

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Wednesday, 11th June, 2014

Present:

Councillor Paul Crossley	Leader of the Council
Councillor David Dixon	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Simon Allen	Cabinet Member for Wellbeing
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
Councillor David Bellotti	Cabinet Member for Community Resources
Councillor Katie Hall	Cabinet Member for Community Integration
Councillor Caroline Roberts	Cabinet Member for Transport
Councillor Dine Romero	Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth
Councillor Ben Stevens	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

17 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

18 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Paul Crossley declared an 'other' interest under the Code of Conduct in item 14 on the agenda (Radstock Ecology Mitigation Programme) as a Board Member of the Norton Radstock Regeneration (NRR) company. Councillor Crossley would be taking part in the debate and voting.

21 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

22 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 16 questions from the following Councillors: Liz Hardman (3), Geoff Ward (4), Anthony Clarke (3), Liz Richardson (2), Vic Pritchard (2), Martin Veal (2).

There were no questions from members of the public.

[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.]

23 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Robert and Anna Morgan raised their concerns in terms of their stall at the Guildhall Market. Councillor Paul Crossley advised that he would meet Robert and Anna Morgan with relevant officers to discuss this issue.

Rachel Mercer in a statement [a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website] expressed her concern about pedestrian safety within the village of Combe Down, in particular on the zebra crossing on North Road between the junctions of Stonehouse Lane and The Firs. Rachel Mercer presented a petition with 228 signatures that supported her call for a change to be made.

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones said that he made a statement at the last Cabinet meeting and that he was very encouraged by the response from Councillor Stevens. Councillor Anketell-Jones quoted Councillor Stevens, who said 'if the budget was to continue and the Victoria Art Gallery was left out in the cold, they would struggle'. Councillor Anketell-Jones commented that this was exactly what he had been saying for the last two years. Councillor Anketell-Jones also quoted Councillor Stevens, who said 'the plans he (Councillor Anketell-Jones) referred to are beginning to be thought about to change the gallery operating model to make the Gallery more sustainable'. Councillor Anketell-Jones added that everyone knew that the Gallery had been operating on unsustainable business model.

Councillor Anketell-Jones asked if he could get updates from Councillor Stevens on the progress towards sustainability of the Victoria Art Gallery.

24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14th May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

26 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

27 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

28 APPROACH TO SHARED SERVICES AND CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT WITH NORTH SOMERSET

Councillor David Bellotti introduced the item by saying that he would be quite happy to move the recommendations. Councillor Bellotti said that it was really important to have a purpose in looking at working with other people and the main purpose here was to improve the quality of services for B&NES residents. At the same time, it would be possible to make some savings. Those savings could either be used to avoid an increase Council Tax or to increase the level of services provided. The Council had been already working with a lot of local partners in the area, such as Sirona. The Council had been also working with neighbouring Councils in some areas, such as a jointly managed Audit service with North Somerset.

Councillor Bellotti said that Councillor Crossley had had a number of very useful meetings with the Leader of the North Somerset Council, and also some individual Cabinet Members had met with their equivalents from the North Somerset Cabinet, in order to discuss shared services.

Councillor Bellotti concluded his introduction by saying this was about delivering services to our residents in better way.

Councillor Bellotti moved the proposals.

Councillor Crossley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Crossley said that there was one change in the report. The following should be added at the paragraph 6.1 of the report: '...but only where this does not contradict or lessen the impact of the Think Local procurement strategy'.

Councillor Crossley also said that the B&NES Council had had a prior record of working with different organisations and partners across ex-Avon, Wiltshire and Somerset. This would be a growing model of the future. This proposal was not only about saving money, it was more about delivering better services with better value to residents.

Councillor Crossley added that there were quite a few meetings between senior officers from both Councils, which helped towards building the trust and interest between two Councils.

Councillor Katie Hall said that she was delighted to see this paper on the agenda. Councillor Hall appreciated the thoughtful way of talking with the North Somerset Council over the past 18-24 months, instead of rushing into this agreement. This was all about service improvement and doing this in more modern and efficient way.

Councillor Bellotti summed up by saying that even though B&NES Council had been in discussion with North Somerset Council, this Council would welcome an opportunity to work with other neighbouring Councils in future. Councillor Bellotti also said that, in terms of working with local partners, he was particularly pleased that the Police in Bath had expressed an interest in having a presence in our One Stop Shop. In the years to come there would be great developments with other Councils, local partners and voluntary organisations.

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

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE:

- (a) further opportunities to join up services internally;
- (b) develop work with local partners in Bath & NE Somerset; and
- (c) work with other Councils where our services could benefit from joint working;

(2) To APPROVE the Co-operation agreement;

(3) To AUTHORISE the Leader to sign it on behalf of Bath & North East Council; and

(4) To ASK for a progress report in 12 months on the joint work that is developing.

29 COMMUNITY REGENERATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2014-15

Councillor Eleanor Jackson in an *ad hoc* statement drew Cabinet's attention to page 27 of the report, related to Digital B&NES. Councillor Jackson felt that this was an excellent initiative for investment of Council resources into and she also welcomed an investment into the River Corridor Fund. Councillor Jackson also said that the Midsomer Norton Business Centre was not accessible by public transport.

Councillor Dave Laming in an *ad hoc* statement said that this day represented a quite significant day in the history of river. The lease of the Boathouse had been finalised as headquarters for the River Corridor Group. This Council for the first time confirmed budgetary recognition of the river. Councillor Laming also said that he had received full support from a senior director of Wessex Water. Similar support had been received from an Environment Agency and the Canal and River Trust. All of this was possible with support from the leadership of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet. Councillor Laming also thanked the Strategic Director for Place for her contribution towards the River Strategy.

Councillor John Bull in an *ad hoc* statement commented that broadband connectivity in Paulton had not been included in Digital B&NES programme. Councillor Bull felt that the scheme was not completely successful considering that residents in other parts of B&NES had provided their own cables in order to link to the BT system. Councillor Bull said that all parts of the authority would need to be connected.

Councillor Ben Stevens introduced the item by saying that this was really good news for all residents in B&NES. Councillor Stevens thanked Councillor Laming for his kind words and for his efforts for bringing the river into the forefront.

Councillor Stevens said that the Digital B&NES scheme had been trailed for the last few months and it would deliver wireless network in Bath, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Keynsham. That would offer a significant boost in tourism and convenience for residents. It would also offer a superfast broadband in Enterprise Area, which would help businesses. Councillor Stevens highlighted an ongoing work with the BIDUK to deliver superfast broadband in rural areas. This would cover all but few thousand premises across B&NES.

Councillor Stevens said that comments from Councillor Jackson about public transport connections with the Midsomer Norton Business Centre would be picked up by the relevant Cabinet Member.

Councillor Stevens moved the proposals.

Councillor David Dixon seconded the proposal.

Councillor Dixon said that this report showed how Council would support businesses in the area.

Councillor Dixon said that he was pleased to see that the Minerva Rowing Club would receive some funding to provide basic facilities.

Councillor Dixon was also pleased that the Midsomer Norton Business Centre would receive some funding.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that this was really good news for B&NES. This was about provision of vibrant economy and vibrant place across the whole of B&NES. An expansion of Digital B&NES would address some current inadequacies. Councillor Crossley also praised commitment from Councillor Laming towards the River Corridor Group and highlighted Council's pledge of investment in the river. Councillor Crossley was also pleased for investment in the Minerva Rowing Club and the Midsomer Norton Business Centre.

Councillor Stevens summed up by saying that this would support local businesses and help them grow.

On a motion from Councillor Ben Stevens, seconded by Councillor David Dixon, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the following provisional items for inclusion within the 14/15 capital programme:

- River Corridor Fund - £340k to include support towards:
 - Minerva Rowing Club;
 - Edge Protection at Widcombe;
 - Riverside linkages through Pulteney Bridge to Cleveland Place;
- Digital B&NES - £350k;
- Midsomer Norton Business Centre - £125k; and

(2) To DELEGATE authority to the Strategic Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development to draw down the funds.

30 RADSTOCK ECOLOGY MITIGATION PROGRAMME

Councillor Eleanor Jackson said she was speaking as Meadow View resident. The other residents in the road felt that this was a misuse of Council funds and it was the developer's responsibility to look after the ecological mitigation.

Councillor Jackson questioned whether £400k should be put in this programme. Councillor Jackson felt that this would set a worrying precedent because developers would now claim that their site was not viable.

Councillor Jackson also said that these proposals did not leave any way for a proper scrutiny for this measure, if executed by the B&NES Council.

Councillor Jackson requested that this report should be sent back for a further consideration.

Debra Porter said that the Council would need to commit to claims made by the developer. Debra Porter also said that it was important that the Council should not inflate the ecological value of a significantly diminished ecological resort. The ecologist would accept the package but only if it does what it said it would. Debra Porter suggested that the proposed money should go elsewhere instead of where it was proposed by the report and called this report a financially unviable plan.

Colin Currie addressed his concerns on the plan and also his concern that the developer would not look after the ecological mitigation.

Jason Shore in an *ad hoc* statement said that he was speaking in support of the regeneration project. Jason Shore also said that he did not understand why the regeneration had not happened yet and there was nothing in Radstock to keep people in the locality. The focus should be on building more shops in Radstock. In his view, the trade was declining in Radstock and soon it could become a ghost town.

Hayley Worth in an *ad hoc* statement said that she had lived in Radstock for long time and asked for how long Radstock would stay the same place. Hayley Worth said that more homes and shops would give more opportunities to people in the area. The regeneration should start and the town should be moving forward.

Councillor John Bull in an *ad hoc* statement said that the purpose of the paper was to agree the allocation of the funding to this particular project in Radstock. Councillor

Bull expressed his concern that money had been paid to developers for something which they were responsible for under the planning decision.

Nettie Williams in an *ad hoc* statement said that she worked with Radstock families for some time and that the regeneration of Radstock should continue to happen. This plan showed a great level of commitment for the future of Radstock. The Victoria Hall refurbishment had had a big impact on Radstock so further regeneration could only move Radstock forward.

Shane Kitchen in an *ad hoc* statement said that he grew up in Radstock and that had business in Radstock. Shane Kitchen would like to see the regeneration move forward. It would increase employment and contacts with Bristol and other cities.

Councillor Ben Stevens introduced the item by saying that he listened to the concerns on mitigation and ecological impact though he was satisfied that this plan could go forward. Councillor Stevens said that for far too long the Norton Radstock Regeneration project had been held up by a small group of people and that he was quite happy that there were people in Radstock who wanted to move forward.

Councillor Stevens moved the proposals.

Councillor Simon Allen seconded the proposal.

Councillor Allen said that 26 years ago the last train left Radstock train station. Councillor Allen said that there were still people who did not want Radstock to move forward. Councillor Allen also said that he was pleased that there were residents who wanted to move forward with the regeneration of Radstock. This would deliver affordable homes for people of Radstock. What had been happening in Radstock now, in terms of the regeneration, was a positive thing.

Councillor Tim Ball said that Radstock would need to move forward and supported the plan.

Councillor Paul Crossley said that there was no mishandling of money in Radstock. Radstock is an important part of B&NES. Councillor Crossley read out paragraph 5.5 of the report and said that this was good news for Radstock and it would allow regeneration to happen. Councillor Crossley also praised the Victoria Hall regeneration. Councillor Crossley said that the Cabinet would move Radstock forward and this plan was good news for Radstock.

Councillor David Dixon said it was great to see younger families in the Chamber tonight. The Victoria Hall had been a success. This plan had been created to enable regeneration happening. This would provide new homes and more amenities to local community. This paper was a big step forward in delivering the regeneration of Radstock.

Councillor Ben Stevens summed up that we would need to continue momentum. Councillor Stevens also said that this paper facilitates the regeneration

On a motion from Councillor Ben Stevens, seconded by Councillor Simon Allen, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To AGREE that the Council will work in partnership with Norton Radstock Regeneration Company and its development partner Linden Homes Ltd to undertake the responsibility to deliver the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan for the former Great Western Railway lands to support the delivery of new highway, homes and jobs in Radstock; and

(2) To ALLOCATE up to £400k of the existing capital budget for the capital costs of the Ecological Mitigation, Compensation and Management Plan with future revenue costs met from associated savings in corporate borrowing costs.

31 FUNDING APPROVAL FOR INDICATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Councillor Eleanor Jackson in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website*] said that this subject and a version of this paper came to the meeting of the PDS Panel for Housing and Major Developments on 27 May 2014, where it was generally welcomed by panel members.

This Panel was a good place to discuss the proposals because the measures recommended clearly needed to be seen in the wider context of housing delivery in Bath and North East Somerset, and the difficulties experienced in a number of the current major projects in getting adequate amounts of affordable housing built. Councillor Jackson suggested that the Resources PDS Panel should scrutinise this matter.

Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group) in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website*] said that Linden Homes were clear that they were not going to pay the proposed S106 agreement due to their responsibility to their stakeholders and asked why the Council would have to pay for this out of taxpayers money.

Councillor Dave Laming in an *ad hoc* statement said that the title might be misleading. Not many people in the area could afford houses so the Council should be looking to invest into homes, like mobile homes.

Councillor Paul Crossley asked if all Cabinet Members had read a Public Interest Test circulated as an appendix to the report.

All Cabinet Members confirmed that they had read the Public Interest Test.

Councillor Paul Crossley asked if all Cabinet Members agreed that appendix 1 of the report be exempt from publication.

All Cabinet Members agreed.

Councillor Paul Crossley informed the meeting that if any of Cabinet Members would want to refer to information from exempt appendix, then he would exclude the public from the meeting and move into exempt session.

Councillor Tim Ball introduced the item by saying that paper had been about homes for people. Councillor Ball said that there had been partnership work across the

authority, with different housing associations, to ensure there were affordable homes and social housing. Councillor Ball also said that he was pleased that Councillor Jackson welcomed the report and assured that appropriate Scrutiny would be taking place.

Councillor Ball informed the meeting that we were the only authority in the country to hit its target on delivery of affordable homes. 610 affordable homes had been delivered within four year programme across the district. Councillor Ball congratulated officers and thanked them for the hard work they put in this report.

Councillor Ball highlighted that there were quite a lot of details in the papers on how the Council would deliver affordable housing, including S106 details.

Councillor Ball moved the proposals.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal.

Councillor Crossley thanked Councillor Jackson for her comments on this report and commended her commitment towards housing for disadvantaged and excluded groups.

Councillor Crossley said that the Council would be committing a significant capital budget to provide homes. The most substantial problem was the cost of the land in B&NES, which makes building of the affordable homes extremely difficult.

Councillor Simon Allen said that building homes for people was one of the most important things that this Council had been doing. Councillor Allen also said that this was a vital document which would be interrelated with future S106 agreements.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the allocation of £1.015m Affordable Housing Capital budget for 2015-18, as detailed within Appendix 1; and

(2) To DELEGATE the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning, to approve allocations of Affordable Housing Grant and Commuted Sums for developments falling within the scope of the indicative 2014-15 programme.

Councillor Paul Crossley closed the meeting at this point and read out some of tweets that arrived during the duration of this meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

CABINET MEETING 11th June 2014

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

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

- Robert Morgan
Re: Local Government Ombudsman Findings
- Anna Morgan
Re: Local Government Ombudsman Findings
- Rachel Mercer
Re: Pedestrian Safety
- Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones
Re: Victoria Art Gallery

Re: Agenda Item 14 (Radstock Ecology Mitigation programme)

- Cllr Eleanor Jackson
- Deborah Porter (Cam Valley Wildlife Group)
- Colin Currie

Re: Agenda Item 15 (Funding Approval for Indicative Affordable Housing Development Programme)

- Cllr Eleanor Jackson
- Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>At the Council budget meeting on 18 February, 2014 it was agreed "To earmark an on-going revenue allocation of £300k for 2015/16 onwards to be ring-fenced to further reduce the savings required specifically relating to Children's Centre Services. It is intended that this funding will be allocated as part of the 2015/2016 revenue budget"</p> <p>I have looked at the consultation on the future of Children's Centres and I am finding it hard to see what difference this £300K has made. The model of service delivery now proposed seems very similar to that proposed before the additional £300K became available.</p> <p>Please can you tell me how it is proposed to utilise the £300K ongoing revenue allocation and what difference this reduction in the savings target will make to the services that will be provided in Children's Centres?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The consultation is taking place on the emerging model for Children's Centres considered at the Cabinet meeting on 12th February. The Council's budget meeting took place on the 18th of February, after Cabinet had considered the proposals and asked officers to consult on them. The intention is to review how the £300K should be allocated once we see what comes out of the consultation. The utilisation of the additional £300K will be covered in the July Cabinet report.</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>There is nothing in three proposals in consultation booklet that takes account of extra allocated money. At what stage there will be a consultation on how this extra money would be used?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>We are in the process of consultation and we are looking to find out how we can deal with the reduction in money for these particular services. Usually there are two options – either to reduce what you are doing or to do things differently. We are looking to reconfigure the service to suit the actual needs and we are looking what those needs are. We are looking to target those families with the biggest need, making sure we are funding front-facing services to continue to be effective and efficient and also provide better value service. By looking into all of these issues we can find out what these savings will be and also how much money we will need to do this. We know what the current spend is in different areas so we are consulting on what the needs are, following the consultation with the stakeholders and other parties. When we know what is fully needed, then we will be able to ensure that what we are able to do would not have unintended consequences. At the moment I cannot give a proper and full answer. The model will be much clearer after the meeting in July 2014.</p>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>At the Council budget meeting on 18 February, 2014⁵ it was agreed to "To allocate a sum of up to £200k in 2014/2015 to support the transition and implementation of the new delivery model for Early Years and Children's Centre Services. This funding will be allocated from the Council's Financial Planning Reserve as may be required during the financial year".</p> <p>Please could you provide a detailed breakdown of how this allocation is to be spent?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The £200K will be used to ensure there is a planned and managed transition to the new models for all the services affected by the budget reductions during 2015/16. It will also fund capacity building in the local market, particularly with the local voluntary sector, to support the formation of local partnerships and capacity to manage council contracts associated with the delivery of the Early Years and Children's Centre services. This will be covered in July Cabinet report.</p>		

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>During the budget process, it was agreed to permanently delete £500K of the savings originally required from the Early Years and Children's Centres base budget in 2014/15 and subsequent years.</p> <p>Please could you tell me how it is proposed to utilise this additional £500K and what difference this reduction in the savings target has made to the services that will be provided in Early Years and Children's Centres?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>Proposals for utilising the £500K were included in the Cabinet report on the 12th February in appendix 4.</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>What are the specific proposals now which differ from the Cabinet report in February which would use an additional money given to children centres and children services?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The model itself will dictate how the money will be spent, so more information will be available after July 2014.</p>		

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>What measures are being taken to prevent gull breeding on Council owned buildings in Bath this year? Please provide the scale of works in comparison to last year.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p>Officers from the Environmental Protection team met with colleagues from Property Services earlier in the year to discuss treatments for Council owned buildings. From those discussions the following buildings are being treated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Guildhall • Victoria Art Gallery • Southgate Street (3 properties which are owned by B&NES) • Northgate House • Lewis House • The Pump Rooms <p>Each building will receive 4 visits throughout the breeding season. Nests will be inspected and if they are empty and unoccupied, they will be removed. If there are eggs in the nests then these will be replaced with dummy eggs.</p> <p>In 2013, there were trials of 'bird gel' on the roof of the Roman Baths Kitchen rather than egg replacement treatments on any other buildings.</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>Despite these works detailed in your response, are you really happy with the state of streets?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p>I will be happy when our streets are spotless all the time. Our officers are doing a fantastic job and I am seeing a lot less litter and rubbish in the city centre and around. We will never eradicate gulls from the city centre but what we can do as to keep the city centre as clean as possible.</p>		

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm when work is due to restart on the Batheaston foot and cycle bridge over the River Avon and when is it finally due to be completed?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Works to complete the cycle and foot way commenced on the 29th May 2014 and will be complete mid-June.</p>		

M 06	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what the total final cost is of the new Batheaston foot and cycle bridge, and provide a breakdown of how it has been funded, including the Council's own contribution?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>The budget for the new Batheaston foot and cycle bridge is £910k and current forecasts show spend will be on target, although final completion was delayed into the 14/15 financial year due to site conditions caused by adverse weather, and thus final payments are not through yet. This has been funded from LSTF grant funding (£380k), Transport Improvement block grant funding (£250k), and a council contribution of (£280k).</p>		

M 07	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Whilst investment to modernise the Council's public toilet provision is widely welcomed, the proposals to significantly reduce capacity (in terms of a reduction in cubicles and removal of urinals) at many of the Council's public toilets has caused significant alarm and opposition amongst members of the public, particularly in relation to public toilets situated in or near parks and shopping areas. Will the Cabinet Member commit to undertaking a full public consultation on the proposed changes for each affected public toilet before implementing the reduction in capacity?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor David Dixon
<p>We had a long discussion at one of the Council's meetings, on locations where public toilets would go. One thing that needs to be done is to ask the relevant officers to do the count and see how many cubicles are needed in each location and deliver the same in right places. We had four 'loo reviews' in this Council about where the loos will go and we really don't need any more of these reviews in the next 15 years</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>What makes you think there will be a sufficient capacity given that single cubicles, like the one in Charlotte Street, have queues? Are we going to see queues in the parks as well?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor David Dixon
<p>We know how many people need to use our loos, we have all the counts and data. We know that each cubicle can take 25 people in an hour. We also opened the first set of cubicles in Monmouth Street and I have never seen a queue there. We know that this model works now. We already are providing one extra cubicle in Royal Victoria Park. We know that 800 people visit loos in Victoria Park each day, during the summer months.</p>		

M 08	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>In the light of the considerable support for a wider Transport Strategy than that being consulted on at the moment, related to the Enterprise Zone and the Core Strategy, can the Cabinet Member confirm that she is prepared to support the establishment of a cross-party committee to develop such a strategy, so that a cross-party approach can be taken to transport and traffic management?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Further to Cllr Clarke's query above, a vehicle for cross party working is already established through the LDF steering group, remit of which has been extended to incorporate the Transport Strategy. The membership reflects this change and Cllr Clarke has been invited to these meetings as a nominated member.</p>		

M 09	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>Has the Council yet refunded any fines issued in relation to the Dorchester Street Bus Gate, and when does the Council anticipate that all the fines will be refunded?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>The Council has commenced refunds on Monday 2nd June 2014. Credit/Debit card refunds are being refunded directly onto the card that made payment. Cheque payments will be refunded in a batch via BACS and all cash and postal payees will receive a letter shortly outlining how the refund can be claimed. We anticipate that the refunds for Credit/Debit Cards, which are by far the majority, will be completed within 3 weeks. The process takes this long as each must be actioned individually. Cheque and cash refunds may take slightly longer</p>		

M 10	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>In relation to the Parish Ranger pilot, the B&NES website states: "This is a new role for the Council and will if successful be rolled out across the whole rural district from April 2014". Noting the apparent delay in rolling-out this scheme, can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the current programme for the Parish Ranger roll-out, and can the Cabinet Member please confirm whether the Parish Ranger scheme is still considered to be cost neutral?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p>The trial of the Parish Ranger scheme was extended to ensure we evaluate the</p>		

approach for longer period. We looked at all comments submitted to us, including comments from Councillor Richardson. The extension of the trial is not cost neutral – it will be over and above what we do at the moment with cost implication. Currently, there is no allocated funding for this scheme. However, as a Cabinet we will consider some learning points from this scheme. It was an amazing learning exercise.

M 11	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>In February it was highlighted to the Council that the Traveller site on the Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, is sited directly above an existing 18 inch trunk water main. Wessex Water advised that the existing main operates at significant pressure and presents a dangerous hazard to the public if a burst occurs. In light of this knowledge what action has the council taken to ensure that the occupants of the site are safe?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball
<p>This was addressed in the planning application resolved on 4th June 2014. With due respect it is a shame that the member who keeps questioning did not check her facts before submitting her question.</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>This was not referring to planning application. It was referring to current situation because the Wessex Water report did highlight how dangerous that mains is and I was wondering if anything had been done to ensure that nobody is within that dangerous area</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball
<p>As far as we are aware nobody is parked next to that dangerous area. The improvements to the site will be carried out as soon as the site is cleared out, which will be in the next couple of months. The travellers who are currently there will be relocated to other sites or to temporary accommodations whilst the site is developed. Not only that we will remove dangerous pies but we will enhance nature reserves. This will be a huge exercise to protect our wildlife whilst enhancing conditions for gypsy and travellers community.</p>		

M 12	Question from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>What measures have been taken to find Wood Works, an organisation which helps disadvantaged and disabled adults learn woodworking and upholstery techniques in a supported environment, alternative premises given the Council's proposed</p>		

redevelopment of 1 James Street West, in which Wood Works is currently located?

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

Woodworks are currently considering an opportunity to take a retail unit under the ownership of the Council to act as a showroom. The Council is also looking at alternative opportunities within Council ownership to facilitate the upholstery and woodworking element of their business. In addition, Council Officers have been working with Woodworks to identify potential alternative solutions in private ownership.

Woodworks provide a service which is important to a particular group of residents in our area. The Council will do all it can to help them notwithstanding we have no contractual relationship with them as they are a part of the Genesis Trust programme. Genesis Trust are also doing all they can to help Woodworks.

The building at James Street West which will be developed is the building earmarked by the last Conservative Administration for a hostel which they failed to put money in the budget to provide.

M 13

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Does the Cabinet Member envisage reducing visibility distances when dealing with new planning applications within new 20mph speed limit areas?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Visibility distances are determined on a site by site basis by using actual speed measurements rather than speed limits.

20mph speed limits help to reduce vehicle speeds and hence visibility distances.

M 14

Question from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

Kelston Road has now been closed for four months, blighting the livelihoods of businesses in the area and causing severe traffic problems on alternative routes, including local lanes near the Kelston Road as well as through Keynsham, the A4 Keynsham bypass, the A4 through Salford, the A4 Newbridge Road and local roads into Weston and Newbridge.

Several weeks ago the Council promised that once underground investigations had been completed it would be possible to provide a clearer timetable for the work required to enable the reopening of Kelston Road. However, no such timetable or further information has since been provided. Residents naturally find this situation unacceptable and are demanding greater clarity.

What is the current timetable for reopening Kelston Road, when is repair work expected to commence, has the Cabinet made a financial commitment to whatever sums

necessary to undertake this work, and has the Council made application to Government to assist with or cover the cost of repairing and reopening the road?

Why has no progress been made by the Council on implementing the idea of a temporary alternative road bypassing the Kelston Road closure and, given the known willingness of local landowners to allow such a temporary road to be constructed on their land, is this something the Council is now progressing as a matter of urgency?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Kelvin Packer, Group Manager Highways and Traffic, attended a workshop with the neighbouring Authority on Monday 9th June to discuss the Kelston Road issue.

Although site works have stopped, laboratory testing of materials from site and detailed design of a solution have been continually progressed. Officers will liaise with Parish and Ward councillors on holding a public meeting to sharing all the information and advising the public of both the work to date and proposals for the permanent works.

The proposed timetable for the works is that they will start in July and conclude with the road reopening before Christmas 2014.

The Council is preparing a bid to Government for funding for the scheme and officers have been asked to consider that, in the event of Government funding not being available to advise Cabinet of alternative options and impacts. This will enable Cabinet to determine the most appropriate funding for the repairs.

From early on in the closure period independent consultants were asked to consider the viability of a temporary road. Their expert opinion is that progressing with a temporary road would take 16 weeks to construct at a likely cost of £1.6m and only be suitable for light traffic.

As there is a need to conduct construction operations in the area where a temporary road would be located (making it unavailable for periods during the works) officers have been asked to concentrate their efforts on getting the existing road reopened as quickly as possible.

Supplementary Question:

Has the Council given thought to some rebate, or refund, on Council Tax and/or Business Tax for those people who have been so seriously inconvenienced with considerable financial loss for some of the businesses in the light of the likelihood that this road will stay closed for 8-9 months?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

We are concerned on the impact that this closure has on businesses. However, a good proportion of people affected by the closure are from South Gloucestershire, so we have to have some cross boundary working with them to find out the best solutions on how to compensate people who may be affected. We need to go back to the Government to get the funding.

M 15	Question from:	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>The Government has provided emergency funding for areas affected by the winter flooding to address the scale of damage caused by some of the worst precipitation and consequent flooding in living memory. This Central Government Funding reflects the enormity of the destruction caused and the resulting affect it has had on local communities. On Thursday morning 29th May, in a public meeting at the Shepton Mallet Showground, Dan Roberson MP, Minister for DEFRA, said this funding was due to end in the last week of June 2014. The closure of the A431 has been caused by the combined effect of persistent high precipitation and high levels of ground water, together with the pressure associated with weight of land mass sitting on top of an insecure ground strata caused by the exceptional weather.</p> <p>What has the Council done to facilitate the local communities of Kelston and North Stoke accessing these Government funds to alleviate and compensate those communities for the extreme problems, inconvenience and costs associated with this road closure? Will urgent action be taken by this Administration to make application to access the Government funding only available for the next few weeks?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>The authority is co-ordinating claims for central government funding in respect of homes and businesses affected by the flooding. We will expedite all claims made to us in accordance with the terms of the scheme.</p> <p>Businesses and Communities can access information via the B&NES web site – search for Lead Local Flood Authority on the site.</p> <p>The grant in question is for flood resilience measures and is applicable to properties that have actually flooded and want to install resilience measures; or want to apply for business support as a result of flooding. Therefore, this grant would not be available to residents and traders inconvenienced by the Kelston landslip.</p>		

M 16	Question from:	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>When will the Council make available to the public the consultant's report and second opinion (from the independent engineer) on the Council's approach to the Kelston Road closure and planned next steps?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>In addition to a public meeting to explain the progress, programme and decisions taken, I would advocate that officers and ward members meet to review the reports and complex technical information collected to date.</p> <p>The Council will continue to provide public updates on the website and once all the arrangements are finalised release the information</p>		

Pedestrian Safety statement

Good evening Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you this evening.

The issue I would like to bring to your attention is concerning pedestrian safety within the village of Combe Down. The particular area of concern is the zebra crossing on North Road between the junctions of Stonehouse Lane and The Firs.

The crossing is well used by local residents who have children at Combe Down Primary School and by residents using the facilities in the village, however on a daily basis traffic fails to stop to allow pedestrians to cross safely. The traffic often is travelling too fast along North Road, the crossing itself is well worn and the beacon on The Firs side of the main road is covered by trees. In addition the pavement at the top of The Firs is particularly narrow which leaves pedestrians feeling vulnerable as they wait to cross. For people with pushchairs and for wheelchair users the narrow pavement makes using the crossing even more difficult as there is insufficient room to turn to face the crossing and see the traffic approaching. In addition, because the crossing is so close to The Firs and Stonehouse Lane junctions, drivers that are turning out onto the main road find themselves upon the crossing immediately and this is an extra problem.

Looking to the future and the development of the Foxhill site, traffic is going to increase quite significantly and something needs to be done as a matter of urgency. I have canvassed local residents and been told about numerous 'near misses' that have occurred and that will continue to occur until something is done. For children walking to and from school it is especially dangerous, if drivers don't see me at the crossing they are not going to see my children. The strength of feeling within the local community about this issue is strong and I have a petition to present to you today that has ----- signatures that support my call for a change to be made.

In May I did email my concerns to the transportation department and I am happy that they have responded with some positive actions for improvement. They have committed to repainting the crossing, adding 'slow' to the road, adding some additional signage and have contacted the owner of the trees to get them cut back from the beacon. Nevertheless I feel strongly that more could be done to make the crossing safer for all who use it. My suggestions are:

1. A barrier/railing is installed on the narrow side of the pavement to offer protection for pedestrians and that this pavement is widened.
2. Signage needs to be improved to alert drivers to the crossing, perhaps a traffic activated warning sign would be the most effective?
3. The speed limit on North Road could be reduced to 20mph to coincide with school start and finish times (like they have at Ralph Allen School) so drivers are aware that there is a large (primary) school nearby.
4. The trees that cover the beacon need to be maintained at all times.

5. The road markings need to be maintained at all times.

These ideas would no doubt improve things however I do feel that for pedestrians to be best protected 2 more radical actions should be taken, these would be:

1. The crossing is relocated so that it is not so near the 2 junctions of Stonehouse Lane and The Firs, a move of only a few metres in the direction of Farris Lane could ease the problem.
2. A 'pelican' or 'puffin' crossing, essentially a crossing with traffic lights replaces the zebra crossing in an improved location.

Funding Approval for Indicative Affordable Housing Programme E2663

This subject and a version of this paper came to the meeting of the PDS Panel for Housing and Major Developments on 27 May 2014, where it was generally welcomed by panel members.

This panel was a good place to discuss the proposals because the measures recommended in it clearly need to be seen in the wider context of housing delivery in Bath and North East Somerset, and the difficulties experienced in a number of the current major projects in getting adequate amounts of affordable housing built.

As a member of the General Development Control committee it is a matter of great frustration to me and other committee members that there are 4000 unbuilt dwellings which have received planning permission since 2007, and of course we also have the issue of meeting the Core Strategy targets in due course. However, the panel was informed that this measure would not ease the situation.

It seems it is going to be a developer-led initiative because, I quote from the Draft PDS Minutes: 'it was about pursuing developments when approached by partners.'

Personally I would like to see our officers being more pro-active in identifying bottlenecks and taking the initiative to unblock things – which I guess might be the argument behind the Radstock item later. Nevertheless the panel welcomed the paper. Obviously if Council votes a sum of money to aid the delivery of affordable housing, and decides to do this by enhancing the partnership with Recognised Providers, then there has to be an efficient way of doing this, and spending the agreed council funding in an accountable and transparent way. The proposals in the paper would seem an acceptable way of doing this, as the PDS panel said. Delegated authority in this way is the only practical solution.

My question concerns scrutiny: I would hope that there will be a mechanism for this exercised by the Resources Panel. I am also concerned because repeatedly (and nationally) developers weasel out of their commitment to deliver affordable housing so that we may end up missing the Core Strategy quotas. We may also find ourselves struggling financially if the New Homes Bonus ends.

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*B&NES Cabinet Meeting 11 June 2014 Item 15:
Funding Approval for Indicative Housing Development Programme*

Statement by Amanda Leon, Radstock Action Group

Last month, Radstock Action Group met Linden Homes, the company currently proposed as the developers of central Radstock Railway Land. At this meeting Linden Homes was absolutely clear that they were not going to pay the proposed 106 because their responsibility lies exclusively to their shareholders and paying the 106 would mean there would be nothing in it for said shareholders.

And now B&NES cabinet is being asked to approve expenditure of OUR money in order to ensure that affordable homes are built and that Linden Homes shareholders get their profits. Of course, thanks to the Byzantine rules of the Local Government Act we are barred from seeing the details of this and any other relevant plans.

B&NES has been trumpeting its commitment to affordable housing as part of a regeneration package for Radstock for years. What they have not said is that they would be entering into deals with developers who want this sort of work so that they can line the pockets of their shareholders.

No doubt B&NES will argue that the Radstock Regeneration Project is already budgeted for – some of it will certainly not be completed by 2015, even if it actually starts.

Who is paying for all of this?

1. B&NES has assumed responsibility for paying a large chunk of the road bill, thus relieving pressure on any would-be developer
2. B&NES has let Linden Homes off their 106 responsibilities – according to Linden Homes, the 106 has been signed and everything is sorted in relation to conditions
3. Is B&NES also, by this agenda item, going to subsidise the building of the affordable homes?

And, of course, B&NES has been telling doubters that this all will mean affordable homes for Radstock people. Not true. Radstock people will have to take their turn like all the others in the authority who need decent homes.

But Linden Homes shareholders will be fine – their dividends are guaranteed now that our council and other taxes will be paying for affordable homes, roads, additional infrastructure such as additional school places and community facilities.

Throw this out and explain why we should be paying. The whole situation stinks.

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