

CABINET MEETING 5th November 2008

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

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 13 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.

- Cllr Andy Furse
Re: Bus Rapid Transport
- Cllr Caroline Roberts
Re: Joint Waste Core Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Paul Crossley
Re: Joint Waste Core Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Andy Furse
Re: Joint Waste Core Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Tim Ball
Re: Joint Waste Core Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Roger Symonds
Re: Joint Waste Core Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Caroline Roberts
Re: Public Realm – Bath City Centre (Agenda Item 13)
- Cllr Paul Crossley
Re: Public Realm – Bath City Centre (Agenda Item 13)
- Cllr Andy Furse
Re: Public Realm – Bath City Centre (Agenda Item 13)
- Cllr Tim Ball
Re: Public Realm – Bath City Centre (Agenda Item 13)
- Cllr Paul Crossley
Re: Public Realm – BWR Development Agreement (Agenda Item 14)
- Cllr Andy Furse
Re: Public Realm – BWR Development Agreement (Agenda Item 14)
- Cllr Tim Ball
Re: Public Realm – BWR Development Agreement (Agenda Item 14)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

01 **Question from:** Councillor John Bull

In view of the Government's offer of funding to provide free swimming sessions for those over 60 and those under 16, in order to encourage active leisure and combat obesity, is the Cabinet member prepared to say whether BANES will be taking up this offer?

Answer from: Councillor Terry Gazzard

There is a significant funding gap associated with both proposals, although there is a possibility of support from the Primary Care Trust for the 'over 60's' programme. The Cabinet has indicated its interest in the scheme to the Department Civil Servants, but acceptance of the offer is dependent on confirmation of support from the Primary Care Trust and subject to other budgetary considerations. The 'under 16' programme funding is more problematic as the gap is substantially greater.

Supplementary Question: Councillor John Bull

I welcome the input from the PCT. Could the Cabinet Member give me a timescale please regarding acceptance of the government funding.

Answer from: Councillor Terry Gazzard

This is still in negotiation and now in the hands of the Secretary of State. I will keep Councillor Bull informed of progress.

02 **Question from:** Councillor John Bull

What is the Council's policy on paying invoices? Can you ensure that small business contractors are paid within 10 days in line with recent changes to central government policy?

Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

Council policy is to pay supplier invoices within 30 days of receipt of invoice unless specific terms exist for the supplier. This policy is derived primarily from Performance Indicator BVPI8 – a national performance indicator for which all Councils are required to report. The Council's performance has been good in this area – 2007/8 performance was 93% paid in 30 days. It is understood that some Councils have been approached by DCLG recently regarding the feasibility of paying small businesses in 10 days in future. The key

considerations for such a proposal would need to be:

- *The Government would need to provide a clear definition as to what constitutes a 'small business' for this purpose*
- *How the Council could then identify those small businesses from its supplier database - this would be key to the feasibility of any such proposal given the 5000 trade suppliers per annum that the Council trade with.*
- *How we could practically ensure that payment was made within 10 days given devolved authorisation arrangements. There would need to be considerable commitment from Strategic Directors, Divisional Directors and Managers within all services to ensure invoices were approved and processed within a 10 day period.*

Clearly there would be a loss of interest to the council, which is estimated at around £55k on an annual basis.

We are not sure the full implications of such change in policy and the costs of implementing have been fully thought through i.e. beyond the sound bite.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor John Bull

Thanks. Once the Government have clarified the definition of small businesses, will the Council be using the Government's definition?

Answer from:

Councillor Malcolm Hanney

The Government is seeking comments and the issue of practically ensuring payment is made within 10 days is under ongoing review.

03

Question from:

Councillor Dr. Eleanor Jackson

Would the cabinet member consider re-visiting his decision to 'shelve' the Locally Listed Buildings Policy SPD, a requirement for the Local Development Framework, given that the B&NES officers concerned have already invested considerable time and energy in a public consultation exercise, that community action groups and individuals have responded with enthusiasm and agreed criteria, application forms etc and that outside Bath a number of important buildings and much loved man-made structures such as batches representing our industrial heritage are at risk?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

This project has been developed, tested by public consultation and put on hold at an appropriate milestone. It has not been abandoned.

The reason we are not proceeding at present is due to resources. The district is well blessed with historic assets and there are approximately 6,400 entries on our list of nationally listed buildings. It is quite possible that the local list could generate a similar number of entries. The resources required to gather, process and make such information electronically available are considerable. The choice we face at this stage of the project is whether to ask our hard pressed

Conservation Officers to attempt to juggle this alongside their daily duties of processing listed building consents, or to wait and look for resources to tackle this in a comprehensive and proper manner. In my opinion the first choice could lead to us doing both tasks badly, and if any project such as this is worth doing, then it should be done properly. I have therefore asked the officers involved to cost out a bid to use as a basis for seeking funding both within the Council and beyond. It is likely that a list of locally important buildings may become a requirement under provisions in the emerging Heritage protection Bill. The work completed to date ensures that this Council has an excellent foundation upon which to proceed with this project if it does look set to become a statutory requirement, and the investment to date is therefore banked rather than wasted.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Eleanor Jackson

I'm aware that there are 6,400 extra nationally listed building which are unevenly distributed and surely this Policy would go some way to redressing the balance?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

This is an interesting observation but as the source of listing is with English Heritage, they would be the ones to follow this up.

04

Question from:

Councillor Ian Gilchrist

Will Cllr Gerrish please obtain a response from officers to my repeated emails on the subject of the crossing at Widcombe Junior School and why its restoration has stalled at an uncompleted state? It would be tedious to enumerate the one-sided communications on this topic, so I will just remind the Cabinet member that the job was supposed to have been finished before the start of last Summer term. The railings remain unpainted (white); there is no 20 mph restriction when the school warning lights flash, and the new post which is supposed to hold a light at the top remains unadorned.

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

I am assured that the lighting improvements will be completed by the end of November, subject to the electrical contractors programme. The approach railings only will be painted white to make them more visible to approaching vehicles, and will be completed before Christmas. An advisory 20 mph speed limit operating during school times will be installed on Pulteney Road and will require the installation of signs on Pulteney Road, at the existing wig wag light locations and will be carried out as soon as is practicable.

05

Question from:

Councillor Ian Gilchrist

In these troubled financial times when it seems even AAA ratings cannot be relied on, what reassurance can I give the residents of Widcombe that the Council's reserves are safe in your hands? Will the £5m VAT rebate so proudly announced still be available to provide essential council services such as road safety when needed?

Answer from:

Councillor Malcolm Hanney

The Council has adopted a cautious approach to its placement of funds of over £100m in the market since the run on Northern Rock in September 2007. This has meant a significant reduction in banks approved for placements and while ratings are relevant in assessment we have not relied on ratings exclusively. At times we have placed all or a significant amount of our funds with the UK Government Debt Office (UK Government risk) rather than take undue risks in the interbank market. This has meant a loss of interest income originally of the order of 1/2% pa but now much wider given the continuing uncertainty in the interbank market. Our first priority has been the protection of Council funds. In this respect, at times we have not followed slavishly the advice of our independent Treasury advisors which included an over-reliance on ratings and a degree of criticism as to the caution adopted by the Council. It is now clear they were wrong.

The Council has no exposure to Icelandic institutions unlike a number of local authorities. I have, however, been asked by the Local Government Association to sit on one of the Icelandic Creditor Groups because of my past experience as an international banker and my involvement in problem resolution in similar situations.

The markets remain high risk and we continue to adopt a cautious strategy. Contrary to normal market situations, diversification is currently sub-optimal in terms of risk management. We therefore continue to place a significant proportion of our funds with the UK Government Debt Office and otherwise with highly-rated major financial institutions in the G7 countries (and primarily with UK banks) where we assess there is implicit or explicit Government support.

I should also stress that the matter of safe placement of funds has been high on our agenda since the run on Northern Rock and I am grateful for the work undertaken by Andrew Pate, Paul Fox and Gary Adams in a very dynamic and sometimes difficult situation.

With regard to the issue of the VAT repayment, I should stress that this is only a very small part of our placements - we also hold other general and earmarked reserves, we have substantial funds on the market because of timing of expenditures and receipts, we place funds on behalf of schools, and we also have pension fund and West of England Partnership growth-point related placements. We adopt a similarly cautious approach to all placements.

It is also appropriate to comment on the potential use of the VAT receipt that you mention in your question - i.e. 'road safety'. There is no decision made as to the use of the VAT receipt for road safety issues or indeed any other purpose.

The Council maintains a prudent level of reserves that is appropriate for the collective risks involved across the wide range of Council services and activities including a very substantial capital programme. These include specific reserves for specific risks and general reserves. The Council's reserves position has been improved recently because of the significant VAT receipt of just under £5m. This has meant that we will reach our target level of reserves earlier than originally

planned. It is also appropriate to note that the reserves position needs to be seen in the context of an annual £350m revenue and capital spend, significant in-year pressures in many services, the general economic background, a need to ensure ongoing financial stability, and prospective funding settlements. Going forward, difficult choices will continue to be necessary in terms of meeting what will be significant spending pressures across all services, a requirement to fund expected and significant increased levels of employer pension contributions, meeting the Council's improvement priorities and having acceptable levels of Council tax increases in a difficult economic environment.

The Council's medium term financial plan is currently being prepared and will inform the 2009/10 budget. The reserves position will be reviewed as part of this process but it is unlikely that there will be any general reserves that will be surplus to risk requirements and if there are then they are unlikely to be significant.

Furthermore, if we are imprudent in managing reserves now without appropriate review and prioritisation against prospective pressures we will be in a very sorry state in the future. We do not wish to emulate the Government's approach.

06

Question from:	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
Does the Cabinet member agree that it is unacceptable for school buses to run where children are put at risk by being forced to stand?	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>Where the Council commissions buses for transport to school statutorily, there is no overcrowding. For the children whose parents have to organise their transport and who use public transport, this is a matter for the operator in liaison with the Health & Safety inspectorate. Obviously the Council is concerned if there is overcrowding.</i>	

07

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
The Cabinet member has previously stated that he plans to "introduce a food waste collection scheme at the start of 2009/10 financial year". However at a recent meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities O&S panel (25.09.08) doubt was cast on the implementation of this target by an officer update. Does the Cabinet member still intend to implement this collection from May 2009?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>Recent analyses from our recycling collections partner have suggested that it would be better value for the Council to implement kitchen waste collections from 2011 and we are studying these conclusions before we make a decision.</i>	

Supplementary Question:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<i>Could the Cabinet Member please indicate whether there are only economic grounds for this decision as suggested by officer comments to the O&S Panel a few weeks ago in that it costs more up to 2011?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>Economic factors are taken into consideration but there are other factors such as the timing of the introduction of this with additional services so that they can be done together.</i>	

08

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Can the Cabinet member tell me the estimated % by which our recycling rates should increase once weekly kerbside collections of kitchen waste are in place?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>We anticipate collecting up to approximately 6000 tonnes of kitchen waste per annum with a source segregated kerbside collection. This figure is based on pilots carried out in Bath and North East Somerset, local composition analysis and national research. Experience shows that participation increases over time as people get used to new services. At the maximum levels anticipated, this will add approximately 7% to our recycling rate based on current forecasts and assumptions.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Roger Symonds
<i>These figures are low and based on information from 7-8 years ago. Would the Cabinet Member be willing to look at statistics from our comparator family of Councils to see what their costs and levels are?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>I'm very aware of Councillor Symonds interest in this issue and his preference for a figure of 10%. There is a dilemma here which is that we haven't worked out a way to include the whole district. So, we must be realistic in our assumptions and this is considered to be realistic. However, yes, I'm happy to look at evidence from other Authorities.</i>	

09

Question from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Has the Cabinet member considered whether the Council may be eligible for	

funding from WRAP to help implement food waste collections?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>Yes. One of WRAP's work streams is support for food waste collections. We put in a bid to WRAP earlier this year with a tentative timetable and have been working closely with WRAP advisors to progress this. WRAP have also drawn our attention to a range of resources to help support food waste collections. Once the timetable for implementation of food waste collections has been confirmed by the Cabinet we will progress our discussions with WRAP to firm up our bid.</i></p>	

10

Question from:	Councillor Paul Crossley
Has the Cabinet member given up on the idea of an ice rink in Bath this year?	
Answer from:	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<p><i>Unfortunately, following the withdrawal of the operator from the proposed site, following local objections, there isn't the time available for Council officers and the Contractor to explore alternative options, consult with interested parties and ensure sufficient publicity guarantees the success of the event. Planning permission would also most likely be required for a new site.</i></p>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>Does the Cabinet Member agree that work should start immediately to try and get this off the ground for next year and that Parade Gardens would be an ideal place for this to take place?</i></p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<p><i>I was the Ward Councillor representing the Ward for this and a very good case for this was put forward by officers. I have decided to start working on this as soon as possible and will definitely consider Parade Gardens.</i></p>	

11

Question from:	Councillor Paul Crossley
Will the Leader of Council consider putting in place a mechanism to allow single member decisions to be made in public?	
Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haerberling
<p><i>No, the current system, whereby Cabinet Single Member decisions are published</i></p>	

publicly on the Weekly List, has been in operation under different administrations since the Executive Member system was introduced in 2002. We currently have no plans to alter the system by which decisions are made as the present system has been shown to operate successfully over a number of years.

Supplementary Question: Councillor Paul Crossley

Is the Leader of the Council aware that many political administrations across the country are adopting this process and it would be a good contributor for moving the Council from a 3 star to a 4 star Council.

Answer from: Councillor Francine Haerberling

Yes, I am aware of this. We could look into it but it is not something we are currently considering.

12 **Question from:** Councillor Paul Crossley

On Tuesday 20th November 2007 the Enterprise & Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Panel reviewed the outcome of the previous year's trial of shared use on existing cycle tracks. Having announced the trial 'a resounding success', it was recommended that in future multi-use continued on the Chew Valley Lake cycle path and the Colliers Way cycle path. It was also recommended that a further 12 month multi-use trial period should be assigned to the routes of the Norton Radstock Greenway and the Bristol and Bath Railway Path "in the hope that a sense of tolerance will surface". These recommendations were accepted by Cllr Charles Gerrish. The further year's trial has now ended and all users have shared these paths without incident. Can Cllr Gerrish confirm that the Council will now implement a policy of equal access for all non-motorised users on all existing cycle paths?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

I am considering the results of the extended trial and subsequent user representations. A decision will be made shortly.

13 **Question from:** Councillor Paul Crossley

The Council's existing policy is of shared access for all non-motorised users on all new cycle paths. This was recommended by the O&S Panel in 2005 and endorsed by the whole Council. Will the Cabinet member assure me that if the Cabinet is considering any changes to this policy it will be done through the public decision making process?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

The Council's Local Transport Plan Policy encourages shared use of new cycle paths and this is supported by our Rights of Way improvement Plan. I am considering the results of the extended trial and subsequent user representations to ensure we can implement this policy in the most equitable manner; a decision will be made shortly.

14

Question from:	Councillor Marian McNeir																		
<p>Can the Cabinet member report on progress towards finding suitable parking for coaches for the Bath Christmas Market this year? In particular can he report on what communications have taken place with Colerne Airfield and Bath Race Course; and can he confirm that the 'fall back' option is for coaches to park around the city centre and vicinity?</p>																			
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish																		
<p><i>A detailed action plan has been drawn up to manage coach parking capacity for the 2008 Christmas Market. Discussions have been held throughout the planning process with representatives of the Race Course and Colerne Airfield. Although Lansdown Race Course was considered earlier in the year it was removed from the Council's coach parking options following a more detailed assessment of the facilities at the course and issues relating to access to the City Centre which, following discussions with South Gloucestershire Council in September became undeliverable as the option.</i></p> <p><i>Colerne Airfield was also initially considered as a suitable site but objections received from the Police on Traffic Management grounds and planned roadworks meant that we were unable to develop this option.</i></p> <p><i>As the main sponsors of the Christmas Market, Bath Tourism Plus is ultimately responsible for ensuring this traffic management issue is addressed but as BTP relies on Council funding, it was considered beneficial to the residents of Bath for the Council, as the Highway Authority which must approve such traffic management proposals, to assist in ensuring adequate provision is made until such time that Bath Tourism Plus is able to prepare and submit its own plans for future events.</i></p> <p><i>A plan has been agreed for 2008 which reinforces the work done at short notice in 2007 by Parking Services, on behalf of BTP. This plan allows for the parking of coaches in possession of pre-booked permits at the following locations:</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Daily</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Spaces</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Odd Down Rec</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40 max</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wellsway (A367) outbound</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20 max</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lower Bristol Road (A36)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Royal Avenue</td> <td style="text-align: right;">33</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Avon Street Coach Park</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right; border-top: 1px solid black;">148</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Weekends only</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Rotork Ltd</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Daily	Spaces	Odd Down Rec	40 max	Wellsway (A367) outbound	20 max	Lower Bristol Road (A36)	40	Royal Avenue	33	Avon Street Coach Park	15		148	Weekends only		Rotork Ltd	15
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<i>Sulis Club</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Bath University (to be confirmed)</i>	<i>28</i>
	<u><i>58</i></u>
Total Capacity	<u><u><i>206</i></u></u>

15	Question from: Councillor Marian McNeir
Can the Cabinet member guarantee that coaches will not be allowed to park on Wellsway during the Christmas market and how does he plan to enforce this?	
	Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>An officer has been allocated the task of project managing Christmas Market coach parking and a plan has been drawn up which is regularly reviewed. A meeting was held on Thursday 23rd October to consult with the Police, Bath Tourism Plus and Traffic & Safety Engineers. Proposals include the putting in place of temporary Traffic Orders to restrict (and if necessary enforce with parking penalties) coach parking on the inbound lanes of Wellsway and provide welfare facilities at Odd Down Rec and a shuttle bus to carry coach drivers into Bath while they await their return journeys.</i></p> <p><i>Each site will be enforced throughout the period of the Christmas Market and provision will be made for road safety signage and the monitoring and control of driver behaviour.</i></p>	

16	Question from: Councillor Will Sandry
Please can you indicate whether you are expecting to attend the next full public meeting of the Healthier Communities and Older People panel when the impact of your decision E1795 (to substantially increase charges for Home Help, Community Transport and Community Meals) will be scrutinised by the panel?	
	Answer from: Councillor Vic Pritchard
Yes.	

17	Question from: Councillor Will Sandry
What is the geographical boundary of the authority of the City Centre Manager? Specifically, does it include the suburbs of Bath, such as Oldfield Ward?	
	Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

The City Centre Manager is employed by Future Bath Plus and not the Council. At this stage his remit does not extend to Bath suburbs such as Oldfield Park.

18 **Question from:** Councillor Tim Ball

It has recently been announced that “The intention when Councillor Hawkins was appointed was for him to undertake the role for eighteen months to allow Councillor Gazzard to find his feet as a ward councillor and become the Cabinet Member for Development and Major Projects in the fullness of time.” Given that this is the first we outside the Cabinet have heard of this “intention”, could the Leader of Council let us know if any other changes of Cabinet position are “intended”?

Answer from: Councillor Francine Haeberling

There are no further changes anticipated.

Supplementary Question: Councillor Tim Ball

Given the geographical area of the Authority and its population of approx 170,000, would the Leader not agree that the Cabinet is geographically imbalanced and that a re-shuffle would be more appropriate?

Answer from: Councillor Francine Haeberling

No, I don't agree. Councillors are voted in to represent the whole of the Authority.

19 **Question from:** Councillor Tim Ball

How much has the Council spent in the last 6 months on placing advertisements in local newspapers and on local radio (excluding statutory notices and job advertisements)?

Answer from: Councillor Malcolm Hanney

Between April 1 and September 1 2008 the Council spent an estimated £84,000 on advertising in newspapers, magazines and on local radio. This includes substantial amounts of both statutory and employment advertising such as planning and public inspections. In the timescale it has not been possible to break these figures down further.

Question from:	Councillor Nathan Hartley
<p>The current target for Customer Service satisfaction with the Planning Department is 82%.</p> <p>The last customer satisfaction survey was carried out between April-September 2006, of which just 51% of people were satisfied with the planning system.</p> <p>What is the Cabinet Member doing to increase this figure?</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member consider carrying out this survey more than every three years to more effectively monitor customer service satisfaction?</p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The customer satisfaction survey that Councillor Nathan Hartley refers to relates to the three yearly Best Value Planning User Survey that central government required all local authorities to carry out as part of the Best Value initiative. Because the Planning Service is keen to monitor customer satisfaction levels more frequently, customer surveys are carried out every six months to monitor satisfaction with those applicants who have received a planning application decision. The results for the period June 2007 to December 2007 were 67% satisfaction levels. A further survey is currently underway relating to the period January 2008 to June 2008 and the results are awaited.</i></p>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Nathan Hartley
<p><i>What is the Council doing to increase from the 67% satisfaction levels?</i></p>	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p>(The following response was provided within 5 working days):</p> <p><i>The improved performance of the Planning team in determining applications within target times and the reduction of the back log has generally reduced customer concerns and complaints about delays in determining applications. In addition we have implemented a pre-application protocol to deal with proposals outside of the Development Team Process. This is a partnership agreement between the Local Planning Authority and Planning applicants. We ask that they provide us with good quality and full information and we commit to reply within agreed timescales, to keep applicants updated of progress and to provide detailed responses. We have replaced the single sentence replies telling applicants that their proposal is contrary to policy and instead are giving more explanatory reasons etc. This will provide certainty and better customer service. Prior consultation with planning agents produced positive feedback for this approach.</i></p> <p><i>Finally we have revised the Planning enforcement policy setting out clear criteria of how to submit a complaint and how the LPA will prioritise and deal with enforcement issues. Timescales for reply and commitments to keep complainants informed of progress are included. Again early consultation responses were positive.</i></p>	

21

Question from:	Councillor Cherry Beath
Is the Cabinet member aware of the situation concerning overcrowding on school buses travelling on Widcombe Hill to and from Ralph Allen School? What communications has he or his department had with First Bus and what action will he take to remedy the overcrowding before an accident occurs?	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>First Bus is responsible for this public service and I have had talks with them. They've reported that they're aware of an incident of overcrowding on one bus when the driver had not been aware of a bus following so had allowed all the passengers on. First Bus are following this up through their disciplinary procedures. First Bus are not aware of any other incidence of overcrowding on that route.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Cherry Beath
<i>I have been informed of problems with this since last September. What about older buses and incidences of them slipping backwards on Widcombe Hill?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>The Local Authority is not responsible for all aspects of bus travel. They take responsibility for those for whom they must statutorily provide transport but these are run by a public transport operator and there are proper processes for dealing with these issues via existing organisations.</i>	

22

Question from:	Councillor Cherry Beath
The Cabinet member will be aware of our interest in youth work provision in Fox Hill from previous questions to Cabinet over the last year. I have now understood from officers that only 4 hours per week, joint work of detached youth worker's time are allocated to Fox Hill. Does the Cabinet member feel that this is sufficient?	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>The Youth Service is delivered on the basis of needs of each individual area and this is broadly speaking in line with the Policy & Budget framework of 2007/8 which her party voted for.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Cherry Beath
<i>There is a lot of evidence to suggest that Foxhill has the same level of need as</i>	

<i>Odd Down, Twerton and Snow Hill – could the Cabinet Member address that please?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>I have nothing further to add.</i>	

23

Question from:	Councillor Nicholas Coombes
Does the Cabinet member agree – following the traffic count earlier this year – that a zebra crossing is needed on Bathwick Hill by the canal? Can he confirm that this crossing will be included in next year’s transport capital programme?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>Traffic and pedestrian counts were carried out earlier this year which suggested that a crossing may be viable; however more recent counts were carried out on 23 October which have yet to be analysed. Once this work has been done a definite answer can be given on whether a crossing can be justified. Should this be the case, the scheme will be given a priority rating and added to the Task Register of schemes awaiting consideration for inclusion in a future Capital Programme. Those schemes with the highest priority rating will be forwarded for inclusion in the 2009/10 Programme.</i>	

24

Question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
Could the Cabinet Member for Customer Services confirm the costs associated with the replacement tree planting following the replacement sewers on the proposed Bus Rapid Transit route in Lower Weston?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>We are still considering the amount of replacement tree planting that will be required, so are not able to provide costs at present. We will of course discuss with affected residents/businesses how we can develop a landscaping strategy for the BRT route. The public exhibition on 6/7/8 November will allow members of the public to make suggestions on this very issue.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<i>I had actually meant to ask about the cost of the original tree planting.</i>	

Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>I will get back to you as soon as possible with the information.</i></p> <p>Cllr Gerrish later responded: <i>This work was not undertaken by the Council and as such therefore no record is held as to the expenditure incurred by Wessex Water and through the actions of local volunteers.</i></p>	

25	Question from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Could the Cabinet Member for Customer Services confirm how much it is estimated that replacement of the sewer on the proposed Bus Rapid Transit route would cost?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The current estimate is that the net additional cost of lowering the rising main will be approximately £200K.</i></p>		

26	Question from:	Councillor Andy Furse
<p>As the Cabinet member will be aware, it was suggested at the first meeting of the Bath City Liaison Forum meeting (on October 21st) that B&NES Council spends £17 per household on street cleaning. However in the October 23rd edition of the Bath Chronicle, a Council spokesman is quoted as saying that the figures produced "were no longer up to date". Would the Cabinet member please supply the up to date figures and state how this compares to our statistical 'family' of Councils.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>In 2008/9 the Council is spending approximately £25 per household on functions that are covered by the new Neighbourhood working structure. This includes street cleansing and general aspects of grounds maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>If budgets for the Environmental Improvement Team which deal with litter enforcement issues are taken into account, this increases to £37 per household.</i></p> <p><i>Members will be aware of the recent article in the Bath Chronicle which quoted that £17 per household in B&NES was spent on street cleansing. This figure relates to 2006/7 and was taken from a sample of some, but not all, local authorities in the country. Therefore, the figures do not give a truly representative picture. Unfortunately, Encams (an independent body which assesses local authority environmental performance) do not have any more recent statistics that they can release to us at this stage and comparable statistics for other authorities in our CIPFA family are not yet available. It is anticipated that the Council will be</i></p>		

working with Encams in a benchmarking exercise in the future when further up to date information will be requested.

For Members' information the Council's performance with respect to street cleansing was last independently assessed in 2006/7. The Council was rated in the top quartile and 5th in the CIPFA family group for the percentage of land with unacceptable levels of litter.

As a result of the Bath City Liaison Group meeting where this issue was raised, a Task and Finish group has been convened made up of Council Officers and other stakeholders to review current spending and standards. This Group is due to report back in the New Year on proposals.

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Question from:	Councillor Andy Furse
Please could the Cabinet member state whether the construction of the new bus station for Bath is on time and on budget? Can the cabinet member state what the opening date is planned to be?	
Answer from:	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<i>I have been away and upon my return the Council Officer who was best placed to produce a reply was also away until today. Multi expect to complete the construction of the new bus terminal by late April 2009. They are currently in discussion with First with regard to their fit out, consequently, a firm date for operation of the new station cannot be confirmed at present. The temporary bus station will remain fully operational until the changeover.</i>	
<i>The bus station is being delivered by Multi so any commercial issues are therefore between Multi and their contractors and not the Council.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Andy Furse
<i>Could I ask that more work be done to give clarity to residents and the city regarding the timescales?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<i>Yes, I have been looking into this.</i>	

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Question from:	Councillor Andy Furse
Will the Cabinet engage in debate with residents and Council members about the bus rapid transit route rather than solely on the Bath transportation package as a whole?	

Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haeberling
<i>The bus rapid transit route is an integral part of the Bath transport package and therefore any debate on this part of the route cannot be taken out of this context. The Council has been consulting on the implementation and options for this package for some considerable time and will continue to do so.</i>	
Supplementary Question:	Councillor Andy Furse
<i>Is the Cabinet Member aware that residents only heard that the whole of their gardens would be affected by letter so could I request that fuller engagement is held with those people?</i>	
Answer from:	Councillor Francine Haeberling
<i>Yes, engagement with all those affected will be as full as possible.</i>	

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

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Question from:	Joanna Robinson (Conservation Officer, Bath Preservation Trust)
<p>The Bath Preservation Trust notes with interest that the Council has established a City Liaison Forum with the following purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To act as the focus for community engagement by public services with groups which perform a representational role for local residents in the City of Bath; • To provide a link and representation to the Local Strategic Partnership on behalf of Bath's residents. <p>The Trust welcomes moves to improve community engagement and representation for residents of the City of Bath. We note that groups which have a remit for a particular issue or group of issues, such as heritage and planning issues, are not eligible for membership of the City Liaison Forum because other arrangements are in place for engagement with these groups. Ad hoc consultation and discussion takes place between Council officers and the Trust, and no doubt with other heritage groups. But we are not aware of any formal mechanisms for engagement between the Council and heritage groups on planning and development issues, other than the Steering Group for the World Heritage Site Management Plan (which last met in November 2007 and whose remit relates to the Management Plan). The Bath Preservation Trust's suggestion in June 2007 that the B&NES Statement of Community Involvement should highlight the importance of engagement with heritage groups in the World Heritage city was not accepted.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet please provide an explanation of the arrangements in place for</p>	

ensuring effective community engagement with heritage groups in the City of Bath, including how these groups can ensure that their interests are taken into account by the Local Strategic Partnership?

Answer from: Councillor Francine Haeberling

The Bath City Liaison Forum had a successful first meeting on 21st October. The meeting was well-attended by a range of residents' groups from across the City. There was an opportunity to discuss the impact of the Regional Spatial strategy on the City of Bath and the Forum agreed to establish a "task and finish" group to examine ways to improve street cleansing.

Although the meeting is an open one, the criteria for formal membership reflects the need for a Forum to bring together- for the first time- the many residents' groups in our City to address issues of mutual concern.

I very much welcome the Trust's positive comments on the Forum, and on the effectiveness of the constructive working relationships with the Council on heritage matters. I can also provide reassurance regarding our commitment to ensuring that heritage groups' views are properly addressed. I understand that a new independent Chair for the World Heritage Site Steering Group is currently being recruited and that the Steering Group will meet shortly. As the Chair of the LSP I agree that effective linkages need to be made between this Group and the LSP process, and I have requested officers to examine how best this can be addressed within the LSP structure.

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Question from: Alison Phillips (Vice Chair, Bath Heritage Watchdog)

With there being no guarantee that a sufficiently strong Heritage Protection Bill will be passed in Parliament, together with the fact that the White Paper has some serious shortcomings, Bath Heritage Watchdog would like to ask the Executive Member how he can justify refusing funding for the implementation of the Locally Important Buildings SPD, despite policies already being in place in the Adopted Local Plan which was subjected to full consultation, despite considerable support from local groups and residents, and despite some considerable time, effort and passion from the Conservation Officers concerned, and isn't this a demonstration of the lack of commitment to Bath's heritage, especially the Victorian and Industrial heritage?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

The List of Locally Important Buildings project has been developed, tested by public consultation and put on hold at an appropriate milestone. It has not been abandoned, and funding has not been refused. No budgetary provision currently exists for this work, and rather than refusing funding the emphasis is on attempting to secure it.

The district is well blessed with historic assets and there are approximately 6,400 entries on our list of nationally listed buildings. It is quite possible that the local list could generate a similar number of entries. The resources required to gather, process and make such information electronically available are considerable.

The choice we face at this stage of the project is whether to ask our hard pressed Conservation Officers to attempt to juggle this alongside their daily duties of processing listed building consents, or to wait and look for resources to tackle this in a comprehensive and proper manner. In my opinion the first choice could lead to us doing both tasks badly, and if any project such as this is worth doing, then it should be done properly. I have therefore asked the officers involved to cost out a bid to use as a basis for seeking funding both within the Council and beyond. This will be considered during the Council's current Service Planning procedures in the normal manner.

It is likely that a list of locally important buildings may become a requirement under provisions in the emerging Heritage protection Bill. The work completed to date ensures that this Council has an excellent foundation upon which to proceed with this project if it does look set to become a statutory requirement, and the investment to date is therefore banked rather than wasted.