

## BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 9th November, 2017

Present:- **Councillors** Cherry Beath, Patrick Anketell-Jones, Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Colin Barrett, Jasper Becker, Sarah Bevan, Colin Blackburn, John Bull, Neil Butters, Anthony Clarke, Matt Cochrane, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Fiona Darey, Matthew Davies, Sally Davis, Emma Dixon, Michael Evans, Andrew Furse, Charles Gerrish, Ian Gilchrist, Lizzie Gladwyn, Bob Goodman, Francine Haeberling, Alan Hale, Liz Hardman, Steve Hedges, Deirdre Horstmann, Eleanor Jackson, Steve Jeffries, Les Kew, Barry Macrae, Paul May, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Alison Millar, Robin Moss, Paul Myers, Michael Norton, Lisa O'Brien, Michelle O'Doherty, Bryan Organ, Lin Patterson, June Player, Vic Pritchard, Joe Rayment, Liz Richardson, Nigel Roberts, Dine Romero, Richard Samuel, Will Sandry, Brian Simmons, Peter Turner, David Veale, Martin Veal, Karen Walker, Geoff Ward, Tim Warren, Karen Warrington and Chris Watt

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Douglas Deacon, Marie Longstaff, Christopher Pearce, Caroline Roberts and Mark Shelford

#### 45 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

#### 46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nigel Roberts declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 16 - **Virgin Care**, as he works for the RUH who have contracts with Virgin Care. He left the meeting for the duration of that item.

Councillor Paul Crossley declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 16 - **Virgin Care**, as his wife is a Virgin employee. He left the meeting for the duration of that item. He also took the opportunity to apologise to Council for speaking at an earlier meeting about the Virgin contract. At the time, he had forgotten about this conflict of interest. He informed Council that he has now corrected his register of interests and hoped that Council would accept his apology for what was simply an oversight.

Councillor Paul May declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 16 - **Virgin Care**, as a member of the Sirona Board. He left the meeting for the duration of that item.

Councillor Paul May also declared an 'other' interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**.

Councillor Joe Rayment declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 16 - **Virgin Care**, as an employee of DHI, and left the meeting for the duration of that item

Councillor Cherry Beath declared an 'other' interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**, as an ex-officio member of the University of Bath Court.

Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**, as an employee of the University, and left the meeting for the duration of that item.

Councillor Ian Gilchrist declared an 'other' interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**, as an ex-officio member of the University of Bath Court.

Councillor Sarah Bevan declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**, as a part-time employee, and left the meeting for the duration of that item.

Councillor Fiona Darey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 19 – **University of Bath**, as a Tutor at the University, and left the meeting for the duration of that item.

The Monitoring Officer granted a general dispensation to any Councillors in receipt of a pension with regard to item 12 – **Avon Pension Fund Annual Report**, and also a general dispensation to any Councillors in receipt of benefits with regard to item 20 – **Universal Credit**.

#### **47 MINUTES - 14TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

On a motion from Councillor Tim Warren, seconded by Councillor Karen Warrington, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **48 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair made the usual customary announcements. The Monitoring Officer also took the opportunity to remind Members about speaking restrictions concerning the forthcoming Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

The Chair then invited the Council to stand in silence as a mark of respect after the recent death of Kevin Pearson, Chief Fire Officer of Avon Fire & Rescue Service, and also in recognition of Remembrance Day.

#### **49 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **50 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Statements were made by the following people;

Paul Roles drew Members' attention to a report 'Taxi and Private Vehicle Licensing' which had been updated in August 2017. He highlighted particularly various points from the Councillors Checklist section, which asks if the needs and safety of passengers are at the centre. He raised a perceived discrepancy with licensing policy on the Council's website, and illustrated a particular example of a banned Uber driver operating in Bath. In response to a query from Councillor Dine Romero as to whether Paul was aware that they had asked the Member of Parliament to pursue a national register of taxi drivers, he responded that he was aware that one existed in Scotland which stopped drivers who have had their licence revoked from working in another city, which he maintained happens in Bath. The Chair thanked Paul for his statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Gene Kerr made a statement in support of a petition which he presented calling on the Council to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists on the approaches to and at the junction of Claverton Down and Oakley Road in Bath. A full copy of the statement has been attached to the online minutes. In response to a question from Councillor Neil Butters about the preferred road safety solution, Gene responded that a mini roundabout would be their preference; however, Highways officers had said there wasn't sufficient space for one, so raised pedestrian crossings on speed tables on each road would go towards reducing car speed. The Chair thanked Gene for his statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Alison Lampard, a resident of Whitchurch, made a statement opposing the number of dwellings proposed for Whitchurch village in the Joint Spatial Plan and highlighted a number of reasons why this would not be beneficial for the community. She asked how it was fair that Whitchurch was taking a disproportionate amount when it did not have the infrastructure to support this level of development. In response to a query from Councillor Tim Warren about whether Alison was aware that the Joint Spatial Plan was being developed alongside the Transport plan so that there would be no houses if the infrastructure was not in place, Alison responded that it would be good to get that commitment, as the village could not support this level of development. The Chair thanked Alison for her statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Rachel Chandler made a statement as a resident of Whitchurch also opposing the proposed development. She explained that they had worked with the developers and were not against reasonable housing proposals but this would decimate, not extend the village. The Chair thanked Rachel for her statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Mary Walsh, a resident of Whitchurch for 35 years, made a statement challenging the development proposals and outlined a number of reasons why it was not appropriate for the area. Councillor Neil Butters asked what would be the number one action they would like to see to address this, to which Mary responded that they would like to see all small villages take a small amount of housing, but she acknowledged that that wouldn't be popular with developers. The Chair thanked Mary for her statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

William Gaskell made a statement about various issues including student voting, support to local people and promoting the Wild Camden scheme. Councillor Dine Romero asked William to clarify his points about voter registration to which he

responded that he would like to see 90% of people registered and temporary workers and students not being registered. A full copy of William's statement has been added to the online minutes. The Chair thanked William for his statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

John Hamer made a statement, on behalf of the Welton Road Neighbourhood Association, which has the backing of Westfield Parish Council. He outlined traffic problems which had been going on for nearly 40 years of the narrow road with no pavements. He stated that Police weren't enforcing the 20mph speed limit and the situation was now considerably worse with 500 extra students at the local college, which was endangering local residents. John explained that he had met with the Area Traffic Engineer who had recommended a feasibility study at a cost of £5000. Councillor Rob Appleyard asked John about a recent piece of work which had recommended the road be made one way, but hadn't proceeded as agreement wasn't reached about the direction for the one way proposal, to which John responded that the problem with one way traffic was that it tended to speed up and so traffic calming measures would still be needed. Councillor Robin Moss asked if any solution was one that needed to be discussed with the whole community to which John responded that he did not: they needed £5000 for a feasibility study. The Chair thanked John for his statement which was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

The Chair permitted Councillor Robin Moss to refer to his statement on Curo at this point in the meeting, which had been deferred from the last meeting. Councillor Moss reserved his right to read out his statement which had been circulated and is attached to the online minutes.

## **51 WEST OF ENGLAND DRAFT JOINT SPATIAL PLAN PUBLICATION**

The Council considered a report seeking authorisation to publish the West of England Draft Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for public representations and subsequently to submit to the Secretary of State for public examination.

On a motion from Councillor Bob Goodman, seconded by Councillor Tim Warren, it was

**RESOLVED** to agree that:

1. the draft West of England Joint Spatial Plan in Appendix A to the report is published for consultation under regulations 19, 20 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
2. if the JSP is ready for independent examination, it shall be submitted to the Secretary of State before the end of March 2018 under regulation 22 of the Regulations, along with the other submission documents required by the Regulations; and
3. the Strategic Director Place is delegated the authority, in consultation with the Council Leader and in co-ordination with Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils, to;

- a. make modifications to the JSP if needed, either prior to publication or prior to submission, and
- b. respond to issues arising during the examination, including making modifications to the JSP.

*[Notes:*

1. *The successful resolution above was carried with 50 Councillors voting in favour, 8 Councillors voting against and 2 abstentions.]*

## **52 B&NES LOCAL PLAN 2016 - 2036 OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

The Council considered a report concerning the options stage of preparing the new Local Plan, seeking approval to publicise an options document for consultation.

On a motion from Councillor Bob Goodman, seconded by Councillor Paul Myers, it was

**RESOLVED** to

1. Consider the comments of the Planning, Housing & Economic Development Scrutiny Panel held on 7th November;
2. Agree the publication of the options document attached as Appendix 1 to the report for consultation;
3. To agree the public consultation arrangements in para 8.3 of the report; and
4. Delegate to the Divisional Director of Development, the authority to make minor changes to the options document in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Development and Neighbourhoods.

*[Notes:*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 51 Councillors voting in favour, 5 Councillors voting against and 2 abstentions.*
2. *During debate, a point of order was raised by Councillor Robin Moss and seconded by Councillor Karen Warrington to move to the vote. This was carried with 50 Councillors voting in favour, 7 Councillors voting against and 2 abstentions.]*

## **53 EFFICIENCY STRATEGY**

The Council considered a report presenting the Efficiency Strategy, which had also been presented to Cabinet on the 11th October 2017 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Efficiency Strategy is a key component in the delivery of that overall strategy and requires Council approval.

On a motion from Councillor Charles Gerrish, seconded by Councillor Paul May, it was

**RESOLVED** to

1. Approve the attached Efficiency Strategy, and associated changes in the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix A. of the report;
2. Approve an increase in the 2017/18 borrowing limits of £12.3m by bringing forward approved borrowing from 2018/19, to facilitate the acceleration of revenue savings from Commercial Property investment; and
3. Approve the associated adjustments to the capital programme to reflect the revised profile of budget for Commercial Property investment with £12.3m brought forward to 2017/18 from 2018/19.

*[Notes;*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 39 Councillors voting in favour and 21 Councillors voting against.]*

#### **54 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Council considered the Treasury Management report to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017, presented in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice. The report gives details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Plan 2017/18 for the first six months of 2017/18.

On a motion from Councillor Charles Gerrish, seconded by Councillor Andy Furse, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) to agree that

1. the Treasury Management Report to 30th September 2017, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted; and
2. the Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2017 are noted.

#### **55 AVON PENSION FUND COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Council considered the annual report of the Avon Pension Fund Committee on the work it has undertaken in the previous twelve months in its role as the administering authority of the Avon Pension Fund in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended).

On a motion from Councillor David Veale, seconded by Councillor Shaun Stephenson McGall, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the contents of the report.

#### **56 REPORT ON OUTCOME OF REGULATORY INVESTIGATIONS POWERS ACT (RIPA) INSPECTION AND UPDATE TO POLICY**

The Council considered a report regarding the Office of Surveillance Commissioner Inspection of the Council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers policies and procedures in June 2017.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Warren, seconded by Councillor Sarah Bevan, it was

**RESOLVED** unanimously

1. To note the OSC Inspector's report for 2017 at Appendix 1 of the report;
2. To consider and approve the draft action Plan for 2017-2020 at Appendix 2 of the report; and
3. To agree the inclusion of Schedule 5 to the Council's RIPA Policy at Appendix 3 of the report.

## **57 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Council considered a report seeking approval of the appointment for a fixed term to 30 May 2020 of the Chief Executive and the designation of the post holder as Head of Paid Service.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Warren, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, it was

**RESOLVED** to agree

1. That the appointment of Chief Executive be offered to Ashley Ayre on a fixed term basis ending on 31 May 2020 at a spot salary of £153,015 pa within the approved range;
2. The designation of the postholder as Head of Paid Service under section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989.

*[Notes;*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 58 Councillors voting in favour and 2 Councillors abstaining.]*

## **58 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

The Council considered a report seeking agreement to various proposed amendments to its Constitution, following consultation with the Constitution Working Group.

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

**RESOLVED** to agree that the following are incorporated into the Council's Constitution:

1. A financial threshold for key decisions at £250k as set out in section 5.1 of the report;
2. The amendment to 'Closure Motions' section as set out in section 5.3 of the report with regard to standing to vote, and with the following change only to the wording of 43(b) as set out below with the text in bold;

*"On a motion "that the question be now put"; unless in her/his opinion the matter before the meeting has been insufficiently discussed, the Chair shall first put to the vote the motion "that the question be now put". If that motion is passed, the Chair will invite the mover of **the motion under discussion** to exercise her/his right of reply under Rule 38 before putting that original motion to the vote;*

3. Amendment to Part 3, Section 3, to update the references to the West of England Combined Authority, as set out in section 5.4 of the report; and
4. The deadline for submission of questions from members of the public to Cabinet and Council to be 4 working days as set out in section 5.5 of the report.

[Notes:

1. The above successful resolution incorporates a minor change to the recommendations with regard to closure motions, agreed by the mover and seconder of the motion, and reflected above.]

## **59 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - VIRGIN CARE: PATIENT SAFETY**

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat Group regarding Virgin Care.

On a motion from Councillor Will Sandry, seconded by Councillor Vic Pritchard, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Council;

1. Notes recent media reports suggesting that Virgin Care asked managers to 'hold off' from contacting the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about safety concerns arising from IT problems.
2. Notes that the Council takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and will ensure its suppliers comply with legal requirements.
3. Notes that the Council has robust monitoring arrangements in place with Virgin Care and the Council are ensuring they are kept informed.
4. Affirms its intention to work with the NHS B&NES Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure that effective reporting and whistle blowing procedures are in place at Virgin Care and to manage continual improvement by contractual mechanisms.



5. Requests that the Executive Member for Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing ensure issues of concern are reported through the appropriate Council bodies so as to ensure full transparency.

## **60 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - REFUGEES**

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat Group concerning refugees.

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Tim Warren, it was

**RESOLVED** that;

The Council notes that:

1. Since becoming involved in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, B&NES has welcomed 37 people from 8 families to the local area, as of October 2017.
2. B&NES has also agreed to take in 23 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, of whom 14 have already arrived and are now living with foster families, as of October 2017. The Council has actively sought to recruit additional foster carers from the local community.
3. Councils and the LGA have urged the Government to put in place long-term funding arrangements to ensure that individuals starting a new life in the UK are properly supported.
4. It has been a year since the Council has discussed the situation of refugees who have been welcomed into the B&NES community and so an update is timely.

The Council resolves to:

1. Reiterate its willingness to be involved in the Government's national resettlement schemes and receive an update from officers on the Council's involvement to date.
2. Welcome the partnership working between the Council, charities, faith groups, and local voluntary organisations, including Bath Welcomes Refugees and Julian House, the Genesis Trust, Developing Health & Independence, and The Nest.
3. Commend the work of the Connecting Families team, social workers and other Council officers who are involved in supporting refugees in B&NES; and commend the work of charities, faith groups, and local voluntary organisations who are fundraising and giving practical support to refugees in B&NES.

*[Notes;*

1. *During debate, a motion that the meeting proceed to the next business was moved by Councillor Alan Hale, seconded by Councillor Lisa O'Brien, and lost with 18 Councillors voting in favour and 30 Councillors voting against.*
2. *The successful resolution above was carried with 59 Councillors voting in favour and 1 Councillor abstaining.]*

## **61 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - RECYCLING**

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat Group on recycling.

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Richard Samuel, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that

Council notes:

1. Single use consumer packaging is a generally wasteful use of scarce natural resources; packaging often ends up as litter and may make its way to the sea. Millions of tonnes of plastic enter the oceans every year, with most coming from the land<sup>1</sup>.
2. Awareness is growing about the negative effect of sea plastic particularly on marine life, sea birds and contamination of the food chain.
3. The Government is consulting<sup>2</sup> on a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, aimed at reducing litter and ocean pollution.
4. The report by a consortium of litter campaigners, which suggests that a deposit return scheme for drinks containers could save individual Councils between £60,000 and £500,000 through reduced costs associated with litter and landfill charges, even after any loss of income from kerbside recycling<sup>3</sup>.
5. The inquiry<sup>4</sup> by Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee, which recently heard that 2.5 billion disposable cups are thrown away annually in the UK, equivalent to almost 7 million cups a day, of which only 1% are recycled.
6. The dramatic success of the 5p plastic bag charge, which has reduced use by 80% according to Defra figures and has raised millions for charities.

Council resolves to:

1. Reaffirm its commitment to the long-term goal of Zero Waste previously established by the Council as a target to encourage innovation.
2. Commend the work of officers, local voluntary organisations and the Environmental Sustainability Network in promoting recycling. Commend and encourage campaigns organised by B&NES residents to reduce waste, such as the plastic straws campaign by "Families for a Bright Future".

3. Request that the Leader write to the Government and local MPs expressing this Council's support for a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles and other drinks containers, support for the introduction of a 5p charge on non-recyclable, disposable coffee cups, and interest in being informed about joining any pilot scheme.
4. Request that the Cabinet member for Development and Neighbourhoods work to encourage local businesses to participate in schemes (such as the "Refill" campaign and app by "City to Sea", which the Council already supports) to refill drinking bottles with tap water free on request and encourage proposals to reinstate and create drinking fountains.

<sup>1</sup> <https://goo.gl/MMCSM1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://goo.gl/HvJB1m>

<sup>3</sup> <https://goo.gl/2ocChq> and <https://goo.gl/7zahDN>

<sup>4</sup> <https://goo.gl/v73hMS>

## 62 MOTION FROM THE LABOUR GROUP - UNIVERSITY OF BATH

The Council considered a motion from the Labour Group about the University of Bath.

On a motion from Councillor Joe Rayment, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was

**RESOLVED** that this Council;

1. Notes that the University of Bath is an independent academic institution, whose autonomy must be respected.
2. Further notes, though, that the University of Bath does not operate in isolation, and does impact on the Council. The University of Bath main campus is situated on land owned by the Council, it is the second largest employer in the authority area, and impacts on the planning and housing policy of the Council, particularly with regard to expansion aspirations, which necessarily impact on housing in the city of Bath and the wider area.
3. Notes that some officers and councillors from the Council sit as ex-officio members of the University of Bath Court.
4. Recognises the immense positive impact that the University of Bath has on the local economy, and recognises how successful it has been in recent years.
5. Notes that Home students at the University of Bath are now paying tuition fees of £9,250 per year.
6. Notes that staff paid according to the Higher Education single pay spine have suffered a real terms pay cut of over 16% since 2009.

7. Notes that the latest available figure for the Vice Chancellor (Chief Executive Officer) of the University of Bath is £451,000 for 2015-16 year. This was an 11% rise, compared to a 1% rise in that year for staff paid according to the national pay spine.
8. Notes that the figure of £451,000 is the highest for any Vice Chancellor in the UK.
9. Notes that the pay ratio between the highest and lowest paid member of staff at the University of Bath is approximately 30:1.
10. Notes that the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bath also occupies a grace and favour house in the city, for which the University pays approximately £20,000 each year for running costs including: Council Tax, utility bills, and a housekeeper with such responsibilities as ironing bed linen and towels.
11. Notes that the University of Bath provided its Vice Chancellor with an interest free loan of £31,489 with which to buy a car.
12. Further notes that the University of Bath has confirmed that no other member of staff has been eligible to receive such a loan.
13. Further notes that students of the University of Bath can expect to pay interest rates of 6% on their tuition fee and maintenance loans.
14. Notes that the 2017 meeting of the University of Bath Court included a vote on whether to express concern about the decisions of and transparency of the Remuneration Committee – which sets the pay of the most senior managers at the University. This vote was defeated by 33 votes to 30.
15. Further notes that the Higher Education Funding Council for England are conducting an inquiry into the University of Bath's governance surrounding remuneration of senior managers, since several members of the Remuneration Committee, or people whose pay is set by the committee, voted against the Court motion without declaring an interest.
16. Notes that Conservative MP for South West Wiltshire, Dr Andrew Murrison, has resigned from the University of Bath Court in protest at the high pay and perks of the Vice Chancellor.
17. Notes that Dr Murrison has also led an adjournment debate in the House of Commons about the pay of Vice Chancellors, which revolved primarily around the pay of the University of Bath Vice Chancellor.
18. Notes that three further MPs from the region have resigned from the University of Bath Court: Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East, Labour), Dr David Drew (Stroud, Labour), and Darren Jones (Bristol North West, Labour).
19. Notes that the Liberal Democrat MP for Bath, Wera Hobhouse, has been critical of the high pay and perks of the Vice Chancellor and has called for governance arrangements to be reformed.

20. Notes that the pay of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bath has been referenced in the House of Lords by Lord Adonis (Labour), and that in response Lord Bates (Conservative) stated that he thought 'the House will have been in some state of shock' at the figures quoted.
21. Notes that the University of Bath has been at the forefront of a national debate about the issue of Vice Chancellor pay over the past year.
22. Notes this national debate has led to the Minister of State for Universities and Science (Jo Johnson, Conservative) to announce that the new Office for Students will require universities to publish justifications for any pay over £150,000. This has followed repeated calls for the sector to show restraint in setting levels of senior pay.
23. Believes that the year of constant negative press attention for the University of Bath, and the reputational damage this has caused to the University, is of concern to the Council, as the University of Bath is the second biggest employer in the area.
24. Believes that the success of the University of Bath can be credited to its leadership as well as the work of the staff and students across the institution.
25. Expresses concern at the levels of pay inequality at the University of Bath and at the governance arrangements which have led to this pay inequality.
26. Supports the principle of fair pay and notes that excessive disparities in pay ratios reflect badly on the organisations involved.

*[Notes;*

1. *The successful resolution above was carried with 22 Councillors voting in favour, 16 Councillors voting against and 11 Councillors abstaining.*
2. *During debate, Councillor Tim Warren moved a motion to continue the meeting until 10.20pm, which was seconded by Councillor Charles Gerrish and agreed by a majority.]*

## **63 MOTION FROM THE LABOUR GROUP - UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

The Council considered a motion from the Labour Group on Universal Credit, which was subsequently amended by the Conservative Group, as set out in the resolution below.

On a motion from Councillor Charles Gerrish, seconded by Councillor Tim Warren, it was

**RESOLVED** to note that;

1. Bath and North East Somerset is a Full Service area for the roll out of Universal Credit and has been since May 2016, having been part of the pilot scheme since 2013.

2. By 2020, it is expected that 7,500 people will be in receipt of Universal Credit in Bath and 7,000 in North East Somerset, and that approximately 4,000 households are currently in receipt of Universal Credit in B&NES.
3. Universal Credit simplifies a complex welfare system, merging six benefits into one payment, and that experience in B&NES shows that, a result of Universal Credit, our Housing Benefit caseload for working age customers has reduced by around 35%.
4. By introducing a 'taper rate' of 63% Universal Credit ensures that – unlike the previous welfare system - working more always pays more and recipients no longer have to keep making new claims as their wages increase.
5. The Government is taking a phased approach to the introduction of Universal Credit, and that full roll-out won't be completed until 2022, but that all Job Centres across the country already have some customers on Universal Credits.
6. Universal Credit is paid monthly in arrears, ensuring the system mirrors the way that the majority of people get paid.
7. Between April and September 2017, Citizens Advice advised 274 different people with new problems concerning Universal Credit from every ward in Bath and North East Somerset.
8. People approaching Citizens Advice mainly had problems with the delays in receiving their first payment, inability to pay for essential items such as food and utilities before receiving their first payment, but that for those who cannot wait until their first full payment, interest-free advances are available within five working days, and that over 50% of new claimants have made use of these advance payments.
9. Whilst improvements have been made by Government to Universal Credit, such as the improved taper rate and advance payments, experience in B&NES as well as the Citizens Advice report *Delivering on Universal Credit* shows issues and challenges do remain with the implementation of Universal Credit which need to be addressed as the system is rolled-out.
10. In addition to the support provided by the advance UC payments and Discretionary Housing Payments, as a result of budget decisions taken by this Council B&NES also administers its own Welfare Support Scheme which provides upfront and tailored support for those people who identify themselves as struggling to manage with the current welfare system, including help with the cost of household items, food, accommodation and debt repayments.

**This Council believes that:**

11. The aim of Universal Credit – to simplify the benefits system and to offer people the security and support they need to move into and progress in work - is right.

12. As the Government phases the roll-out of the new system it is important that lessons are learnt from the experience of pilot areas such as B&NES, but that the experience in B&NES and feedback from officers indicates that halting the roll-out entirely would cause greater difficulties than it would resolve and mean the continued administration of multiple complex systems.
13. The Government's decision to make the Universal Credit helpline free of charge is to be welcomed.
14. It is important that the new welfare benefits system is fair, works properly and does not disadvantage residents either now or in the future.

**Council resolves therefore:**

15. To make, through the Leader, urgent representations to Government to:
  - a. Strongly urge that the Secretary of State ensures that issues raised by Bath & North East Somerset Council, as a pilot area, are given priority for resolution under full service, such as:
    - i. Enhanced support for claimants in the first six week period of a claim, recommending that the maximum wait for first payment be reduced to a maximum of 4 weeks, and as a minimum ensuring that advance payments are properly signposted and Alternative Payment Arrangements in place for the most vulnerable;
    - ii. That personal budgeting support should be actively encouraged or applied by the Council or other trusted partners such as CAB and major RSLs;
    - iii. That the Council should be afforded 'trusted partner' status to discuss vulnerable customer circumstances with the Service Centre;
    - iv. That Universal Credit recipients placed in Temporary Accommodation should be awarded Housing Benefit to cover the Housing element of their costs;
    - v. That an online application facility is provided for arranging Job Coach appointments;
    - vi. That DWP work with the Council to improve data transfers between the organisations.
  - b. Ensure that changes made as a result of addressing the problems with Universal Credit are implemented first in existing Full Service areas such as B&NES;

- c. Ensure that, as the part of the roll-out, the full cost to the Council resulting from the introduction of Universal Credit is fully funded by Government.

*[Notes;*

1. *The original motion, as set out in the agenda papers and incorporating an additional paragraph put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group, was moved by Councillor Chris Dando, and seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, but then subsequently amended.*
2. *The successful resolution above carried as an amendment with 33 Councillors voting in favour and 21 Councillors voting against. As the substantive motion, it was then carried with 39 Councillors voting in favour and 13 Councillors voting against.]*

#### **64 MOTION FROM THE LABOUR GROUP - ETHICAL CARE CHARTER**

Before debating this item, Councillor Chris Watt moved, and Councillor Steve Jefferies seconded, and it was subsequently

**RESOLVED** that this item be deferred until the next available Council meeting as there was not sufficient time to debate it before the agreed end time.

*[Notes;*

1. *The above resolution was carried with 41 Councillors voting in favour, 12 Councillors voting against and 1 Councillor abstaining.]*

#### **65 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Robin Moss had made a statement on Curo earlier in the meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm

Chairman .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**