

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

Wednesday, 7th December, 2011

The decisions contained within these minutes may not be implemented until the expiry of the 5 working day call-in period which will run from 8th to 15th December. These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Present:

Councillor Paul Crossley	Leader of the Council
Councillor Nathan Hartley	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth
Councillor David Bellotti	Cabinet Member for Community Resources
Councillor Simon Allen	Cabinet Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
Councillor Cherry Beath	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development
Councillor David Dixon	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Roger Symonds	Cabinet Member for Transport

107 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair was taken by Councillor Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

108 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

109 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST UNDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were none.

111 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

112 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 9 questions from the following people: Councillors John Bull, Patrick Anketell-Jones (2), Martin Veal (2), Francine Haeberling, Tim Warren, Eleanor Jackson (2).

[Copies of the questions and response, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]

113 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

There were 7 notices of intention to make a statement at the meeting. Four statements were about items on the agenda.

Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group) made a statement [*a copy of which is attached as Appendix 3 to the Minutes and on the Council's website*] welcoming the changes to the proposals but saying that all the major objections were ignored by Cabinet. She felt that the new proposals were concerned only with increasing the flow of traffic through the town, not with improving the town for those who live there.

George Bailey (Radstock Action Group) had prepared a statement which Amanda Leon read on his behalf [*a copy of which is attached as Appendix 4 to the Minutes and on the Council's website*]. He felt that the new proposals had come too far into the consultation period to enable effective consultation on them.

John Sprately made a statement saying that the computer modelling needed independent expert scrutiny. He questioned some of the figures, costs and traffic times quoted in the proposals. He stressed that local businesses and jobs were at risk.

114 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Nathan Hartley, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9th November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

115 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

116 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BODIES

The Chair announced that the Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel had met on 5th December to consider the Call-in of Cabinet Decision E2328 on Broadband Provision. The Panel had agreed to make some recommendations to Cabinet and the Chair of the Panel had referred the Panel's recommendations, for consideration by Cabinet. He drew attention to the summary of the Panel's recommendations, a copy of which had been put into the public gallery before the meeting [*and are attached as Appendix 2 to these Minutes and on the Council's website*].

Councillor Robin Moss, Chair of the Panel, introduced the Panel's recommendations to Cabinet. He observed that the Panel had unanimously supported the recommendations. He felt that the strong response to the decision indicated that there had been inadequate consultation prior to the decision.

Councillor Cherry Beath thanked the Panel for their hard work, and all contributors for their considerable input to the debate. She emphasised that there was no disagreement on the importance of this issue – only of the means to achieve the best

outcome. She believed that some of the suggestions warranted consideration, but would need proper technical advice before this could be done, so she made a proposal to Cabinet, the effect of which would be that Cabinet would reconsider the issue at a future meeting.

On a motion from Councillor Cherry Beath, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To NOTE recommendations made by the Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel from its meeting of 5th December 2011;

(2) To AGREE that further technical information would be required before reconsidering the issue;

(3) To ASK that a new report be presented to Cabinet in due course to enable Cabinet to make a further decision with all the information available.

117 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

There were none.

118 PROVISION STRATEGY FOR PUBLIC TOILETS IN BATH & NE SOMERSET

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 5 and on the Council's website*] in which she made the case for the importance of public toilets for workers, shoppers and visitors to the area.

Councillor David Dixon, in proposing the item, said that the proposal was for a 15-year rolling strategy. Cabinet were determined to safeguard the provision. He agreed with Councillor Jackson that toilet provision was essential to the local community and to the economy. He was particularly keen to engage with developers so that the provision or replacement of local toilets could be agreed as part of any development. He emphasised that when toilets were being upgraded, they were being made compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal.

Councillor David Bellotti referred to paragraph 3.9 of the report and emphasised that the strategy was subject to an annual revenue review.

Councillor Roger Symonds was pleased to note that the toilets in the coach park would also be improved, because for some visitors this was their first impression of Bath.

On a motion from Councillor David Dixon, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) to ADOPT the Provision Strategy for Public Toilets in Bath & North East Somerset, 2011-2026, with reviews to be carried out every 5 years.

119 OLYMPICS / CULTURAL OLYMPIAD 2012

Councillor David Dixon, in proposing the item, said that 2012 would be an exciting year and the Council would be embracing all the challenges. He outlined some of the planned events and activities and thanked Lynda Deane and Ann Cullis, who had worked so hard to prepare for the Olympiad. He moved the proposals.

Councillor Cherry Beath seconded the proposal and observed that not all the planned events involved physical activity; many were cultural and educational.

Councillor Simon Allen was particularly pleased that the area would be heavily involved in the Paralympic events.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that he would be inviting all Councillors to join him in the challenge to contribute towards the grand total of 2,012km in running, cycling, swimming, walking and other activities. He also expressed how delighted he was that Bath would be looking after the British Paralympics Team for the next 5 years. He observed that this would require renewed efforts to ensure the accessibility of local venues.

On a motion from Councillor David Dixon, seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To ENGAGE in the National celebrations of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and the ambitions of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and the Government to leave a legacy for future generations;

(2) To EMBRACE all the plans outlined in this Report and support the activities proposed positively;

(3) To ENCOURAGE all Councillors to enthuse and engage their own communities in the planned programme of events and challenges and participate fully in the opportunities and benefits offered by 2012;

(4) To ENCOURAGE all Council staff to adopt an Olympics message in their email signature from January 2012 and to participate in the activities associated with this Report, in line with the Council's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy;

(5) To APPOINT the Leader of the Council as the Olympics Champion and as the figurehead for 2012 locally.

120 LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND MAJOR BID

Councillor Charles Gerrish made an *ad hoc* statement supporting the recommendations and welcoming the inclusion of the proposed cycle route from Batheaston to Bath Spa.

Councillor Roger Symonds, in proposing the item, acknowledged the huge amount of work already done by Councillor Gerrish when he had been the responsible Cabinet member. He advised Cabinet that the proposals had been adopted, that morning, by the West of England Partnership subject to approval by Cabinet tonight. He was delighted that the Partnership had already reached the shortlist of 9 applicants for funding. He emphasised that sustainable economic growth was a crucial part of the bid and referred to paragraph 5.5 of the report in support of this. He felt that it was this emphasis on growth which would make the bid attractive to government.

Councillor Nathan Hartley seconded the proposal. He congratulated Councillor Symonds and the authors of the bid for their hard work. He emphasised that it would be essential to work with local partner authorities in the matter of transport.

Councillor David Bellotti warmly supported the proposals, subject to approval in the budget. He referred to Appendix 3 of the report, and emphasised that the inclusion by Cabinet of 20mph schemes had made the bid viable.

On a motion from Councillor Roger Symonds, seconded by Councillor Nathan Hartley, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To ACCEPT the £750,000 awarded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund Key Component bid;

(2) To APPROVE the West of England joint bid for £25.5 million (WEST) from the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund, SUBJECT to approval of the Council's matched funding elements as part of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in February 2012.

121 KEYNSHAM REGENERATION SCHEME AND WORKPLACES PROGRAMME

The Keynsham Regeneration Project team showed a 3-dimensional visual impression of the proposed development. The Chair thanked the team for their presentation.

Gill Hellier (Keynsham resident) made a statement welcoming the redevelopment plans for Keynsham and asking the Cabinet to approve the proposals, along with the road improvements.

Sheila Crocombe (Keynsham resident) made a statement [*a copy of which is attached as Appendix 6 to the Minutes and on the Council's website*]. She made particular mention of the first floor space and One Stop Shop and said that she was disappointed that the new space would be a replacement Council Chamber. She hoped that Cabinet would consider the needs of the thriving Keynsham Film Club, which needed a projector and screen.

Roger Busby (Keynsham Civic Society) made a statement [*a copy of which is attached as Appendix 7 to the Minutes and on the Council's website*]. He felt that the designs did not reflect the historic market town and did not meet the needs for sustainability, particularly because the roofs were not inclined enough to take advantage of the solar power options.

Councillor Cherry Beath asked Mr Busby whether he was aware that the proposed buildings included state of the art energy saving elements. Mr Busby said he was aware of this, but that he had been referring to the lack of a District Energy Scheme.

Councillor Charles Gerrish in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the proposals and was pleased to see the savings which had been achieved. He acknowledged the merits of the preferred option for funding. He felt in paragraph 5.6 the report should refer to "negotiations" with the current head tenant, not "discussions". He also expressed some concern over the lack of clarity about interim Library facilities.

Councillor Tony Clarke made an *ad hoc* statement congratulating the Cabinet for pushing forward with the scheme, which he felt would bring about a significant improvement in the built environment.

The Chair asked all Cabinet members to confirm that they had read Appendix 4 (Leasing Strategy) and the Public Interest Test document which accompanied it. All confirmed this. The Chair then proposed that Appendix 4 was exempt from publication, by virtue of paragraph 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. This was seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath and Cabinet

agreed unanimously. The Chair reminded Cabinet members that if they wished to refer to the Appendix during the debate, they must first vote to exclude the public from the meeting. All Cabinet members agreed that they did not wish to refer to the Appendix.

Councillor David Bellotti, in proposing the item, said that the existing accommodation was expensive, wasteful and inadequate. He explained that the plans were in due course to have One Stop Shops at Lewis House Bath, Hollies Midsomer Norton, and in Keynsham at the newly built offices. He explained that the proposals had been amended to reduce the cost and maximise the income by involving police, health, citizens advice and others to rent space in the buildings. It was not possible at that point to mention a number of others with whom negotiations were taking place.

Councillor Bellotti explained that the funding option being recommended was for funding from capital receipts and existing cash flow, without the need for additional external borrowing. He agreed with others that there were financial risks in any large project, but the Council was working with a construction delivery partner and the contract would minimise the risk to the Council.

He explained that as a result of the public consultation, a number of changes had been made including changes to the materials, the shape of the buildings and a larger car park. He stressed that the Cabinet were committed to the development as a community provision. He also explained that the Cabinet were considering possible extensions to the main project, which might involve a riverside retirement living complex.

Councillor Cherry Beath seconded the proposal and said that the Council had a long term commitment to the regeneration of Keynsham. She wanted to see retailers moving into the town as soon as possible and was excited about the prospect of a thriving, modern town centre.

Councillor Paul Crossley welcomed the proposals as an excellent piece of work. He confirmed that Cabinet were seeking solutions for the Fire Brigade, swimming pool and others.

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To AGREE that appendix 4 (Leasing Strategy) of the report is EXEMPT from publication by virtue of paragraph 3, Part 1 or Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

On a motion from Councillor David Bellotti, seconded by Councillor Cherry Beath, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(2) To PROCEED in line with the planned accommodation model detailed within the report including the planned partnership arrangements;

(3) To PROCEED with submission of a full planning application for the Keynsham Town Centre Regeneration in January 2012 after further consultation;

(4) To PROCEED with the appointment of a delivery partner for the Keynsham Town Centre Regeneration in line with arrangements in contract standing orders;

(5) To PROCEED with financing Option 5 – Internal Borrowing backed by cash flow and capital receipts as the preferred option to provide the operational Capital Funding Requirement for this project, SUBJECT to the agreement by Full Council as

part of the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, and the Prudential Borrowing Limits in February 2012;

(6) To ADOPT the changes to the Keynsham Town Centre Regeneration scheme to reflect the public consultation as detailed in the report;

(7) To GIVE a 6 month notice to the current retail tenants in order to gain vacant possession in line with the current programme, this notice period to enable trading to continue over Christmas 2011 and into early summer 2012;

(8) To NOTE that options that are being pursued in respect of the future redevelopment of Riverside;

(9) To NOTE the progress of negotiations to secure tenants for the retail units including draft heads of terms with the anchor tenant;

(10) To NOTE the strong support for the Keynsham Regeneration scheme from the consultation undertaken.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

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CABINET MEETING 7th December 2011

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

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 7 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.

Statements about issues NOT on the Agenda

- Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group) Re: Radstock Roads scheme
- George Bailey (Radstock Action Group) Re: Radstock Roads scheme
- John Sprately Re: Radstock Roads scheme

Re: Agenda Item 12 (Public Toilet Provision)

- Cllr Eleanor Jackson

Re: Agenda Item 15 (Keynsham Regeneration)

- Gill Hellier (Keynsham resident)
- Sheila Crocombe (Keynsham resident)
- Roger Busby (Keynsham Civic Society)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS
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M 01	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>The installation of new large telecommunications cabinets by BT has caused concern to residents in areas of BANES since in many cases they do not require planning permission. One such cabinet was installed in Paulton in what was an inappropriate location in my view but the authority did not raise the matter with BT even though the location was on land owned by BANES. What action will BANES take to ensure that there is adequate consultation with local residents and ward Councillors to ensure such developments do not happen again?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball
<p><i>The cabinet that has been erected in Paulton does not require planning permission from the Council. However, under the provisions of the Electronic Communications Code the operator should have given the Local Planning Authority (LPA) one month's notice of their intention to install the cabinet. This notice was not given in this case. However if it had the LPA could not object to either the location or appearance of the cabinet, it could</i></p>		

only give the operator written notice of conditions it would like the operator to comply with. The operator need not comply with these conditions if he considers them to be unreasonable. A Planning Officer has undertaken a site visit and viewed the cabinet in question. Taking into account it does not require planning permission, and its setting, it is not considered expedient for the Local Planning Authority to take any further action in this matter.

If such a cabinet were erected within a Conservation Area or a World Heritage Site 'prior notification' has to be given to the LPA so that approval can be given for the proposed location and appearance of the cabinet. In these cases the LPA advertises the proposal to give the opportunity for third parties to comment before a decision is made.

The land on which the cabinet is located in Paulton is not owned by the Council but is maintained by the Council as highway land. In these cases Section 48 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 allows Public Utility Companies to place apparatus on highway land without the formal consent of the Council.

Supplementary Question:

Will the Council communicate with BT to ensure that in future proper notification is given?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

Yes, BT will be made aware that the council insists on advance notice in future.

M 02

Question from:

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Council's current Public Realm and Movement Strategy programme and implementation timetable?

Answer from:

Councillor Cherry Beath

Following the Cabinet decision on 9 November 2011 (ref E2327), works are now due to commence at Northumberland Place between February and April 2012 and at High Street between May and October 2012. These projects will utilise the new range of street furniture products. The City Information System (CIS) has been the subject of a demonstration project since April 2011 and the full system (physical, digital and paper-based products) is due to be delivered by April 2012.

The programme and implementation timetable for the Public Realm and Movement Programme for 2011/12 was previously reported in the Council's Capital Programme via the Open Cabinet meeting on 5 March 2011. As you are aware, while Cabinet is fully committed to the delivery of the Programme, we are currently reviewing some of the priorities inherited from the previous administration. As a member of the Public Realm and Movement Steering Group, Councillor Anketell-Jones will participate in this review.

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please indicate when he expects the council's new leisure contract negotiations to be completed and be made public, and does the Cabinet Member expect the new contract to produce any financial savings for the authority?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>To ensure that the Council is getting best value from its leisure contract an independent review of all the available options has been commissioned. Expert leisure consultants 'Strategic Leisure' being appointed to deliver this. The primary purpose of the review is to identify which of the options will best contribute to achieving the Council's objectives at a cost to the Council which it is able and willing to incur.</i></p> <p><i>The review will consider the following options providing comment on the strengths, weaknesses and risks associated with each:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Extension for a further 5 years with Aquaterra, as allowed for in the terms of the current contract</i> • <i>Testing the market through an OJEU procurement process, with either a new 5 year or 10 year contract</i> • <i>A combination of different management options splitting the facilities into more than one contract and possibly including asset transfer to the community</i> • <i>Bringing the facilities back in house</i> <p><i>It will also look at the management options for Chew Valley Leisure Centre which does not fall within the Aquaterra contract currently, as well as the new facilities that are currently being developed at Wellsway School and Odd Down Playing Fields.</i></p> <p><i>The planned timescale for this review is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Draft report – 1st week December</i> • <i>Final report – 1st week January</i> • <i>Informal Cabinet discussion – January</i> • <i>Formal cabinet decision – March</i> 		

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on any further discussions which the Cabinet Member has had with Kraft regarding the future of the Somerdale site and when a public consultation on the future use of the site is now anticipated to commence?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>Since the update provided at the last Cabinet meeting, I have not had any further discussions with Kraft regarding the future of Somerdale.</i></p> <p><i>Further meetings between B&NES officers and Kraft are however scheduled for later this month where it is hoped Kraft will be in a position to disclose the name of their preferred developer for the Somerdale site. The timing of any public consultation that takes place following this disclosure will be for Kraft and their preferred developer to consider.</i></p>		

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Francine Haeberling
<p>Can the Leader of Council please indicate how long he deems it acceptable for the Occupy Bath protesters to be camped in Queen Square before action should be taken to remove the encampment?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods visited the encampment on 23rd November and met a number of the protestors. They gave an indication that they intend to move from Queen Square within three weeks. If they have not vacated the site within that timescale the authority will progress action to enforce their removal. The land is not in Council ownership.</i></p>		

M 06	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p>In a recent radio interview Cllr Symonds stated that the cost to the council of repairing Victoria Bridge is likely to be met through either use of reserves or borrowing. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm which funding option is to be used and whether this impacts upon the Cabinet Member for Resources' stated commitment to limit the council's capital borrowing to £180 million over the next four years?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>As part of the current Capital Programme, the Council is spending £80k for peer review work in respect of the bridge. Further provision for the longer term future of the bridge will be considered as part of the 2012/13 budget process for consideration by the Council in February 2012.</i></p> <p><i>Some further emergency work is required to secure the immediate safety of the bridge structure and a specific report will be consider by the Cabinet in January 2012 in this respect.</i></p> <p><i>Against this backdrop, the Cabinet Member for Resources has very recently confirmed the intention of the administration to reduce overall capital borrowings to £180M by 2015.</i></p>		

M 07	Question from:	ERROR - DUPLICATE ITEM
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M 08	Question from:	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm that the council will be participating in the £250m Weekly Collections Support Scheme recently announced by the Government to secure weekly waste collections for the next five years?</p>		

Answer from:	Councillor David Dixon
<i>The Council is awaiting details of the bidding application process. Once these are received a bid will be scoped for my agreement prior to submission.</i>	

M 09	Question from:	Councillor Eleanor Jackson
Can the cabinet member justify drastically reducing the amount spent on the rail survey for Radstock to the point where it is possibly not enough money to meet the spec. for an independent study, when getting people out of their cars and onto public transport is the single most effective way of reducing congestion?		
Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds	
<i>The scope for the independent report is clear and the appointed consultants have confirmed that there are adequate funds to complete the report in accordance with the specification</i>		
Supplementary Question:		
I am pleased to note the Cabinet member's assurances, but not totally convinced. Will he please give an indication of the time frames involved, especially before the railway land returns to the agency?		
Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds	
<i>I can confirm that the Consultants should complete their commission by end of March 2012. While this is a little later than previously indicated the consultants are using the opportunity of studies they are undertaking for Bristol & South Gloucestershire Councils to co-ordinate their work and so provide a better understanding of the potential for rail improvements within the Sub-region.</i>		

M 10	Question from:	Councillor Eleanor Jackson
Given Cllr Bellotti's remarks at Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee for Wellbeing on transferring £235000, unspent funding for the homeless in Bath, would he consider investing it in a foyer for Radstock?		
Answer from:	Councillor David Bellotti	
<i>Councillor Jackson will recall that the previous Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report commissioned by the Council from Ecotec on the issues associated with youth homelessness. That report concluded that the Council should continue to develop a range of services to meet the needs of vulnerable young people rather than develop centralised facilities such as foyer type facilities. The Cabinet is considering</i>		

how the funds might be used

Supplementary Question:

Given the reference to the Ecotec (or Friedman) Report in the answer to my question, is the cabinet member aware that what is actually recommended is a hub based on Radstock College to support the homeless, but the Foyer idea, which originated in the earlier YMCA (Deverell) Report was also commended? To boil down, would he consider implementing the recommendations?

This should be answered in the light of the situation at Julian House now, and I would strongly urge the cabinet member to read the report, given that he said to the Cabinet that he had not done so.

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

I have now has an opportunity to properly review the Ecotec report and I agree it contains some useful information. Thank you for highlighting this. The cabinet will consider its budget priorities in February and there will be a range of competing pressures to consider.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

There were none

Minute Annex

Statement by Amanda Leon, Radstock Action Group, to B&NES Cabinet 7 December 2011

SAVE THE HEART OF RADSTOCK – ABANDON THE NEW LINK ROAD

Radstock Action Group welcomes the decision to keep the Frome Road open. However, there is very little else that has changed about the proposals which originally caused Cabinet to go back for a rethink.

We have to conclude that B&NES is not being honest about its plans for Radstock. The new plans are muddled and contain internal contradictions, they ignore all the major objections put forward previously and, more than anything else, they quite clearly move the goal posts.

- Cabinet members will recall that the reasons originally given for building a new link road were all related to facilitating the building of houses on the NRR railway land but now the headline reason is *Tackling congestion and kick-starting the economy*. Why is B&NES so determined to implement a scheme which will destroy the heart of this beautiful town?
- A superficial and tokenistic 'Feedback Form' asks respondents to answer a series of questions on their views on the minor aspects of the Radstock situation when what should be asked is:
 - Do you want a new road?
 - Do you want The Street to be two-way?
 - Do you want Fortescue Road to have its traffic flow reversed?
- The asking of peripheral questions brings a whole new meaning to the idea of consultation – don't consult on what people are concerned about, consult on what you've already decided and then carry on.
- The big question now that the Frome Road is going to stay open is, 'Why do we need a new link road?' Radstock has never thought we do, but B&NES has previously argued in its favour as related to traffic having to come through the middle of Radstock because Frome Road will be closed to facilitate housing development.
- The current plans do not put Radstock, its businesses and residents at the centre of the picture. They demote the town to a traffic hot-spot for those passing through with congratulatory remarks on how it will be quicker to speed through the town.
- The plans as shown to us at the briefing last week bear all the hall marks of limited planning and a less than professional approach:
 - Two maps are used – one is an aerial view of the town centre – probably from Google Earth, which has no scale on it
 - The other is apparently an old OS map at least 11 years old, which doesn't show much of the recent development in the town
 - The two maps do not match up with each other or with the press release which was issued on 29 November
 - No evidence is offered to support the assumptions on which decisions are being made
 - Calculations about speed, traffic queues and flows bear no relation to the experience of those who live in the town and are highly selective
- Radstock deserves better. Its people deserve respect. We congratulate B&NES on having taken the decision to re-examine the position. But they have to show that they want to listen to those who know best – the people of the town.
- Unless a convincing answer can be found to the question, 'Why do we need a new road?' then it must be abandoned immediately.

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Radstock Action Group

The new road proposals are a step in the right direction But the heart of Radstock is still at risk

B&NES has published its latest proposals for Radstock. The most eye-catching change is that Frome Road will not be closed. So you could be excused for thinking that this addresses most of the points that everyone had objected to previously.

Keeping Frome Road open is certainly to be welcomed but, unfortunately, it is not the whole story and it doesn't solve many of the key objections to the proposals.

Under the latest proposals:

- The new link road between Frome Road and the Victoria Hall is still in the plans.
- The Street will still have two-way traffic.
- Fortescue Road traffic will still run in the opposite direction to present.
- All traffic exiting Fortescue Road will still have to turn left regardless of where it wants to go.
- Parking spaces will still be lost.
- Traffic from Wells Hill going to Haydon or the town centre will still have to negotiate a right turn at the bottom of the hill, on a new roundabout.
- Royal Mail vehicles using the Sorting Office will still not be able to access their depot or park outside.
- Only vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes will be allowed on the proposed new link road.

Other new problems arise from the latest proposals:

- All buses will have to use Frome Road either on their way to Bath or other destinations.
- The introduction of a substantial number of pedestrian crossings, largely made necessary by the new road system, will result in parking being further restricted outside shops and Hope House, as parking on zigzags is not allowed.
- All road vehicles including cyclists will have to negotiate 'raised tables' for the full length of the proposed new link road which will also have an island down the middle.

The result of all the above will:

- Fortescue Road will be difficult to reach as drivers will either have to come down the Street and turn left very sharply (not possible for bigger vehicles) or will have to come from Frome Road end across the proposed new link road, through the bus stops and then take a right at a new mini-roundabout at the meeting of The Street and the proposed new link road. Traffic from Haydon will be *relatively* well off as all it will need to do is cross the roundabout
- The Street with two-way traffic will become a heavily noise and air-polluted environment which will deter shoppers. Parking will be very difficult and with the new crossing is likely to prevent anyone parking outside Hope House. Deliveries will be difficult. There will be increased traffic, including multi-axle trucks travelling in both directions.
- Traffic fumes and vibration will pose a threat to the conservation area including the Victoria Hall
- Traffic turning right into the Street from Wells Hill will pose a danger as the new roundabout at the junction of The Street and Wells Hill will require tight turns on a step slope which will be particularly difficult in poor weather conditions
- In a distance of roughly 60 metres, traffic between Frome Road and Hope House will encounter two roundabouts, bus stops on both sides of a raised table and three zebra crossings

B&NES says that:

- There will be lower traffic flows on The Street
- There will be significant journey time savings

But we are not convinced:

- B&NES claims that, by 2016, a journey in peak evening traffic between the Camerton turn off on the A367 and Cypress Terrace (up west Hill) will take 3 minutes 40 seconds. They say it takes 9 minutes 20 seconds at present. We question both these times. To do the journey in 3 minutes 40 seconds, we calculate that you'd have to average over 40mph and this includes passing through the centre of Radstock which will have a 20 mph speed limit – this is just one example.
- We approve of lowering speed limits as necessary but we wonder whether traffic at peak times will really need a 20mph as it will more than likely be in traffic queues.
- The town centre will be less user-friendly especially for many disabled people and those with buggies and small children.
- How can there be lower traffic flows on the Street when it will be two-way as opposed to one-way?
- Extra roundabouts will do nothing to reduce congestion. Is the solution to the congestion caused by the double mini roundabout to insert yet another roundabout?
- Access to Fortescue Road will be more difficult for traffic coming from three of the five main roads that come into Radstock town centre (i.e. Bath New Road, Somervale Rd and Wells Rd) Even traffic from Frome Rd would have to make a right turn across two-way traffic to enter Fortescue Rd if the flow is reversed.
- B&NES claims 40 new jobs will be created, but how many will be lost?

Questions for B&NES

- **Why is the new link road necessary now that the Frome Road is staying open?**
- Previously B&NES argued that this was all for the new NRR housing development. Now they are justifying it on the grounds that it will improve journey times and reduce congestion. What is the real reason?
- Councillor Crossley, leader of B&NES, has said there will be no road unless the housing happens. So why this haste when the housing has not been agreed?
- Wouldn't the money be better spent on positive improvements to the town?
- Why can't the road system stay as it is? It's not perfect but it's certainly better than the proposals?
- Where are the 40 new jobs coming from?

George Bailey

**Statement to Bath & North East Somerset Cabinet, 7th December 2011
Regarding Norton Radstock TRO's**

Initially, I must complain that the latest amendments to the Traffic Orders have been issued part way through the consultation period. These modifications appear to have been issued on the 5th December, according to an email but at the same time, the consultation period ends on the 20th December. To me, this is 15 days, not 21. Even worse, the general public will not be able to see official plans until December 9th and 10th.

The only traffic statistics we hold are those supplied by B&NES in August this year after much nagging: I would classify them as raw data. The figures, shown as an Appendix, depict only traffic in and out of Radstock: there is no evidence whatsoever to the flow within Radstock. For example, a vehicle entering from Midsomer Norton on the Somervale Road might leave on the Frome Road, Wells Hill or Church Street: indeed, it might even be parked for several hours or not leave at all! Without this information it cannot be possible to make such major changes to traffic flow and expect improvements. These statistics also do not show whether vehicles are cars, 'buses / coaches or HGV's. This information is also critical.

On Tuesday evening, 29th November, at the Briefing, Glen Chipp informed us of weight restrictions on the new link road. These do not appear on the TRO's. However, a right turn is now permitted at the bottom of Church Street. Why? Either there is a weight restriction or not!

Whilst we appreciated the Briefing of 29th November, we have not yet seen the Powerpoint presentation which we were promised: without this, fulsome discussion is impossible. The TRO's seem to be constantly changing, what can we discuss?

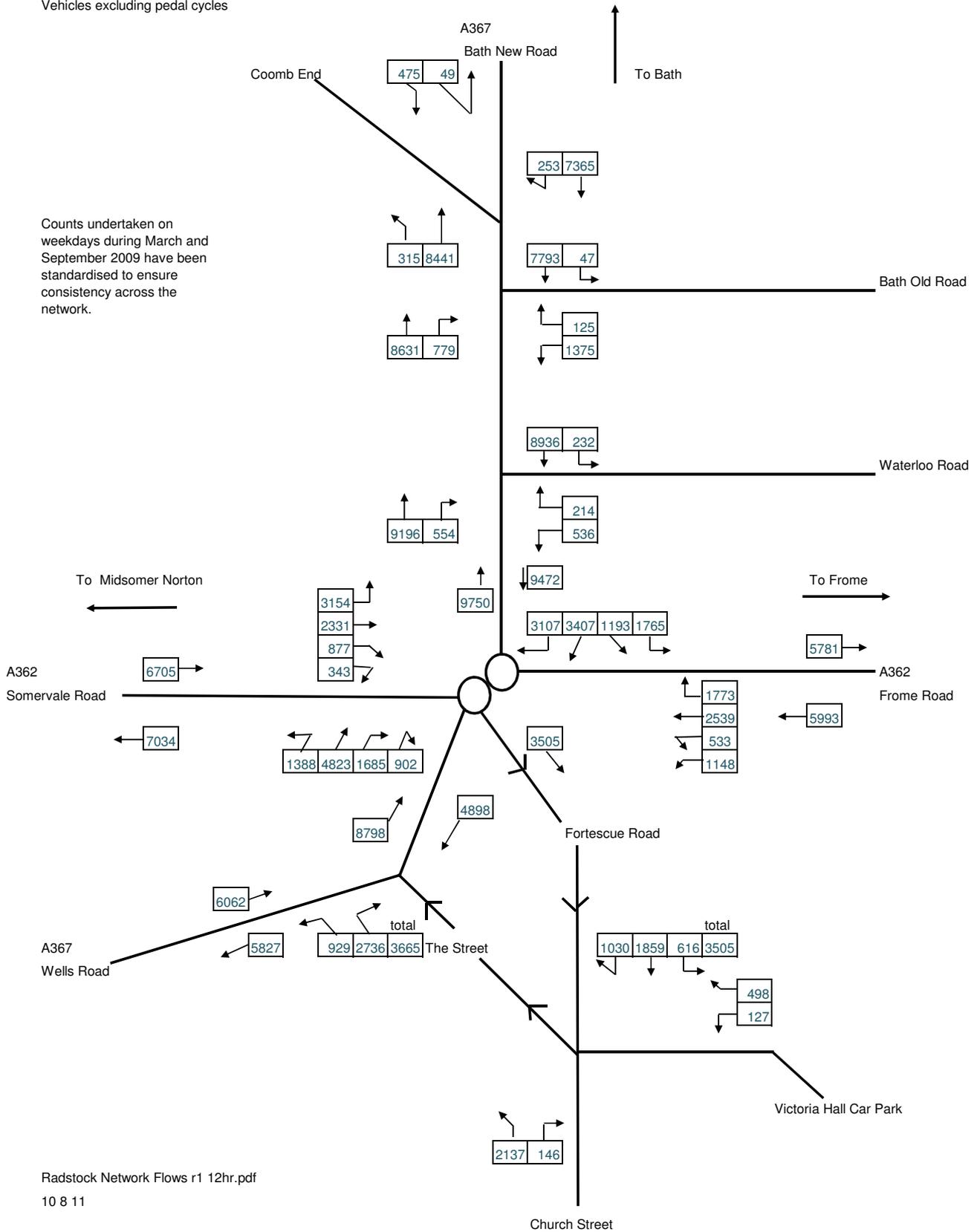
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Radstock Traffic Flows (2009)

12 hours 7am- 7pm Standardised Flows

Vehicles excluding pedal cycles

Counts undertaken on weekdays during March and September 2009 have been standardised to ensure consistency across the network.



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CALL-IN of Cabinet Decision E2328: Improving Access to superfast Broadband

The Economic & Community Development Policy Development Scrutiny Panel considered the Call-in at a meeting on 5-Dec-2011.

The Panel unanimously resolved:

To UPHOLD the Call In request and asked the Cabinet to reconsider the decision E2328: Improving Access to superfast Broadband for the following reasons:

1. The Cabinet to consider the report in the light of additional technical information;
2. The Cabinet to look into improved Impact Assessments including equalities impact statement as well as additional economic and business assessments;
3. The Cabinet to enter into consultation with the wider community; and
4. The Cabinet to provide a full cost benefit analysis.

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Cllr Eleanor Jackson

Statement to Cabinet 7-Dec-11

I am glad to see the members of the Radstock Action Group sitting here in front of you with their Tee Shirts emblazoned with 'Save the Heart of Radstock'. But it is not just a matter of a negative response to a road scheme. We have great plans for developing Radstock, especially through tourism. Tourism is vital to the economy, as is retail footfall, just as in Bath, and indeed the rest of North East Somerset.

Public toilets are essential for tourists. Many tourists are over sixty and they need convenient conveniences. The grey pound is vital for Bath's economy – coachloads of pensioners spending money in the Christmas Market for example. Radstock has a key position on the National Cycletrack, but no public toilets since B&NES closed the existing ones recently.

I do not think that the public toilets policy is right because it does not go far enough. Para 6 in the report to cabinet talks of the risk that B&NES will have to do something about the situation. B&NES Council should embrace the obligation, not treat it in a negative way.

Similarly they should be rolling out superfast broadband. Dr James Weeks from Meadow View, Radstock explained to the last cabinet meeting how vitally important it was. Rural businesses depended on it, and I hoped that cabinet would reverse its decision and take up the offer from government.

Toilets for tourism, retail and visiting business people.

I rest my case.

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Cabinet meeting

Sheila Crocombe – Keynsham resident since 1962

My focus here is the first floor space in the library/one-stop-shop building which may be available for hire.

As a member of Keynsham Community Association I worked with the District Council for 7 years between 1994 and 2001 trying to establish a community building worthy of Keynsham and we failed. The Association disbanded in 2009 disillusioned but I retain an interest in any possible new community provision.

It is disappointing that the new space will in fact be a replacement Council Chamber so the community will have to make do with the times left-over from council business but I would like to flag up one particular group who could make good use of the space if they can get a regular slot and if it has a good sound system.

Keynsham has a thriving Film Club now in its 6th year run by a group of 10 volunteers showing a film once a month at the Fry Club.

This is a very comfortable venue which is not a church or a school and has excellent parking in a safe environment.

We have our own projector and screen which we have to carry and mount each time but we plug into the sound system at the Carter Room and at the moment no other hall in Keynsham can offer this except Broadlands school. This is actually too big and too expensive for our needs and the school has plans for major changes there anyway.

The proposed retractable raked seating is an excellent idea.

If the new space also had a projector unit and screen built-in this could be an income-generator as other groups would welcome it.

The Carter room is 266 square metres and we use about half of it so the new space at 136 square metres would be ideal.

We have 50 members paying an annual fee and our numbers are regularly swollen to about 80 with guests. We find many of our patrons enjoy an evening out here but would not travel further.

Our numbers could be further increased if the venue were accessible by public transport which the Fry club is not.

We do not want to move from the Carter room but this may be forced upon us in the future in which case we would have nowhere to go.

This issue may seem like a detail in the context of this major project but it could make a significant difference to the cultural life of the town – if we get right.

Thank you for your time.

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Roger Busby

Keynsham Town Centre Redevelopment

I am speaking on behalf of the Keynsham Civic Society. When we first saw the plans for the proposed redevelopment of the Town Centre we expressed our concern about the ‘blocky’ design, but were assured that this was not to be the final design. We are now at a stage just prior to the Planning Application and, despite public comment^(a) and representations on the Focus Group, the plans still look like a repeat of the adjacent Riverside Offices.

The proposed roof design has a slope of only 9 degrees, that is, almost flat. The optimum inclination for solar PV panels is 35 degrees, but because the design doesn’t incorporate south facing pitched roofs, the panels have to be almost flat to avoid overshadowing one another.

The draft Core Strategy^(b) envisages a district-heating scheme for this area of the town and yet these plans make no mention of this potential to reduce Keynsham’s carbon footprint, for example, using hydroelectricity from the River Chew across the road.

We have been told that the financial appraisal assumes a life of 60 years for this development. Surely Keynsham deserves a more iconic design than something that resembles the development that went on in the Town in the 1960s.

We consider these proposals to be inadequate on the grounds that the design does not:

1. Reflect the historic market town;
2. Embrace the potential for a district-heating scheme; and
3. Represent sustainable development.

Roger Busby
Keynsham Civic Society

Notes

(a) Over 80% of the more than 2000 people who responded to the Town Plan Questionnaire, wanted “future developments to reflect the character of the old market town”.

(b) Page 110 of the draft Core Strategy.

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