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Date: 7 March 2014

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To: All Members of the Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor John Bull
Councillor Roger Symonds
Councillor Colin Barrett
Councillor Paul Myers
Councillor Charles Gerrish
Councillor Barry Macrae
Councillor Nigel Roberts

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers
Press and Public

Dear Member

Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel: Monday, 17th March, 2014

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel**, to be held on **Monday, 17th March, 2014** at **5.30 pm** in the **Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath.**

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely



Michaela Gay
for Chief Executive

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This Agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

NOTES:

- 1. Inspection of Papers:** Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Michaela Gay who is available by telephoning Bath 01225 394411 or by calling at the Riverside Offices Keynsham (during normal office hours).
- 2. Public Speaking at Meetings:** The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday)

The public may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services at least two full working days in advance of the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays, notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday). If an answer cannot be prepared in time for the meeting it will be sent out within five days afterwards. Further details of the scheme can be obtained by contacting Michaela Gay as above.

- 3. Details of Decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and also circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime details can be obtained by contacting Michaela Gay as above.

Appendices to reports are available for inspection as follows:-

Public Access points - Riverside - Keynsham, Guildhall - Bath, Hollies - Midsomer Norton, and Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

For Councillors and Officers papers may be inspected via Political Group Research Assistants and Group Rooms/Members' Rooms.

- 4. Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register which will be circulated at the meeting.
- 5. THE APPENDED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY AGENDA ITEM NUMBER.**
- 6. Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted.

Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Monday, 17th March, 2014

at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

(a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.

(b) The nature of their interest.

(c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** *or* **an other interest**,
(as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES - 10TH FEBRUARY 2014 (Pages 5 - 10)

For the Panel to confirm as a correct record.

8. WELFARE REFORM - REPORT (Pages 11 - 36)

Report on Welfare Reform is attached.

9. GRAND PARADE AND UNDERCROFT REPORT (Pages 37 - 46)

The presentation on 'Grand Parade and Undercroft' at the meeting is attached.

10. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will update the panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions. This will be a verbal update, there is no report attached.

11. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 47 - 50)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel (Appendix 1).

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Michaela Gay who can be contacted on 01225 394411.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 10th February, 2014

Present:- Councillors John Bull (Chair), Roger Symonds (Vice-Chair), Colin Barrett, Paul Myers, Charles Gerrish, Patrick Anketell-Jones (In place of Barry Macrae) and Nigel Roberts

54 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

55 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Barry Macrae sent his apologies; he was substituted by Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

58 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

59 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Councillor Liz Hardman made a statement on Children's Services Funding. In her statement Councillor Hardman asked that £300k be put back into the budget, ring fenced for Children's Centres. She also asked that, regarding the new model of service for Children's Centres, a one off resource be found to enable a smooth transition.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement asking that £60k be put back into the budget to maintain the bronze level of security for vulnerable people in sheltered accommodation. Councillors Gerrish and Roberts stated that they had been contacted by concerned residents on this issue.

The Chairman thanked the Councillor for their statements.

60 MINUTES - 18TH NOVEMBER 2013

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

61 COUNCIL BUDGET 2014/15 AND MEDIUM TERM PLANS

The Chairman outlined the proposed structure of the debate. He explained that he would firstly ask Tim Richens, Divisional Director – Business Support to give an introduction to the budget report. He would then ask Andrew Pate, Strategic Director – Resources to comment on the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panel's minutes. He explained that Ashley Ayre Strategic Director – People and Communities was in attendance to address any of the Panel's questions regarding Children's Services followed by general debate on the budget and on PDS comments. The Panel will then put forward their recommendations which will be put forward to the Cabinet on 12th February 2014.

Tim Richens, Divisional Director – Business Support introduced the report "Medium Term Service & Resources Planning 2014/15 – 2015/16, & Budget and Council Tax 2014/15" (page 5, Agenda item 8). He highlighted some sections of Appendix 1 (page 11).

Andrew Pate, Strategic Director – Resources outlined the process of the Council budget setting. He referred members to the comments from PDS Panels (page 19) in their November meetings on the Medium Term Plans. He also referred to the report (page 15) where some of the points raised by PDS Panels are summarised.

Ashley Ayre Strategic Director – People and Communities, explained that there is a report on "Re- structuring of Early Years, Children Centre and Early Help (0-11) Services 2014-2016" on the Cabinet agenda for 12th February.

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Gerrish asked Ashley Ayre to comment on the observations of Councillor Hardman in her statement at Item 6. The Strategic Director explained that £500k had been put back into the budget for Children's Services and £300k would go directly to Children's Centres and £200k would go back into direct support for children with additional needs. He further explained that the £500k has enabled the protection of targeted services for families with children with additional needs.

Councillor Barrett asked that the increase in the hire charge for youth groups using Weston Children's Centre be considered again as it may cause some groups to fold. The Strategic Director explained that the charge had been £10 per hour which was not economic and not nearly at market rates. He explained that there would be consultation on charging policy and there would be an opportunity to comment on this.

There was some discussion around a proposal from Councillor Bull on Children's Centres which was agreed and is shown at points 2 and 3 of the resolutions below.

The Revenue Budget 2014/15 (page 14)

Following a query from Councillor Gerrish, The Divisional Director for Business Support explained that there are some estimates as to the cost of administering business rate relief but exact amounts are not known until claims come in. There was some discussion around a proposal from Councillor Gerrish which was agreed and is shown at point 4 of the resolutions below.

Councillor Bull referred to the 'Time Out' Club and asked if they will be provided for. Councillor Gerrish explained that if the Council move out of the Riverside building in Keynsham, the landlord has said that Time Out will have to move out too. He asked that the landlord be encouraged by the Council/Property Services to be positive in handling Time Out and the Town Council – both of whom would welcome support on this. Councillor Bellotti – Cabinet Member for Community Resources gave his reassurance that he would talk to his colleagues about this issue, he stated that he would make sure that Time Out did not suffer.

The Capital Budget for 2014/15 (page 28)

Councillor Barrett asked that the residents of Weston be involved in the future plans for the village regarding flood defence schemes. The Divisional Director explained that, regarding the grant from the Environment Agency, the Council will need to have reassurance of budgetary adequacy and full knowledge of risks involved in any proposed scheme. Councillor Gerrish stated that a key priority for the Environment Agency Flood and Coast Committee (on which he is a representative) in financing schemes is to protect the highest number of properties.

Councillor Gerrish made the general point that recent bad weather had brought unexpected issues (at Midford Road and Kelston Road for example) and will bring unknown costs and he wished to log that this is recognised and work should be done on additional funding for structures. The Divisional Director stated that there are a range of provisions for unknown costs such as contingency funds.

Councillor Paul Myers asked about a transport scheme in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Westfield which would enable a carnival event. Councillor Bellotti (Cabinet Member for Community Resources) advised the Councillor to email the highways department and copy in Caroline Roberts (Cabinet Member for Transport) and himself.

Councillor Anketell-Jones asked about parks funding and how this is allocated. He felt that there is an inequitable distribution of resources as play equipment in his ward is very run down. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the parks funding mentioned is additional spend and that in the budget there is money for parks maintenance. Councillor Gerrish advised close engagement with the police regarding the location of skate parks.

Councillor Anketell-Jones asked if the Victoria Art Gallery had to save £50k again this year. The Cabinet Member stated that it did apply this year and explained that

he had met with the Friends of Victoria Art Gallery and spoken about charging for special exhibitions and other possibilities to generate income.

The Chairman thanked officers and members. He outlined the resolutions of the Panel and explained that he would take these to the meeting of the Cabinet on 12th February.

The Panel **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the conclusions and resolutions from the other PDS Panels and refer them on to the Cabinet on 12th February 2014 for consideration; and
2. To recommend that the Cabinet earmark for the 2015/16 budget £300k to go into Children's Services ring fenced for Children's Centres to allow them to stay open from 9am-5pm. The Panel suggest that this be financed by the on-going resource allocation for the financial planning reserve; and
3. To recommend that the Cabinet set aside £200k of the one off headroom allocation money from the financial planning reserve to enable the smooth transition to the new model for Children's Centres; and finally
4. To ask that the Cabinet give active consideration in its budget setting to additional provision for bus services in new estates/developments.

62 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor David Bellotti – Cabinet Member for Community Resources, updated the Panel on the following:

- Community Asset Transfer – a list for the coming year is set out in the budget report. Councillor Bellotti stated that he is happy to take further suggestions;
- Grand Parade and Undercroft – all is going according to plan. He stated that the Council had only committed to phases 1 and 2;
- Keynsham Regeneration – this project is on budget and on time.
- Cattle Market/Corn Market – The closing date has passed and there are a good number of bids. He stated that the Cabinet will look at the bids and share information when appropriate.
- Midsomer Norton regeneration – all progressing on time.
- Procurement – Some progress being made, slow but in the right direction. He stated that he would report to the Panel on an annual basis showing percentages of local businesses.
- Property – there will be more news in the next few weeks

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Barrett spoke about Percy Boys Club and explained that it was their 70th anniversary in 2017. Councillor Bellotti explained that they had been offered a lease for 99 years on a peppercorn rent. On the issue of procurement champion, Councillor Bellotti advised speaking to the Group Leader.

63 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Panel noted the future workplan.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Welfare Reform Update – March 2014

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is a follow up to the Welfare Reform update given to Resources PDS in September 2013.
- 1.2 At the panel meeting we will have a series of short presentations relating to the latest spend against the various welfare support budgets; the emerging impacts of the reforms to-date and the actions we are taking to meet the challenges ahead.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In September we reported that spending was running slightly below budget for Welfare Support and Discretionary Housing Payments, we highlighted an increase in rent arrears with our Social Landlords and an increasing threat of evictions although it was too soon to draw conclusions about the overall impacts.
- 2.2 The message is still somewhat confusing, although we are close to spending the budget for both Welfare Support and Discretionary Housing payments this year and these are detailed in the report. The Welfare Support budget has been confirmed at the same level for 2014/15 but is to cease as a ring fenced DWP grant after 14/15 and whilst there is likely to be provision within RSG settlement it will be necessary to decide if / how future funding for such a scheme should be provided.
- 2.3 Curo who are our major Registered Social Landlord suggest that Welfare Reform has been a lifeline to some of their tenants and has enabled those tenants to keep a roof over their heads.
- 2.4 They also tell us that there has been a marked increase in debt relief orders this year, arrears continue to grow and there are an increased number of tenants subject to eviction proceedings.
- 2.5 Food banks usage continues to grow as do other innovative ways that the Welfare Support team are delivering support.
- 2.6 Overall Council Tax Collection is on course to emulate previous year performance of around 99% in year collection with relatively good collection rates from those customers paying Council Tax for the first time at around 73% at the end of February 2014.

- 2.7 Some of the Welfare Support fund has been used to help people struggling to pay Council Tax and this has increased since the last report as expected
- 2.8 Bath has followed the National trend when it comes to the reducing number of people claiming job seekers allowance, which is good news. However, this needs to be taken in context with the fact that the number of Housing Benefit Claimants has remained static, despite the introduction of Capping, under occupancy rules and a restriction on uprating. Indeed the spending on Housing Benefits continues to rise. A closer analysis of the job market shows that in actual fact the number of full time jobs has reduced and the increase is being met from part time work.
- 2.9 The changes to Income Tax contributions has put more money in the pocket of working people, but for those on tax credits, there has not been a big benefit and this contributes to the effect on people struggling to meet a rising cost of living
- 2.10 Evidence from analysis of tenants facing pre eviction proceedings does suggest that whilst they also are likely to have Council Tax arrears these are people who are no longer on out of work benefits, but people who are struggling in low paid jobs with significant debt related problems.
- 2.11 The Connecting Families team is now operating at full capacity and is proving a successful solution for some of our most vulnerable families, having claimed about 50% of the rewards on a payment by results approach at the half way point in the project 107 families have been included on the scheme and a total of 8 families have now been signed off the programme completely.
- 2.11 The Universal Credit Pilot has now come to an end here in Bath, it highlighted the real benefits of working together with the DWP and produced some real success stories. However, the Job Centre has been unable to continue the same level of its support to joint working since December because Bath Job centre went live with Universal Credit National roll out on Monday the 24th February and resources have had to be channelled in to preparing for this.
- 2.12 Universal Credit in Bath has at this stage only been rolled out to a small cohort of claimants; these are single people who are new claimants to Job Seekers Allowance. This cohort is set to expand over the next year and will start to include couples and families. The Council's role in supporting this is limited and we have recently signed up to a local delivery partnership which will be closely monitored
- 2.13 Members may recall that the Council is now a partner in the Governments Transformation Network programme which is sponsored by CLG and the Cabinet office and we are using this to develop a

business case for reviewing the way we deliver Welfare Support across Bath & North East Somerset to enable people to get in to sustainable work. To-date we have run workshops to look at the Customer journey and we are working with a wide range of partners & stakeholders to develop a joined up and innovative solution to this problem.

- 2.14 In a recent visit to Bath Job Centre Lord Freud commended the work we had done as a Pilot authority and approved of the model we use for addressing the needs of our most vulnerable clients, in particular our partnership working in our One Stop Shops and he indicated this may be a preferred model for Local Support Services in the future.
- 2.15 Early indications from the work we have been doing suggest that co-location with key partners including the DWP will be beneficial, as would an expansion of the model used by Connecting Families for our most vulnerable members of society. The Governance for this should sit within a Local Support Service Framework and could potentially fall under the remit of the Health & Well Being Board.

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- 4.0 Social Fund
- 5.0 Size Criteria
- 6.0 Benefit Cap
- 7.0 Discretionary Housing Payments
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- 10.0 Connecting Families
- 11.0 Other Information & Impacts

3.0 Council Tax Support Scheme

3.1 Members will recall that in November 2012 we set a new tax base for the current year. This tax base calculation took in to account the fact that Council Tax Benefits were being abolished and replaced by a local discretionary scheme of Council Tax Support.

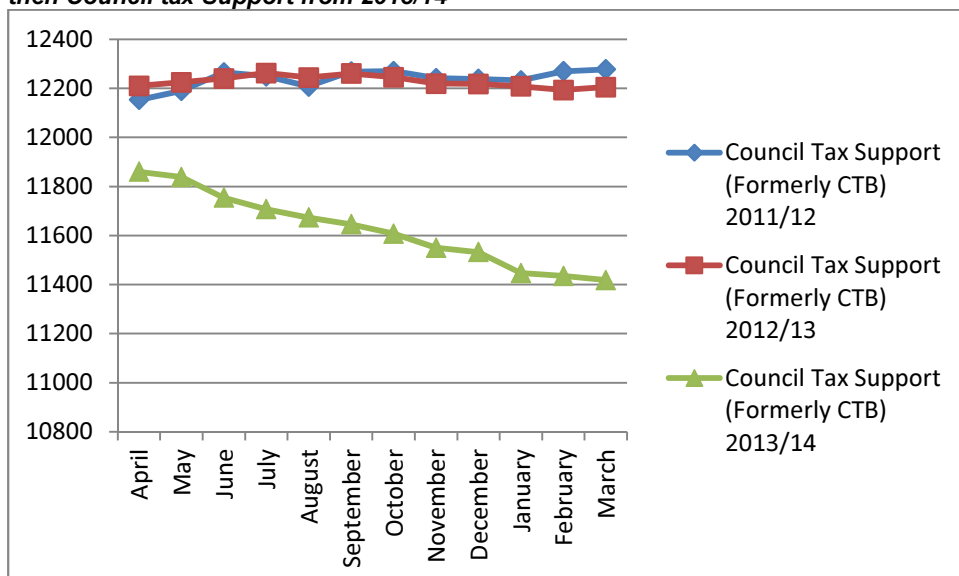
3.2 Bath & North East Somerset had to find a shortfall in funding of £1.5million and set a tax base and support scheme to reflect this. The scheme set out to protect the most vulnerable and encourage people in to work.

3.3 *The Council Tax Support scheme was agreed by full council on the 8th November 2012, more details about the scheme can be found at <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits-and-grants/benefits/council-tax-support-april-2013>*

In 2012/13 we awarded Council Tax Benefit in the sum of :-	£10,500,000.00
As at 31/08/13 the Council Tax Control Account shows that we have awarded Council Tax Support of:-	£9,241,202.94
As at 28/02/14 the Council Tax Control Account shows that we have awarded Council Tax Support of:-	£ 9,152,018.02
Overall funding provision for the Council & Major preceptors in 2013/14 amounts to:-	£9,419,000.00

3.4 The total number of claimants eligible for Council Tax Support has reduced over the year; and due to the very good payment rates amongst all client groups there has not been an adverse impact on the collection fund and this has enabled an higher collection rate to be assumed in the calculation of this year's tax base which in turn helps to maintain a Council Tax freeze

This graph shows the number of households receiving Council tax Benefits in 2011 to 2013 and then Council tax Support from 2013/14



Period covered to the end of:	All Council Tax		Non CTR Accounts		Prev Max CTB		Prev Non Max CTB	
	Collection Rate 2012/13	Collection Rate 2013/14	Collection Rate 2012/13	Collection Rate 2013/14	Collection Rate 2012/13	Collection Rate 2013/14	Collection Rate 2012/13	Collection Rate 2013/14
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
April	11.13	11.22			0			
June	30.31	29.87			0			
August	49.09	48.58			0			
October	68.20	67.52			0			
		86.02		86.37%		54.48%		68.01%
December	87.20	86.30		87.35%	0	56.80%		71.93%
February	95.50	98.31		98.53%	0	73.49%		88.85%
Out-turn	99.00				0			

3.5 At the November meeting of full Council it was agreed that in cases of hardship we should provide temporary support through use of our Social fund allocation.

3.6 This fund is administered by the [Welfare Support Team](#) and is assessed on a case by case basis.

	Number of discretionary awards for Council Tax Support	Amount Paid to date
Sept 13	44	£4,490.67
Feb 14	160	£23,347.90

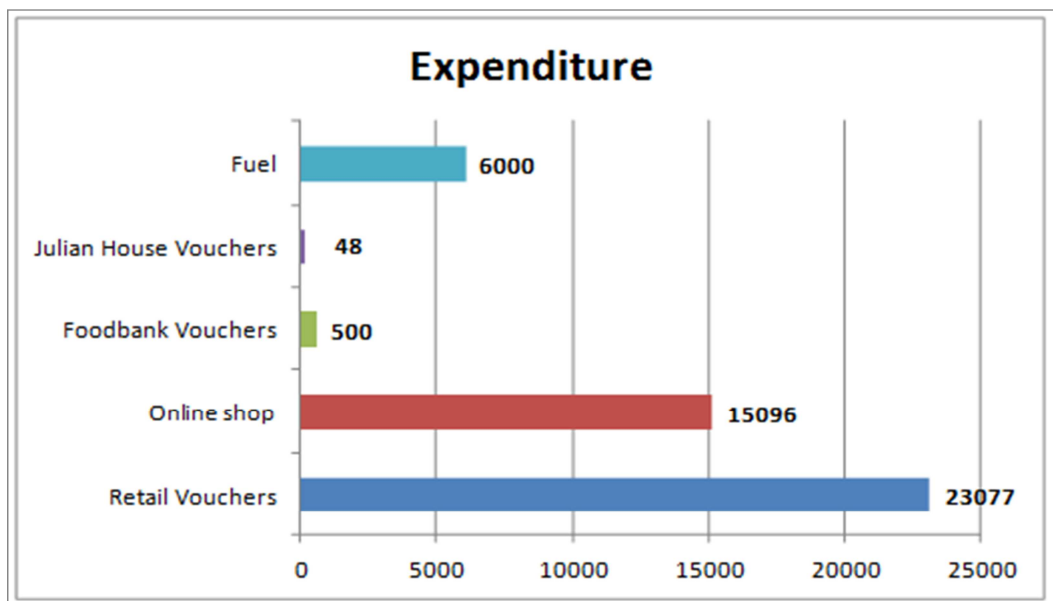
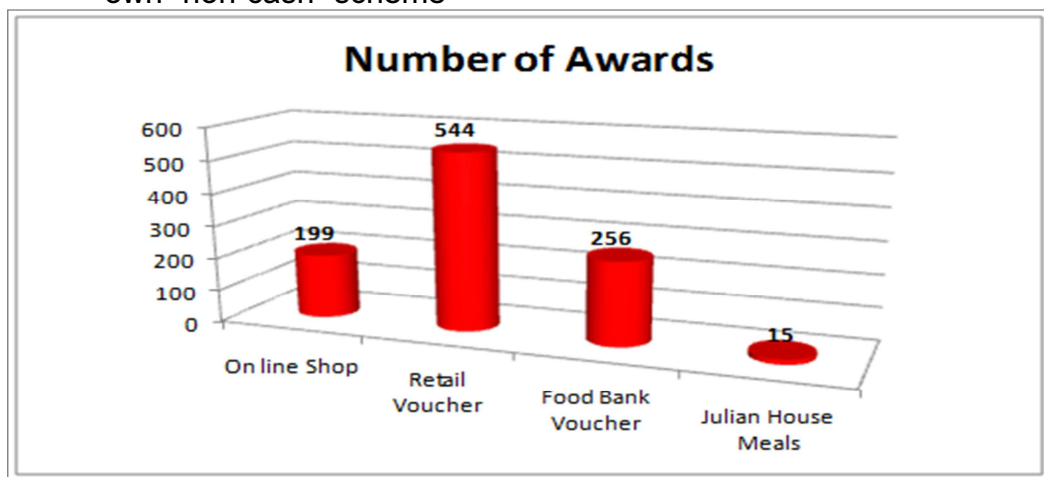
(Funded from £249,260 Social Fund Allocation)

3.7 The majority of awards granted are to assist those customers who:-

- Face delays or changes to their DWP income
- Referred by CAB/Reach due to debt etc.
- Cover a period of hardship

4.0 Social Fund

- 4.1 The council was allocated £249,260 by the DWP as its share of the Social Fund this year and although there were no mandatory responsibilities to provide the same or similar provision to the one previously administered by the DWP we did at very short notice set up our own local welfare Support Scheme. *More details about the scheme can be found at: - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits-and-grants/benefits/welfare-support-scheme>*
- 4.2 The Scheme is administered within the Customer Services Directorate by our Welfare Support Team.
- 4.3 In addition to the Council Tax hardship awards already mentioned the scheme is in two sections, discretionary awards to cover short term emergency Support and non-emergency support for basic household items.
- 4.4 **Emergency Support to cover daily crisis** - This covers elements of the social fund previously administered by DWP and now part of our own “non-cash” scheme



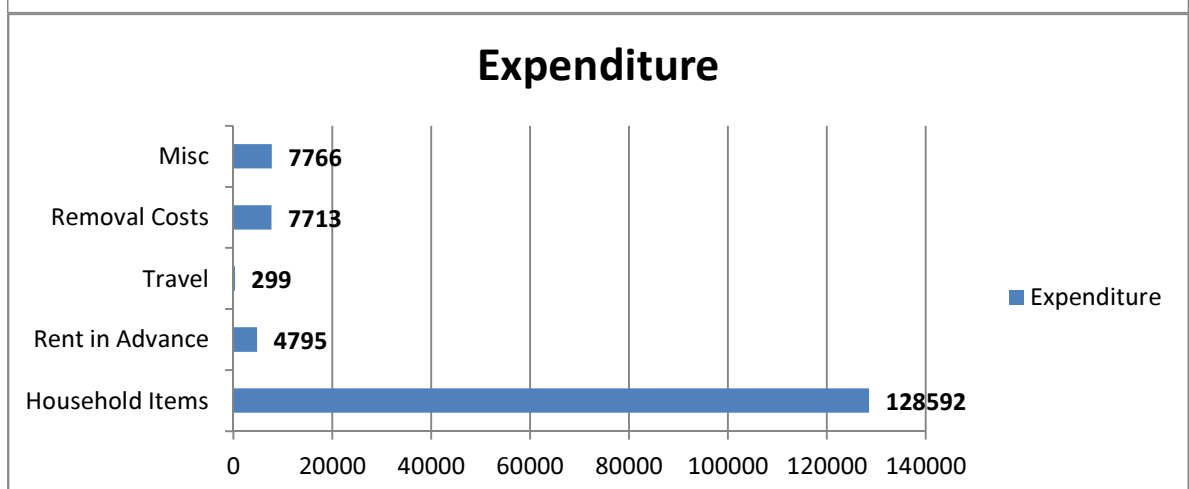
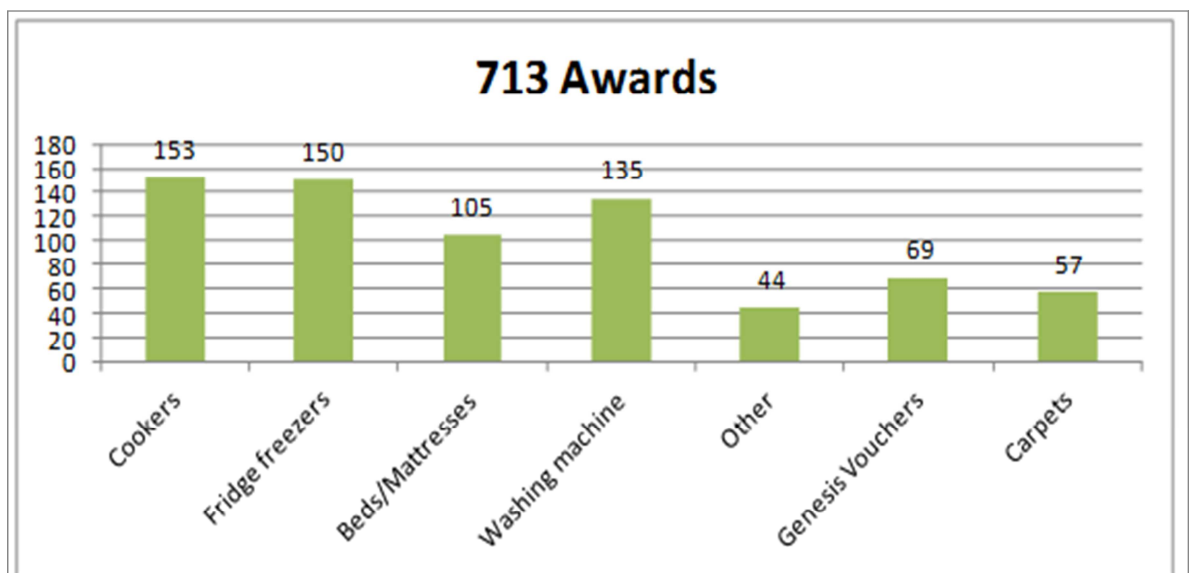
4.5 The majority of claims continue to be made by DWP customers and those who appear to live hand to mouth on a daily basis. Most applications result from:

- DWP sanctions
- Debt problems
- Poor budgeting skills
- Loan repayments
- Irresponsible spending

4.6 Conditions for financial help normally include:

- Money Advice
- Bristol Credit Union
- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Reach/Drugs & Homelessness initiative (DHI)

4.7 Non-Emergency Support



- 4.8 Basic household items are purchased to support the homeless and those moving to affordable housing. This is deemed essential support to those who have been placed within accommodation with no means to vital household possessions.
- 4.9 Where possible we use local suppliers and charities such as Sofa Project, St Johns, Genesis Furniture Project and St Monica Trust etc. to reduce or share the costs. The welfare Support Team has agreed with Genesis Furniture Project a voucher scheme whereby customers are awarded an amount to spend on essential items. Quite often the Genesis Furniture Project will add additional items free of charge to support the needs of the customer.
- 4.10 We have also been working closely with the Council's Recycling Team to reuse suitable items of furniture brought into our Recycling Centres. The project aims to make furniture available to people the Council are assisting to set up home or for those trying to maintain their place in the community.
- 4.11 Although it's early days, it is exciting to think that a good proportion of the high volume of furniture brought to the sites for recycling will instead directly benefit local residents.

- **Budget**

Number of discretionary awards	Annual Budget	Amount Paid to date	Average award Per Claim
1662	£249,260.00	*£211,235.59	£127

** includes the £23,347.90 for Council Tax Support cases*

- 4.12 In order to prevent the retail voucher scheme from being abused, Bath Foodbank Centre has agreed that the Welfare Support Team can issue foodbank vouchers as alternative means to those who may not use the retail vouchers for the purpose to which they are intended. In order to provide on-going support to the Bath Foodbank Centre the Welfare Support Team will continue to support emergency supplies.

- **Number of Refusals 1130**

- 4.13 Principal reasons for refusing support are mainly excess income, DWP sanction, lack of evidence or non-acceptance/compliant of conditions. There are also those who only want cash, therefore rejecting all other offers of help

- **Partners/stakeholders**

- 4.14 The Welfare Support Team has attended many internal and external meetings to promote the Welfare Support Provisions. The team has

identified areas of joint working and shared cost, also acknowledged who and what can provide similar or alternative means of support. There is still a lot more departments and organisation that would benefit from joint working and the intentions are to meet as soon as possible.

4.15 The team are currently working alongside

- CAB
- Reach/DHI
- Curo
- Bristol Credit Union
- Money Advice
- Freeways
- Sirona
- Adult Care
- Children centres
- Family Information Service
- Housing

5.0 Size Criteria

5.1 The issues with size criteria were well reported in September, this chart shows how this has changed over time...

Date	Total No. of Claims	Change	25%			14%		
			No. of claims	Total Weekly Restriction	Average Weekly Restriction	No. of claims	Total Weekly Restriction	Average Weekly Restriction
01/04/2013	868		165	£4,602.51	£27.89	703	£10,470.88	£14.89
01/05/2013	851	17	160	£4,474.26	£27.96	691	£10,300.73	£14.91
01/06/2013	841	10	154	£4,315.39	£28.02	687	£10,235.15	£14.90
01/07/2013	835	6	149	£4,186.43	£28.10	686	£10,231.03	£14.91
01/08/2013	825	10	145	£4,069.90	£28.07	680	£10,138.28	£14.91
01/09/2013	810	15	142	£3,992.24	£28.11	668	£9,939.58	£14.88
01/10/2013	806	4	137	£3,864.47	£28.21	669	£9,983.75	£14.92
01/11/2013	797	9	141	£3,988.06	£28.28	656	£9,841.83	£15.00
01/12/2013	734	63	121	£3,436.76	£28.40	613	£9,217.94	£15.04
01/01/2014	727	7	121	£3,417.88	£28.25	606	£9,129.58	£15.07
01/02/2014	727	0	123	£3,477.78	£28.27	604	£9,091.50	£15.05
01/03/2014	714	13	114	£3,225.16	£28.29	599	£9,032.55	£15.08

- 5.2 There has been a lot of press coverage about this issue and some successful appeals have led to some cases being reclassified.
- 5.3 The number of cases affected has now reduced to 714 and this is due to a variety of reasons, from people moving in to more appropriate accommodation through to clarification of circumstances leading to a change in the classification.
- 5.4 The reason for the reduction of 63 cases between November and December is largely due to the exemption that was uncovered by an appeal case which meant that people who had been in continuous receipt of Housing benefit since April 1996 should be exempt from the new rules, this loophole has now been closed and the exemption will cease from the 2nd March 2014.
- 5.5 As previously noted some of these cases have been supported with Discretionary Housing Payments whilst they seek alternative accommodation.

6.0 Housing Benefit Cap

- 6.1 The Housing Benefit Capping rules were introduced in Bath on the 31st July 2013 and as shown in the table below it has only affected a small number of households. Original DWP estimates suggested this number would be much higher but through early pro-active work (Some through the Universal Credit Pilot) and cleansing of the data the numbers were reduced before go live. There was then a steady increase as cases were verified. This now seems to have stabilised.

This table shows the number of cases impacted by the Benefit Cap and the reasons for movement off the Cap

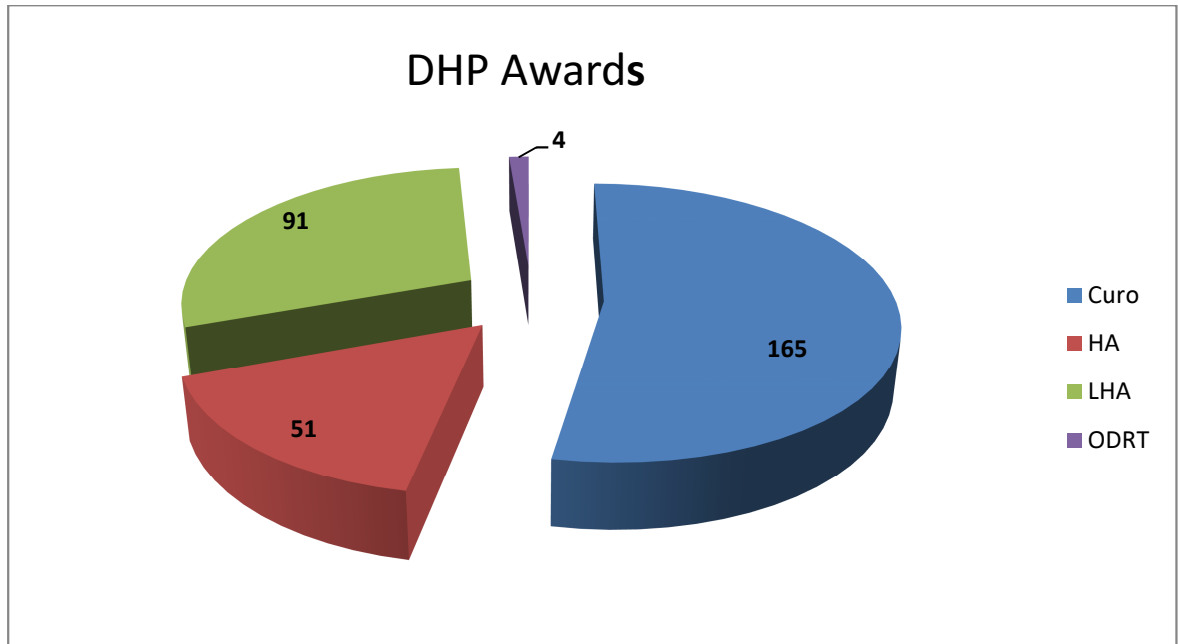
Date	Total No. of Claims
01/08/2013	2
01/09/2013	6
01/10/2013	12
01/11/2013	12
01/12/2013	11
01/01/2014	10
01/02/2014	11
01/03/2014	14

Reasons for Cap ending	
Started work	3
Dependant moved out - now under cap	1
Partner moved in - working	1
Partner now receiving PIP	1
Moved out of area	1
Rent decreased	1

- 6.1 The Welfare Support Team have carried out 12 visits with a further 3 appointments and 2 reclaims as a means to addressing employability and hardship issues.
- 6.2 £17,147.16 has been awarded to 10 customers who are impacted by the Benefit Cap through the local Welfare Support fund.
- 6.3 From the visits carried out, 3 customers have returned to work, 3 are actively seeking employment and 1 has demonstrated an interest in some form of training.

7.0 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

7.1 Number of Awards



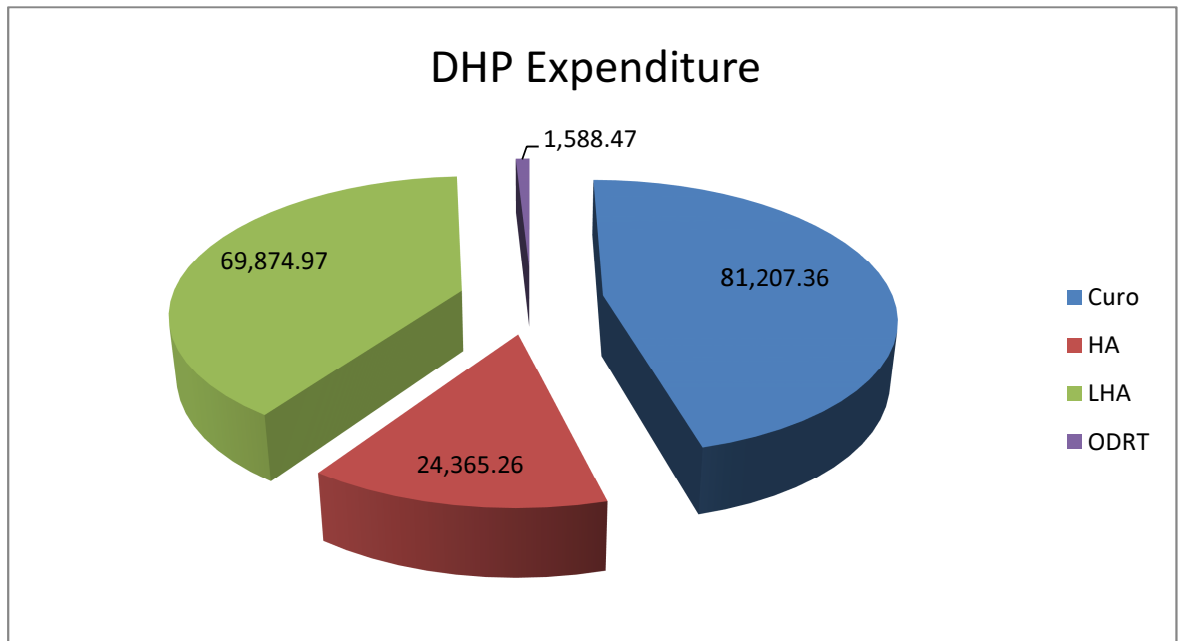
LHA – Local Housing Allowance claimants

HA – Housing Association claimants

CURO – Curo claimants

ODRT – Private sector claimants not subject to Local Housing Allowance, eg) cases subject to individual rent officer decisions

7.2 Paid to Date



7.3 Current expenditure is on a par with the predicted amount at this point in time; funds remain available to provide on-going support to cover Benefit Cap and Universal Credit claims.

	Number of DHP Awards	Total Amount paid out	Average Award Per claim	Annual Budget	Remaining Budget
Sept 13	196	£94,434.82	£463	£243,479.15	£149,044.33
March 14	311	£194,635.42	£625	£243,479.00	£48,843.58

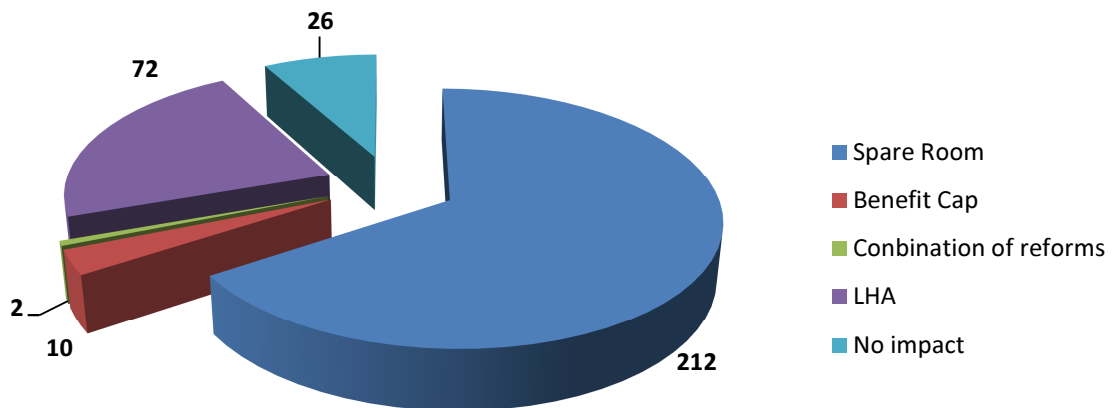
7.4 Discretionary awards are provided to cover a particular point of hardship. Decisions are based upon:

- Income versus expenditure (disabled income is taken into account and offset by any care/mobility costs)
- Level/period of need
- Medical/health factors
- Referred by an organisation and supported by evidence
- Other factors such as, fleeing domestic violence etc.
- Compliance to any conditions that may be attached to award (debt advice, moving etc.)

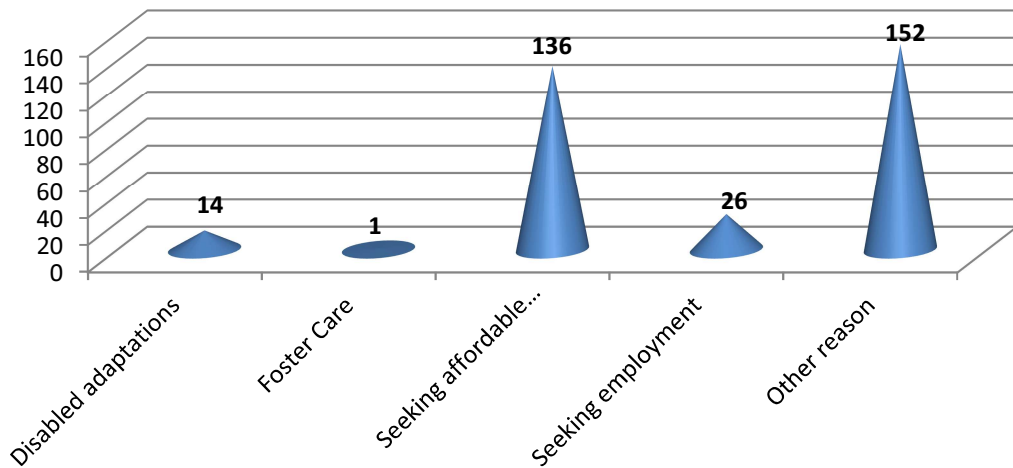
7.5 Period of payment can vary depending on a person's set of circumstances, financial help maybe provided for longer than 13 weeks if they can demonstrate/evidence that their circumstances will change/improve (examples – moving, employment, benefit change, dependants birthdays etc.).

7.6 Due to several welfare changes since 1 April 2013, discretionary housing payments now cover a number of housing benefit restrictions.

DHP Reasons



DHP Outcomes



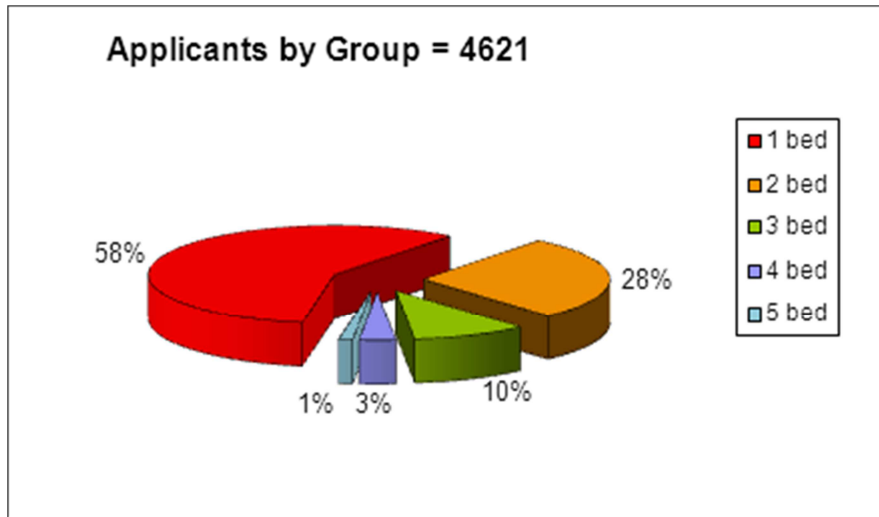
8.0 *Universal Credit*

- 8.1 Universal Credit is the cornerstone of this Government's Welfare Reforms, it is a well-publicised change in the way Benefits are administered, which aims to bring together 6 existing Benefits in to one single assessment.
- 8.2 The implementation of this process was due to commence National Roll out in October this year but due to its complexity it has been plagued by delays, primarily in relation to the IT. The Universal Credit programme's main concern is that it lands safely and securely.
- 8.3 Bath Job Centre went live as a National rollout site on the 24th February 2014 and is only one of 10 sites across the Country operating the new system. Initially the customer base only applies to new claimants for job seekers but will expand to include couples and families over the next twelve months.
- 8.4 DWP will present an update to Members at the meeting, setting out the experiences from the first few weeks of operation and explaining the latest plans for expanding the claimant groups.
- 8.5 The Council's role in supporting the DWP is captured in our recently agreed Local Delivery partnership which indicates that the Council will:-
- Provide support to UC Service Centre staff around housing issues that may arise.
 - Support for claimants to get on-line and stay on line.
 - Manual processing for Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
 - Support for claimants with complex needs and in particular those who require personal budgeting support.
 - Work with Universal Credit Programme in preparing landlords'.
- 8.6 In providing this support the Council will be able to invoice the DWP for any work done under these headings to an agreed budget limit.

9.0 Housing Services – Housing Options and Homelessness

9.1 The Housing Register was fully reviewed in May 2013, there are now 4621 households on the register. The number increases, on average, by approximately one hundred households per month.

Households on the Housing Register February 2014 split into bedroom need:



9.2 Since the spare room under occupation subsidy has been removed, there has been an increasing demand for smaller accommodation. The highest demand is for one bedroom properties, at over 58%.

9.3 The Housing Register gives priority to social housing tenants who need to downsize to smaller properties. Currently fifty eight households have priority to downsize as a result of the removal of the spare room subsidy.

9.4 Some Social Landlords in the West of England are now asking for advance rent from tenants on benefits before the start of new tenancies. Advance rent may be required to offset the risk of losing rent which is being paid directly to tenants under Universal Credit. Some Social Landlords are also seeking to limit access to Affordable Rent Tenancies with an affordability test.

9.5 There has been month by month increase in people seeking Housing Advice from Housing Services. Prevention work has meant that this has not led to an increase in Homeless Applications. The most significant reason for people presenting as homeless between April – December 2013 was notices and evictions for private rented tenants. Homelessness has been prevented by finding alternative accommodation, negotiating with landlords and use of discretionary funding.

9.6 The number of rough sleepers has increased since 2013, the annual estimate at the end of November identified thirty three (33), up from twenty two (22) in 2012. The increased demand for one bedroom properties in social housing as well as the reduction in the availability of properties within the LHA has exacerbated this problem.

9.7 Our major RSL, Curo has commented that...

- *the impact of welfare reform will be cumulative over the coming years – our rents are going up at RPI (3.7%, plus £2 if they are not at target rent – **this is a formula set by the government**), council tax support is reduced and other benefit uplifts are limited to 1% - so people will have less money in their pockets to pay their rent or Council Tax. All this at a time when there is a proliferation of high-cost lenders who can get money in your account in minutes. We predict that demand will increase.*
- *We are very concerned about the prospect of the welfare support funding ending & would urge the Council to consider what alternatives they will put in place. Customers who are working with the CAB on average have debts that are 10 times their monthly income – and we predict that this will get worse **unless action is taken to better regulate these lenders.***
- *There has been a marked increase in Debt Relief Orders this year*
- *We are also very concerned at the current proposal to restrict customers housing costs under UC if they are deemed to be working too few hours & no Housing Benefit for under 25's.*
- *Arrears are increasing **and we are finding that many of our peers are reporting increased arrears this year.***
- *We have re-written our arrears procedures so that they escalate more quickly*
- *At the same time we are increasing our pre-tenancy checks and will have a much more detailed affordability check in place – means we will be saying no to customers who cannot afford to pay the rent and service charges.*
- *We are finding increasing numbers of customer's are struggling to pay "affordable rents" – which is the tenure that all current new-builds and a percentage of relets have to be let on – these are 80% of the market rent. **Affordable rents were introduced when grants were reduced.***
- *We have increased our in-house provision and commissions with advice providers.*
- *800 customers in BANES are at Notice Seeking Possession Stage or higher*
- *124 of these customers have a court order that they are in breach of **and our account managers are working with them to remedy the breach. If they do not engage then their home is at serious risk.***

10.0 *Connecting Families*

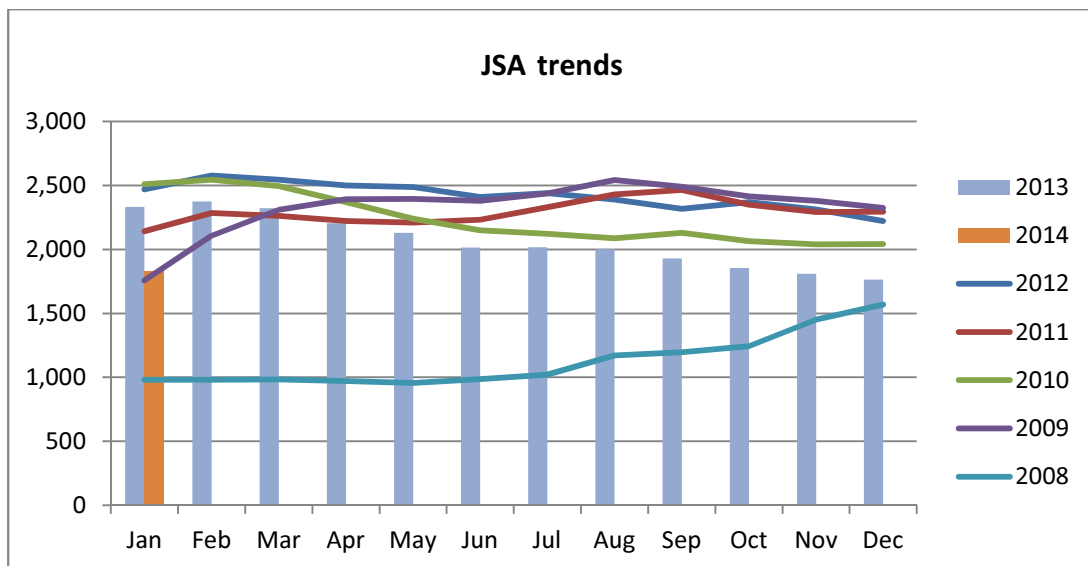
- 10.1 The last report outlined the work done by Connecting Families team and it is now developing in to a really effective model for dealing with some of our most vulnerable families who are identified in the programme as meeting 2 or 3 national criterions.
- 10.2 Connecting Families Team have submitted a second payment by results claim to the Troubled Families Unit, bringing the total to 107 claims which equates to 50% of the total target for the 3 year programme.
- 10.3 To date we have claimed for the following outcomes:-
- 81 education/crime/anti-social behaviour
 - 26 continuous employment
 - 10 Progress to work
- 10.4 Out of the 43 families the core team have worked with, 8 have been closed. These have been given a sustainable action plan and linked to other agencies and services they can access. They can always come back to us for help if needed.
- 10.5 As part of their profile on the family, key workers now complete outcome stars directly from the scaling questions on the action plan. This is more visual and helps the family to visibly see their progress over time, and to identify any areas that are not improving.
- 10.6 One of the key successes of the programme has been the use of a small core team and the adoption of matrix working approach with partners; Curo are already working effectively as part of the matrix team and have officers on the ground tackling the issues. They have learnt that “not one size fits all” and workers have to approach families in different ways.
- 10.7 Paula Bromley who is leading this work is currently looking into recruiting some volunteers from Bath Christian Action Network (BathCAN) and Southside Family Project to work as volunteers doing light touch work with our families when the core team key worker closes.
- 10.8 There is potential to upscale this project to 2020 and increasing the criterion used to bring in more vulnerable groups, this approach could also be linked to the work being done with the Transformation network and offers a real opportunity to develop a One council approach to our most vulnerable residents not just those with young children.

11.0 Other

11.1 Employment and Economic Activity

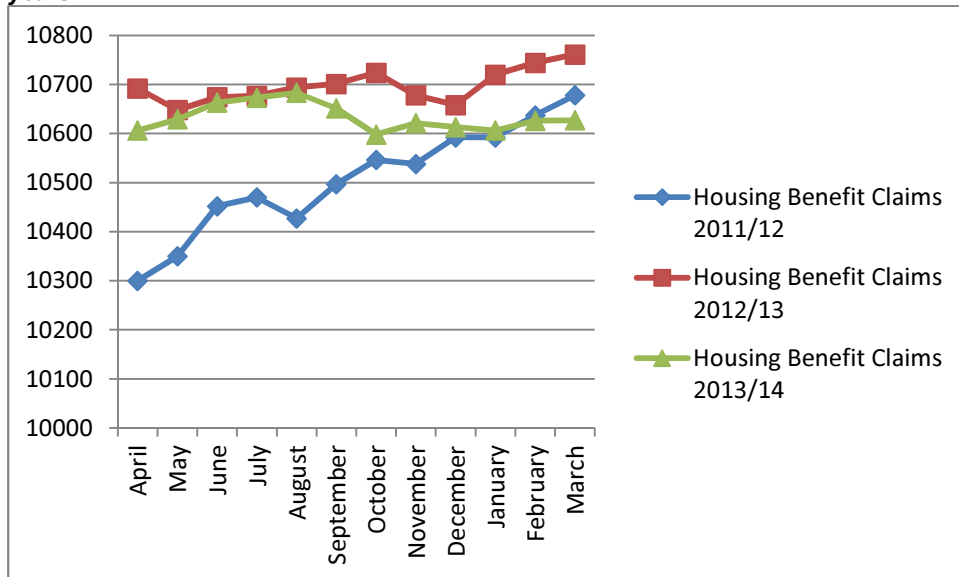
JSA Figures since start of 2009 Recession

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	change from 2012	change from 2013
Jan	982	1756	2508	2142	2468	2331	1827	-137	-504
Feb	981	2107	2544	2284	2577	2373		-204	-2373
Mar	984	2310	2495	2262	2545	2321		-224	-2321
Apr	972	2391	2369	2222	2500	2203		-297	-2203
May	955	2395	2238	2209	2486	2130		-356	-2130
Jun	987	2379	2148	2231	2410	2015		-395	-2015
Jul	1020	2437	2122	2330	2438	2016		-422	-2016
Aug	1170	2541	2086	2430	2389	2002		-387	-2002
Sep	1197	2488	2129	2465	2317	1929		-388	-1929
Oct	1245	2415	2065	2350	2368	1855		-513	-1855
Nov	1452	2379	2038	2292	2311	1809		-502	-1809
Dec	1570	2324	2041	2293	2221	1765		-456	-1765



11.2 Housing Benefits

This graph shows the number of households in receipt of Housing Benefits over the last three years.



11.3 The number of live Housing Benefit claims is now at similar levels to three years ago. Anecdotally we believe this is linked to the fact that most new jobs are low paid and part time and also that more people qualify for Housing benefit because of increasing rents.

11.4 Bath Foodbank

	Vouchers Redeemed	Adults	Children	Total
Oct 13-Jan 14	554	697	291	988
Oct 12-Jan 13	553	753	338	1091
Increase	1	-56	-47	-103
Increase %	0.18%	-7.44%	-13.91%	-9.44%

11.5 Wards with greatest numbers of vouchers issued: Twerton (152), Southdown (118), Abbey (101) with 172 unknown location.

11.6 Context – *'Bath Food bank use has stabilised over the last 6 months. Some months are up and some down. We have done some work on cutting down on multiple use which may partly be the explanation.'*

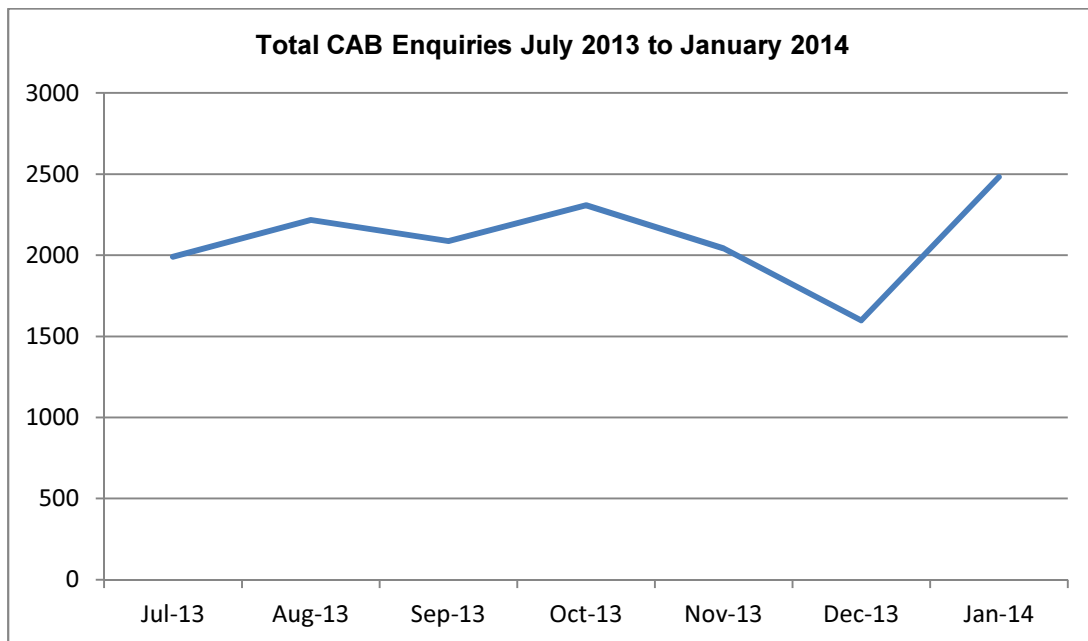
11.7 This historic increase can be seen in the 220% increase in referrals between Q1 2012/13 and Q1 2013/14 (as presented to Panel in a previous update).

11.8 This comparison includes food parcels given out by [Lifeline](#) – they give out much smaller food parcels to those whose lives are much more chaotic, particularly drug and alcohol misuse. Food bank gives to those experiencing a temporary crisis.

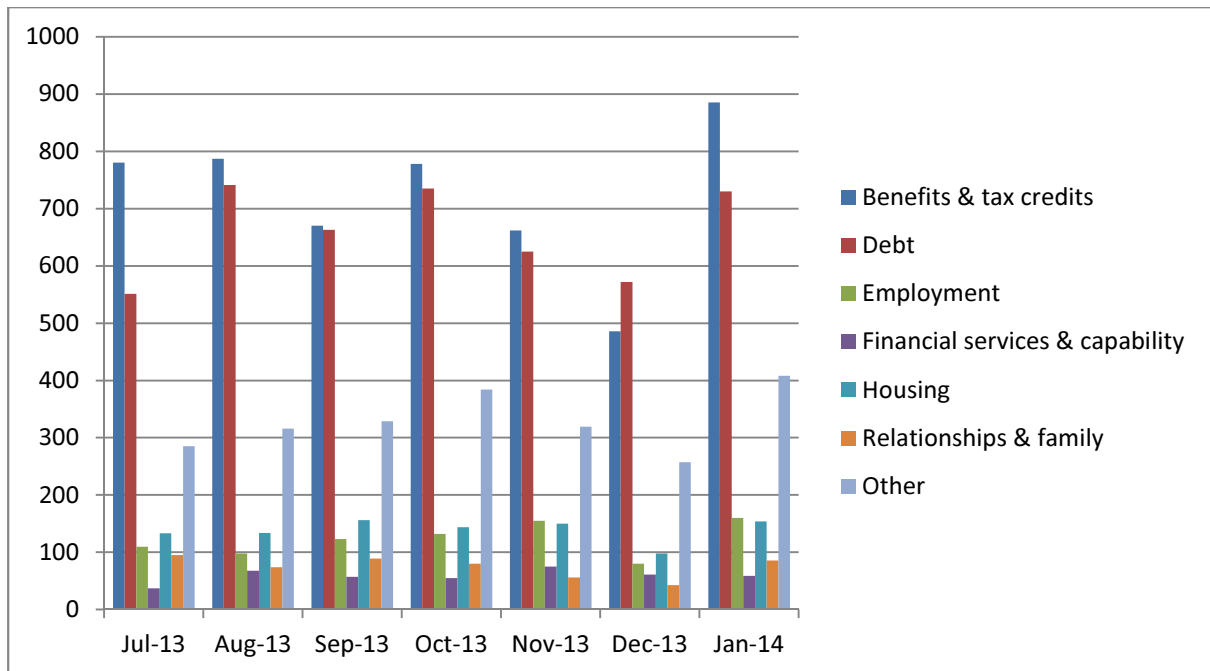
11.9 In addition to the work done through our own Welfare Support Team we are aware that Genesis enrol the following people/organisations to issue food bank vouchers on their behalf

- Health visitors
- Children centres
- 5 GP practices (names unknown)
- 3 Schools (names unknown)
- CAB
- JCP
- Mental Health Teams
- Social Services
- Reach
- DHI

11.10 Citizens Advice Bureau



11.11 Overall numbers of CAB enquiries have remained fairly stable since July 2013, with a notable drop over the Christmas period.



11.12 Enquiries for Benefits/Tax credits and Debt remain the largest enquiry groups at an average 66% of total enquiries from July 2013. For Benefits, the majority of enquiries were around eligibility/entitlement (43%). For debt advice, the majority of enquiries were concerning liability for debt and dealing with debt repayments (58%).

11.13 Community Regeneration's Worklessness Programme Team have between April 2012 – February 2014 - Overall Team Achievements of two Engagement Officers (Young People Leaving Care and General Over 25s claiming for over 1 year an out of work benefit):

- Successfully engaged 110+ (aged 16-59) clients both at early stage support, through to 6 months off out of work benefit or in Employment.
- 42 individuals in over 16 hours Jobs and Apprenticeships, while taking an active role in increasing their paid hours and sustaining such clients.
- Paid activity under permitted working on benefits under 16 hours for circa 12 individuals
- Delivering successful Forwards Work Clubs for General Out of Work Benefit claimants (mainly Work Programme Returners and Connecting Families), 11 of 20 attendees supported into paid work.
- Saved over 62K (April 2012 to February 2014) in out of work benefit savings and counting.
- Prevented homelessness and custodial sentences for a number of clients.
- Developing innovative solutions to enduring problems around economic wellbeing.

Data Sharing

11.14 Continues to be a barrier to developing a cohesive response to Welfare Reforms. However, as part of the successful bid to the Public Transformation Network the Council is working with CLG and the Cabinet Office to overcome barriers and develop a system for enabling much wider sharing of data to enable better analysis and joined up responses to deliver earlier preventative solutions.

Commissioning Advice & Support

11.15 As previously reported we have learnt from co-locating partners within our One Stop shops that there is duplication in the work that the Council, Partners and Voluntary Organisations provide and with smarter commissioning of some of these services we can improve the way we do this.

11.16 Council has recognised that a more coordinated strategic approach is required to the provision of Information and Advice and this work is now progressing.

Acknowledgements

Jon Poole & David Singleton	Collating information about many of the impacts and creating the Wi-ki link
Teresa Welch;	Providing an update on the work done by the Welfare Support Team; Social Fund replacement and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's)
Debbie Stevenson	Checking and updating information relating to Housing Benefit; DHP and Social Fund issues
David Waters; Maxine Wilson; & Sara Kennedy	Information relating to Council Tax Support; Benefit Cap & Size Criteria
Paula Bromley	Information relating to Connecting Families
Mike Chedzoy	Home Search and New Housing Allocations Policy information

Abbreviations:-

DWP	Department For Work & Pensions
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
LGA	Local Government Association
SSSC	Social Sector Size Criteria
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
RSL	Registered Social Landlord

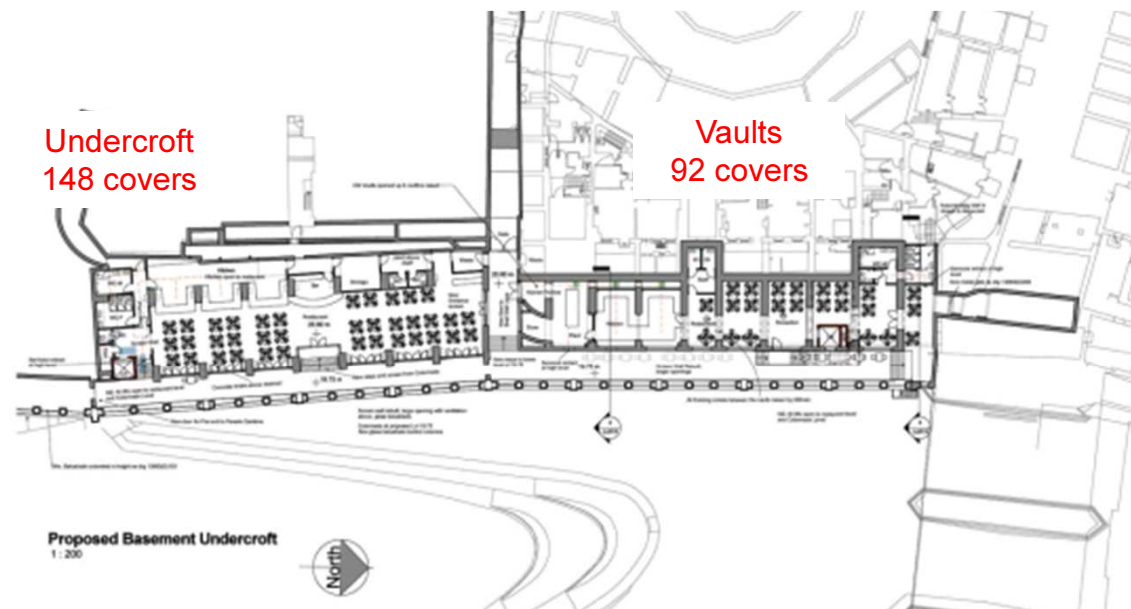
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Grand Parade & Undercroft
Resources PDSP Presentation
17th March 2014

Making Bath & North East Somerset *the* place to live, work & visit

- Emphasis on securing pre-let agreements for restaurant tenants (as required under Cabinet approval)
- Restaurant specialist marketing agent (Fleurets) has been appointed to lead the marketing
- Viability has been re-affirmed, including more detailed (positive) soft marketing testing
- Adverts to appear in Estates Gazette (Trade Journal), Bath Chronicle and Bath Life at end of March
- Lease terms include licenses for outdoor eating / drinking, plus restrictions for deliveries and waste removal



Planning Application

Phase 1: The Colonnades

- Pre-application comments received
- Further meetings held with the Planning and Conservation Officers to discuss pre-application comments
- Foyer designs updated to take on-board comments about openness of the structure (see before and after images opposite)
- Full planning application currently being compiled
- Key stakeholders have been updated on designs and programme
- Public exhibition will be held once the planning application has been registered



Design Development

Phase 1: The Colonnades

- Key features of the detailed design include:
 - Two restaurants situated in the Vaults and Undercroft
 - Restaurant floor levels raised to the 1:100 year flood level (in consultation with the EA)
 - New access routes to The Colonnades from both the southern and northern end of Grand Parade
 - Boatstall Lane (and the East Gate) re-opened
 - Future opportunities preserved to open links with Parade Gardens and Slippery Lane

- Surveys have been completed and the results analysed by the Project Team

- Cost plan is on-budget

- Main Contractor's have been pre-qualified and shortlisted for tender



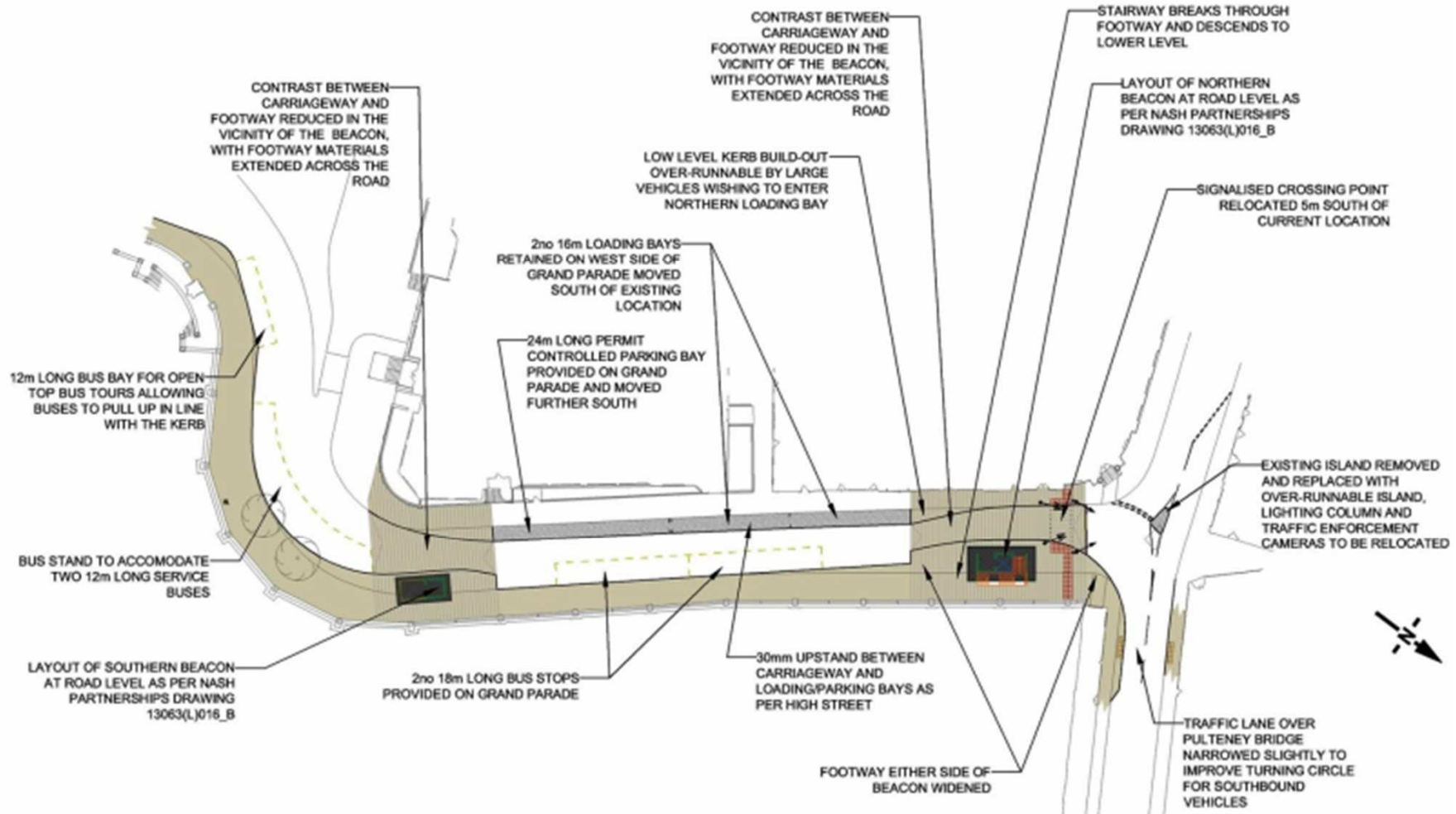
Design Development

Phase 1: The Colonnades



Highways

Phase 1: The Colonnades



- April 2014 Submit planning applications
- Summer 2014 Pre-Let Agreements executed
- Autumn 2014 Start construction works
- 1st Quarter 2015 Complete construction works
- Spring/Summer 2015 Complete restaurant fit-out works
- Spring/Summer 2015 Restaurants open for business

NB. The project team has now developed a detailed implementation programme following initial design work and consultation with stakeholders. This programme is now agreed and is in place. The previously declared timeline has therefore been superseded.

Progress Update

Phase 2: Guildhall Market

- Nash Partnership appointed to design an enhanced market in consultation with key stakeholders
- Design to address the current waste storage issues in the Guildhall car park area
- Semi-permanent market structure that connects with the existing market hall
- Attractive (uniform) market stall designs
- To be delivered in tandem with Phase 1



Q. Can you guess how many bins are in these photos?
A. 27. This is a serious issue!

- Opportunity to bring unused / derelict space above retail units into residential accommodation
- Opportunity to re-look at the retail offer on Newmarket Row
- Timing to suit expiry of existing leases from 2015 onwards





Making Bath & North East Somerset *the* place to live, work & visit

RESOURCES PDS FORWARD PLAN

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or Michaela Gay, Democratic Services (01225 394411). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website and at the Guildhall (Bath), Hollies (Midsomer Norton), Riverside (Keynsham) and at Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

Resources PDS Forward Plan

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Anticipated business at future Panel meetings

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Strategic Director Lead
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 17TH MARCH 2014				
17 Mar 2014	Resources PDS	Grand Parade and Undercroft Report	Tom McBain Tel: 01225 477806	Andrew Pate
17 Mar 2014	Resources PDS	Welfare Reform Report	Ian Savigar Tel: 01225 477327	Andrew Pate
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 12TH MAY 2014				
12 May 2014	Resources PDS	Shared Services (with other Local Authorities)	Andrew Pate Tel: 01225 477300	Andrew Pate
12 May 2014	Resources PDS	Financing and Support Services for proposed Gypsy and Traveller Site (Lower Bristol Road)	Andrew Pate Tel: 01225 477300	Andrew Pate
12 May 2014	Resources PDS	Performance Management Update	Steve Harman	Andrew Pate
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 21ST JULY 2014				
ITEMS TO BE SCHEDULED				
21 Jul 2014	Resources PDS	Impact on Customers of Organisational Development and Workplace Programmes - Update	Ian Savigar Tel: 01225 477327	Andrew Pate

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Strategic Director Lead
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES : Michaela Gay 01225 394411 Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

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