

Cabinet Member Update

Cllr Ben Stevens – Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

Obviously I only took the position over from the AGM last Thursday. Since then I have been getting myself up to date with the portfolio, meeting with the Strategic Director and Divisional Directors as well as external organisations to ensure I am on top of things.

▪ **Economic Development**

- The Co-Working Hub is on track to be opened in July as planned, and is starting to take shape. The primary concern at the moment is how to deal with oversubscription, rather than lack of interest.
- A number of our key development sites are finally being brought forward to ensure a strong economy here in Bath and North East Somerset.
- Many of these sites are on the river and we're working to ensure that the river is central to our future plans.

▪ **Heritage**

- Our heritage assets continue to go from strength to strength; The Roman Baths has won a Silver Tourism Excellence award.
- The Heritage Services Business Plan 2013-2018 has been approved by Cabinet;
- Officers are working on the revised Room Hire Strategy which will be brought forward for adoption in the autumn;
- Charging for the large temporary exhibition gallery at the Victoria Art Gallery was introduced in April; performance is being monitored and will be reviewed in Q3;
- 23rd May marks the 50th anniversary of the Fashion Museum (then the Museum of Costume) opening in Bath; it is being celebrated with the exhibition '50 Fabulous Frocks';

▪ **Culture**

- In July a pot of money provided by Art Council England and Visit England will become available, the Council is supporting a joint bid from Bath Tourism Plus and Bath Festivals.
- Plans for the Tourism Levy are going to start being worked up shortly, and as promised this panel will receive an update once there is one.
- The Arts Development Strategy is currently out for consultation with arts groups.

I thought it might be useful for me to let you know my priorities for the next 2 years.

- Ensuring the river is properly valued
- Refreshing the economic strategy to take account of the changes since it was written (global recession, localism, core strategy etc)
- Bringing forward development sites
- Rationalise the marketing of B&NES to maximise the benefit
- Enhance the cultural offer across B&NES, encouraging cultural tourism