

CABINET MEETING 13th February 2013

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

- Cllr Colin Barrett (read by Cllr Tim Warren)
Re: Petition – Provision of Public Conveniences in Weston Village
- Cllr John Bull
Re: Small Business Saturdays
- Cllr Liz Hardman
Re: Children's Centre Funding
- ~~George Bailey (Radstock Action Group)~~
~~Re: Transport Issues~~
- Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones
Re: Petition - Victoria Art Gallery
- Lin Patterson (Campaign to Save Larkhall Public Toilets)
Re: Petition - Larkhall Public Toilets (To be read by Barbara Gordon)

Re: Agenda Item 16 (Schools Expansion)

- Cllr John Bull
- Cllr Liz Hardman
- Louise Bray (Chair of Governors, Church Valley Schools Federation)
- Rachael Rayner (Paulton resident)
- Mich Moore (Paulton Schools Expansion Action Group)

Re: Agenda Item 12 (Budget Report)

- Della Simmons (Parent of a child at First Steps Children's Centre) - Petition

Re: Agenda Item 13 (Core Strategy)

- David Redgewell

Re: Agenda Item 14 (Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting SPD)

- Cllr David Martin

Re: Agenda Item 20 (Supported Bus Services)

- David Redgewell

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>I have asked for works to be carried out to the Upper Bristol Road, for the last two years, next to the allotments. The pavement has a large run off from the allotments, this freezes in the cold weather causing a large expanse of Ice. Please could the executive councillor explain what is going to happen?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>There is no record of previous reports to our Highways team regarding this matter. The report has been investigated and officers in the Highways team have asked colleagues in Property Services to take action to prevent further discharge of water onto the highway.</i></p>		
M 02	Question from:	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>The crossing at Windsor Bridge with Upper Bristol Road, has no indication to pedestrian of the movement of cars, please could the executive councillor investigate ASAP, before there is a serious injury?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>The Windsor Bridge/Lower Bristol Road junction is due to be improved as part of the Bath Package works. This will include improved pedestrian facilities. This proposal needs to be considered alongside other proposals throughout the district.</i></p>		
M 03	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>With regard to the proposed experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the Circus Area have estimates been made of the number of vehicles which –</p> <p>(a) currently enter Bennett Street from Lansdown Road with a view to rat-running via Gay Street to Queen Square?</p> <p>(b) will in future use Bennett Street in order to access the Circus Area because they will no longer be able to enter via Gay Street?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>Yes in respect of (a) Estimated 270 vehs 12 hour (excluding cycles) and in respect of (b) Estimated 215 vehs 12 hour (excluding cycles)</i></p>		

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>In the Central Zone there has been an experimental scheme whereby members of certain residents associations have been permitted to purchase visitor parking permits at a daily rate of £5. Is the scheme still in being? What has been the take-up? What proposals (if any) are there to extend the scheme to more people and/or review the price?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>I can confirm that the scheme is still in place as a trial whilst consideration is given to the long term strategy and changes to zone arrangements to improve access for all road users, including residents and their visitors. Since the trial commenced we have issued a total of 1259 individual permits to a total of 85 properties showing a limited take up and need.</i></p> <p><i>Therefore it is unlikely that the scheme will be extended or the price increased until the larger review is undertaken.</i></p>		

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p>It was recently announced that the Council would be submitting a new planning application to deliver the planned 250 new parking spaces at Newbridge Park and Ride, resulting in a delay to the start of construction work to expand the site. Can the Cabinet Member please detail how much it will cost the Council to submit a new planning application, and what cost implications this delay may have on the Council's contract with the company delivering the Park and Ride expansion?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>It will cost the Council approximately £250,000 to submit a new planning application for the 250 spaces at Newbridge. Within this budget is an allowance to cover the appointed contractor's costs for the delay in their work caused by this decision. The precise amount has yet to be agreed due to contractual negotiations and in any event will be confidential between the parties. The additional £250,000 referred to above will be met from the Project's contingency budget and will not cause an increase to the Capital cost of the Bath Transport Package as previously agreed by Council.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Can he please tell me whether the contractor's costs will be a significant amount?		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>I do not yet know myself what the figure will be.</i></p>		

M 06	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward								
<p>In January 2011 the Council published its Empty Property Policy, aimed at bringing more empty homes back into use through the use of both advice and assistance to property owners as well as enforcement action. How many times since May 2011 has the Council made use of an Empty Dwelling Management Order or other enforcement action to bring an empty property back into use?</p>										
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball								
<p>As you mention the empty property policy aims to bring empty properties back into use through both advice and assistance and, as a last resort, enforcement action. Since introducing the policy the Council has worked hard with owners identified on the Council Tax record to ensure that empty properties are brought back into use, or if already in use appropriately recorded.</p> <p>This work has been very productive and has reduced the number of properties empty for 6 months or more from 530 (June 2010) to 433 (June 2012). As a result the Department of Communities & Local Government confirmed that this has generated the following New Homes Bonus funding for the Council:</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Financial Year</th> <th style="text-align: center;">New Homes Bonus</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2011/12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£193,979</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2012/13</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£333,104</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2013/14 onwards</td> <td style="text-align: center;">£527,083 p.a.*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Based upon no variation in empty properties, that is, no recovery outcomes nor an increase in empties.</p> <p>Since the end of 2012 the Council have also offered limited financial incentives, including loans to assist eligible owners to bring properties back into use. Once eligible owners have had the chance to seriously consider the offers of financial assistance a report will be presented to Cabinet, expected in Summer 2013, seeking a formal steer on future enforcement action in accordance with the Empty Property Policy. Hence at this stage I can confirm that no formal CPO or EDMOs have been served. However, it should be noted that the Council has served two section Town and Country Planning Act 215 enforcement notices on empty properties. These require the owners to undertake works to resolve problems affecting neighbours. These notices do not directly require the owner to bring the property back into use, however serving such notices can be the catalyst needed to make the owner bring the property back into use. In one case, the property was then sold and the new owner intends to bring it back into use. The second notice has only recently been served.</p> <p>The policy states enforcement action with significant financial considerations, such as EDMOs, will be taken by member decision. While no EDMOs have been made to date, a report will be brought to Cabinet for approval to proceed with enforcement action which may include EDMOs.”</p>			Financial Year	New Homes Bonus	2011/12	£193,979	2012/13	£333,104	2013/14 onwards	£527,083 p.a.*
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Supplementary Question:										
<p>Thank you for your full reply. Does the Cabinet member regret not yet being able to use his powers?</p>										
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball								

On the contrary, I am pleased that so far I have not needed to use the enforcement powers. Many empty properties have already been brought back into use as a result of the policy, but there are still some difficult cases ahead which may need enforcement and I will not hesitate to use these powers if it proves necessary, in order to ensure these properties are brought back into use

M 07	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
What has the change been to the estimated number of people who cycle to work in B&NES over the past two years?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>The most reliable data for cycling to work is the national census, which takes place every 10 years.</i></p> <p><i>In 2001, 2.4% of Bath & North East Somerset's employed residents stated that they travelled to work by bicycle. By 2011, the number of people cycling to work had increased by 33% to 3.0% of work trips.</i></p> <p><i>The Council undertakes annual monitoring of traffic and cycle flows in Bath city centre between 7am and 7pm. This survey records all cycling trips and does not identify work journeys separately. In 2010, the survey recorded 1,670 cycles travelling across Bath city centre, rising to 2,450 in 2012. This is an increase of 47%. Between 2001 and 2012 Bath city centre cycle flows increased by 104%.</i></p>		

M 08	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
Now that the P&R at Newbridge is being significantly delayed, can the cabinet member please confirm if he will be making a decision to delay the car parking restrictions proposed for the Victoria Park area?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>Royal Victoria Park is registered by English Heritage as a Park of National Historic Importance and should not be used as a long stay car park for commuters. The changes to the parking arrangements within Royal Victoria Park will encourage a turnover of spaces allowing families, visitors and residents greater access to the facilities for the benefit of all. Occupancy surveys of the park conducted in 2008 suggest that only 40% of the vehicles surveyed were commuters. However they accounted of over 75% of the available spaces. Furthermore another 9% of vehicles surveyed confirmed that they were unable to park and therefore left without stopping.</i></p> <p><i>Commuters and those wishing to park for extended periods are able to use the appropriate long stay options within the car parks in the city including the nearby Charlotte Street car park where there is usually ample capacity. Those wishing to use Park & Ride can find capacity at Odd Down sites where the recent expansion has been completed and at Lansdown in the very near future where the extension will also be opened.</i></p>		

M 09	Question from:	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>Will the Cabinet Member publish the proposed reduced mobile library timetable in advance of the Council budget meeting so that residents and councillors are able to make an informed judgment on the adequacy of the reduced service?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>It has been essential to develop the Community Library pilots at New Oriel Hall, Larkhall, Combe Hay and Chew Stoke before work began on the mobile library timetable. The mobile library staff are currently reviewing the mobile library timetables. Following the budget decision in February, there will not be any changes to the mobile service until later in the year due to staff consultations etc, enabling time to consult on any proposals.</i></p> <p><i>Library users were last surveyed via questionnaire and public meetings January/February 2012 as to their views about the service and the way forward. The option to reduce to one mobile rather than both was suggested in these meetings. We are taking that forward.</i></p>		

M 10	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>I recently received a copy of the new Visit Bath booklet. I would like to congratulate Bath Tourism Plus on a well-designed, attractive, quality publication, with lots of useful information about attraction in Bath, Wiltshire and the Cotswolds.</p> <p>However, upon looking through the booklet I was dismayed to see that there was scant mention of the attractions in the Chew Valley and Mendips. There are many attractions available in this part of the authority, including the lakes, picturesque walks, and attractive villages. The lack of mention of these within the tourism booklet currently sends the wrong signal about the Council and Bath Tourism Plus's commitment to promoting the North East Somerset and the rural economy.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please explain what will be done to rectify this in future publications?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>The Visitor Guide is just one part of Bath Tourism Plus range of promotional information and does a very specific job: it aims to position the city and surrounding area and encourage readers to find out more. It is a 'pre-arrival' piece of print, which gives a flavour of what our area can offer and tempts the reader to find out more. It is not a definitive Guide.</i></p> <p><i>It complements the visitbath website and App, both of which are very much more detailed and content-rich. To put this in perspective, the website attracts 3million visits a year, whilst the Guide has a print run of some 80,000. The guide encourages readers to visit the Visitor Information Centre (we welcome 500,000 visitors a year) which has lots of information about places to visit beyond the city centre. Bath Tourism Plus are</i></p>		

also currently developing a 'post arrival' piece of print which will encourage visitors to discover the rural areas.

Bath Tourism Plus are devoting resource and support to Cllr Paul Myers who, on behalf of the Somer area is developing ideas to drive more visitors. They would welcome other initiatives from parish councils and look to support them. Cycling and walking are part of this, and this will develop further as the Two Tunnels project is completed.

M 11	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke										
<p>If the Council proceeds with plans to prevent cars using Dorchester Street and Manvers Street as a through-route, what is the current estimate of the traffic impact (in percentage and numerical terms) on Pulteney Road, Rossiter Road and Widcombe Parade?</p>												
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds										
<p><i>The table below gives an indication of the impact of restricting cars from using Dorchester Street and Manvers Street as a through route. As a result of this preliminary analysis and given the range of options available it was concluded that a more detailed understanding of traffic flows was needed using a traffic model to assess the impact of measures in Dorchester St on the wider highway network including the proposed Rossiter Road Traffic Management Scheme.</i></p> <p><i>The detailed analysis will also review the effectiveness of enforcing possible traffic management measures following the recent review of bus gate signage in the city by the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.</i></p>												
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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Joel Hirst
<p>Can the Cabinet confirm B&NES Council commitment to ensure rural areas including the villages of Newton St Loe, Englishcombe, Combe Hay, Tunley and Camerton will benefit from early priority for Superfast Broadband. Can the Cabinet also confirm the current timelines for implementation of Superfast Broadband to our rural areas in B&NES?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>This Administration has been proactive in joining The BDUK project 'Connecting Devon and Somerset' with a view to making improved broadband a priority for rural areas . The contract with BT was signed on 29th January 2013 and surveying work on the project will start immediately. The first locations to be upgraded will be announced during Spring 2013. We will have a better idea then of where these particular villages fit within the programme.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of timescale, the programme will deliver high-speed fibre broadband to around 90 per cent of premises by the end of 2016 and will ensure a minimum of 2Mbps broadband speeds for all. This will make B&NES one of the best connected areas in the UK.</i></p>		

P 02	Question from:	Simon Whittle
<p>The Chew Valley Broadband Group has been formed to press for improved broadband service for users connected to the West Harptree, Temple Cloud, Chew Magna and Compton Dando (Pensford) exchanges. It has the support of at least 5 Ward Councillors and a growing number Parish Councils.</p> <p>Q: Could you please provide an update on the plans and timescales for superfast broadband roll-out in our area? Some residents in villages such as Bishop Sutton, whose employers encourage "teleworking" are forced to commute to Bristol and Bath 5 days per week because the service is both slow and unreliable. This does not contribute to sustainable communities.</p> <p>Q: How will you be working with BT and CDS to ensure that we are not isolated and left behind during this and future technological advances? We pay the same monthly fees as other users and get very poor value for money.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>With the contract between BT and the Connecting Devon and Somerset programme now signed, detailed survey work is currently being undertaken. There is no detail</i></p>		

currently publicly available on the rollout, or on which areas will get the superfast (24 Mbps) and which will get the minimum 2 Mbps, however following the survey Connecting Devon and Somerset will be looking to share this information as far as possible. As a result of delays at a national level with State Aid and the procurement framework, the 90% coverage of superfast broadband is now due to be completed by 2016. The Connecting Devon and Somerset programme does also commit to all areas being upgraded to superfast broadband by 2020.

P 03	Question from:	Evan Weinburg
<p>I am aware that BaNES has committed 1M pounds to the Connecting Devon and Somerset project, but am unable to find any details as to how this money is to be spent , what governance is being placed against it and want to understand how a Parish Council or Village Association can interact with its leaders.</p> <p>Please explain,</p> <p>(a) how BaNES governs the money provided to the Connecting Devon and Somerset project and what metrics (other than percentages of premises connected) will be used to understand how the money will positively effect the development and sustainability of the area.</p> <p>(b) how do we interact with the decision making mechanism governing roll out.</p> <p>(c) What is being done to ensure that none of the rural (but very close to city) locations in BaNES will not be left behind once the Connecting Devon and Somerset project has finished.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p>B&NES has committed £690,000 for capital works and £175,000 revenue over 3 years to a maximum total of £865,000.</p> <p>B&NES have signed up to the Connecting Devon and Somerset Programme who have a governing responsibility for the spend, the targets and the outputs. B&NES have a Senior Officer on the Programme Board of Connecting Devon and Somerset, to which the Programme Director reports in detail on risk, contracts, outputs and spend. Parish Councils currently receive regular briefings via the Parishes Liaison Committee and a small number of Parishes are engaging more directly with the programme where they want to explore other options including private funding and the Rural Communities Broadband Fund.</p> <p>Detailed cost benefit modelling is employed (the return on investment for maximum coverage) to determine the roll-out and the final speeds and coverage. There is no detail currently publicly available on this, or on which areas will get the superfast (24 Mbps) and which will get the minimum 2 Mbps. However, detailed survey work is currently being undertaken and Connecting Devon and Somerset will be looking to share this as far as possible once this is completed. In the meantime, please sign up to the Connecting Devon and Somerset newsletter at www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk</p>		