

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday, 24th March, 2022

Present:- **Councillors** Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Sarah Bevan, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Chris Dando, Jess David, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Douglas Deacon, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Michael Evans, Andrew Furse, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Liz Hardman, Steve Hedges, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Dr Kumar, Matt McCabe, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Paul Myers, Lisa O'Brien, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Vic Pritchard, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Mark Roper, Richard Samuel, Bruce Shearn, Brian Simmons, Alastair Singleton, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Karen Walker, Sarah Warren, Karen Warrington, Andy Wait, Chris Watt, Ryan Wills, David Wood and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Michelle O'Doherty

### **109 WELCOME & ROLL CALL**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the Democratic Services Manager to conduct a roll call.

### **110 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Alastair Singleton declared an 'other' interest in item 9 – Climate Emergency, as a member of Bath & West Community Energy and Trustee of their charitable fund, and a Director of Keynsham Community Energy.

Councillor Robin Moss declared an 'other' interest in item 15 – Statements from Councillor with regard to a statement on Local & national visitor accommodation policies, as the owner of an AirBnb property.

### **111 MINUTES - 16TH FEBRUARY 2022**

The minutes were recommended for approval at the Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

### **112 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair made the following announcement;

Due to a desire to retain a level of social distancing after restrictions have lifted, we are holding this 'informal' virtual Council meeting to enable all Councillors to take part. The comments and indicative decisions from this meeting will help to inform the physically reduced, quorate decision-making meeting tomorrow on 25th March 2022.

We will review this approach for any future Council meetings, in line with government and health guidance at that time.

### **113 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

With the agreement of the Chair, Councillor Kevin Guy made an urgent statement about extreme NHS pressures, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

### **114 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Before moving to the first public speaker, the Chair informed the meeting that, earlier in the week, the Chief Executive had reminded Group Leaders of the wording in Constitutional rule 34 with regard to statements, petitions and deputations from members of the public and councillors, and the specific wording that 'all items must be submitted in writing', and that officers were now applying this rule.

Statements were then made by the following people;

Rachel Stokes made a statement on behalf of the Keynsham Road Safety Campaign and presented a petition of approximately 700 signatures, calling for an extension of the proposed 30mph section of the Wellsway up to the 'Keynsham' sign, and the installation of a pavement to connect properties at Uplands with the pavement at Courtenay Road. A full copy of Ms Stokes' statement is linked to the minutes. Councillor Alan Hale asked Ms Stokes if the campaign group had asked for a speed count to be done. Ms Stokes replied that they had made this request a year ago via Council Connect and more recently to the Highways department, but this had not been done. The statement and petition was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Bob Goodman made a statement about public statements to meetings. A full copy of the statement is linked to the minutes. Councillor Kevin Guy queried whether Mr Goodman had said that his statement had been censored, to which Mr Goodman confirmed that was his view. The statement was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

David Redgewell made a statement expressing concern about bus and rail cuts. A full copy of the statement is linked to the minutes. The statement was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

Danielle Sellwood, from the Bathwick Estate Residents Association (BERA) made a statement about erosion on the banks of the river Avon from Pulteney Weir to Bathampton and calling for this stretch of riverbank to be re-assessed with a view to it being protected. A full copy of the statement is linked to the minutes. Councillor Kevin Guy asked Ms Sellwood if she was aware that a voluntary code of conduct had been developed in the 1990s with local boat operators, which would be useful to review and see if it was helpful. Ms Sellwood replied that she had not been aware of this and would find it helpful to review. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked if BERA were asking for commercial use to be limited. Ms Sellwood confirmed that they were; both in terms of limiting times and having periods with no commercial use, to allow the river to recover. The statement was referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

The Chair thanked everyone for their statements.

## **115 AEQUUS GOVERNANCE, STRUCTURE AND BUSINESS PLAN**

The Council considered a report setting out proposed changes to the Governance and Structure of the Council's wholly owned housing and development companies (Aequus Developments Ltd and Aequus Construction Ltd) and also presenting the Aequus Accounts for 2021/22 together with the Business Plan for 2021/22 to 2023/24.

On a motion from Councillor Tom Davies, seconded by Councillor Richard Samuel it was

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to;

1. Approve the amendments to the Reserved Matters Schedule in the Shareholder Agreement within the Councils' Protocol for Governance Arrangements of Local Authority Trading companies (Appendix 3);
2. Approve the changes to the Company Structure set out in paragraph 7 of the report, including the transfer within the corporate group of ADL and ACL, and the establishment of the holding company;
3. Delegate to the Council's Section 151 Officer the authority to confirm the final documentation required to complete the changes set out in paragraph 7 of the report and to determine the timing and implementation of the new company structure proposed. This will include authority for the Council's Section 151 Officer to provide shareholders approval for all legal, financial and corporate filing documentation to implement the new structure;
4. Note the ADL & ACL 2020/21 year end audited accounts (Appendix 4);
5. Approve the Aequus Business Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 (Appendix 5 of the report.)

*[Notes:*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 16 councillors voting against, 1 councillor abstaining and the remaining councillors voting in favour.]*

## **116 CLIMATE EMERGENCY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Council considered the annual report setting out progress on delivery against climate emergency targets.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Alison Born, it was

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March to note;

1. Progress on the delivery of the Year 2 (2021-22) Climate Emergency Action Plan;
2. The extensive and wide-ranging action being taken across the council to tackle the climate emergency; and
3. The latest available data relating to carbon emissions (Council managed and district-wide emissions).

*[Notes;*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 2 councillors voting against, 8 councillors abstaining and the remaining councillors voting in favour.]*

## **117 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON & INDEPENDENT MEMBER**

The Council considered a report inviting appointment of an independent person and independent member to support the Standards Committee.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to;

1. Approve the appointment of the Independent Person with responsibility for supporting the Standards Committee, as set out in section 5 of the report;
2. Note the resignation of Ms Russell and record the thanks of the Council for her contribution to maintaining high standards of behaviour during her tenure as an independent member of the Standards Committee; and
3. Confirm the appointment of an Independent Member of the Standards Committee, as set out in section 5 of the report.

*[Notes;*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 1 councillor voting against, 1 councillor abstaining and the remaining councillors voting in favour.]*

## **118 COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE - 6 MONTH RULE DISPENSATION**

The Council considered a report regarding attendance.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Vic Pritchard, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022 to;

1. Agree that the members listed in Appendix A (with the inclusion of Councillor Alan Hale), who are unable to attend a council meeting for a period greater than six months, due to long covid or the higher risk of serious illness from Covid 19 for themselves or for their family members, receive a dispensation further to section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 until 24 September 2022;

2. Agree that, in the light of this meeting being conducted through the contingency arrangements (meaning most of those members planning to attend a physical meeting are now unable to do so), a dispensation is issued for all Councillors unable to attend a physical meeting for a further period of 3 months from this meeting, further to section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, until 24th June 2022.

## **119 ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHAIR(MAN) AND VICE-CHAIR(MAN) DESIGNATE FOR 2022/23**

The Council considered a report inviting indication of which Councillor will be formally nominated as Chairman and Vice Chairman at the Council's AGM.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Karen Walker, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March that, for forward planning purposes, Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall is named as Chair(man) of the Council (designate) for the 2022/23 Council year and Councillor June Player is named as Vice Chair(man) (designate) for the 2022/23 Council year.

## **120 CLEANING UP OUR RIVERS - MOTION FROM LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP**

On a motion from Councillor Jess David, seconded by Councillor Lucy Hodge, it was

**RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March that;

### **Council notes:**

1. The recent report of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (Jan 2022) which found that rivers in England are in a mess: "a 'chemical cocktail' of sewage, agricultural waste, and plastic is polluting the waters of many of the country's rivers".
2. That only 12% of the Bristol Avon catchment is classified as having 'good ecological status' with the main sources of pollution being treated sewage discharges and diffuse pollution from farming and land management.
3. That rivers in B&NES are an irreplaceable asset for both people and nature, enjoyed by many for recreation and leisure, and part of the rich landscape character and natural capital of our area.
4. That Bath and North East Somerset Council is a member of the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership which includes Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and Wiltshire Council and is working closely with partners to identify and deliver collaborative solutions to improve water quality and improve the water environment for people and wildlife.
5. That not all properties in B&NES are connected to the public sewage system or to private sewers and that some continue to discharge wastewater straight into the river or into non-compliant, polluting soakaways.

6. That Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality and regulate sources of pollution has dropped by 75% in the last decade.

**Council believes:**

1. That cleaning up our rivers is important for public health and to protect and enhance wildlife, and that this requires the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders including water companies, farmers, land-owners, developers and businesses.
2. That investment in our sewerage system must be accelerated so that discharges of untreated sewage, including from storm overflows, cease.
3. That farmers and land managers have a responsibility to monitor and reduce the flow of pollutants (including nutrients and pesticides) from their land into rivers.
4. That government must provide the funding and powers to enable more effective monitoring and enforcement by water regulators; OFWAT and the Environment Agency.
5. That water companies must continue to improve the public information they provide on sewage discharges to ensure that it is accessible and as close to real time as possible.
6. That developers and property owners have a role to play in reducing surface water from entering the combined sewer system. Installing sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), both in new buildings and through retrofitting, and reducing 'urban creep' can help to reduce the load on our sewerage system.
7. That government must legislate to ban the sale of non-degradable and plastic containing wet wipes which are a major cause of blockages and capacity issues in the sewer network. The incorrect disposal of fats, oils and greases is also a cause of blockages.
8. That the capacity of environmental infrastructure (including sewerage systems) must be sufficient to support new housing development and that water companies must engage with local authorities in the preparation of new drainage and sewerage plans.
9. That the Council has a role to play in educating and raising awareness of the many individual behavioural changes that citizens can make to lessen their impact on water pollution and harm to the water environment.

**Council therefore resolves:**

1. To write to Government Ministers to ask that they:
  - a. Restore funding to the Environment Agency to ensure a stronger regulatory regime for river water quality that delivers year on year improvements.
  - b. Increase funding for Catchment Partnerships so that they can do more to engage all partners in the actions needed to improve river water quality.

- c. Strengthen the legal obligations and powers available to water companies to contribute to improving river water quality.
  - d. Ban the sale of non-degradable and plastic containing wet wipes as a major cause of blockages in the sewage system.
  - e. Introduce incentives for the introduction of SUDS through new build development and retrofitting.
2. Work with our partners Wessex Water to:
- a. Accelerate their plan to reduce the environmental and health impacts of discharges from the sewage system, including improving monitoring and information available to the public;
  - b. Ensure that all properties in B&NES are connected to the mains sewage system, have a compliant treatment system or a septic tank, and that all developers are aware of their obligations;
  - c. Identify opportunities for the installation of community-level SUDS that can help to reduce the load on the combined sewer network;
  - d. Engage residents to avoid the use of disposable wet wipes and communicate wider messages about only flushing the three P's (*pee, poo and paper*) down the toilet.
3. To continue to support the work of the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership to engage all riparian landowners, including farmers, and local communities in an action plan to tackle pollution and improve river water quality.
4. To refer the topic of cleaning up our rivers to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel for their further consideration and monitoring.
5. Through the planning system:
- a. encourage the use of SUDS to deal with surface water and reduce the amount of water going into combined sewers;
  - b. explore opportunities through the new Local Plan to reduce 'urban creep' and to avoid or mitigate pollution from intensive farming within catchment areas.

## **121 UKRAINIAN REFUGEES - MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ROBIN MOSS**

On a motion from Councillor Robin Moss, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, and supported by all Group Leaders, it was

**RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> March that;

This Council:

- 1 Notes that at the time of writing the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says that ten million people have fled their homes in Ukraine. 3.6

million have left for neighbouring countries while another estimated 6.5 million are thought to be displaced inside Ukraine itself.

- 2 Notes that under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, sponsors in the UK are able to nominate a named individual or family to stay rent-free in their home or in a separate property for at least six months and that there is no cap on the number of refugees who can benefit from this scheme. Further notes that refugees will be allowed to live and work in the UK for at least three years and that they will be entitled to access healthcare, benefits, employment support, education and English language tuition. Also notes that as of 21 March, under the Family Visa Scheme, 12,400 UK visas have been issued for Ukrainians who have a family member in the UK.
- 3 Notes that local authorities will receive £10,500 in extra funding per refugee for support services with more for children of school age, and that hosts will be offered £350 per month.
- 4 Believes that the escalation of violence, repeated bombings and attacks on Ukraine pose a serious threat to peace and democracy across Europe.
- 6 Recognises that support for refugees cuts across party politics and that councillors from across the political spectrum will wish to stand shoulder to shoulder to express their full support and solidarity with Ukrainian people and affirm their commitment to provide help and support to Ukrainian nationals.
- 7 Recognises the generosity and goodwill of B&NES residents who showed through the welcome they gave Syrian refugees that this is an area which is willing and able to provide sanctuary to desperate people and further encourages those wishing to help to donate to established organisations such as the British Red Cross and Unicef as well as the Disasters Emergency Committee.
- 8 Notes that on 1 March, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Home Secretary and to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration to express solidarity, call for visa requirements to be lifted and reiterate the readiness of this Council to welcome refugees.
- 9 Agrees that a further letter be sent to both the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary repeating this Council's willingness to welcome Ukrainian people fleeing war and persecution in their own country and urging the UK government to act to ensure that the UK does all it can to help alleviate this humanitarian crisis.

## **122 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Duncan Hounsell made a statement about local and national visitor accommodation policies. A full copy of the statement is linked to the minutes. Councillor Kevin Guy asked how many large properties were currently being used for AirBnB in North East Somerset. Councillor Hounsell responded that he understood there to be approximately 100 used in this way in Bath but did not have figures for

North East Somerset as there was no registration scheme. Councillor Liz Hardman asked if Councillor Hounsell was aware that the Labour group had taken a successful motion on short term lettings to Council in July 2018, which had received cross party support and suggested he revisit this to move this issue forward. Councillor Hounsell thanked Councillor Hardman for bringing this to his attention and added that he wanted everyone to support the change in the Local Plan.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hounsell for his statement, which was referred to the relevant Cabinet member.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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## Statement

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to make a statement about the very troubling situation which our local health and social care system finds itself in. I have this week written to the Secretary of State to express my concerns, and I wish to share the current situation with Council.

Over the last two years we have become used to the quite exceptional dedication and commitment of our NHS and social care staff as they have managed massive pressures to cope with the challenges brought by the Covid pandemic. In the face of unprecedented demands, regularly putting their own health and lives at risk, they have delivered incredible outcomes, and I know that we all share huge admiration and gratitude for their work. It can be easy to forget that there were times - particularly early on - when it looked as though the system might be overwhelmed, and when all that stood between us and the worst were these amazing people.

As the severity of the pandemic has lessened, as the latest Covid statistics are no longer headline news, and as government restrictions

and guidance have melted away, it can be tempting to think that the NHS is now back to Business as Usual and that all is now well.

It is not.

I learned this week of a deeply upsetting case of a 93 year-old resident who fell at church on Sunday evening and fractured his femur. It took almost six minutes for the 999 call to be answered, and almost twelve hours for the ambulance to arrive. Due to his injury, the gentleman could not be moved, so he spent the night on the church floor accompanied by his elderly wife and the vicar.

Discussions over the last few days have revealed that this sort of event has become all too common in recent months, despite the very best efforts of staff across the system to deliver the level of care that they joined the service to provide. The RUH is under tremendous pressure, and has had to declare a critical incident several times in recent months.

Last Monday, 26% of its beds - that's 111 in total - were occupied by people who were medically fit for discharge, but who could not be released due to shortfalls in capability in domiciliary care. In addition

to this, the hospital had 44 Covid patients - with 7 in intensive care - and over 90 further beds unavailable for Covid infection control reasons. And staff absence with Covid infections is once more on the rise.

This all has a direct knock-on effect on ambulance services, and it is not unusual to see 15 or 20 ambulances queueing outside A&E unable to hand over patients to hospital staff on account of shortages of beds or other capacity within the hospital. This in turn means that those ambulances cannot respond to new calls or emergencies.

In short, the system is in crisis, and has suffered longterm from funding deficits, staff shortages - particularly now that many European employees have left the UK - and regular reorganisations. This has undermined its resilience, and that in turn has led to shortages of critical items like PPE and to far too much knee-jerk, tactical responses where properly thought-through and funded strategic measures were needed.

Colleagues, the situation that faces our local services is outrageous and unacceptable for a country like ours in 2022. Our dedicated NHS and care service staff deserve so much better, and I ask you to join me in paying them the credit they deserve for their commitment and in

seeking to ensure that they receive proper resources and support for the future.

Thank you.

## COUNCIL MEETING 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022

### PUBLIC STATEMENTS

#### **Public statements (item 7)**

*(attached)*

- Rachel Stokes      Wellsway 30mph petition  
*(Petition frontsheet & comments circulated separately to cllrs)*
- Bob Goodman      Free speech
- David Redgewell    Transport issues – bus and rail cuts
- Danielle Sellwood    River bank erosion between Pulteney Weir and Bathampton

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Good evening everyone. My name is Rachel Stokes and I represent the Keynsham Road Safety Campaign. Our petition calls for an extension of the proposed 30mph section of the Wellsway up to the 'Keynsham' sign, and the installation of a pavement to connect properties at Uplands with the pavement at Courtenay Road.

For those of you not familiar with Wellsway, it is the only 1 of 5 major routes into Keynsham that is not currently 30 mph. The section we are concerned with is only 700 metres long but contains a dangerous blind bend with 11 residential properties to either side of the road. Reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on this section would vastly increase the safety of all road users, but, would only add 13 seconds to each journey.

The Highways department claim this section should remain 40mph because it is 'rural'.

- If Uplands is 'rural', why do we pay a precept to Keynsham Town Council of around £100 per year?
- Although there is no up to date information, a traffic study in 2018 of this 'rural' road found that it was used by around 11,000 vehicles a day.
- One field (less than 300m long) separates the Uplands residential area from the rest of Keynsham.

Highways officers have been using the guidance for Rural Speed Management when considering this road; the official designation given by the Office for National Statistics for this section of road is C1 - **Urban: City and Town**.

The guidance for C1: Urban City and Town speed limits is very clear. It says that 30mph is the standard speed limit for urban areas.

The guidance says: For a 40mph limit to be appropriate, the road must be of **good width with buildings set back from the road** – at the Uplands junction there is a building less than 150cm from the road.

The guidance says: roads suitable for 40mph **must cater for the needs of non-motorised road users**. Cyclists on this stretch of road regularly take their lives in their hands and it is only a matter of time before we see another serious incident. **'Pulling out of Uplands Junction is quite a challenge' said Andy Wait – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

The guidance says: roads suitable for 40mph **must have adequate footways and crossing places**. There is no footway along this section, and not a single crossing.

The Highways department claim there is 'limited activity' to either side of the road. Every day there are around 50 residents who have to pull out onto a blind bend and hope for the best. Every day, farm traffic, B&B customers, delivery vehicles, cyclists, off-road motorcycles and 4 x 4 enthusiasts pull out onto a blind bend and hope for the best. It is, quite obviously, only a matter of time before there is a major incident

resulting in a fatality at this junction. One of this council's core policies is to promote a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce emissions. At 30mph, with a pavement, this road would be perfect for pedestrians, hikers and horse riders. Instead of Bathnes having to pay for these residents to use the Safer Routes to School scheme, they could walk their children to the local school less than a mile away.

If a planning application was submitted for the junction of Uplands and Wellsway it would be rejected. The Highways Department would say that at 40mph, oncoming traffic does not have enough distance to stop. At 30mph, with longer stopping distances and less chance of death upon impact, the junction would be deemed safe enough for the application to be approved. For the sake of 13 additional seconds, Wellsway road users are subjected to an unacceptable level of risk. It is worth bearing in mind this quote from the Think! Campaign from 2009: "...if you hit a child at 30mph they have an 80% chance of living, but if you hit them at 40mph they have an 80% chance of dying."

Despite our repeated requests for meetings on site, the decision makers have not visited the road. The decision on the speed limits on Wellsway was not, by their own admission, informed by any data on composition of road users, average speeds, or accidents. The 700 people who have signed our petition see it and use it all the time and know it to be extremely fast, extremely busy, and extremely hazardous for all road users. They say: 'I feel I am taking my life in my hands trying to pull into this road', 'If no action is taken we will see serious injury or death'. Government guidance and common sense say that 'fear of traffic can affect peoples' quality of life'. This council's motto is 'Improving People's Lives' – please don't ignore this opportunity to improve the lives of Wellsway road users.

Over two years ago, 53 of your constituents made their concerns and wishes abundantly clear – they voted unanimously for this section of Wellsway to be reduced from 40mph to 30mph. Now, nearly 700 of your constituents have made their concerns and wishes abundantly clear. How long can the council, for the sake of only 700 metres, for the sake of only 13 seconds, ignore the legitimate concerns of these constituents and the evidence presented by this campaign?

Thank you for listening.

## **Bob Goodman statement**

It has been almost 7 years to the day that my mum died, I remember it not only for that reason but the way that events changed my life. In the evening of that day I was asked for the third time if I would stand as a councillor in the Combe Down ward . I had only a few weeks before said NO because I had no political ambition what so ever and believe that local Government should not involve politics. But with the loss of my mum I was being told Yes 'told' by her looking down from above.... " don't be silly Robert you must because you care too much for the City not to do so" .. and so the adventure began.

How absolutely shameful it is that I find myself having to come to this Council meeting to defend 'Free Speech' being dictated to by this Administration and the Chief Executive that I will not be allowed to speak unless I send in what I am going to say.

The Leadership does not believe in transparency, I already had to resign as a Trustee of Avon Wildlife Trust because I dared to criticise the administration on their appalling response to both the Climate and Ecologist Emergency and we have also seen the response to other Cllrs when they stand up and be counted.

One has to ask what this Liberal Democrat council are worried about , in all my speeches to Council or Cabinet I have told it as it is, but they clearly can not defend the indefensible.

I have been truly amazed at the response that I have had from residents of the City who feel poorly represented and from Councillors and yes even those in the Lib Dem group has been truly astonishing.

We can all see what a dictatorship can do with the destruction of Ukraine, those Ukrainians are truly amazing and far braver than I am but I can do my bit by standing up for democracy in the face of bullying tactics that we are facing.

The residents of Bath will not tolerate the way this Council is behaving, if it's not the betrayal of Tufa Fields , the debacle over the Mountain Bikes at Entry Hill , the way in which they have allowed their Development Company to go unchallenged and Now to prevent Free Speech is beyond belief.

If this Administration think they are going to prevent me speaking the truth on the short comings of this Council then they are Sadly mistaken.

I hope Cllrs at this meeting will take on board what is happening to my City and ignore Party Politics and stand up for their residents.

I hope this outrageous decision to prevent free speech will see the demise of this Administration.

All I can say is ... I'm so glad there is the Freedom of Information Facility.....!!!! When the truth will come out.

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Statement for Banes full Council 24th March 2022 and Banes Cabinet meeting 31st March 2022.

Public transport services in the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvements plan - with bus service cuts across the west of mayoral transport Authority and North Somerset.

We are very very concerned about the level of service and frequencies that first group west of England buses are going to operate across the city region and into rural areas of Somerset ,Wiltshire and Gloucestershire from 24 th April 2022 ..

D 2 Bath Spa bus and coach station to Midford, Norton St Phillips, Rode, Beckington and Frome reductions on Saturdays.

Reductions in services 1 Bath city centre to Southdown.

services 3 services reductions.

and 3 a services withdrawn.

services change on route 39 x39 with services starting from Newton St Loe in the morning.

Changes to the Bath Spa bus and coach station to Weston, Kelston, Bitton, Oldland Common, Cadbury Heath, Warmley, Kingswood, Hillfields, Staple hill, Downend, Bromley Heath Uwe bus station, Bristol Parkway, Patchway and Cribbs Causeway bus and coach station.

Services changes - early mornings journeys.

Services 92 Bristol city centre to Whitchurch estate which the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority has put out to tender between Knowle and Whitchurch.

Services Weston super mare to the chew valley which West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council have put out to Tender along with the Weston super Mare to Chew Valley bus service.

One of the main problems out of Bath Spa bus and coach station is the link to Employment in North Bristol fringe and to the Towns in south Gloucestershire of Thornbury, Yate and Chipping Sodbury. with only the Stagecoach West 620, 69 services Bath Spa bus and coach station to Lansdown, Wick, Pucklechurch, Yate bus station, Chipping Sodbury Tetbury and Stroud bus and coach station every 2 hours.

By using services 19 Bath Spa bus and coach station to Downend, connections could be made to Yate on the Y2 Bristol bus and coach station to Eastville, Fishponds, Downend, Bromley heath Coalpit Heath, Yate and Chipping Sodbury, and the 19 connections at Patchway for Aztec west and Thornbury.

People from Bath use bus for Employment in the Yate and Thornbury areas so the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority needs to put out emergency tenders for these services.

The only alternative being the first group Great western railway service from Bath Spa, Oldfield park, Keynsham, Bristol Temple meads, Filton Abbey wood, Bristol Parkway and Yate.

Some trains on this route are being withdrawn in May.

Services in Greater Bristol are also being reduced on the Network and especially services number 2 2a on the Stockwood to Cribbs Causeway bus corridor, one of the city region investment corridors.

There is a problem that we will invest in the city region transport corridors.

Bath Spa bus and coach station, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Westfield, Midsomer Norton, Paulton Chilcompton, Shepton Mallet and Wells bus and coach station - and Street, Glastonbury, Wells bus station, Farrington Gurney, Clutton, Pensford, Whitchurch, Hengrove, Knowle, Bristol Temple Meads station and Bristol bus station but with very reduced bus services especially in the evenings and Sundays.

If services are being reduced now with a £150 million pound covid 19 bus service recovery grant then in October the situation will get worse.

Without further government funding from the Department for transport to the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority and North Somerset council - under the levelling up white paper on Mayoral Combined Authorities, North Somerset council needs to join the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority as the mayor Dan Norris will have more powers on Planning and Transport.

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And cross Bristol and Bath train services from May 2022.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

## **RIVER AVON - Pulteney Weir to Bathampton**

### **Danielle Sellwood, BERA (Bathwick Estate Residents Association)**

This stretch of river has been a subject of concern for over 30 years, with efforts made in 1985, 200 and now 2022 to preserve and maintain this important stretch of river.

#### **Issues:**

##### **Severe riverbank erosion**

Severe erosion means many trees are at risk of dying and falling into the river taking large chunks of bank with them. This not only poses a risk to properties (and huge expense), but also to the integrity of the river itself, with loss of habitat and biodiversity as well as greater flood risk - a wider river combined with increased risk of flooding will escalate erosion and put huge pressure on Pulteney Bridge and beyond.

Whilst some of the erosion is inevitably caused by flooding, a significant amount is also caused by commercial boats (this was established in the 2000 report). Commercial use is increasing, there are currently large barges delivering to Cleveland Pools, tour boats operating from March till October/November, safety boats operating at Cleveland Bridge, and when Cleveland Pools are open there will be additional services running between the pools and the weir.

##### **Loss of habitat and an unhealthy river**

Severe erosion is causing properties at the town end of this stretch to build and place protective walls, often to the detriment of natural habitats due to the loss of plant life on the bank. As erosion continues, more properties will look to protect their banks leading to a much more industrialised river with significant loss to nature. This combined with dangerous levels of pollution is putting this important stretch of river and its rich nature at risk.

##### **Safety of leisure users (non-powered).**

The number of leisure users is rising exponentially, swimmers, paddleboarders, canoeists etc. With the new ownership of Bathwick Meadows by the National Trust, this is set to increase dramatically, up until now, access to this stretch has been very limited. Increased commercial traffic and private and unregulated motored craft pose a significant risk to safety, as does pollution which is well documented.

#### **Solutions**

We are calling for action to be taken to protect this important stretch of river, including:

- This section of the river must be seen as an important asset for the city and a management plan be put in place.
- Commercial boats to be managed, limited and monitored.
- There must be significant sections of the year when no commercial boats may operate (unless in an emergency) in order to allow the banks and habitat to recover.
- Polluters must be stopped as a matter of urgency.



**Then and now.** On the left is Cleveland Pools in 1910, and on the right, 2022. The loss of several feet of bank is clearly demonstrated by the trees that are behind the scene on the left, but now in 2022 dangerously undercut and hanging off the bank in the picture on the right.



**At-risk trees.** On the left at Cleveland Pools and on the right at Forester Court, it is clear to see the significant erosion and undercutting of trees at summer river levels (i.e. low non-flood level)



**Left.** Two tour boats passing close to the banks leaving little room for other users and putting increased pressure on the banks. **Right:** Increasing numbers of leisure users.

**COUNCIL MEETING 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2022**

**COUNCILLOR STATEMENTS**

**Councillor statement (item 15)**

*(attached)*

- Cllr Hounsell      Visitor accommodation policy locally and nationally

## **Rachel Stokes statement**

Good evening everyone. My name is Rachel Stokes and I represent the Keynsham Road Safety Campaign. Our petition calls for an extension of the proposed 30mph section of the Wellsway up to the 'Keynsham' sign, and the installation of a pavement to connect properties at Uplands with the pavement at Courtenay Road.

For those of you not familiar with Wellsway, it is the only 1 of 5 major routes into Keynsham that is not currently 30 mph. The section we are concerned with is only 700 metres long but contains a dangerous blind bend with 11 residential properties to either side of the road. Reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on this section would vastly increase the safety of all road users, but, would only add 13 seconds to each journey.

The Highways department claim this section should remain 40mph because it is 'rural'.

- If Uplands is 'rural', why do we pay a precept to Keynsham Town Council of around £100 per year?
- Although there is no up to date information, a traffic study in 2018 of this 'rural' road found that it was used by around 11,000 vehicles a day.
- One field (less than 300m long) separates the Uplands residential area from the rest of Keynsham.

Highways officers have been using the guidance for Rural Speed Management when considering this road; the official designation given by the Office for National Statistics for this section of road is C1 - **Urban: City and Town**.

The guidance for C1: Urban City and Town speed limits is very clear. It says that 30mph is the standard speed limit for urban areas.

The guidance says: For a 40mph limit to be appropriate, the road must be of **good width with buildings set back from the road** – at the Uplands junction there is a building less than 150cm from the road.

The guidance says: roads suitable for 40mph **must cater for the needs of non-motorised road users**. Cyclists on this stretch of road regularly take their lives in their hands and it is only a matter of time before we see another serious incident. **'Pulling out of Uplands Junction is quite a challenge' said Andy Wait – 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

The guidance says: roads suitable for 40mph **must have adequate footways and crossing places**. There is no footway along this section, and not a single crossing.

The Highways department claim there is 'limited activity' to either side of the road. Every day there are around 50 residents who have to pull out onto a blind bend and hope for the best. Every day, farm traffic, B&B customers, delivery vehicles, cyclists, off-road motorcycles and 4 x 4 enthusiasts pull out onto a blind bend and hope for the best. It is, quite obviously, only a matter of time before there is a major incident resulting in a fatality at this junction. One of this council's core policies is to promote a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce emissions. At 30mph, with a pavement, this road would be perfect for pedestrians, hikers and horse riders. Instead of Bathnes having to pay for these residents to use the Safer Routes to School scheme, they could walk their children to the local school less than a mile away.

If a planning application was submitted for the junction of Uplands and Wellsway it would be rejected. The Highways Department would say that at 40mph, oncoming traffic does not have enough distance to stop. At 30mph, with longer stopping distances and less chance of death upon impact, the junction would be deemed safe enough for the application to be approved. For the sake of 13 additional seconds, Wellsway road users are subjected to an unacceptable level of risk. It is worth bearing in mind this quote from the Think! Campaign from 2009: "...if you hit a child at 30mph they have an 80% chance of living, but if you hit them at 40mph they have an 80% chance of dying."

Despite our repeated requests for meetings on site, the decision makers have not visited the road. The decision on the speed limits on Wellsway was not, by their own admission, informed by any data on composition of road users, average speeds, or accidents. The 700 people who have signed our petition see it and use it all the time and know it to be extremely fast, extremely busy, and extremely hazardous for all road users. They say: 'I feel I am taking my life in my hands trying to pull into this road', 'If no action is taken we will see serious injury or death'. Government guidance and common sense say that 'fear of traffic can affect peoples' quality of life'. This council's motto is 'Improving People's Lives' – please don't ignore this opportunity to improve the lives of Wellsway road users.

Over two years ago, 53 of your constituents made their concerns and wishes abundantly clear – they voted unanimously for this section of Wellsway to be reduced from 40mph to 30mph. Now, nearly 700 of your constituents have made their concerns and wishes abundantly clear. How long can the council, for the sake of only 700 metres,

for the sake of only 13 seconds, ignore the legitimate concerns of these constituents and the evidence presented by this campaign?

Thank you for listening.

## **Bob Goodman statement**

This speech will be substantially different to the that I intended to deliver.

It has been almost 7 years to the day that my mum died, I remember it not only for that reason but the way that events changed my life. In the evening of that day I was asked for the third time if I would stand as a councillor in the Combe Down ward . I had only a few weeks before said NO because I had no political ambition what so ever and believe that local Government should not involve politics. But with the loss of my mum I was being told Yes 'told' by her looking down from above.... " don't be silly Robert you must because you care too much for the City not to do so" .. and so the adventure began.

How absolutely shameful it is that I find myself having to come to this Council meeting to defend 'Free Speech' being dictated to by this Administration and the Chief Executive that I will not be allowed to speak unless I send in what I am going to say.

The Leadership does not believe in transparency, I already had to resign as a Trustee of Avon Wildlife Trust because I dared to criticise the administration on their appalling response to both the Climate and Ecologist Emergency and we have also seen the response to other Cllrs when they stand up and be counted.

One has to ask what this Liberal Democrat council are worried about , in all my speeches to Council or Cabinet I have told it as it is, but they clearly can not defend the indefensible.

I have been truly amazed at the response that I have had from residents of the City who feel poorly represented and from Councillors and yes even those in the Lib Dem group has been truly astonishing.

We can all see what a dictatorship can do with the destruction of Ukraine, those Ukrainians are truly amazing and far braver than I am but I can do my bit by standing up for democracy in the face of bullying tactics that we are facing.

The residents of Bath will not tolerate the way this Council is behaving, if it's not the betrayal of Tufa Fields , the debacle over the Mountain Bikes at Entry Hill , the way in which they have allowed their Development Company to go unchallenged and Now to prevent Free Speech is beyond belief.

If this Administration think they are going to prevent me speaking the truth on the short comings of this Council then they are Sadly mistaken.

I hope Cllrs at this meeting will take on board what is happening to my City and ignore Party Politics and stand up for their residents.

I hope this outrageous decision to prevent free speech will see the demise of this Administration.

All I can say is ... I'm so glad there is the Freedom of Information Facility.....!!!! When the truth will come out.

**David Redgewell** - Statement for Banes full Council 24th March 2022 and Banes Cabinet meeting 31st March 2022.

Public transport services in the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council bus service improvements plan - with bus service cuts across the west of mayoral transport Authority and North Somerset.

We are very very concerned about the level of service and frequencies that first group west of England buses are going to operate across the city region and into rural areas of Somerset ,Wiltshire and Gloucestershire from 24 th April 2022.

D 2 Bath Spa bus and coach station to Midford, Norton St Phillips, Rode, Beckington and Frome reductions on Saturdays.

Reductions in services 1 Bath city centre to Southdown.

services 3 services reductions.

and 3 a services withdrawn.

services change on route 39 x39 with services starting from Newton St Loe in the morning.

Changes to the Bath Spa bus and coach station to Weston, Kelston, Bitton, Oldland Common, Cadbury Heath, Warmley, Kingswood, Hillfields, Staple hill, Downend, Bromley Heath Uwe bus station, Bristol Parkway, Patchway and Cribbs Causeway bus and coach station.

Services changes - early mornings journeys.

Services 92 Bristol city centre to Whitchurch estate which the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority has put out to tender between Knowle and Whitchurch.

Services Weston super mare to the chew valley which West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council have put out to Tender along with the Weston super Mare to Chew Valley bus service.

One of the main problems out of Bath Spa bus and coach station is the link to Employment in North Bristol fringe and to the Towns in south Gloucestershire of Thornbury, Yate and Chipping Sodbury. with only the Stagecoach West 620, 69 services Bath Spa bus and coach station to Lansdown, Wick, Pucklechurch, Yate bus station, Chipping Sodbury Tetbury and Stroud bus and coach station every 2 hours.

By using services 19 Bath Spa bus and coach station to Downend, connections could be made to Yate on the Y2 Bristol bus and coach station to Eastville, Fishponds, Downend, Bromley heath Coalpit Heath, Yate and Chipping Sodbury, and the 19 connections at Patchway for Aztec west and Thornbury.

People from Bath use bus for Employment in the Yate and Thornbury areas so the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority needs to put out emergency tenders for these services.

The only alternative being the first group Great western railway service from Bath Spa, Oldfield park, Keynsham, Bristol Temple meads, Filton Abbey wood, Bristol Parkway and Yate.

Some trains on this route are being withdrawn in May.

Services in Greater Bristol are also being reduced on the Network and especially services number 2 2a on the Stockwood to Cribbs Causeway bus corridor, one of the city region investment corridors.

There is a problem that we will invest in the city region transport corridors.

Bath Spa bus and coach station, Peasedown St John, Radstock, Westfield, Midsomer Norton, Paulton Chilcompton, Shepton Mallet and Wells bus and coach station - and Street, Glastonbury, Wells bus station, Farrington Gurney, Clutton, Pensford, Whitchurch, Hengrove, Knowle, Bristol Temple Meads station and Bristol bus station but with very reduced bus services especially in the evenings and Sundays.

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[Insert Danielle Sellwood statement here ]

## **Cllr Duncan Hounsell**

We all believe in fairness. I want to bring your attention to what I regard as unfairness regarding visitor accommodation policies and practice locally and nationally. Visitor Accommodation is covered in policy RE7 of the B&NES place-making plan. It states that a change of use from a dwelling to visitor accommodation will be permitted provided that for large residential properties a substantial private residential unit is retained. The reason for that policy is obvious. The owner living in the property will have a personal interest in maintaining good order and good relationships with neighbours. If a good citizen applies for planning permission in advance for such change of use of a property they own but do not live in they will be refused because of our policy RE7.

However, if an owner of a large property ignores the planning process and goes ahead to change the use from residential to visitor accommodation, the onus then falls on neighbours to demonstrate that a fundamental change of use has taken place.

Neighbours have to maintain logs of incidents such as increased noise and nuisance, traffic generation, impact on the character of an area etc. The minimum period for maintaining such logs is said to be 6 months. Neighbours can be advised to take photos, video recordings, use noise monitoring equipment all dated and timed and so on. A key consideration is whether the visitors are family groups treating the house as one would expect a normal house to be treated or groups enjoying “hen” and “stag” parties and the like. There will be neighbours who may feel intimidated and neighbours who lack the capacity or strength to undertake the required surveillance.

There are cases where neighbours have had to complete and submit monitoring forms to the Council for years before enforcement action is considered and taken. This enforcement action usually entails forcing the owner to make a formal planning application which can then take months to conclude, and, if the application is refused, the owner can appeal adding yet more months of anguish to neighbours while the owner is making sizeable sums of money.

Owners may buy a chain of residential properties and form a commercial enterprise from visitor accommodation. Because notice is given of any visit to a property by an enforcement officer, owners have enough time to pretend that it is their principal residence.

Our local policies need re-drafting in the next Local Plan. A simple test for a private residential unit could be where the owner is registered for Council Tax for example. Change of use to visitor accommodation for large properties should require a planning application at the outset in every case giving the local community and local councils a chance to have their say. Our planning enforcement team does very good work. They need the right tools - more officers, more resources, and stronger, unambiguous policies.

National law needs to be enacted that requires all AirBnB type accommodation to be registered with the local authority. A levy on every booking should be paid to the local authority to give the funds necessary for effective monitoring and control.

These changes will be welcomed by those who good owners who offer visitor accommodation, who want to do the right thing but are tainted by the publicity from the bad cases.

At its worst, these “party houses” blight people’s lives for months and years, affecting health and well-being. Neighbours and communities feel powerless. This has to stop. It is simply not fair. END

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