

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 25th February, 2025

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Matt McCabe, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Karen Walker, Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren CBE, Andy Wait and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Deborah Collins, Sarah Evans, Alan Hale, Ann Morgan, June Player, Malcolm Treby and David Wood

8 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors who pay Council Tax, are Parish Councillors or School Governors and therefore had an interest in these items, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote on agenda item 8 - Budget & Council Tax 2024/25.

In addition, specific dispensations were granted for the below Councillors who have a family member in receipt of Council SEND support, social care support or are working for B&NES;

Sarah Warren

Saskia Heijltjes

Sarah Moore

Lucy Hodge

Tim Ball

Steve Hedges

10 MINUTES - 21ST NOVEMBER 2024

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Mark Elliott, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting of 21st November 2024, and the Special Council Meeting of 21st November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair made the usual housekeeping announcements about phones and microphones.

The Chair offered congratulations to Julie Devey, a Senior Registration Officer, who was recently awarded an OBE for her work campaigning to tackle male violence.

The Chair then asked Councillors to stand for a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of former Councillors Doug Deacon and Jeremy Sparks.

12 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

13 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Alasdair Barron made a statement about the Sydney Place Liveable neighbourhood, and Liveable Neighbourhoods more widely. In response to a query from Councillor Shaun Hughes about the effect the roadworks and closure to the A36 had had on the traffic data, Alasdair responded that what it meant was that, in addition to the 3,100 vehicles displaced from Sydney road during the trial, an additional 15,000 vehicles will be added to the congestion when the road fully reopens meaning the traffic increases on the boundary roads will rise by a further 50%. Councillor Tim Warren asked if Alasdair considered it was beneficial for the air quality to have a Liveable Neighbourhood in his area to which Alasdair responded that he did think in theory it was, but the additional traffic has meant that air quality was worse and it did not benefit him personally. Councillor Joanna Wright asked how the criteria for the key decision had been made. Alasdair replied that it was his understanding that, in law, a decision which affects more than one ward is a key decision. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked, in the context of road diversions, if Alasdair was aware of the benefits of the D2X being diverted through Radstock and its popularity. Alasdair replied that he was not aware. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Jon Avent addressed Councillors on the subject of the Sydney Place Liveable Neighbourhood and Liveable Neighbourhoods more generally. Councillor Tim Warren noted Jon's comment that he had not any response from his ward councillor and wanted to check if this was the case. Jon confirmed it was. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Jon how long an ETRO could be in place before a decision was needed, to which Jon replied that he did not know. Councillor Shaun Hughes checked Jon was aware that the decision had been called in, to which Jon replied

that he was. Councillor Kevin Guy asked Jon about contact from the Liveable Neighbourhood team, to which Jon replied that he had been talking about a response from the ward member and there had just been one email about a basement vault. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Benazir Jatoi, one of 8 trustees of the charity Voices, a small Bath based, grassroots organisation that provides domestic abuse survivors prevention and recovery support. Councillor Joanna Wright asked what would be the consequences if this support was not available. Benazir explained it would be a false economy due to the costs of rehabilitating survivors. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if the charity would like to meet the Cabinet Member for Adult Services, to which Benazir agreed. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Tara Gelpey also spoke in support of the charity Voices, as a survivor of abuse who had been supported by the charity. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Tara what she thought might have happened if she had not been able to access this support. Tara replied that she would probably be in another abusive relationship as she had not been able to recognise the situation she was in. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Emily Denne, the CEO of Voices, addressed the meeting. Councillor Kevin Guy extended an invitation to Emily to meet with the Cabinet Member for Adult Services which she accepted. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Emily about the impact for young people in the longer term, to which Emily explained that most of the work they do is with adults, and so they support parents to help their children address trauma, which is vitally important as research shows the very high rates of children becoming abusers if they are not supported. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked about the ideal referral route from the RUH, to which Emily explained that the best case scenario was for hospitals to have an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) who can then refer on. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Grace Wiltshire addressed Council about the plight of refugees in Bath, and in particular Palestinian refugees, and asked about progress on various aspects. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Jess Collier made a statement opposing the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme and calling for the Council to listen to views and reverse the decision. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Jess how many children attending the local school. Jess responded that she did not have that figure. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

David Redgewell made a statement about various transport issues including the transport levy, the community transport network and the importance of continuing to work with WECA to reduce reliance on Westlink. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked David about the accuracy of real-time timetables, to which he agreed that they needed to be sorted out.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their statements, which were referred to the relevant Cabinet Member, Member or officer.

14 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2025/26 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The Council considered a report presenting the revenue and capital budgets together with proposals for increases in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept for 2025/26.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss and **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with rule 3.1.14 (Suspension of rules), rule 3.1.33 be suspended to allow the length of speeches for the Budget debate to be varied (NB: unless otherwise stated, all mover speeches 5 minutes, all others 3 minutes).

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor Paul May, it was

RESOLVED

1. To approve;

- The General Fund net revenue budget for 2025/26 of **£151.71m** and the individual service cash limits for 2025/26 as outlined in Annex 1.
- The savings and income plans outlined in Annex 2(i), funding requirements 2(ii), in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3.
- An increase in Council Tax of 2.99% in 2025/26 (an increase of £51.92 per Band D property or £1 per week).
- An increase of 2% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £34.72 on a Band D property (67p per week).
- The movement in reserves outlined in section 5.6 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £12.58m within a risk assessed range requirement of £11.8m - £13.0m.
- To note the Children's Services management plan update set out in section 5.2.6 of the report.
- The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4.
- The Capital Programme for 2025/26 of £76.41m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.8.3, and notes the programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme.
- The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(i) to Annex 5(iv)

to the relevant Director in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(v).
 - The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6.
 - The MRP Policy attached at Annex 7.
 - The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.8.7.
 - The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8.
 - The Community Contribution Fund extension outlined section 5.5.
 - The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/26 shown in the following link: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/Bath%20%26%20NE%20Somerset%20S13A%20202526%20FINAL%20.pdf> and referred to in 5.3.5 of the report.
 - The Fees and Charges schedule for 2025/26 at Annex 11 and support its publication following approval of the budget, with delegation to amend individual costs within the schedule in line with market needs, to the Director of Place Management, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
- 2.2 That the Council approves the technical resolutions that are derived from the budget report, and all the figures in that report, including the precepts for towns, parishes and other precepting bodies as set out in Annex 13.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet note the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in 5.7.
- 2.4 That the Cabinet note the budget consultation responses in Annex 10, and the PDS Panel feedback in Annex 12.

[Notes;

1. *An amendment was moved by Councillor Shaun Hughes and seconded by Councillor Tim Warren to reinstate the Parking Reinvestment fund (attached to the minutes). This was lost on a named vote;*

Councillors in favour (16): - Councillors David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Sam Ross, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Tim Warren, Joanna Wright.

Councillors against (36) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper,

Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait, Sarah Warren

Councillors abstaining (0)

2. An amendment was moved by Councillor Joanna Wright and seconded by Councillor Sam Ross, containing a series of proposals (attached to the minutes). This was lost on a named vote;

Councillors in favour (3): - Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross and Joanna Wright

Councillors against (49) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Samantha Kelly, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (0)

3. The above successful resolution was carried on a named vote;

Councillors in favour (36): - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait and Sarah Warren.

Councillors against (8): - Councillors David Biddleston, Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (8): - Councillors Colin Blackburn, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Sam Ross, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Joanna Wright]

15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

The Council considered its Treasury Management Strategy statement for 2025/26, fulfilling its legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code which requires this.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliot, seconded by Councillor Paul Roper, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (**Appendix 1**); and
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in **Appendix 1**.

16 PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW

Following the recent by-election in Salford, the Council was required to re-consider its proportionality arrangements. The Chair referred to the alternative proportionality table that had been circulated (and is attached to these minutes) which automatically comes into play should any Member vote against.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Sarah Warren, it was

RESOLVED to approve the circulated proportionality table, which shows the Restructuring Implementation Committee as a proportionate committee.

[Notes;

- 1. The above resolution was carried, with one Member voting against.]*

17 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement about funding for SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and the online record.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services