

## CABINET MEETING 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

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

### REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 5 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.

- Leila Wishart  
Re: Bath As It Might Have Been
- Cllr Tim Ball  
Re: Nursery Provision in Twerton
- Jane Brown, Bath Preservation Trust  
Re: Local Development Scheme Review (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Paul Crossley  
Re: Local Development Scheme Review (Agenda Item 12)
- Cllr Paul Crossley  
Re: Office Procurement Project (Agenda Item 14)

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

01

**Question from:**

Councillor Caroline Roberts

How much has been spent on publicity for the Bath Transport Package, including on adverts on buses and glossy leaflets?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Charles Gerrish

*In October 07 the Council adopted The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Bath Transportation Package (BTP) will involve the submission of four planning applications each of which will need to be supported with an SCI. The BTP has been the subject of a parallel process of Statutory and Non Statutory stakeholder engagement, this obligatory work has covered but not been limited to the following:-*

- *Communication Strategy,*
- *Preparation of a Statement of Community Involvement for each of the four planning applications,*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dissemination of information related to A4 Eastern Bath Park and Ride,</i></li> <li>• <i>Design, production and distribution of leaflets,</i></li> <li>• <i>Production of letters, leaflets, invitations, posters, minutes related to public exhibition, meetings, one to one meetings, street representative meetings etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Sourcing and booking of venues,</i></li> <li>• <i>Preparation and design of materials for public exhibition and forthcoming planning applications,</i></li> <li>• <i>Analysis of public feedback,</i></li> <li>• <i>Tracking communication activities</i></li> <li>• <i>Liaison with resident groups</i></li> </ul> <p><i>From March 08 until November 08 this has amounted to around £65,000 of external support. In addition some £50,000 has been spent on the campaign to increase the understanding of how the package will benefit the locality. We anticipate that along with other eligible preparatory costs 50% of these will be refunded by DfT. These costs have been reported to DfT and were included in the scheme estimates agreed in September with the single member decision.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>Would this money not be better spent on supporting segregated routes rather than on glossy advertising?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The Council has a statutory responsibility to advise residents of the plans so there was no option.</i></p>	

02

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Shirley Steel
<p>Some Councils are currently investigating or trialling a scheme whereby street lighting in certain areas is turned off for a period of time overnight. This scheme can have the benefit of conserving energy by saving electricity as well as having financial benefits for the Council. It is also worth assessing whether any security benefits can be gained from less lighting in certain areas. Westbury-sub-Mendip has undertaken just such a 'Dark Skies' trial and with 2009 being the Year of Astronomy the reduction in light-pollution levels are worth noting.</p> <p>Is any consideration currently being given by the Cabinet Member to investigating the possibility of such a scheme in Bath and North East Somerset?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The issue will be considered by the Council's Overview &amp; Scrutiny panel (for Safer Stronger Communities) later this month and the panel will be asked to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member on a package of measures to mitigate the recent substantial increases in energy costs. Switching off lighting in carefully selected locations is a possibility. Safety of the public is of paramount importance therefore any potential location would be subject to a full risk</i></p>	

*assessment prior to switching any lights off. Other measures to be considered by O&S to reduce light pollution and energy consumption include part-night lighting and dimming of lights at certain times in the night.*

03

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
Is the Cllr aware that some specific promises concerning completion of the crossing at Widcombe Schools on Pulteney Rd have not been met? In particular the railings are not yet painted, and the '20 mph when lights flashing' signs have not been provided. At the last opportunity for me to ask it was claimed that these would be done before Christmas (email from Transportation Planning Manager, dated Nov 6).	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>The flashing 'wig wag' signs have been installed and commissioned. The 20mph advisory speed limit signs are programmed to be installed by the end of February.</i>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
Can the Cabinet member say when the railings will be painted?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>I'm sorry that it has taken so long to reply to your supplementary question raised regarding the painting of the railings. It is proposed to paint the approach railings to the pedestrian crossing only to limit the visual impact on the street scene. This section of railings is also the section most visible to approaching vehicles. An actual date for the work has not been received from the contractor but it is anticipated that the painting will be completed before the end of the financial year.</i>	

04

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
Could Cllr Hanney please update me on progress with installation of biomass boilers at Royal Victoria Parks? At the last occasion I asked (January 2008) you said that Project Initiation had just taken place and that discussions with Planning were due to start shortly.	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Malcolm Hanney
<i>The planning application for a biomass boiler in Royal Victoria Park was submitted on 3rd December 2008. The submission was delayed whilst the project funding, location on the site, and technical issues were resolved. There are still some environmental concerns which are being addressed through the planning process. It is hoped that works will commence on site in April/May 2009.</i>	

05

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Cherry Beath
<p>Following the Cabinet Member's written reply to questions (Q20) at Cabinet 25th June last year, and subsequent assurances that the works below would begin in October last year, can he please give us a date when the long delayed Bradford Road pedestrian refuge will be completed, and the pathway build-out at the junction of Southstoke Road and Bradford Road, which he has told us would be undertaken at the same time.</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>My apologies for the continued delay in progressing this work. These delays have been caused by difficulties relating to electrical supply. The issues have now been resolved and the works are programmed to be completed before the end of March this year. I will provide you with the week within which work will start, within seven days.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>Would the Cabinet member please give a fuller explanation? I am aware of a channel which was dug a number of months ago but nothing has been done since.</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>I will provide a written response within 7 days. I can however add that the start date is now expected to be week commencing 09-March.</i>  <b>Councillor Gerrish later responded further:</b> <i>I have sought to get to the bottom of this. The delay appears to be attributable to the change in our contractors. Prior to October our contractor did not undertake electrical works and they had to be let separately to specialist electrical contractors, who required substantial notice to carry out work concurrently with civil engineering work. It was known that contract was due to expire and as result it was decided to undertake the simple work (ie drop kerbs and ducting) and await for the new contract to settle in which would include the electrical works.</i>  <i>Unfortunately it transpires that although new contracts Schedule does cover some electrical work it does not include all the necessary electrical items hence rates have to be agreed separately.</i></p>	

06

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>a) The roadways in Kingsway are in a poor state, please could the executive member indicate when these are due for re-surfacing?  b) What assessment is made of the cost effectiveness of patching versus total resurfacing?</p>	

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>a) The carriageway resurfacing programme is undertaken on a priority needs basis. At present there are no proposals to resurface the carriageways in Kingsway. The roads are subject to an annual safety inspection, further routine inspections and inspections carried out in response to any complaints received. Any defects that warrant attention are programmed for repair and any ad hoc defects reported by the public in between inspections are checked and repaired if necessary. The Highway Inspector responsible for these streets has been asked to undertake an additional inspection of Kingsway and ensure that any defects are attended to.</i></p> <p><i>b) Actual costs will vary according to the location. In general terms, patching is considered to be at least four times more expensive per square metre than resurfacing in overall cost. Repetitive patching of a street also impacts on congestion and creates disruption in streets. However, defects in our highways can appear at very short notice especially during inclement weather. In such circumstances patching becomes essential to keep the highway safe and reduce the risk of claims against the Council. Officers are developing a Transportation Asset Management Plan with the neighbouring Councils (a Joint Local Transport Plan objective) and are investigating systems that will facilitate the most cost effective maintenance of the network. This work will ensure the network is proactively managed and reactive patching and pothole repairs is kept to a minimum.</i></p>	

07

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Nigel Roberts
<p>a) Please could the executive member say what is taken into account in design of footpaths and objects entered into the footpath, to ensure that they are suitable for residents with disabilities?</p> <p>b) Has any consultation taken place with groups that represent those with disabilities, e.g. RNIB?</p> <p>c) Has a risk assessment been carried out?</p> <p>d) What is the budget for footpath repairs? What is the budget for carriageway repairs?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>a) The standards used are set out the Inclusive Mobility guidelines published by the DfT. Full details are available on the DfT website: <a href="http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/peti/inclusivemobility">www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/peti/inclusivemobility</a>.</i></p> <p><i>b) Regular consultations with local disabled groups on transport schemes are carried out through the Joint Liaison Group. The Joint Liaison Group is made up of representatives of those who provide, influence or are affected by facilities and policies affecting the transport and access needs of pedestrians, cyclists, disabled people and equestrians. The meetings are regularly attended by Cathie Baker from B&amp;NES Disability Equality Forum and Gordon Popplewell, Bath Association for disabled people is invited and receives minutes of the meetings.</i></p>	

c) Safety audits are carried out on individual schemes which identify potential problems to all road users, including the disabled.

d) The 2008/09 revenue budget for carriageway repairs is £879k and £380k for footway repairs. In addition to these sums, capital allocations of £1.912m (carriageways) and £200k (footways) will be spent on resurfacing schemes.

08

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Will Sandry
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In October 2008 changes came in to force to the General Permitted Development Order Regulations. One significant aspect of this was that Permitted Development rights no longer applied to World Heritage Sites.

- a) Since inception in 1996, has Bath and North East Somerset Council ever lobbied central government for changes to be made to the GPDO Regulations that removed permitted development rights from World Heritage Sites?
- b) When was Bath and North East Somerset Council first consulted by central government about the regulations that came in to force in October 2008?
- c) What was Bath and North East Somerset Council's response to this consultation?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
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*Changes to the General Permitted Development Order came into force on 1st October 2008. The relevant change is that World Heritage Sites are now classified as Article 1(5) land and are therefore afforded the same permitted development rights as land included within Conservation Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.*

*The Bath World Heritage Site covers the whole of the city, whereas the conservation area covers two thirds of the city.*

*There are now much greater restrictions on what can be done on article 1/(5) land. No side extensions at all are allowed (regardless of how big the curtilage is). No rear extensions or more than one storey are allowed. No cladding of (or extension including the cladding of) any exterior part of the dwelling with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.*

*Combined with restrictions elsewhere in the Order on front extensions, this means that the only Permitted Development extensions on Article 1 (5) land are single story rear ones.*

*The changes to the GPDO followed a consultation by Department of Communities and Local Government in May 2008.*

*a) The only occasion on which Bath and North East Somerset Council has (to my knowledge) lobbied central government with regard to permitted development rights and World Heritage Sites was in the consultation response on 20 August 2008. In this response the Council objected to reduced permitted development rights (see below).*

*b) The consultation ran from May 2008 to the end of August 2008 and was country wide. The first consultation was therefore May 2008.*

*c) The Council responded on 20 August 2008. The full response is posted on the Council's web site at*

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/BathNES/environmentandplanning/worldheritagesite/Protection+of+World+Heritage+Sites+-+Response.htm>.

*This Council objected to the measure to reduce permitted development rights, and the relevant extract from the response is as follows:*

*The proposal to control minor incremental changes through the imposition of Article 1 (5) land is not considered useful for Bath World Heritage Site. The Council objects to this measure, and request further discussion on this issue. It may be that the Planning Acts offer some 'opt out' clause for this, but this needs to be explored further. The site covers the whole city, and two thirds are covered by conservation area and thus already included as Article 1(5) land. The remaining third of the City does not meet the criteria for Conservation Area designation. Minor incremental changes in what are predominantly C20th housing suburbs do not affect the Outstanding Universal Values of the sites, and controls are not considered necessary. This would have (as yet unestimated) resource implications for the Council, and could lead to resentment from those affected and alienation with regard to World Heritage Status. Such alienation would negate the benefits described in the impact assessment.*

*The consultation closed at the end of August 2008 and despite the above comments the measures were introduced some two months later by central government without further discussion.*

09

**Question from:** Councillor Nathan Hartley

There are currently over 6,000 applicants on the B&NES social housing register – many of them are people in desperate need for somewhere to live.

- a) What is the Cabinet doing to reduce the current waiting list for social housing?
- b) Does the Cabinet support Cllr Sarah Bevan's campaign, following her statement at the last full council meeting, that many of the existing boarded up and derelict properties in the authority should be brought back into use providing more people with places to live?
- c) If so, what action is being taken to address this?

**Answer from:** Councillor Vic Pritchard

*At the time of writing this response Housing Services advise that there are 6560 households on the Homesearch register. In addition each month around 100 new households join the scheme. Unfortunately the supply of social housing properties is only around 40-50 per month with a high proportion of these being unpopular sheltered accommodation. While this is clearly of concern it does reflect the national picture with waiting lists for social housing dramatically increasing due to national macro-economic factors.*

*Housing Services, supported by myself and the Cabinet, are attempting to influence the market and improve the situation through a number of measures.*

*These include:*

- *Introduced a new and enhanced Homesearch Policy on the 22nd December which aims to improve the balance between client choice and housing need.*
- *Promoting alternative housing options, such as, the private rented sector and*

<p><i>intermediate housing. Indeed the Homeseach web-site will shortly be advertising private rented properties which meet certain standards and criteria. These include meeting the standards of the Council's Accreditation Scheme and accepting clients in receipt of Local Housing Allowance (formerly Housing Benefit.)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Working with partners to increase the supply of affordable housing within the area</i></li> <li><i>Reviewing and revising our Homelessness Strategy which aims to prevent people becoming homeless through a range of early intervention and prevention measures such as mediation, court desks etc. The new Homeless Strategy is scheduled for single member decision this month.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The post of Empty Property Officer was deleted from Housing Services some years back to enable the service to meet savings targets. However, within existing resources, Housing Services is aiming to create the capacity to develop and undertake an empty property action plan to again tackle to the issue of empty properties within the district.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>Thank you for your reply. Can you say how many empty houses there are in the district?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>No. I do not have the figures to hand.</i></p>	

10

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Sharon Ball
<p>a) With travellers constantly on the former Herman Miller site on the Lower Bristol Road can the Cabinet member say why it has taken so long to move on the current travellers that have been there for quite a few weeks now and when can we expect to see this site clear?</p> <p>b) Can the Cabinet member tell us what progress has been made in identifying appropriate travellers sites in Bath &amp; North East Somerset?</p> <p>c) If appropriate sites have been identified can the Cabinet member tell us when we can expect to see these put in place and also tell us what consultation is proposed?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>a) The current unauthorised occupation of land at the rear of the former Herman Miller factory began in mid November 2008 and 4 complaints have been received since that time. Three of these complaints were notifications from members of the public that the occupation was taking place and one related to an allegation that trees were being cut down on the site. In accordance with the Council's protocol on responding to unauthorised occupations of land, the site has</i></p>	



*continued to be monitored by the Environmental Protection team since November 2008.*

*The land was thought to be privately owned by Lidl's and in normal circumstances the Council has no responsibility to end the occupation. However, once Lidl had gone through their internal processes, they eventually confirmed that they do not own the land, and a Land Registry Search is now taking place to confirm ownership. Once this is confirmed the owner will be contacted in accordance with the protocol and made aware of the situation for them to take their own appropriate action.*

*b) Allocation of the gypsy & traveller sites in Bath & North East Somerset will be undertaken through the preparation of the Bath & North East Somerset Gypsies, Traveller, & Travelling Showpeople Site Allocations Plan. This is a statutory Planning Document and will be subject to the statutory public consultation requirements as well as the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. The Plan will reflect the needs identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy.*

*c) The proposed timetable for this Plan is set out in the Local Development Scheme report to Cabinet on 14/1/09. The work will be jointly commissioned by the Housing, Planning and Environmental Services and is due to commence in July 2009.*

11

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Sharon Ball
<p>a) Can we be told what progress is being made with the development of Western Riverside and when can we expect work to start on site?</p> <p>b) Can the Cabinet member comment on whether or not there is a shortfall in government funding for the development of the Western Riverside site and if so, what work has he undertaken to make up the shortfall?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<p>a) <i>Prior to any work being able to commence on site it is necessary to complete the Development Agreement between the Council and the Developer and the Section 106 Agreement which is connected to planning permissions, negotiations of which continue. However it should be noted that the current adverse economic conditions are making negotiations more complicated. No date for a start on site has yet been agreed.</i></p> <p>b) <i>Dialogue continues with the government's Homes and Communities Agency (formerly English Partnerships and Housing Corporation) in respect of their potential investment. Negotiations have progressed well but no conclusions have yet been agreed.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>If the building of a new improved stadium for Bath Rugby at the Rec proves impossible for any reason would the cabinet member not agree with me that in view of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the widespread feeling in Bath that the current Crest design is not up to Bath</li> </ul>	

<p>standards;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and in the light of the current financial and building crises;</li> <li>• and most importantly the absolute need to keep Bath Rugby based in the heart of Bath;</li> </ul> <p>that the Council should enter into talks with Crest and its bankers to buy the BWR riverside land at price that reflects current values and risk so that an option for a Bath Rugby Stadium could be considered in a new development scheme at BWR and that this would make a much better capital proposal than a new Council Office?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<p><i>I must declare that I have a personal but non-prejudicial interest as a season ticket holder for Bath Rugby.</i></p> <p><i>The Council is investigating every possible opportunity to build new housing. To build a stadium on Bath Western Riverside would use up valuable housing land. Should events overtake us, we will consider her comments along with others.</i></p>	

12

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Sharon Ball
<p>a) Can the Cabinet member enlighten us as to what progress is being made with the potential developer of the Former Bath Press site on the Lower Bristol Road?</p> <p>b) Is the Council considering a development brief for the Bath Press site and are they working with the site owners on such a brief that may include small starter business units?</p> <p>c) Many residents are concerned that the Historic frontage to the Former Bath Press building might be lost when this site is redeveloped, can the Cabinet member enlighten us to any talks with the potential developer that may lead to a protection of this frontage?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Terry Gazzard
<p><i>a) Initial discussions have outlined the policy position recognising the need for investment and development to address a range of issues facing the city, including new good quality business space, employment, housing and improvements to the public realm and movement infrastructure. The need to consider the future role of the Bath Press site in relation to the surrounding area has been stressed. It is understood that the owner is now considering options, taking account of the consultation they undertook last November.</i></p> <p><i>b) The Council are not considering a development brief as the site is not allocated in the Local Plan therefore a brief will not have policy status. We are therefore focussing on a Regeneration Delivery Plan for the wider Lower Bristol Road area as part of the new Local Development Framework, in accordance with the Council resolution on 20 Nov. 2009. Part of this will include advice on the Council's strategy towards the Bath Press site and small business units will be a consideration in the Regeneration Delivery Plan for the area including the Bath Press site.</i></p>	

*c) Following a request for listing of the building, English Heritage has concluded that this level of protection is not warranted. The Council do consider the building to be of local importance and as such any pre-planning application discussions will include the design of the scheme. The Historic Environment Team have indicated that at least some of the building should be retained which could include more than just the façade. These requirements will be balanced against the other requirements of the development.*

13

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Sharon Ball
<p>a) With the implementation of the Government's play pathfinder scheme to redevelop play areas, and with works starting on many sites within the last few weeks, can the Cabinet member tell me what consultation has taken place with local residents before these schemes were agreed?</p> <p>b) On a specific site in my ward of Westmoreland the site of Lymore playing fields, which is better known locally as the Brickfields, was selected for a new play area. Was the Cabinet member aware that the original play area was removed from this site at the request of local residents after inappropriate use of the play area by some youths? Can the Cabinet member tell us if there was any additional consideration given to this site due to the previous play area being removed and were all residents in this area informed of the proposals for the new play area? If so what was the feed back?</p> <p>c) Can the Cabinet member enlighten us to any thoughts that he may have of how consultation could be better handled in the future?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Chris Watt
<p><i>a) It has been recognised nationally that there has been insufficient time with the Play Pathfinder projects to fully consult in a way that would be desirable for all concerned. However given the timescales our roll-out of the first 12 sites has been based on the Green Spaces Strategy which was consulted on by the Parks Department in a comprehensive way a few years ago. This strategy was completed in 2006. Part of this strategy determined which areas of the City and Council required more or new play sites. When funding was received for Play Pathfinder we used the summer holiday to undertake significant consultation with children and some local families in the areas where we knew sites were likely to be affected. Quotes from the relevant consultation undertaken are:</i></p> <p><u><i>Brickfields feedback:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Most popular pieces of play equipment:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. – Pic no. 3 – Zip Wire</li> <li>2. – Pic nos. 1 (Landscaping including tunnels) 10 (I think children thought this was a roundabout) and 7 (climbing frame) equally popular.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <i>All children VERY keen on BMX track, residents concerned that this may cut off the options for runners and dog walkers to stroll around the perimeter.</i></li> <li>• <i>Children like the idea of having a separate area for dog walkers and have suggested a 'dog park'.</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a need for additional seating.</i></li> </ul>	

- *Playrangers are a popular option.*
- *A number of children would like to see goal posts and a football pitch.*
- *There were some concerns about sand and how it can get dirty and be used as a cat litter tray.*
- *There is a concern that there should be an area for football*
- *Good that the informal BMX area is adjacent to the Linear Way as helps joining up*
- *Popular spot for young people, some kind of shelter is needed in addition to the proposed seating in terraces as this will be wet in winter*

*Where possible these ideas have been used with the designers but budget constraints mean not all ideas can go forward. In addition when designers were appointed they were given a list of key people, Councillors, residents (where known) to link with as part of the process. We are currently unsure whether all sites received this attention but we are following it up.*

*b) The area that is under development at Brickfields has an existing play area that we are enhancing. The existing play area has only received minimal investment for approximately the last 6 years since it became a site under consideration for the relocation of the St John's Primary School. During this time one item of play equipment was removed because it had reached the end of its life and the fence around the area was gradually removed as it had become rotten and was subject to vandalism. Since the decision was made not to build the St John's Primary School on the site we have been seeking funding to improve the area. The site was part of an unsuccessful joint Big Lottery funding bid between Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils.*

*c) Due to time constraints for the first 12 sites we were not able to extend our consultation beyond children and families and to build on the Green Spaces Strategy. For the next 16 sites we will continue to build on the Green Spaces Strategy and to consult young people and parents. However where sites are new to play (unlike any in the first wave) we will undertake more extensive local consultation. It is also important to remember that we are not changing the use of any of the Parks and in the main Planning Permission is not being sought (other than at Gullock Tynning at this stage). Where Planning Permission is required we will go through the normal consultation processes. In addition for the next 16 sites we have involved Ward Councillors or Parish Councillors in giving expressions of interest for where they would like the sites to be in their area. Where possible (given the constraints of the project) we will work with Councillors to develop these ideas. In addition we are now looking at the best options for creating capacity within the Parks Service to ensure the maintenance and on-going development of play in parks takes place. We are also investing more time in marketing and publicity about the project to inform local residents of up-coming developments in their area.*

14

**Question from:** Councillor Paul Crossley

I am committed to a full recycling service based on same day collection but am concerned at rumours that the Cabinet is considering options, which I would oppose, such as reducing the number of recycling streams collected, introducing

fortnightly waste collections and/or introducing a pay-as-you-throw 'bin charge'. Can the Cabinet member assure me that the approaching budget will contain no further reduction or delays to recycling schemes and that the Cabinet is not considering either fortnightly waste collection or the introduction of 'bin charges'?

**Answer from:** Councillor Charles Gerrish

*The Council is not considering the introduction of "bin charges" and has not expressed an interest to DEFRA to be one of the 5 pilot Local Authorities that are being sought. Legislation does not allow for the introduction of direct bin charges currently other than through participation as a pilot authority. The Climate Change Bill allows central government to roll out the powers to all local authorities in England in the future after evidence from the pilots has been reported back to Parliament.*

*The Council is not considering fortnightly collection of residual waste.*

*The Council has 2 key waste management initiatives to implement in 2009 - same day collections for refuse, green box recycling & garden/cardboard composting and the award of a contract for the treatment of residual waste in partnership with the West of England authorities.*

*The Council's Zero Waste Strategy will be comprehensively updated in 2009 to more accurately reflect legislative changes, new initiatives being undertaken and changes in waste tonnages since the strategy was published in 2005. An increased emphasis will be placed upon community liaison to proactively encourage waste minimisation and to help residents take part in our recycling schemes to their maximum potential.*

*Proposed service developments will include the implementation of weekly kitchen waste collections, the implementation of weekly cardboard collection and the weekly collection of mixed plastic packaging in October 2011 (subject to UK market conditions for these materials being viable).*

*In implementing kitchen waste recycling collections, the green box recycling vehicle fleet must be replaced with vehicles with a larger payload & capacity. The intention is that these vehicles will be designed with the capacity to collect cardboard, and all mixed plastics.*

**15 Question from:** Councillor Tim Ball

a) The decision to withdraw funding for The Crèche at the Hut has upset many local parents in Twerton with young Children. Could the Cabinet member tell me if he was aware that funding was being transferred from The Crèche to First Steps Nursery?

b) Has the Cabinet member visited The Crèche at the Hut to see the excellent way that they provide services for local parents and if not would he like to go and meet the staff and talk to local parents?

c) I am sure that the Cabinet member is aware that we have three excellent nurseries in Twerton of which one is school-based. Each nursery offers a different service to match the requirements of the community. Would the Cabinet member join with me in congratulating the staff of these nurseries for the continued high quality service that they have provided for the Community of Twerton?

d) I would also hope that the Cabinet member would agree with me that these nurseries need the continued support of the local authority in providing the service that the community is asking for and in that light would he ensure that all of these nurseries receive funding of some sort from the local authority?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Chris Watt

a) *Funding for the creche was terminated in March 2008, however due to the disruption to children attending during that academic year and the lack of full consultation with other providers in the area, it was decided to extend the funding until the end of August. Subsequently at the request of the ward Councillor an exception was made to give a further 4 months funding, pending the creche seeking alternative funding. Funding for First Steps was secured when they became a full Children's Centre back in 2005. With the reduction in funding to the Sure Start Local Programme, which just covered South West Bath, cuts had to be made in April 2007/08. The creche is for families in the Twerton area only, whilst we need to now provide services across the authority and funding has had to be re-deployed to priorities other than just childcare (i.e. health, family support, special needs children etc.). There is sufficient early years provision through First Steps and Twerton Infants to meet current demand. First Steps has vacancies to meet the needs of families currently using the creche.*

b) *No I have not visited the Hut although I have visited many of our Early Years settings. First Steps continue to offer parents the flexibility to attend sessions or for a longer day (and have vacancies to meet the needs of the creche children) but within the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage, their Ofsted report was good. The Creche at the Hut received a 'satisfactory' when they were last inspected.*

c) *See b) above for detail - First Steps and Twerton Infant school both employ teachers to delivery the Early Years Foundation Stage, through an age appropriate play based curriculum. Research suggests (EPPE) that highly qualified staff, particularly for children from disadvantaged areas, can have a very positive impact on outcomes. The Council has therefore invested in highly qualified staff to lead early years practice in the area. However I agree the staff all work hard to offer the best possible service to children in that area.*

d) *The Council is required to report annually (for the first time last year) on the sufficiency of childcare in the whole authority. This is done in consultation with families and early years providers, through questionnaires, focus groups etc. Our report confirmed that overall we have sufficient childcare to meet demand. The issues that arose from the Twerton area where that families didn't want to necessarily use childcare to return to work but would value more free childcare. Twerton Infants School and First Steps (because they are registered to delivery the Early Years Foundation Stage) will receive additional funding to extend the offer of 'free early education' from 12.5 hours per week to 15 hours per week from September 2009. We hope the government will also soon introduce a free offer for 2 year olds. This will benefit our neediest areas, of which Twerton is one. Where there not sufficient childcare in the area we would need to consider our proposed actions.*

**Supplementary Question:**

[The wording of the member's supplementary question will be provided later]	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Chris Watt
<i>No, I wasn't aware of that.</i>	

16

<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Dr Eleanor Jackson
<p>Re Decision E1916. Terminating the lease on Binks' Restaurant. (Member of Bath Tourism Plus) Question relating to the implications for tourism and retail policy:</p> <p>a) - is B&amp;NES deliberately going up market vis a vis the Roman Baths and other attractions when it already has a reputation in Germany etc for being too expensive and posh. Radstock people often use this cafe - described to me as 'a good honest working man's cafe'</p> <p>b) What the cost will be to the tax payer of the renovation and upgrading of this property?</p> <p>c) If BANEs is going down this route, have any studies been done to show that visitors to the Roman Baths would actually use the cafe?</p> <p>d) Has the impact on neighbouring establishments been considered?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillors Terry Gazzard
<p><i>a) The Council is intent upon improving the offer within the Abbey Church Yard and creating a better environment for residents and visitors alike. This is part of the wider Council initiative to improve the public realm in the city centre. The Council appreciates that this location is one of celebration (for residents) and for enjoyment of the heritage of the City (spread over a period of 2,000 years). The Council is already engaged in a major investment in the Roman Baths Development Plan, which is aimed at improving the presentation of the attraction and addressing perceptions of value for money. The premises in question is opposite to the main entrance to the Roman Baths and the redevelopment of the facility is intended to respond to the continued improvement of the Baths &amp; Pump Room, to deliver value for money for the visitors to Bath. (as an example, a cup of coffee in the Pump Room Restaurant is less expensive than a cup of coffee in the café in question). The proposed development will provide a complementary experience &amp; services to that offered by the Pump Room. This will include an evening dining experience that will extend the opening hours of the facility. Visitors from Germany have benefited from the recent movements in sterling, which will have made a visit to the Roman Bath at least 25% less expensive for them during the last year.</i></p> <p><i>b) The cost of developing and refurbishing the property will be financed by borrowing, as is usual for Council services. The cost of borrowing will be met, in full, from income generated from the facility. No cost will therefore fall upon the local tax payer. Both the costs and the business case for the investment have been reviewed by the Council's Project Initiation Deliverability Group which has reviewed the</i></p>	

*viability of the proposals.*

*The owner of the Binks facility was offered the opportunity to explain their 'development & investment strategy' for the site at a meeting following on from an initiative by the local MP, Don Foster. No plans or investment strategy was forthcoming.*

*c) The Council commissioned a comprehensive survey and business planning review from an independent, expert, catering consultant, prior to embarking on this development. The consultants review determined that visitors to Roman Baths would make use of the facility.*

*Regular comparisons with other major visitor attractions carried out via the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) also confirms that there is a gap in provision for customers of the Roman Baths – both before and after the visit - and that there is an opportunity to generate additional income from this source.*

*Based upon the numbers generated by the consultants we have also engaged in a 'reality check' with third party catering operators.*

*d) The catering consultants did consider the impact upon other businesses in the immediate area in order to arrive at their final analysis.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

17

**Question from:** Gail Coleshill

In the centre of Radstock after many years of community consultation planning permission was given to Norton Radstock Regeneration company in March 2007 for a regeneration scheme. The permission was granted and passed unanimously by Councillors from all parties. Radstock is shown by B&NES own statistics to be urgently in need of housing for young people and newly forming households and the NRR scheme responds specifically to this need.

The NRR/Bellway current application made in August 2008 for reserved matters includes 57 affordable homes, alongside other business, community and retail premises to strengthen the town centre. NRR and Bellway are negotiating with the new Homes and Communities Agency over the finance for them. People in Radstock are waiting for these houses. The school is waiting for the children.

How can the cabinet speed up the bureaucratic process so that these homes are built in 2009?

**Answer from:** Councillor Terry Gazzard

*In order for these houses to be brought forward there would need to be acceleration in the Homes & Communities Agency grant.*

*In relation to the reserved matters planning application the Council met with the agents for the joint NRR/Bellway scheme in December to discuss minor changes to the application. Revised proposals are currently awaited so that the application can be brought before the Planning Committee.*

*The Council have also met with NRR, Bellway and the Homes & Communities Agency regarding the affordable housing element of the regeneration scheme. The Homes & Communities Agency have invited Bellway to submit a new*



*application for funding and the Council is liaising with the Company on this.*