

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 12th September, 2013

Present:- **Councillors** Simon Allen, Patrick Anketell-Jones, Rob Appleyard, Sharon Ball, Tim Ball, Colin Barrett, Cherry Beath, David Bellotti, Sarah Bevan, Mathew Blankley, Lisa Brett, John Bull, Neil Butters, Anthony Clarke, Nicholas Coombes, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Sally Davis, Douglas Deacon, David Dixon, Peter Edwards, Michael Evans, Paul Fox, Andrew Furse, Charles Gerrish, Ian Gilchrist, Francine Haerberling, Alan Hale, Katie Hall, Liz Hardman, Nathan Hartley, Steve Hedges, Eleanor Jackson, Les Kew, Dave Laming, Malcolm Lees, Marie Longstaff, Barry Macrae, David Martin, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE, Robin Moss, Paul Myers, Douglas Nicol, Vic Pritchard, Liz Richardson, Manda Rigby, Caroline Roberts, Nigel Roberts, Dine Romero, Will Sandry, Brian Simmons, Kate Simmons, Jeremy Sparks, Ben Stevens, David Veale, Martin Veal, Geoff Ward, Tim Warren, Chris Watt and Brian Webber

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Gabriel Batt, Bryan Chalker, Bryan Organ, June Player and Roger Symonds

26 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure, as set out on the agenda.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Will Sandry declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item 12 on Tobacco Control as an employee of Imperial Tobacco Limited.

Councillor Lorraine Morgan-Brinkhurst MBE declared an 'other' interest in item 10 – "Apprenticeships, Work placements, Work experience, Internships and Volunteering policy" as a non-executive Director on Sirona Care and Health.

28 MINUTES - 11TH JULY 2013

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of 11th July 2013 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman made the customary announcements regarding mobile phones and a comfort break. He also announced that item 11 had been withdrawn from the agenda. At his invitation, the Council's Monitoring Officer explained how the petition for debate item would be conducted.

30 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There were no items of urgent business.

31 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following people;

- Pat Ryan made a statement regarding the impact of the Council Tax Support scheme and the bedroom tax. In response to a question from Councillor John Bull asking if Mrs Ryan was aware that Members of the Labour and Independent groups, and some Members of the Conservative group had attempted last November to get Cabinet to consider other sources of revenue to restore the loss of benefit but that this had not been taken up by the Cabinet, Mrs Ryan responded that she had not been aware of that and was sorry to hear it. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Community Resources. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- David Metcalfe, Co-Chair of the Cultural Forum for the Bath Area made a statement regarding the arts sector. In response to a query from Councillor Dave Laming about the role of the river in future arts planning, Mr Metcalfe responded that he would love to develop this as much as possible and was aware of the future event to which Councillor Laming had made reference. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Belinda Kidd, Chief Executive of Bath Festivals made a statement outlining the benefits the arts bring to Bath & North East Somerset. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Warren about whether the collaborative partnership approach she was seeking from the Council meant money or help, Ms Kidd responded that it was a bit of both. She understood the tough times the Council faced but believed that a sense of partnership would act as a catalyst for facilitating creativity. In response to a question from Councillor Eleanor Jackson enquiring whether the programme of festivals would be extended to the Somer valley, Ms Kidd responded that they hoped to do so, and had already been working with libraries and youth centres in that area. In response to a question from Councillor Dave Laming whether there were any plans for a river festival this year, Belinda Kidd responded that they would love to hold such an event which would need considerable funds raised to cover the health and safety aspects of it. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Nicolette Boater made a statement regarding statutory officer roles. The statement was referred to the Leader. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.

- David Redgewell made a statement about bus service alterations and progress on MetroWest. In response to a question from the Leader enquiring whether Mr Redgewell was aware of the forthcoming major transport consultation that was being planned, he responded that he was aware, welcomed it and hoped neighbouring authorities would contribute too. In response to a question from Councillor Eleanor Jackson asking if he was aware that there was a new shopping bus service between Writhlington and Radstock, Mr Redgewell responded that he welcomed any new bus services, particularly if they were privately funded. The statement was referred to the Cabinet Member for Transport. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.

Concerning item 8 on the agenda:

- David Redgewell made a further statement regarding Bath's public toilets in which he outlined the impact of toilet closure on himself and disabled people generally. He called for a proper equality impact assessment to be done and proposed working with the private sector. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Warren about whether he'd been aware of any public consultation about closing toilets, Mr Redgewell responded that he had tried to get a definitive list from the Equalities team about which toilets were earmarked for closure but had not received one. In response to a question from Councillor John Bull asking how many of those designated for closure had disabled facilities, Mr Redgewell responded that most of them did.
- Susan Charles, Access B&NES Disability Access group made a statement regarding Bath's public toilets in which she commented that closing toilets without offering alternatives was contrary to disability legislation. She mentioned that many pub toilets were not on the ground floor and difficult to access. She felt these moves would take disabled people back to the 1800s. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Warren about whether she'd been aware of any public consultation about closing toilets, Susan Charles responded that she had not.
- Ian Pring, Bath & District Branch Chair of MS Society, made a statement regarding the impact of toilet closure on people with MS. Whilst understanding the conflicting demands on the Council, he urged the Council to recognise toilets as an essential service and keep them open. In response to a question from Councillor Tim Warren about whether he'd been aware of any public consultation about closing toilets, Ian Pring responded that he had only been vaguely aware.
- Clare Libby, who had been a Bath Tourist Information officer for 18 years (now retired) made a brief statement explaining that the most common question asked of the service over the 18 years had been the location of the nearest public toilets. In response to a question from Councillor David Dixon as to whether Clare Libby was aware that the Pump rooms and Guildhall toilets were now available to the public at no cost, Clare Libby responded that she was aware but there were still not enough. Councillor John Bull asked how she would feel directing members of the public to shops and cafes, to

which Mrs Libby responded that she would have tried to help people in the best way possible.

- Teresa Webb made a statement regarding Bath's public toilets stressing the need for toilets in the outlying areas of Bath with few retail outlets, and close to transport hubs. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Council's Minute book and linked to the electronic record.
- Teresa Waterhouse read a statement on behalf of Jackie Dudley, Colostomy Association calling for adequate toilet facilities to enable everyone regardless of condition or disability to be able to take part in public life. She described the distress and embarrassment that resulted from inadequate facilities, as well as the potential loss of trade and damage to the city's reputation.
- Lyndon Hughes read a statement of behalf of Kerr Brown, Ileostomy Association, which called for easy access to clean facilities which were needed frequently due to different bowel function, in order for people with this condition to have the confidence to maintain a healthy and active life. In response to a question from Councillor Eleanor Jackson querying whether members of the Association were aware that drinking less to avoid trips to the toilet carried a risk of developing kidney stones, Mr Hughes responded that they were aware.

The Chairman indicated the above statements would be taken into account during the debate.

32 SAVE BATH'S PUBLIC TOILETS - PETITION FOR DEBATE

The Council had received a petition entitled 'Save Bath's Public Toilets' with sufficient signatures to trigger a debate at Council.

Lin Patterson, lead petitioner, spoke in support of the petition. A copy of the statement is attached to the Minute book and attached electronically to the minutes.

It was moved by Councillor David Dixon, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, and

RESOLVED (unanimously) as set out below;

Council wishes to provide public conveniences which:

- Are modern and well maintained and which meet the needs of both the residents and visitors to the district.
- Meet acceptable standards of cleanliness and hygiene.
- Are located strategically across the district.
- Are accessible and safe to all users.
- Address night time economy issues.

Council notes:

- That access to toilets is very important for many people who live in, work in and visit our area.
- That toilets in public buildings are now publicly accessible.
- That the budget set by Council expects a saving of £120k on public convenience provision to be delivered in the 2014/15 financial year.
- That the equalities issues arising from this budget proposal have been analysed and a statement prepared in September 2012, which is available at; http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/siteimages/equality_public_toilets_sept_2012.docx
- The increase in toilets in the private sector over recent years, some of which the Council has enabled through planning and development grants at no cost to the tax payer. These include Bath Bus Station, Southgate, Waitrose and the new one that will be delivered through the Keynsham redevelopment.
- And recognises the serious concerns of residents over the planned closure of a number of the Council's public toilets.
- And recognises the importance of easily accessible public toilets and the value placed upon them by the general public, particularly in the case of elderly and disabled residents, and those with certain health problems.
- And supports plans to upgrade and improve the Council's public toilet provision, where appropriate and needed.
- And is concerned by the continued lack of certainty over the future of those toilets earmarked for closure if no suitable alternative can be found.

Council resolves:

1. To ask that Officers continue to work with local ward Members on seeking alternative public toilet provision, or identifying alternative funding arrangements, in areas where public toilets are earmarked for closure.
2. That where no suitable nearby alternative provision can be found, or alternative arrangements identified, Cabinet halt the planned toilet closures and maintain existing public toilet facilities in these areas until the end of the current financial year.
3. To request that officers review the arrangements for the new public toilet maintenance contract to investigate potential options for retaining a greater number of public toilets, whilst still seeking to achieve the target level of savings within the Medium Term Service and Resource Plan (MTSRP).
4. To instruct Cabinet, as part of the 2014/15 budget and MTSRP, to bring forward revised proposals which maintain public toilet facilities in areas where no suitable alternative provision can be found or alternative funding arrangements can be identified, unless consultation with the local community clearly demonstrates a lack of need.

[Note: Councillor Geoff Ward moved an adjustment which had been circulated to the meeting to replace the final 2 sections of the substantive motion with the totality of

the amendment. This was accepted by Councillors David Dixon and Paul Crossley into the substantive motion.]

33 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Corporate Audit Committee has specific delegated powers given to it from Council and, as such, is required to report back annually to Council under its Terms of Reference. This is the annual report of the Committee which details its work over the last year.

On a motion from Councillor Will Sandry, seconded by Councillor Brian Webber, it was

RESOLVED to note the annual report of the Corporate Audit Committee.

34 APPRENTICESHIPS, WORK PLACEMENTS, WORK EXPERIENCE, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING POLICY

The Council considered a report describing a coordinated approach to be followed by all Council services to ensure that any schemes apply the same broad principles, deliver the Government agenda and assist the Council to deliver an “excellent” programme of apprenticeships, work placements, work experience, internships and volunteering. The policy has already been adopted by the Cabinet on 12th June 2013 and Council is asked to endorse it.

On a motion from Councillor Ben Stevens, seconded by Councillor Andy Furse, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) to endorse the policy agreed by Cabinet on 12th June 2013.

35 ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPROVAL OF UNANTICIPATED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OUTSIDE APPROVED BUDGET

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

36 MOTION FROM LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - TOBACCO CONTROL

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat group.

On a motion from Councillor Simon Allen, seconded by Councillor Katie Hall, it was

RESOLVED to agree the motion as set out below;

We acknowledge that:

- Smoking is the single greatest cause of premature death and disease in our communities;

- Reducing smoking in our communities significantly increases household incomes and benefits the local economy;
- Reducing smoking amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities is the single most important means of reducing health inequalities;
- Smoking is an addiction largely taken up by children and young people, two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18;
- Smoking is an epidemic created and sustained by the tobacco industry, which promotes uptake of smoking to replace the 80,000 people its products kill in England every year; and
- The illicit trade in tobacco funds the activities of organised criminal gangs and gives children access to cheap tobacco.

As local leaders in public health, we welcome the:

- Opportunity for local government to lead local action to tackle smoking and secure the health, welfare, social, economic and environmental benefits that come from reducing smoking prevalence;
- Commitment by the government to live up to its obligations as a party to the World Health Organisation's framework convention on Tobacco control (FCTC) and in particular to protect the development of public health policy from the vested interests of the tobacco industry; and
- Endorsement of this declaration by Department of Health, Public Health England and professional bodies.

We commit our Council from 12th September 2013 to:

- Act at a local level to reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities and to raise the profile of the harm caused by smoking to our communities;
- Develop plans with our partners and local communities to address the causes and impacts of tobacco use;
- Participate in local and regional networks for support;
- Support the government in taking action at national level to help local authorities reduce smoking prevalence and health inequalities in our communities;
- Protect our tobacco control work from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry by not accepting any partnerships, payments, gifts and services, monetary or in kind or research funding offered by the tobacco industry to officials or employees;

- Monitor the progress of our plans against our commitments and publish the results;
- Publicly declare our commitment to reducing smoking in our communities by joining the Smokefree Action Coalition, the alliance of organisations working to reduce the harm caused by tobacco; and
- Write to local MPs requesting them to ask the Government to reinstate its proposed legislation requiring cigarettes to be marketed only in standard packages and without images provided by the tobacco companies.

[Notes;

- 1. The underlined wording in the resolution constitutes an adjustment moved by the Labour group and accepted by the mover and seconder of the motion.*
- 2. The resolution was passed with Councillor Doug Nicol abstaining and Councillor Steve Hedges voting against.]*

37 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

One question was submitted by Councillor Steve Hedges to Councillor Tim Ball. A response was circulated, placed on the Minute book and has been linked to the electronic record.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

PRESENTATION TO BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL BY THE BATH AGAINST CUTS CAMPAIGN, 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

FOCUS : IMPACT OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND BEDROOM TAX

- Most people on low income who were exempt from council tax now have to pay up to 22% of this tax under the new Council Tax Support scheme introduced by Bath & North East Somerset Council in April this year
- For people trying to survive on very low incomes, the payment of council tax will result in their being unable to afford essentials such as food or heating for themselves and their families. The Citizens Advice Bureau recently reported a 78% increase in the last 6 months in people needing food banks to keep going. Bath CAB has found that people in Bath alone have accumulated debts of over £9 million in just 18 months. Many of these will be people who have been caught up in changes in welfare benefits, particularly the payment of council tax and the bedroom tax, both of which were introduced in April 2013
- Nearly 6 million people nationally are now paying council tax they cannot afford. Meanwhile, the government has cut income tax for people earning £150,000 or more from 50p to 45p in the pound. This means that 13,000 of the richest people in Britain will receive a tax cut of £100,000 each this tax year
- The payment of council tax by those least able to afford it will plunge people into greater poverty and debt. It will also cause homelessness and criminalise people because of the legal sanctions involved in the non-payment of arrears. These include county court summonses, fines, the use of bailiffs, eviction and ultimately prison
- Many of the people affected by the changes in council tax have also been hit by the introduction of the bedroom tax which has involved losses of between 14% and 25% of housing benefit for people on low income
- The policy on council tax exemption was introduced by a number of councils, including Bath & North East Somerset, because of central government cuts of 10% to local authorities' funding. However, some councils such as Bristol City Council, have found ways of avoiding placing this extra charge on people who are amongst the poorest in the community. Bristol Council has also agreed a 'no evictions' policy for people in arrears due to the bedroom tax.

We call on the council to : -

- 1) restore council tax benefit to all those who previously benefited from the scheme
- 2) establish a working group to examine the impact of the introduction of the council tax support scheme and the bedroom tax
- 3) agree a 'no eviction' policy for residents in arrears for either council tax or the bedroom tax.

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Statement to B&NES Council, 12th September 2013

David Metcalfe, Co-Chair of the Cultural Forum for the Bath Area

The Cultural Forum for the Bath Area champions the interests of around 80 diverse cultural sector enterprises operating in the city of Bath and the surrounding districts. We're one of the Council's key partners implementing B&NES' Cultural Strategy and, among other things, deliver, under contract with the Council, a programme of activity to improve the capacity and connectivity of the area's cultural sector.

The Cultural Forum applauds the withdrawal of the draft Arts Development Strategy 2014-2017 from its intended consideration by the Cabinet yesterday. In our view the document was narrowly focused, not in the best interests of the arts sector as a whole, and didn't make enough of what the arts offers in terms of economic impact and social benefit. Consequently, we're excited by the proposed development of a wider 'Place Strategy' to embrace economic development, destination management, tourism, events and the arts; and we look forward to contributing to the development of this wider, joined-up strategic approach in due course.

What we're really concerned about now, though, is the interim Arts Development Business Plan 2014-2015 – so I'd like to make a few key points about it on behalf of our members as a whole.

- It's great that the Council is continuing to invest in arts activity, through grants, contracts and commissions under the Business Plan; but we're concerned that the far-reaching implications of implementing the Plan have not been fully discussed at Cabinet.
- We're very worried that the radically different and unilaterally introduced commissioning process will prove divisive among our members, damaging to the existing vibrant arts ecology, and seriously strain the more cooperative and connected way of partnership working the arts sector now enjoys and which the Cultural Forum has championed. This isn't because we disagree with commissioning in principle: it's because we're concerned about the nature of the short-term business plan that's driving it, and because the new process is being introduced in a rush.

- We're extremely concerned that, if there are major cuts to key arts organisations resulting from this new approach, there is a real risk that the arts sector in B&NES will lose major funding from the Arts Council England and the potential for cultural funding from the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership.

So, what we'd like to ask for is:

- Time – say a year – to develop a better procedure (to introduce once the wider 'Place Strategy' has been developed) which would be more soundly-based and expertly advised on – not to mention less onerous in terms of administrative overheads for both our member organisations and the B&NES Arts Development Team.
- That this should be a partnership process, with a Steering Group bringing in expertise from the Arts Council England, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the University of Bath and Bath Spa University.
- That, in the meantime, the contracts and commissions element set out in the new Business Plan is either suspended or operated in practice to take account of the concerns mentioned above.

We therefore look to you to decide to modify the implementation of the Arts Development Business Plan 2014-15 as requested to ensure B&NES benefits from a visionary and vibrant arts policy.

Thank you for listening.

THE BENEFITS THAT THE ARTS BRING TO BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Presentation to B&NES Council 12 9 13, by Belinda Kidd, Chief Executive, Bath Festivals

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the full Council. I am Belinda Kidd, CEO of Bath Festivals. We produce the International Music Festival, the Literature Festival and the Children's Literature Festival. We also run a busy year round education programme, and manage the Bath Box Office selling tickets for over 100 organisations.

I want to follow up on David's presentation by adding a few further points about the benefits of the arts to B&NES, and the importance of having a fully rounded strategic approach to make the most of what the arts can offer to our local area and to our communities:-

Importance of the arts to the economy:

- The economic value of cultural activity in B&NES is estimated to be at least £157 million
- Cultural activity generates at least 6,079 jobs in the local economy

From University of Bath study, 2010

The arts brings visitors in from across the UK and beyond
Cultural visitors stay overnight and spend more than other visitors, which supports the tourism strategy, which aims to bring in more higher spending visitors.

The arts raises the profile of Bath & NE Somerset nationally through the good press coverage we get, so people see Bath as a lively, contemporary city, as well as a beautiful heritage attraction

Social benefits of the arts:

Engagement with creative activities has been proved to increase children's communication skills, their confidence and their overall engagement in learning. I have seen a particularly dramatic effect amongst children who are disengaged with education, or at risk of offending behaviour, when they've been involved in drama, music or other arts projects. Arts organisations are very good at working with schools, youth centres and others to provide wider creative opportunities for children, and inspiring teachers to work more regularly with professional artists within schools.

Arts festivals and events bring communities together enhancing a sense of pride and belonging. Free events have a particular role to play in this, such as Party in the City, as it's so easy to join in – thousands of local people join in, and thousands of performers get a chance to shine.

The way forward

We hope B&NES will adopt an imaginative and inspiring approach to working with cultural organisations and outside partners to get us all working together to realise all the opportunities that the arts offer. There are still significant resources out there we can bring in but only if we are working together strategically and showing clear leadership and imagination. With the right approach, we can set up partnerships and consortia of organisations to work together in large-scale education projects, to set up rural touring initiatives, and to work with disaffected young people, - and to collaborate on marketing and promotion so that we attract more audiences, both bringing more people in from across the UK and abroad, and widening the audience so that more local people benefit from the lively cultural offer of Bath & NE Somerset. To achieve all this, we need B&NES to adopt a collaborative leadership approach, to help act as a catalyst to make the most of the creativity and enterprise that is inherent within the cultural sector.

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Statement to the 12.9.13 meeting of B&NES Council

"Thank you Chair for allowing me to address Full Council tonight.

I speak from the heart as a member of three generations of a family living in Bath and North East Somerset, and draw on my expertise as a strategic management consultant and economist.

My eye was caught by the sudden arrival of item 11 on the agenda and even more intrigued by the absence of any attempt to develop and evaluate alternative options, supporting figures or facts, reference to corporate objectives or equality considerations!

Although I have since learned that this item has been withdrawn, I remain concerned by its relationship to the "Allocation of Statutory Roles" paper deferred from May's Council meeting, and now scheduled for the November one, the changed title of which suggests that the Council is in no hurry to fulfill the spirit as well as the letter of its statutory duty to designate a Scrutiny Officer.

For the real reason I find item 11 so disturbing, is that the very statutory officers debarred from fulfilling the Scrutiny Officer function seem to be asking Council to covertly fund the protection of their reputation and powers whilst yet again deferring the designation of a Scrutiny Officer, who as a critical friend, with the long term needs and interests of your electorate uppermost in their mind, would help them identify and avert such costly and risky errors. **Herein lies the importance and value of having a non executive officer working alongside those with more formal powers.** For despite the best intentions, competence and hard work of the Cabinet and their executive directors, their perspective and the pace and scale of the strategic and financial challenge ahead, means as item 11 hints, that there will be errors and some of these will have bad consequences.

So on behalf of all those in our community and economy who lack the time or expertise to follow your policies and decisions, **I implore you to specify, budget, appoint and only then designate, the influential and appropriately empowered leader the Overview and Scrutiny function now requires** and thereby help ensure that *all* your policies and decisions go into making our locality, in the future as well as now, a great place to be."

*Nicolette Boater, M.A.(Oxon.), M.Phil.,
Strategist, business economist and policy analyst,
working at the interface of the public, private and voluntary sector.*

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*Statement from South West Transport Network for
Bristol City Council Cabinet on 5 September and full Council on 10
September, Sustainable Transport Commission on 19 September,
West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 September,
Transport Board and Transport Executive on 11 September
South Gloucestershire Planning, Transport and Environment
Committee on 3 September
BANES full Council on 12 September
Sedgemoor District Council Bus Scrutiny Panel on 3 September*

Bus Service Alterations and Progress on MetroWest

We are concerned that the bus service alterations from a number of operators on 29 July and 1 September, particularly those affecting Bridgwater, Weston-super-Mare and North Somerset, have caused real passenger concern. The loss of almost all evening services in the Taunton Wellington, Bridgwater, Burnham and Weston-super-Mare corridor and the Taunton-Minehead corridor is especially damaging to the quality of life, rural economy and access to Healthcare in the major centres. This is despite the fact that there are “Quality Partnerships” between operators and the local authorities — i.e. Somerset County Council in this instance — on these routes.

On 1 September the situation has been exacerbated by the closure of all bus operations from Baker Dolphin (Weston to the Hospital, Weston to Worle on W5 and W14, the 121 to Banwell, Winscombe and Wrington via the town centre, although for the time being daytime services are being maintained on route 121, 66 (Congresbury to Portishead) and the 668/669 Lower Langford, to Cheddar, Street and Shepton Mallett.

Following the cutbacks on the Bridgwater town services, some of which are now being restored by Webberbus and First (rerouting the 1 and the 14),

Statement from South West Transport Network for Bristol City Council Cabinet on 5 September and full Council on 10 September, Sustainable Transport Commission on 19 September, West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 September, Transport Board and Transport Executive on 11 September South Gloucestershire Planning, Transport and Environment Committee on 3 September BANES full Council on 12 September Sedgemoor District Council Bus Scrutiny Panel on 3 September

the deepest concern here is the issue of continuity of public subsidy. Unless this can be addressed with central government and resources put into protecting the rural bus network (with rural proofing), the operators will never be able to make these services commercially viable. Whilst we hope that some of these services will be restored in November, this will not take place without an injection of public finance.

It is very important that the West of England Partnership, Wiltshire, Somerset and Gloucestershire County Councils work together to protect the bus network across their boundaries and this issue of rural proofing is raised with the Secretary of State, the buses Minister Norman Baker and the Department for Transport. A similar situation arises with bus services between South Gloucestershire and Gloucester where the Bristol—Dursley—Gloucester corridor only has funding for a single year.

It is also very important the Bus Priority measures between Bristol and Thornbury go ahead along the showcase route, and the issue of Highworth Road in Patchway is addressed within this corridor.

Night-time Bus Services

We are pleased with the success of the extension of Greater Bristol daytime services to create the innovative night bus service. We would however urge the Mayor of Bristol, BANES Council, South Gloucestershire and North

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Somerset Councils to retain and improve on the current network. Routes 1, 2, 40A, 43, 44, 48, 49, 70, 73, 75, 76, 90, 339 and N50 all need to be retained with affordable fares and the following routes should be considered for addition to the night network:

- 6 and 7 between Bristol and Kingswood via Staple Hill
- 376 Bristol to Whitchurch, Wells, Glastonbury and Street
- Bristol to Weston-super-Mare
- Bristol to Portishead (with possible extension to Clevedon)
- Bristol to Thornbury
- Bristol to Yate and Chipping Sodbury (replacing the N50 with the 342 running six nights per week).

We are pleased to see that Police and Crime Commissioner, Avon and Somerset, BTP, the Bristol Port Police and the Universities have worked so well together in creating an environment where access to the night-time economy in Bristol, Bath with its links to the Airport is available to so many people.

The recent route changes on Services 40, 40A and 41 in Bristol have left both night-time users and day-time users with an impaired level of service. Whilst we understand that these changes are primarily pragmatic rather than ideological on the part of First Group (reflecting traffic management problems in Sneyd Park and Broadmead/Old Market crew changes). In view of the strong local opposition to these changes in the Sneyd Park/Stoke Bishop area and the effect the cutback of the route from Old

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Market to Union Street is having on the night-time economy in Old Market, we would urge the Mayor and South Gloucestershire Council to use the opportunity of the forthcoming review to consider ways of restoring these services and deal with the traffic management issues in more appropriate ways. It is regrettable that there are no statutory quality partnerships on the routes signed with First or Wessex to deal with the issues of frequency, routing, vehicle quality and ticketing.

This group of routes has seen no investment in vehicles and consequently little growth in its market appeal over recent years. Whilst we welcome the planned investment in vehicles for routes 6, 7, 24 and 25, we do believe that the 40 group needs to be included in the next round of improvements.

MetroWest bus and train services

We would like to see details of progress on the Portishead line reopening (including the station sites at Portishead and Ashton Gate), the Interchange at Temple Meads with MetroWest Buses and works to finish the embarrassingly protracted Interchange at Bath Spa (including the disabled toilets and signage). We also think it is vital that studies between the West of England Partnership and BANES include the reopening of Bathampton, Corsham and Salford stations as well as the provision of disabled facilities and access at existing stations (Oldfield Park and Keynsham in particular).

Statement from South West Transport Network for Bristol City Council Cabinet on 5 September and full Council on 10 September, Sustainable Transport Commission on 19 September, West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 September, Transport Board and Transport Executive on 11 September South Gloucestershire Planning, Transport and Environment Committee on 3 September BANES full Council on 12 September Sedgemoor District Council Bus Scrutiny Panel on 3 September

We welcome the appointment of an officer from Centro to South Gloucestershire Council to coordinate the reopening of the Henbury Loop and integration of bus and rail services with the re-opened line including disabled facilities (for which specific funding is available). We are looking forward to seeing a proper delivery plan for MetroWest and in particular the Henbury line.

From a passenger perspective the widespread closure of public toilets at Bus Terminals (including disabled facilities) is very much regretted (The prime examples are Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon but the same proposals are now on the table for Portishead, Twerton, Larkhall, Midsomer Norton, Peasedown St John, Combe Down and Keynsham).

In Conclusion

It is good to see the working relationship which is developing between the Mayor of Bristol, the West of England Partnership and the bus and rail operators. Encouraging events have been the special train on the Henbury loop, the electric buses and the high-quality commuter coach on display at the Make Sunday Special event, and the new buses in Bath and South Gloucestershire. We welcome the setting up of a Public Transport Forum for the Greater Bristol area by the West of England Partnership, along the lines of the successful forum partnership in South Gloucestershire and the sadly cash-strapped Somerset County Council Transport Forum.

*Statement from South West Transport Network for
Bristol City Council Cabinet on 5 September and full Council on 10
September, Sustainable Transport Commission on 19 September,
West of England Partnership Scrutiny Commission on 6 September,
Transport Board and Transport Executive on 11 September
South Gloucestershire Planning, Transport and Environment
Committee on 3 September
BANES full Council on 12 September
Sedgemoor District Council Bus Scrutiny Panel on 3 September*

David Redgewell

South West Transport Network – Tel 07814 794953

11 AUDLEY AVENUE
WESTON
BATH
BA1 3BL
10 SEPTEMBER 2013

RE: PUBLIC TOILETS
REINVESTMENT / POSSIBLE CLOSURES

HAVING RECEIVED VARIOUS CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DON FOSTER; THIS IS COMMENTED ON BELOW AND TO BE PRESENTED AT THE MEETING ON THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2013 AT ELDONIAN BANQUET ROOMS:-

a. REGARDING POSITIONING OF TOILETS; IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT TOILETS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OUTLYING DISTRICTS OF BTNES.

b. RETAIL OUTLETS IN CITY CENTRES GIVE THAT OPPORTUNITY.

THE EDGES OF THE CITY I.E., BATHAMPTON IS NOT COVERED AT ALL AS FAR AS I AM AWARE.

c. TOILETS LINKED TO TRANSPORT HUBS IS A CASE IN POINT. THERE ARE PEOPLE SUCH AS MYSELF WHO USUALLY WALK ~~WALKS~~ ALMOST EVERYWHERE. WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO? — ESPECIALLY WHEN ANYONE HAS A PERSONAL HEALTH PROBLEM FOR EXAMPLE — ARE WE TO KNOCK ON SOMEONE'S DOOR — SAY Page 33 BATHAMPTON FOR EXAMPLE?

2. I believe an idea is to encourage landlords and hoteliers alike to allow the public access to use their facilities.

a. fact:- I was refused entry by staff at a public house in a district already mentioned in this letter. I explained the nature of the work was training for a charity event to raise money for breast cancer. I was still refused entry. A grown woman with impeccable manners!

So basically:-

1. NOT EVERYONE WILL HAVE READY CASH TO USE A PAYING FACILITY.
2. NOT EVERYONE LIKES AN AUTOMATED ENCLOSED SYSTEM I.E. CLAUSTROPHOBICS.
3. URGENT NEED FOR FACILITIES I.E. SPECIAL NEEDS ADULTS / CHILDREN / DISABLED IN WHEELCHAIRS
4. IT IS A BASIC HUMAN NEED WE ALL HAVE!

Yours very sincerely,

Teresa Webb - Mrs

Statement to Full Council Meeting 12th September, 2013, by the Save Our Bath Public Toilets campaign

Keeping our toilets open comes down to recognising a basic human need and seeing that our local, representative democracy works.

Money

I acknowledge the council is under terrific pressure from a misguided national programme of cuts. But although the council's first priority is to "protect services to the public", the main focus has been on cost, on how much would be saved by closures, although £120,000 savings is not a large amount relative to the B&NES budget. Now with the council's success in finding other organisations to take on the running of several of the threatened toilets, the annual outlay is significantly less, almost vanishingly small in terms of B&NES budget. Why, then, should the remaining toilets have to close, especially when they meet a basic human need?

As to the question, "where else could savings be made", there may be avoidable wastage to correct or 'best practice' innovations to plan, like your own award winning conversion to LED street lighting saving up to £250,000 per year, and many other green savings that could be made in order to meet a basic human need.

Of course cost is an issue, but have all the long term costs of *closure* been taken into consideration? Not to mention the loss in rates when local businesses start folding, or damage to the tourist trade, look at the safety implications. Other closed toilets have been left boarded up. And although I know that is not your plan, it may yet be the result. You may be familiar with the "Broken Windows Thesis." If you aren't, your police officers are. Research shows that if an area begins to look neglected, it attracts offenders because of the perception that the area is vulnerable to crime, with residents perceived as being fearful to stop crime, triggering a downward cascade, into a real lack of safety. I can tell you that Twerton residents living opposite the public toilets are very anxious about this, as they already suffer fouling of their property when toilets are closed at night. Basic human need.

Does our local representative democracy work?

Consultation was inadequate. It was part of the whole B&NES budget consultation from Nov to Jan, but information on which looses were due to

close was not announced until December 6th.¹ There was no time to inform or mobilise the community. You know this is not fair. Unlike with the libraries, there was no separate consultation on providing for this basic human need.

The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was inadequate. EIAs identify the impact on vulnerable groups. But the EIA failed to assess each area's toilet individually. Some areas such as Twerton and Larkhall and probably others, have no adequate alternative facilities, and doubly so for disabled people or wheelchair users. However, the EIA did list the many groups of vulnerable people who would be adversely affected. This seems to have been ignored, but you must know that is not right, now that people are bringing to your attention that they understand this is a basic human need. I understand you may now be starting to address this.

Does our representative democracy work? What does it mean when you say, regarding toilets due for closure last month, that you are now "working through options for alternative provision?" Hopefully this means, as allowed for Weston, the toilets will stay open until adequate alternative provision is found. Does it? And what happens to Larkhall in April if alternative provision has sadly not been found?

Are the views of the 536 Larkhall residents who signed a petition, the 66 residents who wrote considered comments over just two hours in the Larkhall Square, the over 2000 signatories from all over Bath and the 400 Twerton residents who signed in just 3 days, are their views going to be heard, respected and acted upon? Is this a place where democracy works?

I believe in democracy, or I wouldn't be here. I trust that this council will support the overwhelming wish of the taxpaying public to retain their public toilets.

Lin Patterson
For the Save Our Bath Public Toilets campaign
10 Brookleaze Buildings
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01225 311163

¹ Bath Chronicle, Dec 6th <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-33964894.html>

Councillor Questions for Council 12th September 2013

(**NOTE:** The following question and response will be published on the Council's website as soon as possible after the meeting and linked to the published draft minutes of this meeting.)

1. Question from Councillor Steve Hedges

Could Councillor Tim Ball reassure the residents of Odd Down that greenfield sites will only be used for housing after brownfield sites have been used up?

Answer from Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning

Council agreed in March 2013 that it should plan for 12,700 dwellings in order to meet housing needs. Through the Core Strategy, the Council is seeking to focus new development on brownfield sites. Before identifying new sites for development, the Council assessed the capacity of the existing supply. Whilst this consisted primarily of brownfield sites, there are a number of permissions and other commitments on greenfield sites such as at the site at South West Keynsham (K2). These greenfield sites are currently being developed alongside the brownfield sites. In light of the fact that there are insufficient sites to meet the identified housing requirement of 12,700 dwellings, Council agreed in March 2013 that greenfield locations, such as land adjoining Odd Down, should be released for development. The release of these sites is currently being scrutinised through a public examination and the Inspector will clarify in his forthcoming report whether these sites are appropriate for development. If he agrees that they are then these sites will need to progress rapidly in order to meet the district's needs for housing during the plan period to 2029.

Furthermore, until the Core Strategy is adopted, the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF is resulting in the need to grant planning permission on some greenfield sites or sites being granted on appeal. Development on these sites is likely to take place alongside the development of the brownfield sites.

In conclusion, whilst the Council is seeking to prioritise brownfield sites as far as possible, it will be necessary to progress both brownfield and greenfield sites at the same time.

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