

CABINET MEETING 9th Sep 2015

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

- David Redgwell (South West Transport Network)
Re: Metro West bus
- Cllr Alison Millar
Re: East of Bath park and ride
- Sally Harris
Re: On the subject of diversity and accessibility

- Cllr Lisa Brett on behalf of Jay Risbridger
Re: Agenda Item 15 ('97/101 Walcot Street')
- Eric Howard (Walcot Traders and Residents Association)
Re: Agenda Item 15 ('97/101 Walcot Street')
- Cllr Dine Romero on behalf Cllr Cherry Beath
Re: Agenda Item 17 ('Transforming Firs Field into a Centenary Park')

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>When Odd Down was completed there was intention to have access from the Red Lion roundabout area. A fence there is continually repaired and then cut again. Please could the Cabinet Member for Transport find the funding to complete this vital access.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>A request for a permanent gate in the land adjacent to Guinness Housing Association at the lower end of Odd Down Sports Ground was made at the start of the redevelopment. Permission was therefore sought from the landowner to erect a permanent gate; however, this request was refused.</i></p> <p><i>Property Services has sought to find an alternative location and has identified a potential site off the Wellsway but this is accessed via a private driveway. However, the Registered Title (No ST222294) gives unfettered right for the Council to use the roadway. The legalities around this are currently being addressed with the private landowner</i></p> <p><i>The estimated cost for supply and fitting of the gate is estimated at £1,000.</i></p>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor Karen Walker
<p>I would like to ask the Cabinet Member for Transport to look into altering the flow of traffic on the A367 into Bath.</p> <p>Currently the people commuting into Bath from Peasedown St John and beyond frequently have to que up Dunkerton Hill in the morning. I do believe with some work we could improve this situation.</p> <p>The bus lane which starts on the plateau of the A367 is currently used for buses, taxis and bikes. I would like to see this lane moved to the middle and include the cars using the Park & Ride. This is how it works at Brislington with great effect. The traffic going into town would therefore use the outside lane.</p> <p>At the present time there is no incentive for commuters to use this park and ride, they even have to que unnecessarily because of the current layout; they actually have to drive past where they will be parking to be able to turn into the Park & Ride. The entrance is at the wrong end!</p> <p>I acknowledge that some works on the layout would be necessary but do feel it is a</p>		

project worth looking at a taking forward for the benefit of our residents.

I would like to ask the Cabinet Member to seriously consider this option and undertake to review as to how the layout and access could be improved.

Answer from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

Design work has been carried out on a scheme to relocate the inbound bus lane on the A367 at Odd Down to the centre lane and for it to be available for P&R users . The modelling showed some time savings for buses and cars. However, it gave rise to problems at the roundabout junction at the P&R site entrance – where inbound buses would have to move from the centre lane to the single northbound traffic lane on the A367 exiting the roundabout. There is also the issue of traffic using the “rat run” from Dunkerton via Combe Hay to bypass the queue on the A367 and gain priority on the roundabout. It was concluded that further work would be necessary to get a workable design that would pass a safety audit.

The possibility of an additional southern entrance to the Odd Down P&R site was first considered as part of the initial proposals for the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) scheme some years ago. It would have involved land acquisition and was not pursued at the time because of the likely cost and uncertainty over development of the adjacent Fullers Earth Works site. Also, it would have been necessary to make some changes to the layout of the P&R site itself, to prevent traffic using it as a through route. This problem occurs at the Brislington P&R site in Bristol and is mitigated there by selective closures of some of the internal access lanes during the peak hours. The idea was looked at again more recently in conjunction with the work referred to in the previous paragraph and the conclusion was that a signalised junction with the A367 would be necessary at a new southern entrance/exit. Currently there is insufficient budget to undertake a scheme of this magnitude and is not identified as a priority scheme.

M 03

Question from:

Councillor Neil Butters

At the Cabinet meeting of 8th July 2015, the Leader committed to publishing the results of the independent transport projects review. Also, the names of the consultants engaged, and the costs. All this was to be published in a timely fashion. What progress has he to report? When can we expect to see it?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Warren

We are using the services of another public sector provider at limited costs to cover expenses. We will share the terms of reference before the end of September and will report later in the Autumn.

M 04

Question from:

Councillor Neil Butters

How can the Cabinet member justify omitting environmental impact and minimising both visual effect and journey time from the ‘Objectives for the Park and Ride Scheme’ listed in the Council press release of 25 August 2015?

Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>The environmental and visual impact of the scheme is important consideration, and will be set out within the consultation documents under the section entitled 'Environmental Considerations'. Journey times for those using the new P&R facility will be improved and again this will be an important consideration when deciding how to take this project forward.</i></p>	

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Alison Millar
<p>Can the Cabinet member clarify whether the three sites which are being taken forward for consultation as possible locations for an East of Bath park and ride were chosen as a result of the traffic modelling report by Mott McDonald? If so, why we are not able simply to see the report?</p>		
Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke	
<p><i>The sites that are being taken forward for the public to comment on are those which have been deemed by officers to be both viable and meet the objectives of a P&R east of Bath. The Transportation Model developed by Mott MacDonald has confirmed that there is an unmet demand for about 1,400 P&R spaces. Their work will be published in the next couple of weeks. This is an important conclusion which helped inform the selection of the potential sites.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>Why the opinions of the Parish Councils from east of Bath have not been sought in relation to potential Park and Ride sites?</p>		
Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke	
<p><i>Our consultation is offering residents of Bath and North East Somerset to say which site they would prefer. The Parish Councils are perfectly welcome to put in their opinion.</i></p>		

M 06	Question from:	Councillor Alison Millar
<p>Can the Cabinet member explain why this administration is denying local residents in Bathavon North the opportunity to air their views on the park and rail option for the East of Bath, when so many travel to Bristol/Reading/London for work, often each day, and when that option could make a real difference to their journey times? I would like to ask the Cabinet Member to seriously consider this option and undertake to review as to how the layout and access could be improved.</p>		

Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>Careful consideration was given by members and officers to the site previously proposed as a 'Park & Rail' facility, adjacent to the Bathampton rail junction, but was ultimately ruled-out on the grounds of cost and deliverability. The key issues associated with this proposal were:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>It was not supported by key partners including Network Rail.</i> <i>It was an expensive option and will have a much longer delivery time.</i> <i>Moving the railway line to create space for the multi-storey car park would: require the loss of a Listed Bridge; impact on a Site of Special Scientific Interest and require the loss of new housing currently being built.</i> <i>The multi-storey car park required would be very visual and this would be difficult to mitigate through landscaping.</i> 	
Supplementary Question:	
<p>Was the Cabinet Member for Transport aware that plans for the Bathampton Park and Rail were put together so the car park would be lowered and not at all visible from three villages, which would be better option than one of the sites put forward?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>Lowered car park is, in many respects, the least important issue to putting the Park and Rail at that site. It would take an extremely long time to go with that option and this authority cannot wait longer in reducing traffic coming from east of Bath.</i></p>	
M 07	Question from: Councillor Dine Romero
<p>Would the Leader of the Council confirm that both he and the Cabinet continue to support the Council's opposition to fracking in all areas that may affect the geothermal waters of Bath?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p><i>The Leader and the Cabinet support the Council resolution of 11th July 2013 in relation to the potential threat to the hot springs of Bath from geothermal operations and unconventional gas extraction within Bath & North East Somerset and the wider zone of influence for the hot springs.</i> http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=10112</p>	
Supplementary Question:	
<p>Is the Leader still concerned that the Government might decide to take such decision out of Council's control?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p><i>I would be concerned but I don't believe that would happen.</i></p>	

M	08	Question from:	Councillor Lisa Brett
Can the Cabinet member please confirm when the options paper relating to the funding commitment of £1m for youth and community facilities in Walcot will be published?			
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish	
<p><i>The Capital item of £1M for youth and community facilities in the London Road area of Bath was Provisionally Approved by the Council in February 2014 subject to consideration of a detailed business case. To date no such Business Case has been presented and I have therefore asked Officers to establish if any appropriate options are available by Dec 2015.</i></p>			
M	09	Question from:	Councillor Tim Ball
Can the Cabinet member confirm by how much the public health budget in B&NES will be cut as part of the government in-year cuts?			
Answer from:		Councillor Vic Pritchard	
<p><i>The most likely answer to this question is £544k. This is the figure corresponding to the preferred option in a Department of Health consultation that closed on August 28th and which, at the time of writing (3rd September) has not yet been finalised by Government. This option is an across-the-board 6.2% cut, taking into account both the current budget of approximately £7.5 million and the extra money that will come to the council from the 1st October when we take on the commissioning of 0-5 children's services, which will add approximately £1.3 million in 2015-16 and twice that recurrently from 1 April 2016 onwards.</i></p> <p><i>Since time is so short to make in-year cuts, it seems fairly unlikely that a more refined calculation at a national level could now be done as a basis for changing this figure, whether based on distance from notional target allocations or on which councils have greater reserves. But even if there was some change, the BaNES budget is exactly at its target level and so again it shouldn't make much difference.</i></p> <p><i>The Council has responded to this consultation, and has added its voice to many other councils and health organisations around the country in protesting that this cut undermines important preventive work and will be particularly difficult to manage in year with most public health money committed in commissioning contracts.</i></p> <p><i>This cut has been presented as a one-off measure, but beyond that no clear statement has been made as to whether it will, or will not be made into a recurrent saving.</i></p>			
M	10	Question from:	Councillor Tim Ball
Can the Cabinet member confirm how in-year public health funding cuts will be implemented in B&NES and which programmes will be cut to meet the savings required?			

Answer from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>Although the scale of the cut is not yet certain, a plan has been made on the basis of a 6.2% cut equating to £544k. Great care has been taken to minimise the damage that this will cause in loss of services to residents of B&NES.</i></p> <p><i>A plan has been put forward by the public health team, by which it will find savings of just over £200k within this financial year. Discussions are underway about the remaining sum being taken from Council reserves on a “one-off” basis, however, this has not yet been finalised as we await a final figure from Government.</i></p> <p><i>The great majority of this saving will be realised without direct loss of services but there will be some restrictions in access to two exercise-based services. Once the final overall budget position is clear and we know exactly what service changes will need to be made further details can be provided by myself or Bruce Laurence, the director of public health.</i></p> <p><i>The approach taken to this in year reduction seeks a balance between the need to make a good contribution to an unexpected extra cut to the Council’s budget, while protecting important preventive services, particularly those to some of our more vulnerable residents, and enabling the public health team to meet a range of service and budgetary pressures.</i></p> <p><i>It is also worth noting that we will protect the full budget for the children’s 0-5 services (health visiting and family nurse partnership) that we are inheriting from NHS England, as these are extremely important universal and targeted services providing support to all our families with young children.</i></p>	

M 11	Question from:	Councillor Cherry Beath
<p>Can the Cabinet Member clarify whether or not the New Conservative Administration is fully in support of Curo's plans to develop Mulberry Park on the former Foxhill MoD Site, and regenerate parts of the Foxhill Estate?</p>		
Answer from:	Councillor Marie Longstaff	
<p><i>The Cabinet supports the aspiration to deliver a regeneration project at Mullbery Park and Foxhill which has the support of residents, benefits the whole community and includes high quality housing and community facilities as well as open spaces and appropriated accompanying infrastructure. However, the Cabinet believes that this can only be achieved if Curo and all those involved work in close partnership with existing residents and the wider local community. The Cabinet will therefore continue to provide support and assistance in this process.</i></p>		