

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Wednesday, 14th November, 2012

Present:

Councillor Paul Crossley	Leader of the Council
Councillor Simon Allen	Cabinet Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
Councillor Cherry Beath	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development
Councillor David Bellotti	Cabinet Member for Community Resources
Councillor Dine Romero	Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth
Councillor Roger Symonds	Cabinet Member for Transport

90 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair was taken by Councillor Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

91 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

92 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor David Dixon

93 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

94 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

95 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 12 questions from the following people: Councillors John Bull (2), Anthony Clarke (2), Tim Warren, Geoff Ward, Paul Myers; members of the public Rae Harris, Colin Currie (4).

[Copies of the questions and response, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]

The Chair observed that questions #P02 and #P04 had in fact been answered by Councillor Cherry Beath. The Democratic Services Officer agreed to amend the sheet before publication.

96 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Clarice Corfield in a statement read by Mary Lambert [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website*] opposed the drilling for coal bed methane in the Keynsham area and gave a number of reasons for her concerns.

Laura Corfield (Transition Keynsham) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website*] spoke of her concerns about possible drilling for coal bed methane in the Keynsham area, with particular reference to its effect on land and water systems.

The Chair thanked Laura Corfield for her comments and promised to respond to her in due course.

Ben Eve (Saltford environment group) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website*] expressed his concerns about the impact which coal bed methane extraction in the Saltford area would have on the area. He particularly emphasised the unproven safety track record of the industry and the evidence of health risks to local people.

The Chair thanked Ben Eve for his comments and promised to respond to him in due course.

Pamela Galloway (Save Our 6/7 Buses Campaign) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 5 and on the Council's website*] thanked the Cabinet for the recent news that funds would be allocated to subsidise the 6/7 service. She committed to continue to fight to save the service into the future.

Councillor Roger Symonds asked Pamela Galloway for the source of her “reliable” authority that the funding might disappear.

Pamela responded that she would research the source of that comment and would get back to Councillor Symonds in due course.

George Bailey (Radstock Action Group) in a statement read by Colin Currie [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 6 and on the Council's website*] raised a number of issues relating to the sum of £500K allocated for Radstock and how it was to be used.

Colin Currie (Chair, Radstock Action Group) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 7 and on the Council's website*] expressed concerns about how the membership of the Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum were appointed. He was not convinced that the Forum would make decisions in the interests of local people.

The Chair thanked Colin Currie for his comments and promised to respond to him in due course.

Trudie Mitchell (Chair, Compton Dando Parish Council) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 8 and on the Council's website*] appealed to Cabinet to bring forward plans to implement 20mph speed limits in Burnett, Queen Charlton and Chewton Keynsham; and submitted the results of a local survey showing public opinion about traffic speeds in the villages.

Cllr Brian Webber in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 9 and on the Council's website*] referred to plans approved recently by Council for the introduction of a new local council tax benefit scheme. He felt strongly that families on incomes between £13K and £19K would suffer most from the proposals, and that the report submitted to Council had been inadequate.

Councillor David Bellotti asked Councillor Webber whether he felt that a report of 150 pages could be called "inadequate", and whether he would acknowledge that it was government policy to look at all benefits in the round, not one at a time.

Councillor Webber agreed, but said that the report had not been easily digestible.

97 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Simon Allen, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10th October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

98 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

99 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

100 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

There were none

101 OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE USE OF VICTORIA HALL RADSTOCK

Amanda Leon in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the report and agreed that Victoria Hall had the potential to become a focus in the town.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 10 and on the Council's website*] cautiously welcomed the proposals and made some suggestions for developing its use, including a request that Radstock Youth Club and Radstock in Bloom be allowed use of the garden. She reserved her congratulations until the refurbishment had been completed.

Councillor Charles Gerrish in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the proposals but observed that the revenue shortfall was understated and should read £49K, not £24K. He asked for the error to be corrected.

Leslie Mansell (Chair, Radstock Town Council) in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the report and the Cabinet's commitment to the long-overdue refurbishment of Victoria Hall.

Councillor David Bellotti in proposing the item, said that the proposals would give the hall a 20-30 year life. He was excited about the plans for a community library with refreshments and Wi-Fi facilities. The consultation had brought out lots of ideas – not all possible. He expressed his disappointment that it had not been possible to fit in a full-size snooker table despite investigating a number of possible floor layouts. He was delighted however that the building would be fully accessible, with a lift to the upper floor. The total anticipated cost of £800K would be partly met from £160K from the Radstock Regeneration funds, £125K from the sale of the Library site, and another sum from the potential sale of the old caretaker house.

Councillor Simon Allen in seconding the proposals said he was very proud that Cabinet had reached this point. He felt that the renovation of the hall would put the heart back into Radstock.

Councillor Cherry Beath observed that the proposals were evidence that Cabinet was willing to deal with difficult long-standing issues. She committed to working closely with the Economic Forum and the Town Council to ensure the best outcome for the town.

On a motion from Councillor David Bellotti, seconded by Councillor Simon Allen, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

- (1) To NOTE the outcomes of the feasibility study;
- (2) To AGREE that Work is progressed on determining the viability of implementing a scheme for the relocation of the library, creation of community facilities with meeting room and exhibition space, accessed by a new lift;
- (3) To AUTHORISE the Chief Property Officer to finalise the preferred scheme for the development of Victoria Hall in consultation with Cabinet Member for Community Resources and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and subject to:
 - A business plan being completed for the facility, which includes the library relocation, and which will be subject to the approval of the Section 151 Officer;
 - The sources of additional revenue liability resulting from any additional running costs being identified. Any additional revenue costs will represent a funding pressure for 2013/14 and prudent provision is being included in the Resources MTRSP;
 - Sources of external capital funding, including local grants, being fully explored.
- (4) To AUTHORISE the Chief Property Officer to dispose of the existing library;
- (5) To AUTHORISE the Chief Property Officer to maximise the financial returns from the caretaker's house to facilitate the development of Victoria Hall; and
- (6) Subject to the above, to ALLOCATE £160,000 from the Radstock Regeneration Budget and a maximum of £715,000 from the Capital Contingency, to facilitate the development; further subject to the Capital Contingency being replenished to an appropriate level as part of the 2013/2014 Budget.

102 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS - APRIL 2012 TO SEPTEMBER 2012

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

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To NOTE the projected outturn position for 2012/13 and accompanying information;

(2) To ASK Strategic Directors to continue to work towards managing within budget in the current year for their respective service areas, and to manage below budget where possible by not committing unnecessary expenditure, through tight budgetary control;

(3) To NOTE the capital expenditure position for the Council in the financial year to the end of September and the year end projections;

(4) To AGREE the revenue virements listed for approval in the report; and

(5) To NOTE the changes in the capital programme.

103 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2012

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

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To NOTE the Treasury Management Report to 30th September 2012, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice;

(2) To NOTE the Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2012; and

(3) To REFER the Treasury Management Report and attached appendices to November Council and December Corporate Audit Committee.

[Councillor David Bellotti gave his apologies and left the meeting at this point]

104 BATH WORLD HERITAGE SITE SETTING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Peter Duppa-Miller (Clerk, Combe Hay Parish Council) in an *ad hoc* statement [a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 11 and on the Council's website] urged Cabinet to adopt the SPD.

Councillor Tim Ball in proposing the item, thanked the officers for the hard work undertaken during the consultation. Now that the consultation period had ended, he asked Cabinet to adopt the policy.

Councillor Cherry Beath felt that the SPD would be very important in the Council's aim to protect the setting of the city.

Councillor Roger Symonds agreed, and observed that the buffer zone around the city and the tremendous surroundings were worth protecting.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the changes to the Draft City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting Supplementary Planning Document for adoption as a SPD to policies BH.1 of the Bath and North East Somerset Council Local Plan and B4 of the Core Strategy once it is adopted; and

(2) To DELEGATE authority to the Divisional Director for Planning and Transport Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning, to make minor text changes and minor design changes to the layout, if required, and for the inclusion of the rest of the appendices and changes to the selection of photos to the SPD.

105 BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Virginia Williamson (Convenor, Transition Bath Food Group) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 12 and on the Council's website*] referred to the fact that although DEFRA included agriculture within its definition of green infrastructure, the B&NES document seemed to ignore the role of agriculture despite being a substantially agricultural area.

Councillor Peter Anketell-Jones in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the new strategy but warned that measuring “growth” and “progress” would always lead to more tarmac. He asked why the Park and Ride sites could not be included in the document, so as to encourage planting, wildlife and access to the countryside.

Peter Duppa-Miller (Secretary, Local Councils Association) in an *ad hoc* statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 13 and on the Council's website*] asked the Cabinet to endorse the amended strategy.

Councillor Paul Crossley in proposing the item, thanked Councillor Peter Anketell-Jones for his suggestion about the inclusion of Park and Ride sites.

Councillor Tim Ball seconded the proposal. He referred to the comments made by Virginia Williamson by saying that he felt the need for food was outside the remit of a green infrastructure strategy. He was pleased to report however that the PCT had appointed a Food Project Officer which he felt was the right way to tackle the issue.

Councillor Roger Symonds observed that the document would form an important part of the Core Strategy. He reminded the meeting that Bath had been the site of the very first farmers’ market in the whole country and that it was still going strong.

Councillor Cherry Beath agreed that local food sourcing was very important. She reported that in Combe Down the local people had planted an edible landscape and had taken other initiatives to improve the area.

Councillor Dine Romero also reported the planning in Southdown of blackthorn and apple trees. Some local schools were using local produce in their kitchens where possible and in some cases that was coming from the school’s own garden, grown by the pupils.

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

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the Green Infrastructure Strategy “Valuing people, place and nature” for the Bath and North East Somerset area;

(2) To SUPPORT delivery of the Strategy by championing Green Infrastructure and commend the Strategy to the partners and stakeholders who have shaped it and invite them to continue to work with the Council to develop and deliver the action plan; and

(3) To DELEGATE authority to the Divisional Director for Planning and Transport Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, to make

minor text changes and minor design changes to the layout, if required, and for the inclusion of the rest of the appendices and changes to the selection of photos to the Strategy.

106 HOUSING SERVICES ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Councillor Eleanor Jackson (Chair of the Housing and Major Projects Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel) in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the policy and congratulated officers and Councillor Tim Ball for bringing the proposals to Cabinet.

Councillor Tim Ball in proposing the item, emphasised that the policy was not in fact based only on enforcement, but was a means of ensuring decent housing. It would enable the Council to deal with the problem of empty homes.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To ADOPT the revised enforcement policy.

107 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

Councillor Anthony Clarke expressed his support for the proposals but cautioned Cabinet to avoid the centrally driven pressure to put more children into care. He supported the improvement of support offered during the transition between care and adult life.

Councillor Dine Romero in proposing the item noted the concerns expressed by Councillor Clarke. She assured him that each child had a bespoke package of services, tailored to their needs. An audit had shown that the authority has spent less on some areas of corporate parenting than many other authorities, yet has ensured that during the last 8 years not a single young person has needed to be taken back into care after adoption.

Councillor Tim Ball seconded the proposal. He observed that he was a special guardian of 3 children but received no financial support from the authority. He emphasised that no child should ever be raced into adoption – the arrangements must be what is right for the child. It was a tragedy when a child having once been adopted had to be taken back into the system.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that the priority would always be to work with families. He praised the leadership given by Ashley Ayre (Strategic Director – People). He referred to paragraph 6 of the strategy, which dealt with the issues of moving on from care, in particular the fact that 55% of young people leaving care are in education, employment or training compared to 95% of the general population of the same age. He stressed that this was an area which would need action to break the cycle.

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

108 WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE – SNOW WARDEN PILOT REVIEW

Councillor Charles Gerrish in an *ad hoc* statement supported the proposals but pointed out that the cold season had started earlier than anticipated for 2 consecutive years. He asked Cabinet to reconsider the forecasting service being used, which had not always given adequate snow warnings.

Councillor Anthony Clarke said how confident the residents of Camden were after they had been provided with grit and salt on their steep roads.

Peter Duppa-Miller (Secretary, Local Councils Association) in an *ad hoc* statement [a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 14 and on the Council's website] asked the Cabinet to continue the snow warden pilot scheme for the coming winter and to approve the winter service policy.

Councillor Roger Symonds moved the recommendations. He agreed to reconsider the forecasting sourcing in the light of the comments made by Councillor Gerrish.

Councillor Cherry Beath seconded the proposals.

Councillor Dine Romero asked whether it was too late to add extra snow wardens to the scheme, because she knew of some willing volunteers in her own ward.

Councillor Paul Crossley agreed with Councillor Gerrish that the forecasting needed to be improved. This had been the only cause of complaints. He said that extra volunteers could be included but their training would need to be funded by the local Ward members from their Ward Member Initiative funds.

On a motion from Councillor Roger Symonds, seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To AGREE that the existing Snow Warden Pilot Scheme is continued across the winter 2012/13; and

(2) To AGREE that the arrangements for the Highway Winter Service during winter 2012/13 continue as set out in the Policy approved by Cabinet on 14th September 2011.

109 TENANCY STRATEGY

Councillor Tim Ball in proposing the item, explained that the report was a result of the Localism Act. Although he took no pleasure in bringing the paper to Cabinet, it was required by law. He said that the effect of the proposals would be that all tenancies would in future be fixed-term and that rents would be fixed at 80% of the market rate.

Councillor Roger Symonds seconded the proposal although he agreed with Councillor Ball that he took no pleasure in this.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Roger Symonds it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To ADOPT the Tenancy Strategy.

110 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REVISED SCHEME

Councillor Simon Allen in proposing the item, said that the revised scheme would be more transparent and fairer. It would enable people to move to smaller homes and in so doing would free up larger homes and reduce the waiting list.

Councillor Tim Ball seconded the proposal.

On a motion from Councillor Simon Allen, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was **RESOLVED** (unanimously)

- (1) To ADOPT the revised allocation policy; and
- (2) To AGREE that the policy is implemented in phases starting 1st January and to be fully implemented by 1st July 2013.

111 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP FOR EVENTS (SAGE) REPORT 2012

Councillor Roger Symonds in proposing the item, said it was important that event organisers must know what is required of them. The SAGE group were making that possible. He welcomed this, the first annual report.

Councillor Cherry Beath in seconding the proposal said that the report explained the value of the SAGE group. The year just past had been an excellent year for the group to operate, because of the Jubilee celebrations and Olympic events.

Councillor Paul Crossley asked that Cabinet's thanks be passed to Geoff Dicker (Senior Health and Safety Adviser) and the rest of the SAGE team.

On a motion from Councillor Roger Symonds, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To RECONFIRM s.101 of the Events Policy which states "If it is the collective view of the SAGE that the event should not go ahead then this will be communicated to the Public Protection Service Manager and Divisional Director of Environmental Services who will formally write to the event organiser. Each SAGE member retains the right to object to any event"; and

(2) To AMEND the Events Policy (November 2011) to include the following paragraph:

"6.2. The SAGE chair will have the discretion to determine which events are considered by the SAGE - based on risk. This decision will be dependent, amongst other things, on the nature of the event, location, participants and includes events which are likely to cause significant disruption to traffic and parking arrangements. This risk based provision will be exercised following consultation with other members of the SAGE where necessary."

The meeting ended at 8.10 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

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CABINET MEETING 14th November 2012

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

Where the intention is to speak about an item on the Agenda, the speaker will be offered the option to speak near the beginning of the meeting or just before the Agenda item.

Statements about issues NOT on the Agenda

- Clarice Corfield (read by Mary Lambert)
Re: Drilling for coal bed methane in Keynsham
- Laura Corfield (Transition Keynsham)
Re: Coal bed methane extraction and fracking in the Keynsham Area
- Ben Eve (Saltford environment group)
Re: Fracking issue
- Pamela Galloway (Save Our 6/7 Buses Campaign)
Re: 6/7 Buses
- George Bailey (Radstock Action Group) (read by Colin Currie)
Re: Economic Development in Radstock
- Colin Currie (Chair, Radstock Action Group)
Re: Economic Forum
- Trudie Mitchell (Chair, Compton Dando Parish Council)
Re: 20mph in villages in Compton Dando
- Cllr Brian Webber
Re: Council Tax

Re: Agenda Item 13 (Green Infrastructure Strategy)

- Virginia Williamson (Convenor, Transition Bath Food Group)

Re: Agenda Item 20 (Victoria Hall Update)

- Councillor Eleanor Jackson

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>What is the timetable for rolling out the 20mph limit in areas outside Bath, when is Paulton to be included and will the cost of implementing the extended limit in Paulton be paid for out of the general Highways budget rather than the s106 funds from the Polestar development, which can then be used for traffic improvements elsewhere in the village?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>Paulton already has a 20mph Zone and any desired changes to speed limits will be incorporated into traffic management proposals being developed for Paulton using the S106 Planning Obligation funds available from the Polestar site and other developments in the area.</i></p> <p><i>The timetable for rolling out the 20mph speed limits is set out on the Council website http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/streets-and-highway-maintenance/road-safety/traffic-schemes/creating-neighbourhoods-where-p</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>Will he agree that it would be unfair for Paulton to pay for its own signage when other schemes will be paid from the highways Budget?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>The scheme is already being done at the expense of the Council</i></p>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>Is the Cabinet member able to explain why the decision to sell 2 Longacre to developers Emery. was made the day before the drawing up of the Community Asset Register, which would have allowed the FOLAH group to put in a Community Right to Buy bid?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>Discussions with the developer had been taking place over a period of several months, culminating in Heads of Terms being formally agreed for the disposal of 2 Longacre, prior to the interest being expressed by FOLAH. FOLAH were aware of the discussions with the developer some time before the submission of their interest to the Council.</i></p>		

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
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The Cabinet Member has stated that five meetings have been held with Wiltshire Council under the present administration. Can the Cabinet Member please detail who attended these meetings, what topics were discussed at each meeting and whether any conclusions emerged from these meetings in relation to HGVs in Bath?

Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
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I attach a table showing the dates of meetings with Wiltshire since the last election and the topics discussed.

Date/Location	Brief details	Attended by
11/3/11 Bath	Proposed details of weight restriction outlined together with background information. Following this meeting (17/3/11) B&NES cabinet report E222 was sent to Wiltshire officers	Transportation Planning Manager, Transportation Planning Team Leader & Senior Transport Planner
21/9/11 Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire	Our officers attended Bradford on Avon Area Board and gave a presentation on the proposed weight restriction and answered questions.	Transportation Planning Manager & Senior Transport Planner
8/2/11 Westbury, Wiltshire	Our officers attended Westbury Area Board and gave presentation on the proposed weight restriction and answered questions.	Senior Transport Planner
9/12/11 Keynsham	Discussed HGV monitoring to measure the effects of the proposed scheme.	Transportation Planning Manager & Senior Transport Planner
24/1/12 Bath	Discussed HGV monitoring (other issues?) B&NES agreed to delay scheme implementation for 3 months to enable Wiltshire Council to undertake sufficient 'before' monitoring.	Cabinet Member for Transport & Group Manager
14/6/12 Bath	Meeting arranged prior to appeal to discuss the proposed measures. Map of potential diversion routes discussed at some length and quality of O&D survey.	Group Manager and Transportation Planning Manager

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for your response. Can you now tell me whether and when similar meetings were held with Somerset County Council and with the Highways Authority?

Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
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Yes similar meetings took place with both Somerset County Council and HA on the

following dates:

Date/Location	Brief details	Attended by
30/3/11 Keynsham	SCC concerned about: problem definition; benefits of proposed scheme; effect on Buckland Dinham in Somerset; specifying success criteria and signage. SCC followed up the meeting with a letter summarising their concerns.	Senior Transport Planner x 2
31/3/11	HA concerned about gap in strategic network, signage, HA operational vehicles, proposed U turn ban and emergency road closures. However, no objection raised in principle to the proposed scheme. This position changed in letter from HA dated 29/11/11	Transportation Team Leader & Senior Transport Planner
16/4/12	SCC & HA (Wiltshire in attendance): Meeting arranged prior to appeal to discuss the proposed measures. Map of potential diversion routes discussed at some length and quality of O&D survey.	Group Manager & Transportation Planning Manager

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>Given the decision of the DfT to uphold Wiltshire and Somerset Councils' appeal against the proposed A36 weight limit, what action does the Council now intend to take to remove HGVs from Bath which have no destination or origin within the city?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>I am of course very disappointed with the DfT decision and the Council is arranging urgent discussions to seek the agreement of adjoining Highway Authorities so we can work together to address the acknowledged problem of HGVs which have no business in the city of Bath. On the positive side the DfT have agreed to facilitate discussions between the authorities, so I am looking forward to positive progress being made.</i></p>		

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please detail what discussions he has had with FirstBus and other local bus operators regarding bus services to Bath University, in particular in</p>		

relation to overcrowding, lengthy queues at bus stops, and lack of sufficient capacity at peak times, and detail what action has been agreed to address these problems?

Answer from:

Councillor Roger Symonds

The principal bus services to the University of Bath are operated by First and Wessex with no financial support from the Council. The operators have a clear commercial interest in meeting demand and I would expect them to make the most of the opportunities to do so. It should be noted that any bus operator is free to operate a service to the University, subject to obtaining permission to operate onto the campus.

The University holds regular liaison meetings with First and Wessex and the Council's Senior Public Transport Officer attends those meetings. At the most recent meeting on 25 October 2012, capacity issues were raised and discussed at some length. Wessex confirmed that they would operate an additional duplicate bus between the City Centre and the University during the morning peak hours. First confirmed they will operate duplicate buses as and when they have spare vehicles available.

In addition, discussions have been going on between Council officers and Wessex about capacity on contracted bus services 20A and 20C, which provide an orbital service to the University. To alleviate the problems, Wessex agreed to operate two additional journeys at no additional cost to the Council from 5 November 2012. An additional bus runs during school and university terms from Rush Hill at 0830 to the University. Also, a later bus runs on Mondays to Fridays from the University at 1948 to Rush Hill.

The situation will be kept under review and the University will be holding a follow-up meeting with the bus operators on 10 December 2012.

M 06

Question from:

Councillor Geoff Ward

As the Council has started in its consultation on the proposed Article 4 Direction in Bath, this policy aims to spread HMOs more evenly throughout the city. As such, which parts of Bath does the Council anticipate will see an increase in the number of HMOs once the Article 4 Direction is implemented?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

The Council has recently started public consultation on the 'Houses in Multiple Occupation in Bath Draft Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD). The SPD supplements saved policy HG.12 from the Local Plan and sets out the Council's approach to the distribution of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The SPD aims to encourage a sustainable community in Bath, by encouraging an appropriately balanced housing mix across the city in order to support a variety of households in all areas. It seeks to achieve this aim by preventing further over concentration of HMOs in neighbourhoods within the city by setting out criteria for assessing planning applications required by the introduction of the Article 4 Direction for the change of use from 'Family Home' to 'HMO'.

Through the draft SPD a threshold of the proportion of HMOs which is considered acceptable within neighbourhoods (or a 'home patch') is proposed. In areas exceeding the threshold planning permission for change of use to a HMO is likely to be refused. In this way the SPD will help to restrict further growth in the numbers of HMOs in areas of

existing high concentration e.g. Oldfield Park and areas along the London Road. The implementation of the SPD could lead to the displacement of growth of HMOs to other parts of the city. However, the proportion of HMOs in any part of the city will not exceed the proportion thresholds set out in the SPD. Whilst those parts of the city that might see an increase in the number of HMOs are not yet known, it is anticipated there might be increased interest in establishing HMOs in neighbourhoods close to key public transport corridors serving the Universities. Changes in HMO numbers across the city and therefore, any displacement effects will be continually monitored and the maps used to assess the proportion of dwellings that are HMOs will be updated twice yearly.

M 07	Question from:	Councillors Paul Myers / Chris Watt
<p>The South Road Car Park in Midsomer Norton is allocated in the Core Strategy as a site for a large food store. This will precipitate the further regeneration of Midsomer Norton Town Centre as noted in the Core Strategy and further concluded by the recent study commissioned by the Midsomer Norton Economic Regeneration Partnership. This study concluded that this site is viable for a large food store.</p> <p>For this element of the Core Strategy to be delivered the site needs to be brought forward. Part of this may include land assembly (the old gas works is not owned by the Council) as this may improve value.</p> <p>Will the Council Leader agree to ensure the South Road car park is brought to market as soon as is possible with or without the assembly of the old gas works site?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>The Council are actively considering the disposal of South Road car park for food retail use in line with the Core Strategy and the ERDP</i></p>		

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Duncan Hounsell / Chris Warren
<p>Cllr Crossley, on 25th October, we had a large well attended public meeting at Saltford Hall on the issue of re-opening Saltford Railway Station. In addition to residents, both our Saltford B&NES Cllrs were present, Cllr Roger Symonds was on the panel, and you were in the audience. There was a range of views expressed and there is a need for detailed information on the facts and issues regarding the proposal.</p> <p>Would you agree to the B&NES Council preparing an information sheet on the proposal with a consultation for the residents of Saltford in order that everyone is better informed and the full range of views can be listened to?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>The Cabinet at its meeting last June agreed to fund an appraisal of the potential to re-</i></p>		

open Salford Station in the context of a 15 year franchise for Great Western Trains. There is a strong campaign in support of re-opening the station and I attended the public meeting on the 25th October to hear local views. I agree that there were strong feelings expressed at the meeting for and against re-opening the station. During the discussion there was concern expressed that the station would add pressure to parking in adjoining streets. A key issue in developing a business case for the station will be to understand the demand for car parking and how much of this demand can be accommodated immediately next to the station minimising impacts on local streets. The work our consultants are undertaking will allow an assessment to be undertaken of parking required for the station. We will undertake a consultation on the proposal once we understand what the size and cost of providing car parking for the station might be. We expect to receive the Consultant's report early next year.

P 02	Question from:	Colin Currie
Re Economic Forum -- Press release is headed £500,000 for Radstock but includes £100,000 for Radstock and Westfield economic forum. Please clarify.		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>The Radstock and Westfield Economic Action Plan has been developed by a local group of businesses including the Town Traders, Radstock and Westfield Town Councillors, as well as Councillors Eleanor Jackson, Cherry Beath and Simon Allen, under the auspices of the Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum. It focuses on skills and business support activities which will benefit the local economy. As stated in the press release, an allocation of £100,000 is proposed to support the work of the Forum to carry out its action plan as quickly as possible.</i></p>		

P 03	Question from:	Colin Currie
Press release specifies £160,000 for Victoria Hall, Since £250,000 has already been announced, is this funding additional?		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>The original cost estimate for bringing Victoria Hall back into use was £250k. This was based on upgrading of existing systems and installations. Following further extensive surveys it is clear that this is not an option as many of the existing systems need replacing or significantly upgrading. The preferred scheme recommended by the report results in an estimated cost of £875k. This is to be funded by £160k from the Radstock Regeneration Fund and £715k from Capital Contingency to be replenished by Capital receipts and other funding.</i></p>		

P 04	Question from:	Colin Currie
<p>Press release specifies £100,000 for economic forum, who is on it, how are the members selected, how will decisions to be made, and how are they to be accountable?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>The Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum has brought together local businesses, including the Radstock Traders, with Norton Radstock College, local Town Councillors, local ward Councillors and the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development to develop an action plan to support skills development and provide business support in the area. Based on a detailed analysis of the local economy, actions will be delivered on key sector development, enterprise support and skills and employability.</i></p>		

P 05	Question from:	Colin Currie
<p>If the library is to be incorporated into the Victoria Hall, will the money from the sale of the redundant building be used in support of the hall?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>The proceeds from the sale would contribute to the general receipts pot which may be used to fund part of the scheme. The report on the agenda contains further relevant details.</i></p>		

Dr. Clarice do Amaral Corfield
46, Waveney Road
Keynsham
Bristol BS31 1RU

To
The Cabinet
B&NES
Guildhall
Bath

Dear Members of the Cabinet,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present my views regarding coal bed methane (CBM) extraction and fracking

I oppose the use of these methods in our area for the following reasons:

1. The industrial site could use green belt land
2. The drilling sites are unsightly
3. The rigs operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week causing a lot of noise and are lit at night.
4. The sites increase the level of heavy traffic. The traffic around populated areas, e.g. the Hicks Gate roundabout is already high and difficult especially during rush hours
5. These methods are not appropriate for densely populated areas. In the USA, CBM and fracking are used in sparsely populated regions such as the states of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, etc.. In the case of Keynsham, the nearest houses are less than 300 meters from the Hicks Gate roundabout. An area within 2-3 miles radius includes Keynsham, Saltford and Brislington.
6. There is a serious risk of ground water and drinking water contamination. Coal bed methane extraction requires large volumes of water to be pumped out from the ground. This water is not only several times saltier than sea water but also contains many toxic contaminants. It is difficult to guarantee the integrity of the wells which could be 1000m deep or in case of fracking 3000m deep. The damage will be discovered after the water becomes polluted. This poses a serious public health risk.
7. This contaminated pumped out water cannot be discharged in rivers. One of the major problems of these methods is how to treat and dispose of the water. There are no easy solutions, all expensive and problematic.
8. Due to the removal of the large amounts of water the ground may become unstable. This could lead to subsidence affecting properties, roads, utility lines and railway lines.
9. Aquifers could be depleted. The hot water springs of Bath could be affected.
10. A very large number of wells will be needed for an effective extraction of methane. Around 2000 wells would have to be drilled in Somerset.
11. There will be detrimental effects on the environment.

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Coalbed Methane & Shale Gas Extraction – A new threat to Land and Water in B&NES

Soon the peak of fossil fuels will make it impossible to rely on foreign imports to meet our basic needs. We will again become increasingly dependent on our local resources. Land will become our most valued resource – as the medium in which to grow our materials. We should therefore be protecting green-belt land for future agricultural and forestry uses and not as inert material to be mined or built upon by industry.

CBM & Fracking will also impact on our already vulnerable water cycles. Increasingly rainwater is not percolating into the land because it hits impermeable surfaces, enters storm drains and heads out to sea. By-passing traditional routes of purification through rock layers and not replenishing our aquifers, That coupled with the growing consequences of climate change mean our land and water systems are suffering the extremes of drought and flood, leading to the compaction of soil and further impermeability.

Coalbed methane extraction first involves extracting water from coal seams in order to assess the economic viability of available gas. The removal of water from coal seams has been linked to depletion of ground water levels in overlying or underlying aquifers. We should be putting our efforts into maintaining water levels by improving the permeability and soil health of the land and absolutely by leaving groundwater in the ground and stopping our lands, aquifers and certain hot springs from drying out.

The waste water produced during the process should also be considered as toxic effluent and the treatment and disposal of waste water must be thoroughly detailed by any companies in possession of PEDL licences for the B&NES area. These plans should be scrutinized and regulated by any responsible authorities before (and after) any planning applications are granted.

Coal Seam water also contains an array of naturally occurring substances, most of which are extremely hazardous to human health. Contaminants include heavy metals such as arsenic, mercury, lead & cadmium which even in minute traces are very damaging to human development & health. In Australia, treatment before disposal often only involves removing the salts - leaving dozens of hydrocarbons, heavy metals and radionuclides still in the waste water. Often the water is merely diluted to reduce the salinity levels, mixing the produced water with fresh water before discharge. Dart Energy at Airth in the Scotland, the only place in Britain currently extracting CBM, have been 'treating' their water in-house before disposing of it directly into the Firth at Forth. The Environment Agency has not conducted a single test of the water in the 8 months of their production. What is to stop the same thing happening here, with disposal of water straight into the River Avon?

Each stage in the process of unconventional gas production — extraction, transport, processing, and combustion — generates a waste stream and carries multiple hazards for health and the environment. I ask the question who will be left to foot the bill of these waste streams if planning permissions for production are granted? Planning permission should never be granted before some form of bonds and sureties that the full "costs" of any environmental, social and economic impacts and their management will be met by the Gas producing companies. And in such a way that accommodates for the uncertainty and long-term timeframes of such potential impacts.

If we allow full scale unconventional gas extraction to go ahead we are risking the health of the soil, of the land, of the water and all that depend on it. The costs to us and our environment will far exceed any benefit by the way of jobs, a few extra years of fossil fuels or royalties paid to the government.

I would also like it noted that I feel unconventional gas extraction is unfavourable on the 'material' grounds of noise pollution for those who live and work nearby, traffic disturbance from additional heavy-load vehicles the production would create and the unsightly appearance of an industrial landscape that any wells and associated paraphernalia would create as they spread across our landscape.

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I would like to spend a few minutes discussing onshore or unconventional gas exploration, (or fracking or coal bed methane exploration as it has become known) in the context of the Green Strategy to be discussed at this meeting.

I live in Saltford and am very aware that at any time a planning application might be submitted for CBM or Hydraulic fracturing very close to where I live, as has happened in Keynsham. Petroleum Exploration Development Licenses were sold to various companies several years ago that covered this area. The very thought of this industry with an unproven safety track record taking place on my doorstep worries me, and many other residents, greatly.

This area of the south west is one of only a few in the UK , that at present that are being targeted for gas exploration. It feels like this county , and this local area, could become the testing ground – or guinea pig – for unconventional gas exploration in this country, or even Europe.

The problem is that there is no defined body of evidence, no long term study nor proof that shows that fracking or CBM production is safe to practice around densely populated areas or safe at all.

However, there is growing body of evidence from other countries that has shown that there are real risks to health of citizens who live nearby gas operations. One study, for example, has shown that in many areas of the Southern US, Cancer rates have fallen, but in areas where fracking has taken place over the last few years, some Cancer rates have risen.

Authorities have chosen to dismiss much of this evidence as alarmist and anecdotal, when in fact governments and councils should be exercising their duty of care and fully examining every shred of evidence.

Our local MP in Saltford said recently that no government would risk public health for cheap gas but I am not convinced that there is a full scrutiny by the authorities of the adverse reports gleaned from other countries to fully understand the potential risks. Rather, they seem to be dismissed. If only 1 per cent of the evidence from the USA is true, then it would still be foolhardy and negligent to continue.

I am urging the council under their new green strategy to reject all calls for onshore or unconventional gas exploration in this county, and set a marker down for the rest of the UK. The lack of safety guarantees in this industry could lead to serious environmental problems for future generations. i.e our children. Instead of a cheap gas, it could lead to health problems, land, air and water contamination.

The BANES green strategy is 'Valuing people, place and nature" and NOT putting each at serious risk.

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SAVE OUR 6-7 BUSES!



Statement to B&NES Cabinet, 14th Nov 2012

Pamela Galloway

When we registered to speak here today, we were set to campaign again until March. Let me explain why. In June, we were horrified to hear on good authority, and I quote: “that in light of the many difficult financial decisions facing B&NES Council next year, it was going to be very hard for Councillors to justify continuing to subsidise the 6&7 Buses.” That was followed by months of repeated statements by the Executive Member and other councillors that no commitment could be made until at least February to continue our bus subsidy. One councillor has recently termed our campaign “scare-mongering”. What would you have done in our position? We felt we had to re-launch the campaign to preserve the vital 30 minute frequency to keep our community vibrant and our elderly from becoming isolated.

As you know, the original subsidy of £85,000 was reduced to £75,000 for a cheaper bus. And we are now pleased to hear because of increased ridership and skilled negotiations on the part of the executive councillor & officers, this has been reduced to £46,000.

Therefore it is with great relief that we learned at last week’s Budget Fair, that a “myth was being dispelled” and that bus subsidies would not be cut, so we are very grateful to the Cabinet for relegating one aspect of the threat to a myth.

Since the Budget Fair we have had further assurances that the subsidy for our bus service is included in the Cabinet’s proposed public transport budget, and we are delighted to hear this news. We do realise that, as other bus services are affected, this is subject to a Consultation but we & members of the community, as stakeholders, look forward very much to giving our input to this Consultation.

We also had assurances at the Budget Fair, and these have been repeated again since, that the cabinet feel their proposed public transport budget is not under threat from any Central government cuts that might be announced in Dec. We are very encouraged that public transport is being seen as a high priority

At a well attended public meeting last week we were able to update the community about these new developments, and they were united in expressing their a[[recitation for the Cabinet’s support for the 30 min frequency.

We would like to thank the councillors and officers who have worked so hard to allocate funds within a limited budget and yet to make public transport such a high priority. We realise there are a few hurdles yet to be overcome but we sincerely hope that the campaign will not have to be revived again between now & February, or yet again in a year’s time.

Save Our 6-7 Buses campaign team

Pamela Galloway
17 Baytree Road
Fairfield Park
Bath, BA1 6NB

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Questions submitted by Mr George Bailey

1. Who owns the Oak Tree at the junction of The Street and Wells Hill in Radstock?
2. There is no Planning Permission for removal of subway and building Houses so therefore there is no need to move the tree, at least for one year. The Developer is also showing no interest in starting work. Why not delay?
3. Paul Crossley has stated publicly "No road without houses", so is tree to be moved in spite of this?

All the following relate to the Press Release of 15th October, headed £500,000 for Radstock.

4. £150, 000 to improve safety for people "on foot who use bicycles" (sic). No doubt useful, but would it not come from Highways budget, not Economic Development, so is not part of this package.
5. £50,000 for the play-park. This is useful, but hardly economic development. Surely the money should come from Environment?
6. £25,000 to widen Morley Terrace. Surely this should this come from Highways?
7. £10,000 for 20 mph speed limit. Surely this should this come from Highways?
8. £5,000 to provide a pavement on blind bend... Surely this should this come from Highways?
9. Since transport is such an excellent driver for economic development, why is it that the Halcrow study into the Feasibility of the Frome Radstock Branch appears to be sidelined? A discussion took place with Roger Symonds on August 30th, but no conclusions were published. It was on the Agenda of the 10th October meeting of the Cabinet and a Statement was presented, but the matter was not debated. What does this Authority intend to do with it?

Answers

1. B&NES owns the Oak Tree.
2. For the best chance of survival, the tree must be moved between November and February. Therefore it is opportune to move it now to prepare for the future road works.

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On behalf of radstock residents concern is expressed on the inclusion of a £100,000 for the Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum, in the \$500,000 allocated for Radstock regeneration. There is no indication as to how the members of this group are chosen /elected, or what measurable financial accountability they have to the people of radstock. Neither is there any indication as to what contribution they will make that justifies their access to a regeneration budget. The concern is we will see a repeat of the NRR debacle, where considerable amounts of Public Money were wasted with no sensible results by a similarly vaguely organised body.

These are the questions we would like to table for a separate reply

1 Re Economic Forum -- Press release is headed £500,000 for Radstock but includes £100,000 for Radstock and Westfield economic forum please clarify

2 Press release specifies £160,000 for Victoria Hall, Since £250,000 has already been announced, is this funding additional

3 Press release specifies £100,000 for economic forum, who is on it, how are the members selected, how will decisions to be made, and how are they to be accountable

4 If the library is to be incorporated into the Victoria Hall, will the money from the sale of the redundant building be used in support of the hall

COLIN CURRIE chair of R.A.G.

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20 mph speed limits in rural residential areas: Burnett and Queen Charlton

Submitted by Trudie Mitchell, Chair, Compton Dando Parish Council.

Compton Dando Parish Council represents 5 villages close to Keynsham. Three of these, Burnett, Queen Charlton, and Chewton Keynsham, are adjacent to Keynsham, and have for some years been asking for lower speed limits (and in the case of Queen Charlton, access only).

We were therefore very pleased to hear that Bath & North East Somerset are now considering 20 mph speed limits in all residential areas, but far less pleased to hear that while Keynsham would be in group 4, for early implementation, these villages on the edge of Keynsham would be group 15, for implementation at the end of 2013 if funds remained available.

We would ask the council to consider adding Burnett and Queen Charlton to the Keynsham implementation.

1. There would be potential economies of scale/scope to adding these areas at the same time as Keynsham. Both villages lie along the main arteries out of Keynsham, Charlton Road and the Wellsway. Burnett would require perhaps 3 new road signs, and Queen Charlton 3 or 4.
2. The existing Parish Plan (already adopted by Bath and North East Somerset as part of the LDF) calls for measures to curb speed in these villages, so extensive consultation is unnecessary (see excerpts from Parish Plan at the foot of this document)
3. In Queen Charlton, there is only one existing sign, which shows a 20 mph limit round a bend. There are no other speed limit signs. New 20mph speed limit signs would be needed at the turnoff from Woollard Lane, and on the two turn offs from Charlton Road, (including at the Redlynch Lane crossroads, outside the unauthorised traveller site)
4. In Burnett, the existing situation is nonsensical. The B3116 which passes the village after leaving Keynsham has a 40 mph limit. When turning off the B3116 into the village, there are national speed limit signs. Drivers are thus given permission to increase their speed to 60 mph as they move from a through road into a residential area! This

includes the road where the school bus picks up, and children wait. New 20 mph speed limit signs should be placed at the 2 turnoffs from the B3116 (where the national speed limit signs now are), and at the entrance to the village from the west, from the direction of Compton Dando.

5. If the council decides not to accelerate the introduction of 20 mph limits into these two village adjacent to Keynsham, at the very least we would request that the two national speed limit signs sited at the turnoffs from the B3116 into Burnett are removed, and one resited at the exit from the village on the road towards Compton Dando, leaving the village as a 40 mph limit. This would at least be safer than leaving the entire village as a 60 mph limit area, as it now is.
6. The village of Chewton Keynsham would also like a 20 mph speed limit, in place of the existing 30 mph limit through the village. Here also there is a placement issue for the national speed limit sign. The national speed limit sign on the road towards Compton Dando is sited before the end of the village. Villagers have requested that the 60 mph limit should start at the village boundary, not before
7. We appreciate that we do not have the population density of residential areas of Bath or Keynsham. But these are villages mostly without pavements, and much visited for their picturesque nature, where speeding motorists directly endanger ramblers, horse riders, cyclists, and dog walkers, as well as residents daily moving about the village

Parish Plan (2010) excerpts

Safer Communities

Road safety

Many of the roads in the parish are narrow winding lanes which in places are not wide enough for two cars to pass. The junctions of these lanes with main roads can be dangerous and two particular junctions have been singled out as causing concern.

There is a lot of concern about speeding traffic and lanes used as 'rat runs' These are of particular concern in Queen Charlton (to over 90%) where there is strong support for making the village 'Access only'. Over half of the responses supported a 20 mph speed limit in the villages, with 30 mph in the lanes being the most popular option.

Action Points

- The Parish Council have registered the concern over the Redlynch Lane junction with B&NES, and will keep the issue under review.
- The Parish Council will monitor the situation regarding a possible 20 mph speed limit in the villages. Use of police speed check cameras should be considered. They will establish with B&NES the situation regarding 'Access only' in Queen Charlton.

Traffic		Very concerned	Quite concerned	No opinion	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned	
2.1	How concerned are you about speeding traffic?	80%	194	162	41	30	20
		Definitely	Possibly	No opinion	Another solution	Definitely not	
2.2	Would you consider traffic calming?	59%	145	119	19	72	59
		Definitely	Possibly	No opinion	Another solution	Definitely not	
2.3	Is 'Access only' a good idea?	46%	96	110	45	116	94
		Less than 20 mph	20 mph	30 mph	More than 30 mph	Another speed	
2.4	Which speed limit is suitable for your village?	47	231	139	4	1	
		Less than 20 mph	20 mph	30 mph	More than 30 mph	No change needed	
2.5	Which speed limit is suitable for surrounding lanes?	29	146	200	17	50	
		Definitely	Possibly	No opinion	Definitely not	n/r	
2.6	Footpaths for pedestrians on busy roads?	64%	159	125	78	52	32
		Definitely	Possibly	No opinion	Definitely not	n/r	
2.7	Are you concerned about lanes used as 'rat runs'?	80%	263	93	60	17	13

2.4 Which speed limit is suitable for your village?

	Less than 20 mph	20 mph	30 mph	More than 30 mph	Another speed	n/r
Compton Dando	10	106	90	1	1	10
Burnett	3	28	14	1	0	3
Chewton Keynsham	3	25	17	1	0	2
Woollard	3	32	12	0	0	5
Queen Charlton	28	40	6	1	0	0
Total	47	231	139	4	1	20
% of respondents	11	52	31	1	0	



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Last Thursday the Council approved a new local council tax benefit scheme. It did so on the basis of an inadequate report, which was largely devoid of facts, figures and examples. It was an important subject of great complexity, and I am sure most of the councillors in the chamber had only a hazy grasp of how the proposals would affect the people concerned.

I have only an imperfect understanding of the scheme, but it seems to me that it will bear particularly heavily on families with children with modest household incomes in the range of £13,000 to £19,000. Typically, they will have to pay about £250 additional council tax, which is a considerable sum.

I am aware that central government has made changes to the tax system to take low income earners out of income tax. However, I am sure it was not intended that what has been given nationally by the right hand should be taken back locally by the left hand through withdrawal of council tax benefit. Just as we contribute to national taxation according to our means, I feel it is socially just that at least a modicum of the burden of local council tax benefit should be borne by the community as a whole. Otherwise, the proposed scheme effectively means the poor will be paying the council tax benefit of the very poor.

I would also like to complete the remarks about discounts, which I was unable to make on Thursday because time ran out. I did manage to say then that the total abolition of void relief for private landlords was unfair and would discourage landlords from improving their properties or even from letting at all. I would like to add that it might also be a perverse incentive to let to students rather than needy local people. Letting to students is not only more remunerative, but landlords can usually contrive never to have voids, because they can gain access to their properties during the vacations when the students are not actually in occupation. It seems odd that at a time when the Administration is proposing to alter the planning system to curb the number of student houses, it is creating an incentive to let to students. A proposal to reduce the maximum period for void relief from 6 months to 2 would be acceptable, but total abolition is unreasonable.

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The Future of the Victoria Hall.

Cabinet 14 November 2012

Two cheers!

Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson.

There are many reasons to applaud this report which addresses issues which Colin Darracott should have done when he got the Symonds Report in 2005 and shelved it, and Cllr Haeberling ought to have done when the late Cllr Hall and I persuaded her to apply a £40,000 sticking plaster. It lays to rest the arguments in the 1999/2000 review that the Victoria Hall should be demolished, and more recent proposals to sell it. I doubt if Frances, Lady Waldegrave anticipated such problems when she endowed the original hall in 1866 and laid down strict conditions concerning its educational and recreational uses. Since the 1905 rescue package and subsequent extension to house the town council and magistrates' court, it has been the jewel in the crown of the 'best-preserved mining town in England' and once refurbished will remain so. I am very pleased that there is such a substantial financial commitment, and if B&NES Council officers are prepared to consult *properly* with the groups and individuals who want to get involved, I am sure it can be made to pay its way long term. It riles Cllr Bellotti when we speak of 'saving the Victoria Hall' but I think that with a bit more substance and by working together with the Museum, potential purchasers of the Library, the youth hub users and the NRR, this building at the heart of the community can be saved. As it says, 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' I have been campaigning since 2005, having decided to live in Radstock because I was enchanted by the Victoria Hall. Many others feel equally strongly.

However I would like to propose a minor amendment:

2:7 When practicable, to continue to allow Radstock Youth Hub members and Radstock in Bloom the use of the garden and garages.

There is a certain air of unreality in the report. Attempts were made in 2004-5 to sell the caretaker's house. It is now in a dreadful state. Apart from that, it is hard to see who would live next to the Susan Hill School of Dance practices. The figures are not consistent in the report and the house will surely have a use as changing rooms for the hall performances or for the young people.

Secondly, in the Site 2 planning NRR permission there is a 'community hall'. I suggest that this is removed in the re-submission, and a sum paid to the council for the Victoria Hall, or it is integrated into the hall use.

Thirdly, the young people are interesting in extending their cookery classes to practical experience. A community café is a brilliant idea – but it is very close to St. Nicholas Church tearooms.

I am sure local people will be happy to help officers with the 'business plan' and I would urge you all to get a move on. We cannot afford to have a three year delay like that the Clandown Residents Association experienced with their Orchard Project.

Two Cheers then.

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City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting Supplementary Planning Document -

I am speaking as the Clerk to Combe Hay Parish Council and as a member of the Environs of Bath Committee.

The great care taken by Andrew Sharland in preparing this document is very much appreciated.

This document is most important - not only to the City of Bath itself, but also to the Parishes which surround the World Heritage Site.

I urge the Cabinet to agree to adopt the SPD.

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Cabinet 14.11.12: Green Infrastructure Strategy

My name is Virginia Williamson, and I'm convenor of Transition Bath's food group. I've been following the development of the Green Infrastructure Strategy since I was asked to contribute a paper on local food for the first draft in October 2010. Our report identified firstly what research and policy work B&NES had already done to encourage local food production and supply, and secondly what current local planning policy was with regard to local food production and retail. These were followed by recommendations. In 2007, B&NES commissioned research from Sustain, a national organisation, which provided a detailed analysis of the existing local food supply chain, and farmers' perceptions of the barriers to, and potential for, improved local supply. Unfortunately, nothing was done with this research but it retains value as a baseline for future research. Meanwhile, about 20 cities are pursuing the sustainable food city approach – Bristol was one of the first. Last year, an intern from the University of the West of England did research for a report to the Environment and Sustainability Panel. One of her interviewees from Bristol Council said how envious they were of B&NES because of the amount of agricultural land within its boundaries.

Although DEFRA and Natural England include agriculture within their definition of Green Infrastructure, B&NES – unlike a number of other authorities, some mainly urban – has ignored the role of agricultural land within its discussion of green infrastructure, other than to say that farmland is a source of biodiversity. The rural areas of B&NES are presented as space for recreation rather than a working landscape. Instead, the Green Infrastructure Strategy describes local food solely in terms of allotments and community gardens. A very small number of households are lucky enough to have an allotment, but agriculture must necessarily provide the rest. I see that the National Farmers Union has been added to the list of consultees since discussion at the workshop in April, and a few icons for 'food suppliers' (? I'm not sure what that means), have been added to the local food map. I'm glad to see that a statement about allotments providing 'food security' – a cynical misuse of the term – has been removed from this version. Discussion of food security is linked to climate change, and increases in food prices and agricultural land values (which have doubled in the past five years) indicate the impact of climate change on local as well as global food production.

If agriculture is going to be left out of the GI Strategy, where will it be addressed? I've been unable to find information previously available on the B&NES website, but I recall the first draft of the Core Strategy contained a pie-chart of local economic sectors - agriculture was not included. Similarly, a table showing employment within different sectors had a footnote saying that employment within the agricultural sector had not been quantified. Spatially, B&NES is largely a rural district. Who is responsible for agricultural issues within the Council? Is work on agriculture's role in local food production going on behind the scenes?

As far as I know – not. Although the Environment & Sustainability Panel apparently approved a concept paper on local food, it is not clear to us how this is being progressed. Is it because there is little interest from politicians? Aren't councillors from rural parishes interested in the farming economy and rural livelihoods? Aren't those of you who are convinced of the existence of climate change concerned that we are better informed and better prepared to ensure sustainability of local food production? The GI Strategy is wrong to state that local food production can be encapsulated as the provision of allotments and community growing spaces. Agriculture shouldn't be ignored. Please let us know how agriculture's role in sustainable food production is going to be addressed.

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Green Infrastructure Strategy -

I am speaking as the Secretary of the B&NES Local Councils Association - and especially as the Clerk to Combe Hay Parish Council.

The care taken by Sue Murtagh in preparing this very important document is very much appreciated.

I ask the Cabinet to endorse the amended Green Infrastructure Strategy.

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Highway Winter Maintenance -

I am speaking as the Secretary of the B&NES Local Councils Association.

I ask the Cabinet to agree to continue the Snow Warden Pilot Scheme for the coming winter.

I also ask the Cabinet to agree that the approved Highway Winter Service Policy continues to be implemented during the coming winter.

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