

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CABINET**

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

Thursday, 5th November, 2020

#### **Present:**

Councillor Dine Romero	Council Leader and Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Rob Appleyard	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, and Economic Development
Councillor Neil Butters	Cabinet Member for Transport Services
Councillor Paul Crossley	Cabinet Member for Community Services
Councillor Kevin Guy	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Richard Samuel	Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Sarah Warren	Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services
Councillor David Wood	Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Joanna Wright	Cabinet Member for Transport Services

#### **53 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting by explaining that this meeting is being held under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. The Council has agreed a protocol to cover virtual meetings and this meeting would operate in line with that protocol. The meeting has the same status and validity as a meeting held in the Guildhall.

The Chair also reminded everyone that today was the first day of the new lockdown and urged everyone to follow the lockdown rules, stay at home (when possible) and by doing so protect the NHS and save lives.

#### **54 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

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

The Chair informed the meeting that agenda item 11 'Government invitation to Somerset to submit locally led proposals for unitary local government' would be considered under Constitution 'Part 4 B (Access to Information Procedure Rules) - Urgency Rule 15.

## **57 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were 12 questions from Councillors.

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

## **58 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

David Redgewell in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website*] addressed the issues around bus travel around West of England Combined Authority during COVID19 pandemic.

## **59 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **60 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

There were none.

## **61 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

There were none.

## **62 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## **63 RULE 15 GOVERNMENT INVITATION TO SOMERSET TO SUBMIT LOCALLY LED PROPOSALS FOR UNITARY LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Councillor Dine Romero introduced this report by saying that she has received a letter from the Secretary of State for housing Communities and Local Government on the 9th October, asking if the Council would want to submit a locally led proposal for unitary local government with all of, or part of Somerset. In May 2018 Somerset County Council announced its intention to explore a model of government which might deliver better services in Somerset. Earlier discussions included the districts within Somerset County Council's borders, as well as with North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset. The administration of the Council had commissioned advice in 2018, so that it could objectively take part in those early discussions. That advice concluded that there were significant risks to the Council's ability to deliver its strategic priorities, noting that the proposed financial impact, along with the ability of Bath the North East Somerset, to be able to develop policies and interventions

specific to its socio-economic environment were likely to be hampered. Also, any benefits were deemed to be insignificant compared to the scale of risk arising from the proposal.

Councillor Romero continued by saying that she did not believe that situation had changed. The Council did not formally take part in discussions, nor was the Council involved in the business plans drawn up and submitted by Somerset County Council, nor those submitted by the four District Councils within Somerset County Council. Councillor Romero didn't believe that at this time the Council would have anything to gain by submitting a late extra option for government to consider. The Council did have a question of North Somerset's request to join WECA that would need to be fully addressed. This would have some obvious benefits as it would consolidate the economic area as this was a region that the Council has already worked within. Councillor Romero added that in her view this request would need to be resolved more urgently than creating a new unitary with untried partners. The Council would need to continue to act as a separate local unitary authority, and continue to cooperate with all public sector partners, including neighbouring Councils, to offer the best services to local residents and visitors.

Councillor Dine Romero moved the recommendations.

Councillor Richard Samuel seconded the motion by saying that the history of County based reorganisations around the country has not been a happy one over the years. The cost of these reorganisations has been higher than hoped at the point proposals were put forward and agreed by the government. These reorganisations consume an enormous amount of time in the public sector, not just for the Councils involved but also for partners who work with the Councils, and at this particular point in time, when all Councils were trying to work with colleagues in the National Health Service to help tackle the COVID19 pandemic, this was a costly and entirely unnecessary distraction. Councillor Samuel agreed with the Leader that the Council should build on previous partnerships.

Councillor Samuel concluded by saying that this proposal did not seem to be a great deal for BANES residents. Nevertheless, the Council have taken this proposal seriously, and in reaching the recommendations have considered carefully the possibilities.

Councillor David Wood agreed with the comments made by the Leader and Councillor Samuel and added that the Council had to consider what was the best for its residents. Councillor Wood felt that entering into unitary local government with Somerset would be a poor outcome for the residents of BANES, and for those reasons he would be voting for the recommendation of the Leader.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Consider this report and recommend to Council that it does not submit a proposal for local government reorganisation in Somerset, and
- 2) Indicate its intention to continue to act as a separate local unitary authority council (Bath & North East Somerset Council) but continue to co-operate with all public sector partners (including neighbouring councils) to offer the best services it can to its local residents and visitors.

## **64 AMENDMENT TO POLICY ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING STANDARDS FOR DRIVERS, VEHICLES AND OPERATORS**

Councillor Paul Crossley introduced this report by saying that this was about aligning Taxi policy with Clean Air Zone (CAZ) policy. The Council has received £9.4m from the Government to help taxis, coaches, buses and all commercial vehicles meet the requirements for clean air standards. The report outlined the ways the funding would be used and so far there were 600 expressions of interest. All of BANES taxi operators have been contacted by the Council to alert them to this offer. Also, Councillor Crossley hoped that all of the local business and traders would take on this offer. Anyone that applied would be fitted with a telematic device in order to check if they were eligible in meeting terms and conditions of the government grant.

Councillor Paul Crossley moved the recommendations.

Councillor Sarah Warren seconded the motion by saying that she was pleased that the policy requires vehicles to have nitrogen dioxide emissions compliant with CAZ, barring some exemptions, as set out in the report. Everyone can check the compliance of their vehicles with the DVLA vehicle checker, which can be accessed by the Council's CAZ web page, and they can then contact the Council's CAZ team to establish whether they might be eligible for grants or loans. Councillor Warren also said that the CAZ was an important public health measure that would improve air quality in the city and that she hoped that all taxi drivers would look into upgrading their vehicles.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Adopt the proposed amendment to the Policy which provides that all vehicles licensed by the Council must be (as a minimum) compliant with the terms of the Clean Air Zone and meet with its emission standards, unless they are eligible for exemptions as detailed in the CAZ scheme.
- 2) Note that drivers using vehicles eligible for exemptions under and in accordance with the CAZ scheme will be exempted from enforcement action under the Policy

## **65 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2020-21**

Councillor Kevin Guy introduced this report by saying that the Council had a statutory duty to, in consultation with a police probation and health services (as named in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998), publish annual Justice Plan setting out agreed actions to help prevent offending, and reoffending as a lead partner in the multi-agency arrangement. Due to the pandemic the Youth Justice Board of England and Wales advised that there was no requirement to submit a plan to them this year, and therefore no national framework has been completed. However, the Youth Offending Service Management Board has agreed to prepare shorter pack. Councillor Guy added that the rate of children coming into the justice system for the first time continued to reduce in B&NES and the rate of custodial sentencing remains low in the area. There were still some concerns about the rates of reoffending by a minority of children, which was addressed through the continuation of involvement in a wider multi agency work to address criminal exploitation of young people. This was currently being explored through active involvement in the local criminal justice board.

Councillor Guy concluded by saying that the cross-party Children and Young People's PDS Panel endorsed the Plan at their meeting on the 3rd November 2020.

Councillor Kevin Guy moved the recommendations.

Councillor Rob Appleyard seconded the motion by thanking Councillor Guy and the relevant officers for bringing this Plan even though that it wasn't a requirement for this year and continue to keep the focus on the work they were doing. Councillor Appleyard highlighted one of the figures in the Plan which was about reduction of first-time offenders; since 2015 the number of first-time youth offenders has been reduced by around 75%.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to recommend approval of the Youth Justice Plan to Full Council.

## **66 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL 2020 TO SEPTEMBER 2020**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by thanking the officers on the comprehensive document. The government's announcements between June and September have led to expected improvements in the Council's financial position due to grants that the government had provided. However, the government grants have not covered 100% of Council's extra costs, losses and income. The Council had endured substantial income losses from Heritage Services, parking and commercial estate income, and these losses were substantial and serious and that had to be dealt with. In addition to that, there were other pressures caused by COVID19 pandemic such as these on SEND within Children's Services in an amount of £3.2m this year. That money would not be drawn from the Council's Revenue Budget but from the school's grants. Some of the original savings would not be delivered because of COVID19.

The capital programme has slipped from £113.7m to £93.7m, which was an expected outcome.

Councillor Samuel highlighted pressures on Council Tax and business rates collections funds due to individuals and businesses inability to pay in the way they used to. Some of those losses would be covered by past surpluses in the collection funds and some would be covered elsewhere. In terms of the reserves, the Council may not have to withdraw from reserves as was the suggested in the last monitoring report.

Councillor Samuel took the meeting through the rest of the report, as presented, and added that it was encouraging to see that the strong action that the Council took to stabilise its finances, along with financial assistance from the government, have led to an improved financial position.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Dine Romero seconded the motion by thanking the officers and Councillor Samuel on the comprehensive report and on the work that had been done to ensure that the revenue was forecasted to be on budget, and on the position of capital, cash limits and reserves.

Councillor Paul Crossley welcomed the report and also thanked the officers for the amazing work they have done in responding to the crisis. Councillor Crossley highlighted a few initiatives within his portfolio such as engagement of people with library services which were predominantly web based. Councillor Crossley also

thanked the Heritage Services staff for responding well to challenges during COVID 19 pandemic and to all other services and teams within his portfolio.

Councillor Tim Ball also welcomed the report and thanked all Council staff for responding well during this crisis whilst working in very difficult and stressful circumstances.

Councillor Richard Samuel added that the Council would need to continue to keep sharp focus on its finances, and not become complacent over the next six months.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed:

- 1) To note the 2020/21 revenue budget position (as at the end of September 2020).
- 2) To approve the revenue virement listed for approval in Appendix 3(i) and to note those virements listed for information only.
- 3) To note the capital year-end forecast detailed in paragraph 3.36 of this report;
- 4) To note the changes in the capital programme including capital schemes that have been agreed for full approval under delegation listed in Appendix 4(i).

## **67 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that this was a standard report for the Cabinet to consider. Councillor Samuel highlighted very low returns on investment that have been received, although these were still above what was a very low benchmark. All the indicators that the Council had previously agreed and all of the indicators on Treasury performance were within the target. Councillor Samuel also added that COVID19 restrictions would continue over the next year and would have consequent financial and economic impacts until a mass vaccine is found and distributed to the wider population. The pandemic would not go away quickly which was important to consider in terms of how the Council would invest in the foreseeable future. This was something that would be reflected in the next Council's Budget.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Sarah Warren seconded the motion by saying that the Council was currently actively engaging with the Treasury advisors, with regard to disinvesting 4-8% of Council's Treasury funds that remain indirectly invested in fossil fuels, and that was inevitably a gradual process that would need to balance any financial risks that might result in order to safeguard Council funds at a time of ongoing cuts and COVID19 related losses. However, any risks associated with a greener investment portfolio would need to be weighed relative to the alternatives. Councillor Warren expressed her hope that a future Treasury report would be able to publish a timeframe for disinvestment of Treasury reserves from fossil fuels.

Councillor Samuel added that he would seriously Councillor Warren's points on disinvesting in fossil fuels, but for the moment the Council was in transitional period. Councillor Samuel also said that he was sure that over time this and most of other Councils would move away from fossil fuel investment.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) The Treasury Management Report to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted.
- 2) The Treasury Management Indicators to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 are noted.
- 3) This Treasury Management Report and attached appendices are reported to November Council and December Corporate Audit Committee.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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**CABINET MEETING 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020**

**STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC  
AND COUNCILLORS**

1. David Redgewell - statement on Public Transport and The Emergency Active Travel Fund

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Karen Warrington
<p>Why is this Administration pursuing a policy of leaving their Bath Residents without a waste recycling depot resulting in them having to make a 10 mile round trip to Keynsham - wasting their time and money, increasing the use of car journeys, polluting the areas of North East Somerset they drive through and increasing the traffic/congestion burden on the residents of Keynsham?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor David Wood
<p><i>This administration is absolutely not doing this. We are committed to providing at least one site for the residents of Bath and are working on options to reduce car journeys to minimum levels possible.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Karen Warrington
<p>I attended your Liveable Neighbourhoods Webinar and the focus was pretty much completely on Bath, backed by Cllr Wright and there were no pictures outside Bath on the presentation. Rural communities are used as rat runs so what is this Administration going to do to expand 'Liveable Neighbourhoods' outside Bath, how much money will be invested and what are the timescales for including our rural areas?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Joanna Wright
<p><i>The Rural Areas are included in the Liveable Neighbourhoods. The outcome of the Public consultation is due to be reported to Cabinet in December 2020. The Council has allocated £200k this year and is committed to funding the project going forward.</i></p>			

<b>M</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Karen Warrington
<p>Following on from my question to Cabinet last month regarding Licencing of Temporary Event Notices (TEN's) and protection of our ecology and habitats, what steps is the Council going to take to ensure that the Ecology Emergency is robustly reflected within our Local Plan and will the Council ensure that any policies are properly and appropriately enforced?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Tim Ball
<p><i>The Council is currently progressing a partial update of its Local Plan (Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan). Through this partial update the ecology, green infrastructure and trees &amp; woodland policies will be reviewed in order to ensure that they address the ecological emergency e.g. including the requirement for future development to deliver biodiversity net gain. In terms of enforcing the policies the Planning Service make recommendations and decisions in accordance with policies and if planning permission is approved and there was a subsequent breach of control, the Planning Service would need to assess the breach and based on the facts take the appropriate action .</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
<p>Has the government responded to B&amp;NES Council concerns with regards to the proposed unrealistic future housing numbers for this Authority?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Tim Ball
<p><i>The government consultation on changes to the current planning system (including the proposed introduction of the new standard method housing numbers) closed on 1st October 2020. The responses received (including from B&amp;NES Council) are currently being considered by the government. Further information is still awaited from the government on the proposed next steps.</i></p>			

<b>M</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
How will the Council refine the Local Plan to take into account the Ecological Emergency?			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillors Tim Ball	
<i>The Council is currently progressing a partial update of its Local Plan (Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan). Through this partial update the ecology, green infrastructure and trees &amp; woodland policies will be reviewed in order to ensure that they address the ecological emergency e.g. including the requirement for future development to deliver biodiversity net gain. In addition, it is proposed that a Supplementary Planning Document is prepared setting out further guidance on how biodiversity net gain can be delivered.</i>			
<b>M</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
With further senior experienced staff resigning without their posts being re-advertised, can you please give a timescale for completing the restructure previously promised?			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero	
<i>As detailed in the Senior Management Structure Update report to Council on 12 November 2020 appointing the Chief Operating Officer, the new structure will take effect from 1 April 2021. Details of the new structure will be shared with members at the appropriate time once consultation with affected staff has been undertaken.</i>			
<b>M</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
With one of the impacts of the COVID19 being more officers working from home and the permanent closure of office space the issue of staff mental health and well-being is a key issue of concern. What additional steps will the Council take to protect its staff?			

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Dine Romero	
<p><i>The Council take its responsibility for the health and wellbeing of its staff extremely seriously. The Council's Health, Safety &amp; Wellbeing Steering Group meets quarterly and has recently signed off a comprehensive wellbeing strategy and detailed mental health action plan covering all staff. Since July, over 1,680 individual risk assessment conversations have taken place between individuals and their line managers in order to identify those staff at increased risk due to the current pandemic; this includes those staff who are struggling with their mental health. Whilst we are continuing to follow the government guidelines around all staff working from home if they are able to, through the risk assessment process we have identified a small number of staff for whom we have made arrangements to return into Council offices on a limited part-time basis to help support their mental health.</i></p> <p><i>We are promoting resources such as the Wellness Action Plan toolkit from Bath Mind to all staff and line managers as part of our Working Well From Home suite of guidance and information, and we continue to promote our Employee Assistance Programme with its Health e-Hub app to employees on a regular basis. Through our @mybest development programme, we are offering a number of virtual learning and development sessions; we held a Wellbeing in the Workplace Webinar in August and we have more in the pipeline over the next few months. We have also just updated some of our "best bits" to include tips on handling virtual meeting fatigue. In September we trained our first cohort of 16 Mental Health First Aiders and we have a second cohort due to be trained in December. This is to complement our departmental health champion programme alongside our peer support/buddy scheme.</i></p> <p><i>Teams are meeting on a regular basis and we share a news briefing with staff once a week on a Thursday. We are also just about to launch our third wellbeing survey for staff in mid-November.</i></p>		
<b>M</b> <b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
<p>Bristol City Council are progressing significant housing in the south of the city which will have knock on transport impact on the A37. What plans are jointly being considered to mitigate this impact?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillors Joanna Wright and Neil Butters
<p><i>The Joint Local Transport Plan 4 was adopted in March 2020, it sets out how we aim to achieve a well-connected sustainable</i></p>		

*transport network that works for residents, businesses and visitors across the region; a network that offers greater, realistic travel choices and makes walking, cycling and public transport the natural way to travel. The plan does include schemes for the South of Bristol and bus route improvement for the A37 from Bristol to Farrington Gurney. The West of England Combined Authority in consultation with the constituent authorities are currently developing a programme for the new JLTP5, which will provide an opportunity to review and amend the current plans.*

**M 09**

**Question from:**

Councillor Paul May

With two major higher education and further education colleges in the B&NES area, are the financial implications of the impact of students within the business community being discussed?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Richard Samuel

*The Pro Vice Chancellors of the two Universities and the Principal of Bath College are key members of the B&NES Economic Renewal and Recovery Board alongside members of our business community. Chaired by the Leader of the Council, the board meets every two weeks. A public webinar will be held towards the end of this year with the Board to highlight their work programme. In addition to this, the Council's leadership meets with the Universities on a regular basis to discuss matters of strategic importance to the area.*

**M 10**

**Question from:**

Councillor Paul May

Clearly excellent progress is being made regarding the former Culverhay site. Can you confirm that the Council is committed to providing high quality education/skills training on the site subject to budgetary constraints?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Kevin Guy

*The Council is committed to delivering purposeful education provision on the Culverhay site.*

<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul Myers
<p>Given that hardly a week now seems to go by without an announcement of another senior officer leaving the Council, quite apart from an alarming loss of corporate history and knowledge, does this accelerating trend indicate an issue with this administration or is there another cause that we need to be aware of?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero	
<p><i>Recent or upcoming senior management departures are a combination of retirements and individuals leaving to take on new roles. This is quite normal in any organisation and the focus is now on ensuring the new senior management structure is put in place as soon as possible.</i></p>			
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>			
Does the Council carry out exit interviews with staff when they leave?			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero	
<p><i>Thank you for your supplementary question. Exit interviews are offered where appropriate. For senior staff those exit interviews are with the Director of HR &amp; OD.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>Do you agree that it is not acceptable for children in B&amp;NES to have to rely on charity to avoid hunger during the school holidays? What action are you and your Cabinet colleagues taking to implement a voucher scheme for all children entitled to Free School meals in time for the Christmas holidays?</p>			

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Kevin Guy
<p><i>I, as the Lead Member for Children and Young People, am pleased to confirm that B&amp;NES Local Authority has committed to funding Free School Meals (FSM) vouchers for Christmas 2020, February and Easter 2021 school holidays. I am actively lobbying central government for additional funding for FSM. The Local Authority can confirm that the Free School Meals crowd funding, a cross sector initiative to include the Local Authority has already raised £56,000. The Local Authority is working with St Johns Foundation to allocate this funding. In addition, the Children, Adult, Health and Wellbeing PDS panel on 03/11/2020 voted to make representation to Government on FSM as a statutory body.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>This is such welcome news. As I have always said, ultimately we need to address the underlying reasons for food poverty but in the meantime it is so important that we act now to ensure that children don't go hungry. Please could the Cabinet Member give us more details about how he anticipates the process of supplying vouchers/food to FSM children during the school holidays will work?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Kevin Guy
<p><i>Thank you for your supplementary question. I can confirm that the Council has identified the funding for the Free School Meals (FSM) vouchers and will work with partners to distribute the vouchers/funding to parents in the most efficient way. Schools and Children's Centres will be an integral part in the logistics of distribution of the vouchers and we need to discuss with them the most efficient way possible. I can also confirm that we have allocated £79k to fund this proposal, and children in Bath and North East Somerset will not go without food during the school holidays, especially at Christmas. We are looking to draw down additional funding to support free school meals and I am also working with the local food poverty steering group to look at how we can help tackle the wider issues surrounding this extremely important matter.</i></p>	
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>Do you think you would have enough money for this project because I do believe you said that the Council would work with St Johns Foundation? Do you think that would be enough to make sure that if government doesn't come forth with any additional funding that</p>	

we would have enough money for Free School Meals?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Kevin Guy

*The great work done by 3SG, Wera Hobhouse MP and St Johns Foundation with their crowdfunding appeal was a separate to free school meal. That money will be going directly to help organisations connected to children and poverty but will not be going towards free school meals. The Council will be funding this issue and the Cabinet has agreed already that the £270k will be required up until Easter will be set through Council funding alone.*

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David Redgewell statement – BANES Cabinet on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020

SWTN believe that with the rise in Covid 19 rates in the Bristol and Bath city region it is very important to retain the active travel fund scheme in Bath and North east Somerset.especially in Bath city centre, Oldfield Park, Peasdown St John and Keynsham town centre.

We are still concerned about social distancing at the Bath Spa bus and rail station interchange.

There is still a need to keep top of cleaning in and around the public transport interchange in Dorchester Street and Manvers Street and public toilets. The issue of public toilets needs to be addressed by opening public toilets at Avon Street coach station.

We need journey makers and social distancing marshals in BANES like those in Bristol and South Gloucestershire Council and parts of the WECA mayoral combined authority area. Sight and Sound guards are used in South Gloucestershire and covid marshals are also in Gloucester. The covid marshals in the main Bath shopping centres, Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Paulton help to social distance shoppers and visitors and could be used at bus stops and interchanges throughout BANES.

The Avon and Somerset police and crime commissioner have been given money for social distancing and enforcement but we still have passengers on the public transport network not wearing face covering (apart from those who are exempt).

The Directors for public health for Bath, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset council's should be asking the Avon and Somerset police commissioner, PCC Sue Montsteven and the British Transport Police for more enforcement action.

With regards to Christmas in BANES there is a need for a tourist information centres. First Group have the Travel centre which needs reopening along with the one at Wells bus station.

First Group and the WECA mayoral transport authority are looking at a book a bus scheme on the Wells bus station, Shepton Mallet, Paulton, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Peasdown St John and Bath Spa bus station corridor together with a travel centre is required. A joint arrangement could be looked similar to Penzance, St Austell and the Isle of Wight. They should be looked after by Destination Bristol, Visit Bath and North East Somerset town councils.

In view of the latest lockdown there is a need for Bath and Bristol as part of the 4 unity authorities of the WECA mayoral transport authority and North Somerset council to form a city region.

We hope that the WECA mayor will make sure that a financial package is negotiated with central government.

We still need to see close monitoring of the university bus services after the 10 o'clock closure of bars and restaurants after the new lockdown is lifted in December.

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On buses we still need more services on route 37 to Weston for the RuH, Kelston, Bitton, Longwell Green, Hanham, St George, Lawrence Hill station and Bristol bus station.

There should also be later bus services on route 174 between Bath Spa bus and coach station to Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Shepton Mallet and Wells bus station.

There needs to be progress on North Somerset Council joining the WECA mayoral transport and planning authority and on The Somerset and Mendip District Council regional local government reorganisation.

We need a strong city regional authority but of course Bath needs to work closely with Wiltshire County Council, Swindon and Mendip district council in North Somerset.

More public transport staff should be moving to WECA to assist in setting up of a railway Executive like Greater Manchester with mayor Andy Burnham or the West Midlands Combined Authority with mayor Andy Street. There should be an interface

with Network Rail and First Group bus and rail divisions. To improve the public transport network WECA needs to make progress on the light rail system for the 4 lines for the Bristol and Bath city region with details of the work being carried out by WSP..

Please submit our statement to the above cabinet meetings.

David Redgewell South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

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