

## CABINET MEETING 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007

The following Statements and Questions had been registered by the time of publication.

### REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 6 notices of intention to make a statement at the meeting. 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.

- Councillor Paul Crossley  
Re: Children & Young People's Plan (Item 11)
- Councillor Paul Crossley  
Re: Community Use of Council Assets (Item 12)
- Cllr Steve Plumley , Norton Radstock Town Council  
Re: Future of Victoria Hall (Agenda Item 13)
- Gary Dando, Chair of Meadow View Residents' Association, Radstock  
Re: Future of Victoria Hall (Item 13)
- Councillor Paul Crossley  
Re: Bath Plus Limited (Item 14)
- Alex Schlesinger, Honorary Secretary, Bath Branch of the Federation of Small Businesses and proprietor of Old Bank Antiques  
Re: Bath Plus Limited (Item 14)

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

<b>1</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Nigel Roberts
a) How many job vacancies does the council have and how many of those have been vacant for greater than 3 months? Please give a breakdown by department. b) How many staff are currently off with stress? Please give a breakdown by department.	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
<i>The following responses need to be set in the context of the council's overall workforce. At 30 September, the Council employed 3304 people and a further 3038 were employed in schools. (FTE 2496.86 and 1697.62 respectively).</i> a) At 22 October 2007, there were 26 vacancies registered in the Council's	

recruitment process of which 11 had been vacant for more than three months.

<b>Analysis by Director portfolio</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>&gt;3months</b>
Children's Services*	13	7
Adult Social Services and Housing	9	3
Customer Services	4	1

\* inc Youth & Community

The Council defines vacancies as those posts where there is a clear intention to recruit. This is evidenced when the post in question formally enters the recruitment process; this definition is in line with the data supplied quarterly to the Office of National Statistics. This definition will therefore exclude established posts for which no funding currently exists, posts which have been deleted/reviced as a result of restructuring but have yet to be removed from the establishment, posts where some hours remain vacant (and new recruits are not currently sought), posts awaiting external funding decisions etc.

b) The Council's categorisation includes anxiety, depression and stress. The total recorded absence for B&NES staff was 13 at the end of September. There were in addition 2 schools based staff. This categorisation does not record the nature or cause of the medical condition. All members of staff will be receiving appropriate support through the Council's Occupational Health Service and Employee Assistance Programme.

<b>Analysis by Director portfolio</b>	
Adult Social Services/Housing	1
Children's Services	2
Customer Services	2
Support Services	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>

2

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>At the meeting of the Bath South Area committee 15 May it was agreed using its executive powers to recommend that the schemes detailed on the suggestion list, to the committee, in the report be actioned, budget permitting. Please could you clarify what has happened to the schemes, and if these are not going ahead which decision reversed the area committee's decision.</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p>The schemes on the suggestion list were prioritised, with priority being given to those that had supporting petitions that had been presented to the Committee. Of those schemes the following are being progressed with signs and posts currently on order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Southdown Road - provision of a variable message sign;</li> <li>○ Lansdown View - provision of a variable message sign;</li> <li>○ Hawthorne Grove/ Sedgemoor Road - provision of a variable message sign.</li> </ul> <p>The Bloomfield Road scheme has also been progressed, with works comprising footway widening and the provision of a variable message sign due to commence</p>	

*on site on 12th November 2007. However, residents and ward Members have been advised that the construction of the scheme is dependent on existing major electrical cables being located at an appropriate depth. If these cables are placed at too shallow a depth, the cost of having the cables diverted would be prohibitively expensive, and the scheme would not be viable.*

*The funding for the remaining schemes has been deferred as part of the Single Member Cabinet Decision on the "Transport Capital Programme re-assignment" report reference E1670, as these remaining schemes were not sufficiently progressed in design or consultation for them to be delivered this financial year.*

<b>3</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>When the flats were built at Burnt House Wellsway Bath, £10000 was given as section 106 for public transport. What has the money been spent on?</p>		
	<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The wording of the agreement is that the sum of £12,500 is "..to be used by the Council as a contribution towards the improvement of public transport infrastructure and highway improvements in the vicinity of the application site..."</i></p> <p><i>The money was received in May this year, and will be used to carry-out raised kerbing works (to improve access) on the three bus-stops most relevant to the site - northbound stop and two southbound (one for City services north of the junction with Combe Hay Lane and one for Country services south of the junction), and general footway improvements along the frontage of the development. Bus shelter installation will be carried out as part of the Bath Package and/or GBBN works. This fulfils the intention of the agreement which was to mitigate for the reduced parking allocation and therefore encourage the use of alternative modes of travel.</i></p> <p><i>It is intended to undertake these works at the same time as improvements to the adjacent pedestrian crossing to ensure works are coordinated, to minimise disruption to the public and avoid duplicate/abortive works. The works associated with the Section 106 agreement are likely to start early next year.</i></p>		

<b>4</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>When a weight limit is placed upon a road what steps are taken to enforce the weight limit?</p>		
	<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>A weight limit requires a TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) to be advertised and sealed before it comes into existence.</i></p> <p><i>However prior to this extensive consultation is sought with the Police, Fire and Ambulance services, Parish and County Councillors together with the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, NAVTEQ (for satnav</i></p>		

databases) and other interested bodies.

It is only the Police that can enforce this type of restriction, however if it is suspected that a weight limit is being contravened the Traffic & Safety Team can arrange for counts to be undertaken to establish the level of contravention and ask the Police for enforcement if necessary.

5 **Question from:** Councillor David Dixon

At the admissions forum, the issue of school transport was raised. Please could the executive member detail what work is currently being undertaken with regards to school transport?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

**Background**

Eligibility for Home to School Transport is determined by Children's Services. Transport provision is made by the Transport Services Section. The management of home to school transport includes an annual review of all operated routes in October each year after the new September intake. Any changes which occur throughout the year are agreed at the monthly meeting between Children's Services and Transport Services. In addition regular reports on Home to School Transport are made to the Children's Service Senior Leadership Team.

**1. Denominational Transport**

On the 12th July 2006 the Council Executive considered a report on Home to School Transport. As a result of this review it was agreed:-

- That charging should be introduced for denominational transport from September 2007, on the basis that the provision of transport to denominational schools is not considered necessary in terms of s.509(1) of the Education Act 1996;
- To set the level of charge on a six term year at £45 a term (approximately £1.50 a day). For families with more than one child the second and third child would pay 50% of the cost up to a maximum of 3 children. To be reviewed annually in line with other Local Authority charging policies.
- To agree that the charges for denominational transport will not be applied retrospectively and that an exemption will be made for low income families in receipt of free school meals or Maximum Working Tax Credit. Pupils who are in attendance at a denominational school and receive free transport before September 2007 will not be charged while they remain at that school.

In accordance with the above decision charging for denominational transport was introduced from September 2007.

**2. Education and Inspections Bill**

The bill states that from September 2007 children aged eight, but under age 11 from low income families must have travel arrangements made where they live more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying school. This information is published in the annual admission booklets. There is no obligation for LA's to identify those pupils who may qualify but if a request is received it must be

assessed and transport provided if the child qualifies. For September 2007 no applications were received which is due to the pattern of schools in Bath and North East Somerset with the majority of children living within 2 miles of their nearest school.

**3. Three Ways School**

The above school opened on a new site in September 2007. The school educates children who would have previously attended the RUH, Lime Grove and Summerfield Schools. Complete review of transport undertaken and new routes have been put in place and commenced September 2007.

**Future developments**

**1. Education and Inspections Bill**

The Bill states that from September 2008 children aged 11 to 16 from low income families must have travel arrangements made to one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than 2 miles, but less than 6 miles from that school. This information is published in the annual admission booklets. There is no obligation for LA's to identify those pupils who may qualify but if a request is received it must be assessed and transport provided if the child qualifies.

The Bill also places a duty on LA's to have a Sustainable School Travel Policy. This includes an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authorities area, an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions, a strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for; and the promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions.

Officers are continuing to work on the Sustainable School Travel strategy. Currently 57 schools have a sustainable school travel plan with a further 14 schools have a draft plan which should be completed in the near future.

**2. Special Educational Needs Transport**

As part of the on-going full review of all aspects of home to school transport, officers are investigating the possibility of using "Walking Escorts" to accompany Special Educational Needs children to school.

Officers are also investigating the possibility of devolving the home to school transport budget to the Link Centre. This would allow the Link to lease their own vehicles, use school staff to transport the children to school and give them flexibility in arranging additional transport for pupils during the school day

<b>6</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor David Dixon
<p>a) Would the Cabinet not agree that if a child would like to take a bus to school that a seat should be available on a bus for them?</p> <p>b) Will the Cabinet member in charge of transport please detail what steps he plans to take to ensure that children will no longer be left stranded at bus stops or at schools, due to the lack of spaces on popular school runs?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish

a) I very much support the view that bus services should be available to every child who needs them to travel to/from school to help to reduce 'school run' congestion. The Council provides access to public transport for many children at a cost of £3.65m/year under the Council's policy, which can be found on the council's website:

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/BathNES/educationandlearning/Schoolsandcolleges/ASecondarySchoolforyourChild20056.htm>

b) I believe Cllr Dixon has in mind the problem of lack of capacity on bus services to and from Ralph Allen School and officers have met with First Bus, which operates these services commercially, and also the school to listen to the parents concerns to find out what can be done. The problem is a lack of capacity on two services in particular, which particularly affects around 25 children from the Lambridge area and a smaller number travelling to Ralph Allen School from the west.

Following these meetings First Bus has put in place a solution to help resolve the problem in the short term. The Council has also investigated the cost of providing an additional bus. This is estimated to cost at least £4/day, well beyond what most parents are able to afford or willing to pay.

There are three issues emerging;

- the ability for First bus to provide adequately for the demand for their services, which can fluctuate significantly from year to year, on a commercial basis;
- the Council's policy on providing home to school transport, which does not extend to non-denominational schools where the chosen school is not the nearest school;
- the extent to which the Council should subsidise buses for home to school transport.

It is clear that current policies do not support subsidising buses for all home to school transport needs. From March 2006 the Council Executive decided to remove the subsidy from all supported school public bus routes which has led to a much reduced service in Bath and North East Somerset. The reason for this is that the price most parents are willing to pay is up to £2/day, but the actual cost of providing transport is more than twice as much resulting in a significant subsidy of more than £2/day per child. Some 'yellow bus' schemes that have been piloted have not been sustained because of the high level of subsidy needed to keep them going.

Parents of children attending Ralph Allen School have questioned the current discretionary policy of providing transport for pupils attending denominational schools. Reforming this policy on more equitable grounds is, however, likely to lead to less children travelling on public transport than more, because the increased cost of providing more services would need to be passed onto the parents who may be either unable or unwilling to pay.

This leaves commercial operators and in this case First Bus to provide a service, which is flexible enough to accommodate surges in demand at the start and end of the school day as well as at the beginning of the school year. This is a difficult task for operators who have limited capacity at peak times, but one that can be made easier with some advance planning through working with schools and bus operators before the start of the new school year.

I have therefore instructed officers to determine the transport needs of school children before the start of the school year so that potential problems with

*capacity can be identified and measures put in place to help avoid pupils being left stranded at bus stops. In the meantime we will continue to work with First Bus and Ralph Allen School to try to avoid the problems that school children have experienced during the first part of the school year.*

7 **Question from:** Councillor David Dixon

Will the Cabinet member in charge of transport please advise what income has been made from Penalty Charge Notices issued as a result of enforcement of bus lanes, including the Priority Access Point at Northgate Street and Pulteney Bridge, and, while I fully agree that we must enforce these restrictions in a fair and reasonable manner, how he intends to spend this extra income?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

*5 months **income** from Busgate PCN issues to end September is **£225k**. This is on the basis of 11,700 PCN issues, for which some cash was yet to be collected.*

*We understand from other authorities who have undertaken similar enforcement that PCN issues will drop markedly as behaviours change. July saw the peak issues at 3,147, however this has dropped in the subsequent months to 2,090 in August and 1,500 in September. So the trend in figures suggests that a drop in PCN issues and income has started. This will need to be monitored and factored back into forecasting.*

*Annual **costs** of operation of the scheme are estimated at **c.£240k** for 2007/08, but in part depends on the number of PCN's issued. In additional capital costs have been expended on the setting up of the scheme.*

*All available funding is required to assist in service cost pressures, the most significant of which is an estimated £500,000 excess in costs over budget in the concessionary bus fare scheme which has arisen due to increased usage but also because the outcome of First's appeal was not established until after the completion of the budget process.*

8 **Question from:** Councillor David Dixon

Would the Cabinet please give their view on the proposals by this Council's Housing Department under the leadership of Councillor Vic Pritchard, working with Somer Housing, to create a new facility for Bath Self Help Housing at 3 and 4 Longacre, London Road, and this time will the cabinet not shirk responsibility by giving the view that this is a planning matter, as it is not?

**Answer from:** Councillor Vic Pritchard

*The development is being proposed and led by Somer Housing on behalf of their group member Bath Self Help Housing, working in partnership with the Housing*

*Services. The proposal is consistent with the Council's housing policy objectives and target to reduce reliance on Bed and Breakfast facilities.*

*Somer are in the process of conducting consultation on the issue with a view to submitting a planning application to the Council. I understand this proposal may involve the refurbishment of number 3 Longacre, a Grade II listed building and the partial reconstruction and refurbishment of number 4 Longacre. At this stage, I would not want to commit the Cabinet to a view on the detail of a planning application which has yet to be submitted.*

*Perhaps Councillor Dixon may benefit from a personal briefing on this subject. For his convenience, I have requested that, following the conclusion of this meeting, Housing Services officers contact Councillor Dixon to arrange this briefing at a time suitable for him. Out of courtesy, his ward colleague Councillor Darracott will also be contacted.*

**9 Question from:** Helen Woodley

The Service and Financial Plans 2007/8, Item 7 of the agenda report of the PTES Panel of 29 January 2007, stated that consultation will be carried out with all interest groups (internal and external) as part of the process leading to the adoption of the final versions of the service plans. The Allotments Association for one was not consulted.

a) Which interest groups were consulted, and were their responses relayed to Members in advance of February's budget setting council meeting?

b) What framework is being developed in order to ensure that such commitments are adhered to in future and within appropriate timescales?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

*a) The Service Planning consultation process was carried out via open public meetings and discussions were held with representatives of the Allotments Association prior to a final decision on the council budget having been made. Parks officers contacted the Allotments Association Committee Members and Allotment Site Representatives on this issue by letter on 21st February 2007. The outcome of these discussions were conveyed to Members during meetings about the Service Plan and budget proposals.*

*b) Parks officers now hold regular meetings with representatives of the Allotments Association and this will be the means by which they are consulted on proposals in the future.*

**10 Question from:** Councillor Doug Deacon

A. Is Bath & North East Somerset Council still committed to privatising Domiciliary Care?

B. If so when is the expected date for staff to be transferred to the private sector?

C. When is the expected date for the new contract to begin?

D. What are the likely cost savings that will be made through contracting out this



service.	
E. What will happen to the current Management Team of Domiciliary Care?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>A. The Council decided to re-shape domiciliary care service and decided to tender for the provision of long term home care service on 6 September 2006 and authorised the Director to take all necessary action.</i></p> <p><i>Resources were allocated to enable the in-house service to get to a stage to identify the resources required to develop and submit a bid. A progress report went to O&amp;S panel on 10 November 2006. At this meeting the Assistant Director for Adult Care Housing &amp; Health informed the Panel that the in-house service confirmed they did not wish to take forward an in-house bid. The Panel welcomed the efforts that had been made to explore this.</i></p> <p><i>The in-house Intake, Assessment &amp; Re-enablement service was set up in July 2007. This service takes all new referrals for home care who will benefit from rehabilitation. Each service user has a tailored programme of re-enablement to establish longer term care needs.</i></p> <p><i>The tender process was begun in January 2007 and is on-going as we enter the second stage of full tender evaluation and selection of Providers to deliver longer term care.</i></p> <p><i>B/C. There were 15 Providers shortlisted and invited to submit fully costed tenders. The evaluation includes: - method statement evaluation, financial evaluation, site visits, service user panel and Trade Union representative panel. The evaluation is scheduled to take place between October – December 2007 with a view to decision making in January 2008. There will then be a period of contract awards, post contract award discussions with a view to phased implementation of contracts between February – April 2008 to ensure smooth transition of both staff and service users to ensure continuity of care.</i></p> <p><i>Staff will transfer with service users to the selected Provider(s) in a managed way.</i></p> <p><i>D. A more detailed financial analysis will be undertaken when the costed tender bids have been evaluated.</i></p> <p><i>E. As part of the tender pack in line with guidance to Local Authorities effecting TUPE transfers in-house staffing details (anonymised) were given to the shortlisted Providers, this included management staff. All Providers are required to adhere to TUPE 2006 regulations and it is not possible to confirm at this stage whether domiciliary care management staff will be eligible for TUPE transfer. Workshops have been held with staff supported by Senior Managers and HR and managers are aware that this is the position.</i></p> <p><i>Note: Cllr Pritchard advises Cllr Deacon to take advice from the Council Solicitor in respect of any declaration of interest that may be required.</i></p>	

11

<b>Question from:</b>	Will Oulton
<p>My question is to ask if Bath and North East Somerset would agree to sign up to the Every Disabled Child Matters Charter (EDCM Charter). I have been asked to bring this matter to your attention by the Trustees of local charity Time2Share, of</p>	

which I am a Board Member.

I understand that it may be difficult to give an answer on the spot and that you may be required to undertake further research and deliberation, before making a decision.

I would be pleased if the Lead Member for Children's Services Cllr Watt could request that your officers produce a future report to a) identify how many of the commitments in the charter you already deliver and b) the feasibility of meeting the other commitments in the charter and that this be placed on your Forward Plan for consideration in the future.

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Chris Watt
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*I fully support the principles and aims behind this campaign, to ensure that every disabled child matters.*

*Disabled children are already a key priority for the children's service – we have looked at local needs and consulted disabled children and young people locally about priorities for improvement and have agreed an action plan through our disabled children's strategy group.*

*A number of the specific objectives in the charter are already fully met (4) and some are partially met (3).*

*However, meeting the objectives in full by January 2008, as the charter suggests, will not be possible – nor are some of the specific objectives a local priority as we do not believe they will improve outcomes for our disabled children as effectively as our existing local priorities.*

*I therefore propose that we do not sign up to the charter, due to our constrained resources, but acknowledge disabled children as a high priority group and continue to offer high quality services in line with our current plans.*

*As evidence of our commitment I refer Mr. Oulton to the recently opened Three Ways School which provides exceptional facilities for some of our most disabled and vulnerable children and young people.*

<b>12 Question from:</b>	Councillor David Speirs
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In light of the difficulties experienced by parents in Paulton transporting their children to local secondary schools what advice can the Cabinet member give to both schools and parents to help alleviate these difficulties in the future for pupils up to and including GCSE years (Years 7-11) who are in compulsory secondary education?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Chris Watt
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*School transport is provided for pupils who live over 3 miles from their home to the nearest appropriate secondary school as measured by the nearest available walking route. The secondary school which serves the area of Paulton is Somervale School. As Somervale School is less than 3 miles from Paulton free transport is not provided.*

*Some parents exercise their rights to send their child to a school of their preference which is not their nearest appropriate school. It is made clear to*

*parents when they exercise that right that transport will not be provided and that they are responsible to ensure that their child can get to the school of their choice.*

*Formerly there was transport, subsidised by the council, running between Paulton and Midsomer Norton and Radstock which enabled pupils living in Paulton, who attended Somervale School or who had opted to attend Norton Hill School or Writhlington School, to travel as fare paying passengers. This service was heavily subsidised by the council and allowed pupils who were not entitled to free transport to travel for £1 return fare whilst the council paid £2.62 subsidy per person based on average passenger numbers.*

*The Council was required to make a substantial saving in the budget for revenue support of bus services in 2006/7 and, to achieve that, it was necessary to withdraw some services. The Council decided that financial support for all bus services carrying non entitled pupils would be withdrawn from July 2006. Some services, however, continued on a commercial basis (i.e. without subsidy from the council) and Centurion continued to run a service from Paulton into Midsomer Norton and on to Writhlington which pupils were able to use. However, this service ran at a loss and in May 2007 the operator felt that this was no longer commercially viable and withdrew the service.*

*While there is still a bus service which goes from Paulton to Midsomer Norton, which could be used to access Norton Hill and Somervale Schools, the service does not extend to Writhlington School. However, Writhlington School is not the designated school for Paulton residents and pupils living in Paulton who attend Writhlington School do so because their parents have made this a stated preference and consequently are responsible for ensuring their child can get to the school of their choice. All parents whose children do not qualify for free transport must arrange the best way to get them to school whether this is by private car, bus, bicycle or walking. Parents can organise their own transport if they wish to do so but they must be prepared to cover the whole cost involved. If any parents wish to pursue this option, officers in the Council's Transport Services Section are willing to offer advice and support.*

Question 13 was withdrawn.

<b>14</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
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It is noted that the previous Council policy on allowing rough sleepers to overnight in Parade Gardens has recently been reversed. I wish to know on whose authority the previous policy was made, including the apparent allowance on dogs which is against the park bye-laws. I further wish to know whether any kind of risk assessment on this policy was made, and if so for this to be made public?	
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<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
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<i>There is no Council policy on how or where we accommodate roofless sleepers, but a relaxation in attitude had been in place for a while</i> <i>The decision to allow sleepers to use Parade Gardens until the end of March 2007 was made at an informal meeting of the Council's Executive on 3rd January 2007. This decision was made further to a briefing paper on the available options</i>	
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*which had input from all relevant partners, including supporting people, cleansing, police, community safety and consultation with the roofless community and considered risk issues. No decision was made on arrangements for the period from April 2007 and officers, working with the police and all relevant housing agencies, have sought alternative solutions, thus far without success. A number of complaints were received this summer about use of the Gardens during the day by roofless sleepers who occasionally brought dogs on site. Dogs are not allowed in the Gardens and action was taken to remove them. People are no longer permitted to use the Gardens for sleeping. No formal Risk Assessment was carried out prior to the decision in January although one has subsequently been completed. This risk assessment is available from the Assistant Director, Environmental Services.*

<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
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Is the same policy applied to the other parts of the District?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
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*There is no policy.*

**15 Question from:** Councillor Sarah Bevan

In 2005, residents of Eckweek Gardens, Peasedown St John, brought it to my attention that they did not have any street lighting in their cul de sac. This is a known drug-dealing area. Many of the residents are vulnerable and elderly and there are areas in this particular area that, due to their dark corners and a disused car park, people get up to illegal activity. After highlighting the area's problems, a petition was drawn up which received the full support of all residents, the local police and the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership. In 2005 this petition was presented to Full Council in the hope of gaining at least basic street illumination for Eckweek Gardens. In October 2007 I was informed by Keith Showering, Head of the Council's Street Lighting Department, that the scheme had been rejected for funding. How is this justifiable? Surely, of all the areas that need street lights, this is one of them? Can the Cabinet Member please tell me why this scheme was refused and why residents have had to wait two years for a response?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
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*The Community Safety and Drugs Partnership and the Council's Street Lighting Department have for several years worked together to manage an annual street lighting improvement request database. In June 2007, all lighting scheme requests were prioritised and assessed against a number of factors including calls to the Police for issues relating to anti-social behaviour and all recorded offences during the hours of darkness between March*

2006 and April 2007.

*Eckweek Gardens was not a high priority against the other schemes assessed. Therefore, it was not chosen as an 'improvement scheme' for 2007. However, it was felt that negotiation with the Parish Council (that currently maintains and pays for the energy of the lighting columns in the area) could enable the possibility of supporting the scheme in 2008.*

*The Council and the Police work closely on community safety and drugs issues. Through the Safer, Stronger Neighbourhoods agenda communities have the opportunity to identify their key concerns and the Police and partners address these and report back accordingly. If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact Inspector Paul Kendall*

16

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nicholas Coombes
Would each Cabinet member please say when did you last visit Bath University and Bath Spa University and how did you travel there?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Francine Haeberling
<i>On 18th Oct. I was taken there. By car.</i>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
<i>I last visited Bath University on 18 October 2007 and Bath Spa University on 25 October 2007. In both cases I went from my home in Chew Magna by car. Chew Magna is 14 miles from Bath with a weekly bus and I do not own a bike and would not use one anyway for such a journey.</i>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<i>I last visited Bath University on 26th Sept. I travelled to the University with Cllr Hanney and returned to the Guildhall with the Chief Executive. I have not received an invitation to visit Bath Spa University.</i>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>My last visit to Bath University was on 26 Sept when I travelled in car with 2 Council officers and 1 other member - have not had occasion or received an invitation to visit the Newton Park campus of Bath Spa University.</i>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor David Hawkins
<i>I went to Bath University on 26th Sept I car shared in Malcolm Hanney's vehicle with him and least two others there and back. I have been on my own to Bath Spa University on 26th June.</i>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Chris Watt

*Bath University – 09/10 to meet with Ged Roddy + at Team Bath. I travelled by car from home to Bath University (there is no public transport). Another person attending the meeting (travelled by train and bus to the Uni) travelled with me to our final destination again by car.*

*Bath Spa University – August (my calendar does not store any data older than 1 month so can't remember the date) to meet with the Vice Chancellor. I travelled from home (no public transport) to Bath Spa University by car.*

*The car in question is a Toyota Prius (I have driven one for 4 years). This car is class leading for its contribution to reducing emissions.*

<b>17</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nicholas Coombes
<p>How do you recommend that staff and students commute to Bath University? Walking, typically 2-3 miles uphill; on a bus, which often takes longer than walking and has risen in price by 50% in 2 years; or in their own car?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The provision of local transport services and infrastructure for students, staff and residents is an issue that will be addressed by the new Student Community Partnership, recently launched by the Council Cabinet and two Universities. Rather than me issuing recommendations from a personal perspective it would be far more appropriate for the matters which Councillor Coombes raises to be discussed at this level.</i></p> <p><i>In the meantime, staff and students (and indeed all Bath and North East Somerset Council residents) may wish to visit the following website for travel planning advice: <a href="http://www.transportdirect.info">www.transportdirect.info</a></i></p> <p><i>I would also like to point out that the service to which Councillor Coombes refers is a commercial service run by First.</i></p>		
<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>		Councillor Nicholas Coombes
<p>Given that no members of the Cabinet used public transport to get to the universities, and since we are still waiting for the Student Community Forums, should students follow the Cabinet example and drive to the University?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The new body was launched on 01-November. There have been meetings between the Cabinet and the University exploring areas of common interest including accommodation on campus, which would reduce transport needs. The Cabinet wishes where possible to maximise the use of public transport although the use of transport is a personal choice.</i></p>		

<b>18</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nicholas Coombes
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When will the council be following Bath University's lead by installing recycling bins alongside conventional litter bins in the public realm?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>The Council have already installed recycling bins alongside litter bins in Parade Gardens. These bins are for plastic bottles, cans and paper. There are plans to extend this to royal Victoria Park and then to other parks in the authority, subject to budget availability. We are also working with the Southgate developers to include recycling bins in the new shopping area.</i>	
<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>	Councillor Nicholas Coombes
Would the Cabinet member agree that this is a high priority? Are there plans to introduce it into other areas?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>My reply referred specifically to Southgate. We will include other areas into line as a long-term ambition.</i>	

19

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Cherry Beath
A new bus shelter was requested a year ago for the Hadley Arms bus stop in Combe Down as the stop is regularly used by elderly residents who particularly need the protection of a shelter in this exposed spot. To date, the work has not been carried out and the reason which I have been given is that there is no staff to carry out this work. Can the Cabinet member tell me when staff will be appointed; how many vacancies exist in the highways Dept, and which particular positions are unfilled? When will the Hadley Arms bus shelter be installed?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>There are currently 11 vacancies in the Transportation Policy Team, of which 4 are in the Public Transport Team, including the post for installing shelters. Recruitment processes are on-going to fill these vacant posts with 4 posts currently being advertised. Of the remaining posts 5 are recent vacancies which have yet to be advertised and 2 posts are temporarily vacant as a result of internal secondments.</i> <i>A meeting on site has been arranged with Cllr Symonds on Friday, 9th November, 2007 to look at suitable locations for a shelter and to make arrangements for installing a new shelter. I will keep you informed of developments.</i>	

20

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Cherry Beath
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A number of months ago Cllr Roger Symonds and I submitted a request for the single yellow lines at the junction of Sydenhams yard and Hawthorn Grove in Combe Down to be upgraded to double yellows. We received an answer to the effect that it would cost £5000.00 to do this and that, because this year's budget has already been allocated, it could not be done until, at the earliest, next April. Does Cllr Gerrish agree that this high cost and delay in carrying out an uncomplicated piece of work on the Highway is not acceptable, and can he assure the long-suffering affected residents of Hawthorn Grove that he will now address this problem speedily?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

*Any alteration to restrictions whether a revocation or new restriction requires a traffic regulation order which is the legal process necessary to enable any restriction.*

*This process includes investigation, design, consultation and advertising on site and in the local press. If objections are received then a report is considered by the executive member. The cost of the actual road marking as in this example is minimal the bulk of the cost lies within the other elements of the process*

*This particular request was added into another scheme which include North Road, The Avenue and Church Road in Combe Down for which funding had been allocated The proposals are currently with our legal team preparing the advert and it is likely the scheme will be implemented early in the new year.*

**Supplementary Question from:** Councillor Cherry Beath

The inclusion of this yellow line was not in the original Order [*Councillor Beath provided to Councillor Gerrish a copy of an email*]. Does he not agree that this is misleading?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

*(Response provided within 7 days of the meeting):*

*At the time of your request there were no funds allocated and it was unclear that there were to be funding provided by the Stone mines project, once these became available the Council was able to incorporate all outstanding Combe Down restriction issues, to enable the work sought in Hawthorn grove to be included.*

**21 Question from:** Councillor Cherry Beath

The installation of a Pedestrian Refuge on Bradford Road, near the junction with Southstoke Road Combe Down, is in the Capital Programme of works, can the Cabinet member tell me when it will be done?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish



<i>The pedestrian refuge is programmed for construction in Feb/March 2008 in response to extensive lobbying by former Councillor Leila Wishart of the previous Council Executive member for transportation and highways.</i>	
<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>	Councillor Cherry Beath
Re. the pedestrian refuge: Is the Cabinet member aware that the efforts to get this done were in fact by Councillor Roger Symonds and myself? This is at variance with the information in his reply.	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>No: This is not in line with the advice I have received.</i>	

<b>22</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p>1. Can the Executive member tell Council whether he agrees with the options put to the Project Board of the West of England Waste Management and Planning Strategy, in Weston-Super-Mare on 26th September 2007? Those options, which were accepted by the Board, are:  Plan A - "Procure an "Energy from Waste" facility to manage 200,000 tonnes per annum once the strategy is agreed".  Plan B - "Procure one 360,000 tonnes per annum "Energy from Waste" facility once the strategy is agreed".</p> <p>2. Can the Executive member explain to Council why neither he nor the Environmental Services Director was present at the meeting of 26th September 2007, where the Board accepted these recommendations?</p> <p>3. The Council has already committed £152,000 to the West of England Waste Partnership; can the Executive member tell Council how much B&amp;NES is expected to contribute to this Partnership over the next 4 years?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>1. The final West of England Strategy will be presented to the Project Board in December, following which the Strategy will then need to be agreed by each of the 4 authorities Cabinet/Executive in early 2008.</i></p> <p><i>2. Both myself and Matthew Smith were unable to attend the meeting due to prior commitments. I had previously asked that the date of the meeting be changed but as they were unable to, I made arrangements for my assistant Councillor to attend.</i></p> <p><i>3. Over the next 3 financial years (excluding this year) the authority is forecasting that, should it commit to the project programme, it would contribute £585,000 to the Partnership. This would include the cost of procurement of the facilities and the joint Development Plan costs.</i></p>		

<b>23</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Will the Cabinet member consider introducing a 20 mph speed limit to residential roads in Bath, similar to that which has been introduced by Portsmouth City Council?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>I have recently been in touch with the Leader of Portsmouth City Council on this subject and currently seeking information as to the resources implications of this for Bath and North East Somerset before making any judgement.</i></p>		
<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Thanks to the Cabinet member for his reply. Are there any timescales on a full reply and feedback from Portsmouth? Why does the answer to Question 19 (above) give a different figure for vacancies in Transportation than the one to Question 1?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>I will be replying by letter when more information becomes available from Portsmouth. The reason for the apparent differences between the quoted statistics is that they cover different timescales.</i></p>		

<b>24</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>Can the Cabinet member confirm that adequate budgetary provision is being made for the additional costs of the new national concessionary bus travel scheme? What figures are available concerning disproportionate costs which may be borne by areas which attract many tourists, such as Bath and North East Somerset? Will parking charges in Bath be increased once again should budgetary provision prove inadequate (as was the case with the Diamond Card in January)?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>Budget planning for next year is currently in progress. When free off-peak bus travel for the elderly and disabled became a statutory entitlement in 2006, the Government did not provide adequate additional funding to this Council to meet the full cost. Demand for free travel in this area was far higher than predicted using the Government's own formula. The Council has consistently challenged the Government, both directly and through the LGA, on this issue and also lobbied the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee which is currently investigating tourism issues.</i></p> <p><i>At the present time, the Government is consulting on four options to allocate the additional £212m it has earmarked for distribution to Councils in England to</i></p>		

<i>extend the scheme nationwide. The Council will be making the case robustly for the option that takes best account of Bath's status as a major visitor centre and the relatively high levels of bus use locally.</i>	
<b>Supplementary Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul Crossley
Since many other local councils are suffering under funding, will the Cabinet member work with them to press the Government on this?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>Yes – especially via the Culture, Media and Sport committee because of the importance of tourism in our area.</i>	
<b>Additional Answer from:</b>	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
<i>The Assistant Director of Support Services met recently with others from surrounding councils to consider the practicalities of joint lobbying about this subject.</i>	

<b>25</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Ian Thorn
Given that sign posts in the heart of our city are frequently dirty and pointing in the wrong direction, how often are maintenance checks carried out on sign posts in the city centre?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>The Highways Maintenance department carries out regular inspections of the safety of the network at frequencies based on national guidance in the Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management. For Bath City centre these are at frequencies of one month, three months or six months depending on the classification/usage of the street. These inspections will pick up any defective or dirty signing when it is considered to be an immediate safety hazard. The Council also endeavours to respond to customer requests to deal with specific signing defects and prioritises these requests on safety grounds.</i>		

<b>26</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Shaun McGall
The Council has recently begun accepting Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) for recycling at its Keynsham, Bath and Old Welton Recycling Centres. Where is this WEEE being sent to for recycling and who will be recycling it? What efforts are being made to minimise the carbon footprint of transporting the WEEE e.g. will the waste be transported by road or rail to the processing plant?		

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>In line with the requirements of the Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) Directive the Council has appointed via a tender process Valpak Ltd to act as its Producer Compliance Scheme. As it happens this company was the most local tenderer under the producer compliance scheme. It is the responsibility of the compliance scheme to arrange and pay for the collection and reprocessing of WEEE from the recycling centres. The WEEE is transported by road and the destinations of the 5 streams are as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>○ Large Domestic Appliances – SIMS Group in Newport</i></li><li><i>○ Fridges/freezers – Evans in Tredegar, S.Wales</i></li><li><i>○ CRTs – SIMS Group in Newport</i></li><li><i>○ Fluorescent Tubes – Lampcare (city electrical) operate nationwide, collections by City Electrical in Bath.</i></li></ul> <p><i>Small WEEE (e.g. hairdryers, toasters, kettles) – SIMS Group in Newport</i></p> <p><i>The Council is working with Valpak Ltd to use recycling facilities that reduce the distance that the material is transported, but due to the way in which the directive has been introduced in the UK, the final reprocessor is the choice of the compliance scheme.</i></p>	