

Cabinet

Date: Friday, 29th May, 2020

Time: 2.00 pm

**Venue: Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via
YouTube**

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

Councillors: Dine Romero, Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Neil Butters, Paul Crossley, Kevin Guy, Richard Samuel, Sarah Warren, David Wood and Joanna Wright



Jack Latkovic

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NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. **Recording at Meetings:-**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Some of our meetings are webcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. If you would prefer not to be filmed for the webcast, please make yourself known to the camera operators.

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4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. They may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. **Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.** Further details of the scheme:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

6. **Supplementary information for meetings**

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

Cabinet - Friday, 29th May, 2020

**at 2.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>**

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
4. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR
5. QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS
6. STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS
7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING (Pages 5 - 12)
8. CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET
9. MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES
10. SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING (Pages 13 - 18)
11. COVID19 - UPDATE REPORT AND POSITION STATEMENT (Pages 19 - 44)

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Jack Latkovic who can be contacted on 01225 394452.

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BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

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

Thursday, 13th February, 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 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

64 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

65 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Kevin Guy.

67 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors with regard to their payment of Council Tax. She also issued a further dispensation with regard to any Councillors in receipt of specific services and invited them to make any such declarations.

Councillor Tim Ball declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to the social care budget item, being in receipt of a related service.

Councillor Sarah Warren declared an interest in relation to the schools and the music service budget.

Councillor Richard Samuel declared an interest in relation to the budget, being the holder of a bus pass.

Councillor Liz Hardman, in attendance at the meeting, declared an interest in her capacity as a Governor at Aspire Academy.

68 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

69 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 9 questions from Councillors and 1 question from a member of the public.

[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.]

70 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Councillors Karen Walker and Sarah Bevan made a joint statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes and on the Council's website*] setting out their wish list for projects in Peasedown St John to be included within the forthcoming Council budget. They raised various queries about specific projects. In response to these issues, Councillor Jo Wright invited Councillors Karen Walker and Sarah Bevan to meet her and Councillor Neil Butters to review their issues. Councillor Richard Samuel noted the comments and queries from the Councillors. He explained that the budgets were built at portfolio level and subject to prioritisation. He responded that he would look into their queries and get back to them.

Ian Barrett, Chief Executive of Avon Wildlife Trust, made a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes and on the Council's website*] This statement was made at the Corporate Strategy item later in the meeting.

71 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

On a motion from Councillor Rob Appleyard, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

72 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

73 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

Councillor Paul Myers, as Chair of the Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel, addressed the Cabinet about the Budget session that had taken place at the Panel on 3rd February 2020. He reported that it was a good meeting. The Panel had suggested that, in future, some comparative figures be provided to enable them to more easily spot trends and set the figures in context. They were concerned about the £20k music service saving and how this would impact on families. He also raised points about localised flooding and road damage, the empty homes review and electric car charging points. He thanked officers for their input.

74 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

75 BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX 2020/21 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Councillor Paul Myers speaking as a resident of B&NES said that he felt let down by the lack of ambition in this budget. He understood the pressure the Council was facing but had expected this budget to take further the manifesto commitments. He commented that the Council Tax rise will hit the most vulnerable.

Councillor Vic Pritchard raised a query about why the Cabinet were not seeking a higher increase to the social care element of the budget which would then leave residual funding for public health.

In response to Councillor Pritchard's query, Councillor Richard Samuel responded that practice in the past had been to pass forward the public health grant directly to public health, but the announcement expected from Government on 24th February would inform whether this would take place. He did not expect a reduction but needed to have the details first.

Councillor Liz Hardman welcomed some positive aspects of the budget but expressed concern about the efficiency savings in Adult services and wondered if they were achievable.

Councillor Richard Samuel, in presenting this budget to Council, thanked officers, Scrutiny Panel members and the public for their contributions, in spite of the general election meaning that it had not been possible to do the usual range of engagement events. He described a change in direction and new investment areas in climate emergency, transport and housing. He outlined some of the highlights of the budget and explained a move away from cuts to staff and services partly from a Council tax rise, still resulting in the third lowest Council tax in the South West region. He acknowledged the current funding gap for 2021/22 and hoped to be able to close that gap by the Autumn.

Councillor Tim Ball commented that they had not inherited a good legacy with the Park & Ride issue and expressed surprise about the lack of ambition comments. He

commended this forward-looking budget, fully delivering on housing and development over the 4-year term, and one which would benefit all residents.

Councillor Joanna Wright welcomed the real changes in combatting rat running and congestion and was delighted in the focus on walking, cycling and low traffic neighbourhoods. She described the budget as one which was good for health, social justice and the environment.

Councillor Neil Butters supported this budget and thanked Councillor Samuel and Finance officers in bringing this budget forward. Councillor Butters described a steady state being maintained through Highways resurfacing schemes and state of the art gritters.

Councillor David Wood welcomed the extra investment this brought in for the residents of North East Somerset which went towards addressing the imbalance some North East Somerset residents felt.

Councillor Sarah Warren expressed her delight at the funding for climate emergency measures and improved capacity for citizen engagement. She hoped for positive news from Government the following week regarding Bath's Clean Air Zone.

Councillor Rob Appleyard highlighted the focus on prevention within the budget and the Adult Social Care Charging framework which would simplify processes at a very difficult time for people. He thanked key officers who had contributed to bringing this piece of work forward.

Councillor Paul Crossley highlighted the positive news about libraries. He commended the budget for identifying problems and building in early solutions such as the new staff member to address the Ash dieback problem, which would affect 95% of Ash tree cover in the area, offset in part by the replanting scheme. He also commended the Archway project which was coming on stream in this budget year.

Councillor Richard Samuel responded to various points made during debate and called upon his Cabinet colleagues to drive delivery forward.

On a motion from Councillor Richard Samuel, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. The Cabinet recommends Council approves –
 - a) The General Fund net revenue budget for 2020/21 of £118.25m and the individual service cash limits for 2020/21 as outlined in Annex 1 of the report;
 - b) The savings and income generation plans outlined in Annex 2(i), priorities 2(ii), one-off allocations 2(iii), pressures 2(iv) in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3 of the report;
 - c) An increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2020/21 (an increase of £27.88 per Band D property);
 - d) An increase of 1.99% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept is approved in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on

- this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £27.88 on a Band D property;
- e) The movement in reserves outlined in paragraph 5.5 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £13.5m within a risk assessed range requirement of £12.3m - £13.5m;
 - f) The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4 to the report;
 - g) The Capital Programme for 2020/21 of £109.507m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.7.2, and notes the programme for 2021/22 to 2024/25 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme;
 - h) The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(ii) to Annex 5(iv) to the relevant Director in Consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder;
 - i) The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(v) of the report;
 - j) The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6 of the report;
 - k) The MRP Policy attached at Annex 7 of the report;
 - l) The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.7.8
 - m) The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 9 of the report;
 - n) The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 shown in the following link: <http://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/Bath%20%26%20NE%20Someset%20S13A%20202021%20v3.pdf> and referred to in 5.3.4;
 - o) The Adult Social Care Charging and Financial Assessment Framework at Annex 10 of the report;
 - p) The Direct Payment Policy at Annex 11 of the report;
2. That the Council include in its Council Tax setting, the precepts set and approved by other bodies including the local precepts of Town Councils, Parish Councils, and Charter Trustees of the City of Bath, and those of the Fire and Police Authorities.
 3. That Cabinet note the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in section 5.6 of the report
 4. Authorise the Council's S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Efficiency, to make any necessary changes to the draft budget proposal for submission to Council.

76 B&NES CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-2024

Ian Barrett, Chief Executive of Avon Wildlife Trust, was invited to make his statement at this point. (A full copy is available to view online and attached to the minutes). He welcomed the inclusion of the nature emergency in core policies. He described the loss of wildlife populations and ecosystems and called on the Council to declare an ecological emergency. Councillor Sarah Warren explained that the Cabinet were working hard to improve habitats and address ecological issues and enquired if Avon Wildlife Trust would work with them on this. Ian responded that the strength of the Bristol City Council approach was the partnership with other organisation such as key businesses and charities and welcomed this type of approach.

Councillor Dine Romero explained that they had taken their manifesto commitments and translated them into this strategy which she was pleased to present. They would continue to engage communities in taking this forward.

Councillor Richard Samuel explained how this strategy provided the context for the budget, which translated aspirations into reality. It is intentionally high level.

Councillor David Wood thanked Councillor Romero and officers for delivering this strategy which was clearly based on the foundation of the Liberal Democrat manifesto.

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Richard Samuel, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

1. Thank those who provided feedback on the draft Corporate Strategy and agree to continue to work with local communities to ensure their involvement during the strategy's implementation and review;
2. Note the responses and agree the recommendations and next steps following the feedback on the draft strategy, as set out in the Corporate Strategy Engagement Report in Appendix Two;
3. Note and consider the responses from the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels also set out in the Corporate Strategy Engagement Report in Appendix Two;
4. Recommend that Council adopt the new Corporate Strategy 2020-2024
5. Recommend that Council adopt the new Corporate Delivery Programme 2020-2021.

77 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS - APRIL 2019 TO DECEMBER 2019

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced this item and explained that a good start had been made on his objective to have a closer fit between capital planning and expenditure so that budgets will balance at year end and there will be no need for draw down.

On a motion from Councillor Richard Samuel, seconded by Councillor

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the 2019/20 on budget position (as at the end of December 2019).
2. To approve the revenue virements 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 3.14 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);
5. To remove from the Provisional Capital Programme schemes of £6.663m, detailed in Appendix 4(iii), to align to current delivery expectation.

78 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2019-20 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (MID YEAR UPDATE)

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced this regular performance report. He explained that a very good presentation had recently taken place to members of the Corporate Audit Committee.

On a motion from Councillor Richard Samuel, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

1. Note the Treasury Management Report to 31st December 2019, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators to 31st December 2019.

79 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND TREASURY INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the Strategy statement which will be recommended to Council. He drew Members' attention to the Municipal Bonds agency which might make borrowing more complicated but may be a potential investment source in the future.

On a motion from Councillor Richard Samuel, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, it was

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

1. Recommend the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Appendix 1) to February Council;
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in Appendix 1 and delegate authority for updating the indicators prior to approval at Full Council on 25th February 2020 to the Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Resources, in light of any changes to the recommended budget as set out in the Budget Report elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting; and
3. Note that any comments made by the Corporate Audit Committee at their meeting on the 6th February 2020 will be reported to Full Council on the 25th February 2020.

80 HERITAGE SERVICES REVISED BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2025

Councillor Paul Crossley introduced this report by celebrating the Council's success in the recent South West Awards with 4 nominations resulting in 4 gold wins. He

commended the excellent leadership and staff and praised the principles and aspiration of the service. He drew particular attention to the Inclusivity award.

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

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

1. Approve the Heritage Services Business Plan 2020-2025;
2. Confirm that it wishes Heritage Services to continue to work to the business principles agreed by the Council Executive in 2004, as amended;
3. Confirm that it wishes to relocate the Fashion Museum with a supporting Collections Centre subject to a satisfactory business case being prepared.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Cabinet Single-Member Decisions and Responses to Recommendations from PDS Panels

published 3-Feb-2020 to 19-May-2020

Further details of each decision can be seen on the Council's Single-member Decision Register at <http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?&dm=3>

Naming of new street in Chew Stoke

The decision required is to name a new street in Chew Stoke. The choice of name is the subject of considerable debate within the village.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Community Services

Decision published: 14/05/2020

Effective from: 22/05/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member has decided that the street name should be Malcolm Close.

Wards affected: Chew Valley;

Lead officer: Martin Laker

RULE 4 - Covid-19 Council Tax Hardship relief

Following the outbreak of Covid 19 and the advice of the UK Government on self-isolation and the temporary closure of Businesses and places of work, the Government have made available a £500m Hardship fund for Local Authorities, with the expectation that this will primarily be used to provide council tax relief under section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Government has provided guidance on the minimum requirements which this additional fund should address and have stated that residual funds from each authority's allocation may be used to deliver increased financial assistance through other local funding mechanisms.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Resources

Decision published: 27/04/2020

Effective from: 27/04/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees that officers be authorised to immediately reduce the council tax liability for all working age recipients of Local Council Tax Support during 2020/21 by the lower figure of their remaining liability for that year or £150.

Lead officer: Damien Peak

Updates to the Local Development Scheme, Local Plan and Statement of Community Involvement

To agree (1) updates to the B&NES Local Development Scheme and (2) the Statement of Community Involvement and (3) a launch document for a partial review to the Core Strategy/ Placemaking Plan.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, and Economic Development

Decision published: 23/03/2020

Effective from: 31/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees;

- a. that the amendments to the Interim Local Development Scheme 2020/21 (Attachment 1) to come into effect on or after 28th March,
- b. that the revised Statement of Community Involvement 2020 (Attachment 2), and
- c. that;
 - i. the B&NES Core Strategy and Placemaking (the B&NES Local Plan) should be partially updated, and
 - ii. the Local Plan Partial Update Commencement Document (Attachment 3) is published for consultation for a period of at least 6 weeks
- d. that the Director of Development and Public Protection is given delegated authority to make minor amendments and correct any errors in the Local Development Scheme, the Statement of Community Involvement and Commencement Document prior to publication.

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Lead officer: Simon De Beer

Parks' Play Area Review

To use recommendations from the Parks Play Area Review and feedback from public consultations to:

- Proceed to community asset transfer three play areas to town councils in Radstock and Midsomer Norton.
- Re-purpose two play areas (at Parry Close and St Saviours in Bath), replacing conventional play equipment with natural play opportunities and landscape improvements.
- Undertake a further consultation on the future of the play area and adjacent open space at Ridge Green Close/ Sulis Meadows in Bath
- Work with residents at Calton Road, Bath to raise grant funding to replace the

current play area provision with new natural play facilities.

- Make no changes to play areas at Chalfield Close in Keynsham and Loxton Drive and Burnt House Road in Bath.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Community Services

Decision published: 23/03/2020

Effective from: 31/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees to use recommendations from the Parks Play Area Review and feedback from public consultations to:

- Proceed to community asset transfer three play areas to town councils in Radstock and Midsomer Norton.
- Re-purpose two play areas (at Parry Close and St Saviour's in Bath), replacing conventional play equipment with natural play opportunities and landscape improvements.
- Undertake a further consultation on the future of the play area and adjacent open space at Ridge Green Close/ Sulis Meadows in Bath
- Work with residents at Calton Road, Bath to raise grant funding to replace the current play area provision with new natural play facilities.
- Make no changes to play areas at Chalfield Close in Keynsham and Loxton Drive and Burnt House Road in Bath.

Wards affected: Keynsham East; Lambridge; Midsomer Norton Redfield; Odd Down; Radstock; Southdown; Widcombe & Lyncombe;

Lead officer: Paul Pearce

School Term & Holiday Dates 2021/2022

Following consultation to fully approve the School Term & Holiday Dates for the 2021/22 academic year.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Decision published: 19/03/2020

Effective from: 27/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees to approve the Council's preferred calendar of school term and holiday dates and to recommend these to all schools for the 2021-22 academic year.

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Lead officer: Josephine Rees

Hackney Carriage Tariff Increase 2020

Proposal to increase maximum fares allowed to be charged by licensed Hackney Carriages for journeys within B&NES.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Community Services

Decision published: 09/03/2020

Effective from: 17/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees that the current tariff rates can be increased by 2.9% subject to the required public consultation.

Lead officer: John Dowding

Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy for Bath Round 7

The request for the sum of £32,941 to be agreed for the latest round (7) of recommendations for the neighbourhood spending of CIL for Bath.

Decision Maker: Council Leader

Decision published: 25/02/2020

Effective from: 04/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees that funding be provided from Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Project Funding for Bath:

- An allocation of £27,941 for Project Gear Change – Julian House for application BA-076 - which will be paid as fully funded revenue grant.
- An allocation of £5,000 for Therapy Shed – Julian House for application BA-075 – and hence approval for an addition to the 2019/20 Capital Programme scheme for Bath Area Forum – CIL.

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Lead officer: Mark Hayward

B&NES Council's response to Mendip Local Plan Part 2

Mendip District Council proposes to allocate new housing sites adjacent to Midsomer Norton through their Local Plan Part 2 Proposed Main Modifications. This is to agree B&NES Council's consultation response.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning, and Economic Development

Decision published: 24/02/2020

Effective from: 03/03/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet member for Housing, Planning and Economic Development;

- Agrees the B&NES Response to the Mendip Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) Proposed Main Modifications.
- Delegates authority to officers to submit the B&NES Response to Mendip District Council for the Mendip Local Plan Inspector's consideration.

Lead officer: Richard Daone

Appendix F to Discretionary Rates Relief Policy

Appendix F to the Discretionary Rates Relief Policy allows for the Council to grant the recently announced Pub Relief as well as the increased Newspaper relief and Retail Discount

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Resources

Decision published: 20/02/2020

Effective from: 20/02/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees that the changes be enacted to reflect central government policy.

Lead officer: Rob Brunton

Technical Adjustment of budget relating to the Keynsham Leisure Project

To outline costs arising from the Keynsham Leisure Centre project to be met from the Leisure Contingency budget.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Resources

Decision published: 17/02/2020

Effective from: 25/02/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Members agree that a virement of £1,093,471 to move budget from Leisure Contingency to Keynsham Leisure Centre project is approved.

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Lead officer: Marc Higgins

Decision to enter funding agreements with Homes England to fund infrastructure and enabling works at Bath Quays North and Englishcombe Lane development sites in-line with grant funding awards

As part of Homes England's Accelerated Construction housing programme the Council have been provisionally awarded grant funding in respect of the redevelopment of Bath Quays North (presently the Avon Street car and coach park), to assist with delivery of 92 new homes; and in respect of land at Englishcombe Lane, to assist with the delivery of 37 new homes. The funding is awarded to help unlock the development sites and increase the speed of housing delivery through investment in infrastructure provision and enabling works.

Decision Maker: Council Leader

Decision published: 11/02/2020

Effective from: 19/02/2020

Decision:

The Cabinet Member agrees to:

1) Enter Funding Agreements with Homes England to fund enabling works and infrastructure in respect of Bath Quays North and Englishcombe Lane in-line with the grant funding awards.

2) Amend the Council Capital Programme on receipt of entered Funding Agreements:-

2.1 Approve an addition of £3,519,000 to 2020/21 Bath Quays North budget.

2.2 Incorporate a new provisional item for Englishcombe Lane Site Preparation - 2019/20 £150,000 and 2020/21 £1,054,597.

Wards affected: Kingsmead; Moorlands;

Lead officer: Simon Martin

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	29th May 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <i>[Cabinet reports only]</i>
		E 3207
TITLE:	COVID-19 - Update Report and Position statement	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1 - Council Response to COVID-19		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report summaries the Council’s local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It sets out the revised Governance Arrangements to ensure that the Council took quick and decisive action to effectively manage the impacts of the coronavirus as they arise.
- 1.2 As a result of the exceptional circumstances facing the country in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has streamlined its decision-making processes to respond quickly and effectively to situations as they arise in order to meet obligations to protect life, contain and mitigate the impact of the emergency, and to create the conditions needed for an eventual recovery to a new normality

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the report on the Council response to COVID -19 pandemic
- 2.2 Consider the comments and feedback from the Corporate Scrutiny Panel meeting on the 27th May.

3 THE REPORT

The attached report (Appendix 1) details how the Council has worked to protect the most vulnerable, support businesses and maintain local services in its response to the COVID-19 emergency. It also highlights the financial impact of the coronavirus on the Council and the need for additional funding to address the predicted £50m shortfall for services this year.

Sadly, there have been 79 COVID-19 related deaths of Bath & North East Somerset residents (as of week ending 8 May).

The Council has worked hard to respond to this public health emergency, streamlining its decision-making processes since declaring a major incident on 23 March. It has been supporting the community including vulnerable residents and local businesses whilst maintaining critical services from refuse collection to child-protection. Throughout we have been following Public Health England advice.

The Council's Leader and Chief Executive have written to residents explaining the financial situation and the report repeats our position that the government must honour its commitment to fund local authorities' response to the pandemic.

The report includes details of how the Council has responded to the needs of the most vulnerable during the pandemic. In partnership with Virgin Care, the CCG and 3SG, Council staff worked around the clock to set up the Compassionate Communities Hub. Based in Peasedown St John, the hub is providing advice and support to thousands of residents self-isolating, shielding or in need of help. It has received over **4,000** calls from people across Bath and North East Somerset and 3SG volunteers, which number over 2,400, have completed more than **800** tasks such as food shopping and collection of medicines.

The report also reveals that the Council has so far paid out over £33m in Business Support Grants. There are circa 3,500 businesses across Bath and North East Somerset that are eligible for this funding and approaching two thirds have now received payment.

Cabinet members will also be told about additional measures taken in response to COVID-19 including:

- Systemic changes in working practices with technology playing a crucial role and 1,500 staff working remotely each day
- Installation of temporary facilities at Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium
- Introduction of online child protection conferences
- Provision of a virtual library to enable both children and adults to feed their thirst for literature
- Provision of virtual music lessons for school children
- Provision of loaned free e-bikes to key workers at Bath's RUH.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The Council's response forms a key part of the Policy and Budget Framework in the Council's constitution. The Council responded to the emergency using its emergency powers which are outlined in the constitution and sets out the key priorities of the Council that have helped to guide its activity and decision-making.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The report highlights the resourcing requirements and the implications of decisions undertaken whilst having to respond to the emergency.

5.2 Section 4 of the report highlights the emergency funding received by the Council and the anticipated financial impact the emergency is likely to have on the Council's overall financial position.

5.3 Section 7 of the report highlights the support given to staff during the emergency.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 The response to the COVID-19 emergency considered Climate emergency Issues where this was appropriate in any decisions linking to the already declared Climate Change Emergency. Clearly the Climate emergency will need to be considered in detail in our recovery plans

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources have been consulted on the drafting of this report as well as the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

Contact person	David Trethewey Director of Partnerships & Corporate Services
Background	

papers	
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Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	
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Position Statement: Council Response to COVID-19

This document summaries the Council's local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It sets out the interim Governance Arrangements that have been put in place to enable the Council to take quick and decisive action to effectively manage the impacts of the coronavirus as they arise.

1. Introduction and Context

As a result of the exceptional circumstances facing the country in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has streamlined its decision-making processes to respond quickly and effectively to situations as they arise in order to meet obligations to protect life, contain and mitigate the impact of the emergency, and to create the conditions needed for an eventual recovery to a new normality.

2. Governance Arrangements

Whilst the Coronavirus was first identified in China in December 2019, the impacts of the pandemic were beginning to be felt within the region and our local economy in early February 2020 with fewer visitors to the region. As the virus spread across Europe during February and March, we started to mobilise our response in line with government guidance. This led on the 16th March to the instigation of our own reporting structure locally within B&NES to enable us to establish our Business Continuity arrangements to protect critical services and set up formally the links into the region through the LRF (Local Resilience Forum¹).

On 23rd March 2020, Bath & North East Somerset Council then declared a Major Incident in line with guidance and delegated authority for all decision-making to the Head of Paid Service. For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, all decisions that would normally be made by Cabinet or the Leader will be made by the Chief Executive. **Appendix 1** provides a briefing note from Democratic Services setting out the powers the Council has under the Constitution for taking urgent decisions.

An organisation-wide response to manage the COVID-19 pandemic locally was introduced with new Programme Management arrangements and these were initially guided by a revised Business Continuity framework which ensured our focus was on maintaining critical services through three key

¹ A Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi-agency forum formed in a police area of the UK by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies. It is a requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It allows responders access to a forum to consult, collaborate and disclose information with each other to facilitate planning and response to emergencies, and produce a Community Risk Register. The B&NES LRF is led by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

workstreams. These are outlined in more detail below and were set up and operational within two weeks.

- ➔ **Strategic Group (and Local Resilience Forum) - overall decision-making group**
- ➔ **Tactical Group (and Business Continuity) - focus on delivery of business-critical services**
- ➔ **Business Support Workstream - provide support to local businesses**
- ➔ **Community Support Workstream - support and help protect the area's most vulnerable residents**

These governance arrangements allowed us to focus only on supporting the community, as well as monitoring the **financial impacts** of the pandemic and providing ongoing **advice and support to Council staff**. The Council at all stages followed Public Health England (PHE) advice and guidance, having regular meetings to continually review the situation and issuing a **daily briefing** to reassure staff of the steps that are being taken.

Immediate Service Impacts

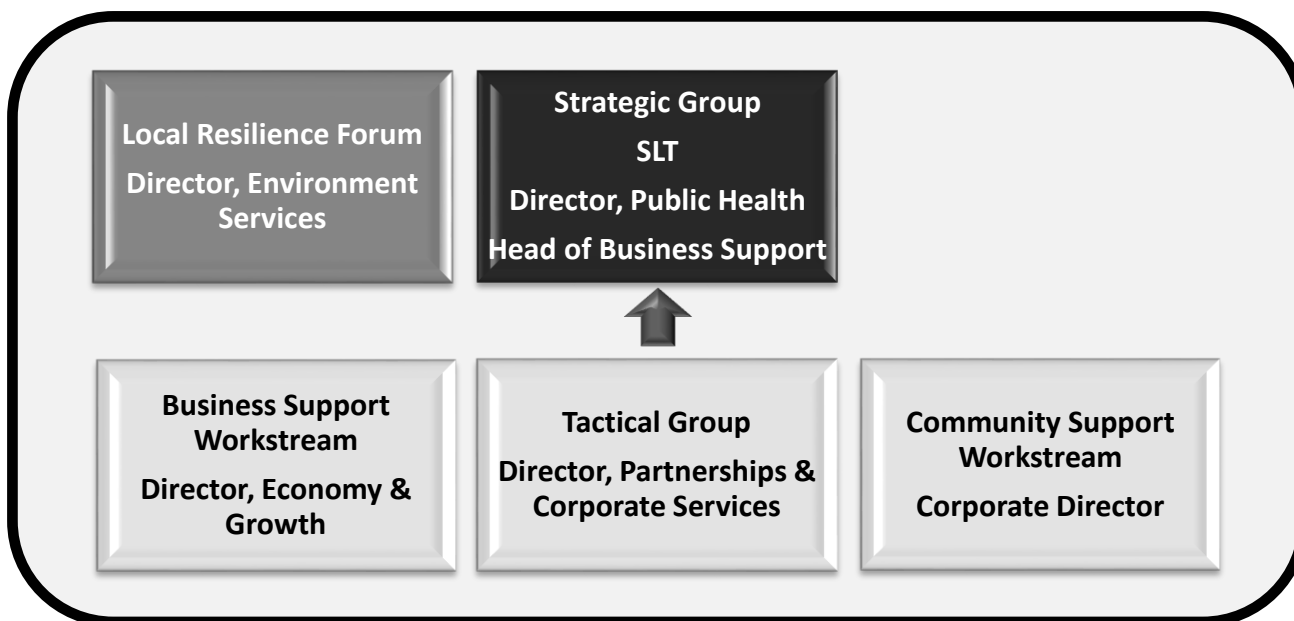
Whilst the initial governance arrangements were being set up, a series of important and significant decisions had to be taken within the first week, which had and continue to have a major impact both organisationally and financially on the Council. These included:

- ➔ Closing all Council Buildings and sending all staff to work from home (aside from a very small number of critical staff)
- ➔ Moving all services to focus on supporting only critical services
- ➔ Closing all the Council's Libraries
- ➔ Closing all our Heritage Services, Museums and Roman Baths
- ➔ Closing all Leisure Centres
- ➔ Closing all construction sites in the area including our capital schemes
- ➔ Stopping all Car Park Charges and supporting essential workers
- ➔ Stopping all Green Waste Collections
- ➔ Reducing a significant number of services to only basic levels of service provision such as our One Stop Shops

All of these decisions had to be taken at pace to ensure at all times the safety of the community, individuals and our own staff were protected. The implications both direct, indirect and financially however are likely to last for a significant period.

As these initial decisions were taken the rest of the governance structure and workstreams started to develop with extensive multi-agency and cross-service working at a pace and scale not seen before. These are detailed in more depth as follows:

COVID-19 Governance Structure:



These groups and workstreams meet (via tele / video conference) on a regular basis, daily for the first six weeks and then less frequently as the incident changed in terms of its local impacts.

Strategic Group

Lead	Will Godfrey - Chief Executive
Role	Key Decisions on Major Service Closures or Significant Changes to public facing services, Policy Changes and Headline Comms, Liaison with Leader / Cabinet

Tactical Group (and Business Continuity)

Lead	David Trethewey - Director, Partnerships & Corporate Services
Role	Daily updates on Critical Business Services only, decisions on operational issues, service changes, service comms, actions for Strategic and emerging issues Delivering Business Critical Services to the Community, supply chain, maintaining as much of BAU and redeployment and business recovery

Business Support Workstream

Lead	John Wilkinson - Director, Economy & Growth
Role	Direct and indirect support to local businesses, to include sign posting and assessments for financial relief from Government and Council and business recovery

The Business Support workstream has been divided into four distinct project areas:

Business Support	Visitor Economy Recovery	Capital Investment Strategy (including WECA)	Medium Term Place Plan
Duncan Kerr Business & Skills Manager	Stephen Bird Head of Heritage Services	Simon Martin Programme Director, Bath Enterprise Zone	Richard Long Head of Property services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First point of contact for all business enquiries via info@investinbath.co.uk • Provision of up to date information on Government support • Where further information required seamless transition to specialist team (Landlord & Tenant, Business Rates) • Invest in Bath website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of critical tourism needs • Development of future sector deal with Destination Bristol, Visit Bath & Visit England • Oversight of Visit Bath • Development of recovery plan with main B&NES attractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of all B&NES capital projects against agreed criteria (stop, pause, continue) • Relationship Management and forward funding strategy with WECA • Relationship Management with other strategic grant bodies (e.g. Homes England) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Strategy • Strategic Asset Management Plan • Local Plan refresh

Community Support Workstream

Lead	Mike Bowden - Corporate Director
Role	Support to the most vulnerable, Humanitarian Centre, multi-agency support, liaison with Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) / Health & Virgin, direct issues from adults and children social care, and community recovery

Compassionate Community Hub

Bath and North East Somerset is a **Compassionate Community** in which people are inspired and supported to look after themselves and each other. This project has taken on a new importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Council in partnership with Virgin Care, the CCG and **3SG**²

² 3SG is a thriving, independent membership network supporting the charity, social enterprise, faith and voluntary sector operating in Bath and North East Somerset.

have worked around the clock to set up the **Compassionate Community Hub**, combining resources to ensure the system can provide sustainable and appropriate responses to meet community needs.

Operating via a dedicated public phone number, the Hub offers advice and support for those who are self-isolating, shielding or simply in need of help. It has access to over 2,400 volunteers (recruited by 3SG), with the 3SG website acting as a virtual hub for the local response to COVID-19. A triage team match calls received to the most appropriate service (or Pod). Through working together in the Hub, we are able to get urgent food parcels to people, co-ordinate someone to pick up medication, support mental health and wellbeing, provide advice on staying active or provide people with support - such as signing up to universal credit.

Colleagues in the Hub are also proactively calling people who are shielding at home to ensure they have access to food and that they are well. The response to this from people receiving calls has been heart-warming. Often, they just want someone to talk to, and some have not spoken to anyone for some time.

The Hub is an excellent example of a strong working partnership bringing together the Council, Virgin Care and the 3SG plus other third sector partners across different organisational boundaries and making a real difference on the ground. To demonstrate the crucial role played by the Hub, the following is a summary of Compassionate Community outcomes and the Council Logistic Pod

4,678 calls from residents requiring support (18 th May)	Completed 972 tasks to help individuals that contacted the Hub for food, medication and befriending (13 th May)	62 emergency medication pick-ups (17 th May)
231 food parcels delivered	Compassionate Community Hub Outcomes and Council Logistic Hub	20 Hearing Aids delivered
95% volunteers offering continued support	40 pharmacies received a total of 240 face visors and 120 full face visors produced by University of Bath	120 goggles delivered (40 from University of Bath and 80 from the Council)

3. **Political Governance and Oversight**

The **Cabinet** themselves are fully involved in all issues and kept informed of all key decisions that are required in a variety of ways:

- ➔ **Informal Cabinet** meet remotely every Monday to discuss key issues and are briefed by the SLT

- ➔ **Daily Briefings** are given to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing, Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder by the Chief Executive
- ➔ **Group Leaders** meet remotely every Tuesday to be briefed on and discuss key issues.

The **Council Leader** is very active in co-ordinating key partners in the response to the incident and this included:

- ➔ Established regular **special COVID-19 pandemic phone conferences** with key partners such as the NHS, local voluntary sector and the Universities
- ➔ Speaking regularly through **WECA with the other local Council Leaders**
- ➔ Established a new **Economic Recovery Board** with key businesses and business groups
- ➔ Actively **lobbied local and national politicians** to make the case for the Council and its issues in relation to its financial position
- ➔ Undertook several **local and national press interviews** (see Section 6) highlighting the Council's response and its financial difficulties.

4. Financial Impacts and Emergency Funding

Impact on the Council's 2020/21 Budget

We face a huge challenge in the scope and scale of our recovery. The financial impact of coronavirus due to the extra expense and income loss added together is currently predicted to lead to circa £43m shortfall in revenue funding for Council services this year. This is broken down as follows:

B&NES Position	£m	Comments
Loss of Income	35.9	Our income is at risk and we are under the most pressure from commercial income including our Heritage Services (Roman Baths), Parking and Commercial Estate which makes up around £30m of this figure.
Increased Expenditure	9.8	We are anticipating increased costs in supporting our most vulnerable in Social Care and responding to COVID-19 implications such as sourcing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the region and keeping services such as Waste collection operating with new demand pressures.
Collection Fund	7.5	Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, it is anticipated that our Council Tax and Business Rates collection will fall with fewer people and business able to pay.
Government Grant (see <i>Emergency Funding below</i>)	-10	The B&NES allocation of the £3.2bn of Government grant funding has given us £10m to meet new expenditure pressures, however this will not mitigate our projected reductions in income. Further support from government will be

B&NES Position	£m	Comments
		essential to enable the Council to manage its 2020/21 Budget.
Projected Deficit	43.2	

By comparison, the overall net budget for the Council to deliver all of its services is £118 million. While we welcome the government's announcement of funding which totals £10m for our area, it will not meet the pressures we are facing. Our key messages are:

- ➔ We are being transparent about the challenge we face and the difficult decisions we will have to take. In fact, we have taken the unprecedented step of the Council Leader and Chief Executive writing to all households in the area explaining the situation.
- ➔ We are facing a "double whammy" - increased costs and drastically reduced income due to the collapse of our visitor economy. We have the highest dependency on income from things like Heritage services of any of our neighbouring councils.
- ➔ Local government is central to helping deal with this crisis and the recovery from it, but to do that government needs to honour its commitment to fund it.

We are exploring our options to reopen both the Council and Bath and North East Somerset for business however it is important to stress the fluidity of the situation. We will need to consider the impact of social distancing on any future operating in the short term, which will shape how and inform when we believe we can offer a safe environment to restore Council services and restart the economy.

Emergency Funding

The table below summarises the emergency funding announced by Central Government to support the COVID-19 response by local authorities:

Funding / Payment on Account	National Allocation	B&NES Allocation
COVID-19 Emergency Funding Initial allocation (19 March)	£1.6bn	£4.64m
COVID-19 Emergency Funding Second allocation (18 April)	£1.6bn	£5.36m
Hardship Fund	£0.50 bn	£1.29m
Business Support Grants	£12.33 bn	£46.1m

Emergency Response Fund: On 19 March 2020, the government announced £1.6 billion of additional funding for local government to help them respond to coronavirus pressures across all the

services they deliver. A further £1.6 billion in funding was announced on 18 April 2020. **B&NES received a total of £10 million** (COVID-19: funding allocations).

MCLG also announced on the 14th May an extra £600 million to be made available for infection control in care homes, through local authorities. We are awaiting further detail on the allocation to the Council.

In response to the COVID-19 restrictions and emergency measures put in place the Council has incurred significant costs in securing PPE supplies and providing supplier relief to ensure that key services can continue to be delivered to residents. The table below shows our estimated use of the £10m COVID-19 revenue grant:

Estimated Expenditure Pressures	£'000
Adults Social Care	2,474
Children's Services	644
Environmental, Leisure and Regulatory services (including Mortuary capacity & Community hubs)	1,002
Transport Services	716
Housing (including homelessness services)	261
Contractual liabilities resulting from delayed construction	1,130
Capitalisation of revenue costs	3,773
Total Estimated Expenditure Pressures	10,000

Hardship Fund: £500 million funding to provide council tax relief in 2020/21 to vulnerable people and households to help those affected most by coronavirus. **B&NES received £1.29 million.**

Business Support Grants: The Government announced support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in the form of two grant funding schemes in 2020/21, these were to be administrated by each local authority:

- ➔ **Small Business Grant Fund** - all businesses in England in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief will be eligible for a payment of £10,000.
- ➔ **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund** - all businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the a cash grant of either £10,000 or £25,000 dependent on the rateable value of the property.

The Council has approximately 3,062 eligible businesses in the Bath and North East Somerset area and has redeployed staff from non-critical service areas to assist with processing applications for business support grants. Latest figures (13/05/20) are as follows:

- ➔ The number of registrations received is 3,136, which is higher than the Council's estimate due to the fact not all of the claims will be eligible.
- ➔ The number of grants processed has now passed the 2,500 mark, leaving circa 500 to pay, this indicates around 83% of eligible cases have been processed.
- ➔ The grants processing team are assessing first time applications within two days of their receipt.

Type of Grant	Amount of Grant	Eligible Cases (estimate)	Grants Processed for Payment	Percentage of Grants Processed	Amount Paid
Small Business Grant	£10,000	1,858	1,752	94.3%	£17,520,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant <15	£10,000	388	251	64.7%	£2,510,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant >15	£25,000	816	540	66.2%	£13,500,000
Overall Totals	-	3,062	2,543	83.05%	£33,530,000

5. Performance Management

Incident Reporting and Data Sharing

A comprehensive **COVID-19 Incident Log** was set up to record all key issues and decisions to ensure they are acted upon and a detailed account is retained for future reference, evaluation and feedback. The IT team has set up a **SharePoint³ Coronavirus Co-ordination Group** to enable easy and accessible sharing of documents, information and data among key officers. All of the information regarding the Council's approach, response and key decisions relating to the pandemic can be found in this group.

Sitreps⁴ provide daily or weekly updates to the Tactical Group about Business-Critical Functions, all of which are saved in SharePoint and recorded on the incident log where necessary. A summary of the COVID-19 Incident Log for March and April 2020 is shown below:

Tactical Group Incident, Issue and Decision Data		
Logs / Decisions	Mar-20	Apr-20
Business Support Logs	62	103

³ SharePoint is a document management and collaboration tool developed by Microsoft that is used for internal purposes to assist with bringing an organisation together.

⁴ A sitrep (Situation Report) is a form of status reporting that provides decision-makers and readers with a quick understanding of the current situation, i.e., a clear, concise understanding of the situation, focusing on meaning or context, in addition to the facts.

People's SLT Logs	18	21
Other Logs	394	280
Total Logs Recorded	474	404
Strategic Decisions	31	51
Tactical Decisions	27	56
Total Decisions Recorded	58	107

Council Demand and Performance

Any supporting performance and intelligence data relating to the incident is held in the **COVID-19 Strategic Dashboard**, which provides up-to-date data feeds in four key areas of focus - **Corporate Health, Business Continuity & Business Support, Community Support** and **Cases & Capacity**.

The dashboard is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Strategic Group and is always available with “live” data for consideration by all key Officers to aid decision making. The table below outlines several examples of changes to service demand as a result of the COVID-19 incident and provides a snapshot of how some services have been affected.

Metric	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		% Change
	Period	Demand	Period	Demand	
New clients - Community (Adults)	April 19	1396	April 20	1346	-4%
New clients - Residential (Adults)	April 19	804	April 20	738	-8%
Contacts to Children's Duty Team	April 19	869	April 20	468	-32%
Children's Social Care Assessments	April 19	85	April 20	89	5%
No. of children in primary and secondary provision	N/A	N/A	April 20	586	-
No. of children in early years provision	N/A	N/A	April 20	315	-
Schools open in last 7 days	N/A	N/A	29/04/2020	63	-
Early years providers open in last 7 days		203	20/04/2020	74	-64%

Metric	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		% Change
	Period	Demand	Period	Demand	
Waste Cleansing - Fix My Street Reports	April 19	566	April 20	404	-29%
Fly Tipping - Fix My Street Requests	April 19	171	April 20	153	-11%
Building Regulation applications	April 19	99	April 20	33	-67%
Land Charges Searches	April 19	199	April 20	90	-55%
Weekly daily average Planning applications	April 19	29	01/05/2020	17	-40%
Waste Collection Tonnage	April 2019 Week 1	449	April 2020 Week 1	561	+25%

Adult Social Care

Demand for adult social care has remained relatively constant with nearly 1,350 people supported in the community in April 2020 compared to nearly 1,400 in the same period last year. The number of people supported in residential and nursing homes has dropped from 804 to 738 over the same period.

The Council's Adult Social Care teams have been working particularly closely with all providers across the health and social care sector. In addition to its governance response to COVID-19, until recently there have been daily B&NES Compassionate Community Hub conference calls with Council and CCG officers, Virgin Care, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP), Primary Care Networks, B&NES Enhanced Medical Services and GPs, other agencies have also joined. The Hub has received daily updates on the number of reported symptomatic and positive COVID-19 cases (including both service users and staff affected) and on the staffing capacity of each agency to ensure services are functioning effectively and are able to support vulnerable people.

There have been routine updates from the Hub about the response and support provided to shielded and vulnerable people. It has been an example of real collaboration been 3SG, Virgin Care, the CCG and the Council. The Hub has also shared the latest Government guidance and discussed issues of concern to enable all organisations to provide a joined up and united response to the needs of the population. Key areas of work range from:

- ➔ Enabling swift discharge from hospital by remodelling the way discharges are carried out in accordance with new guidance; this in turn has achieved the goal of freeing up the RUH and community hospital bed capacity in anticipation of a surge in demand
- ➔ Supporting care homes, who as we know through national reporting, have been struggling with the impact of this

- ➔ Ensuring agencies have the right PPE; this has been reported nationally as a struggle and in B&NES there has been a generous response from agencies by way of mutual aid - this being where providers share PPE between them thus ensuring staff and service users are protected.

We have devised a supplier relief offer for providers that has included a funded advance to help with cashflow and continue to assess individual claims for relief. We provide a weekly newsletter to providers with the latest updates and have held webinar sessions, as well as being in contact sometimes daily but at a minimum weekly to see how things are. We have ensured that via Virgin Care and AWP all service users have been contacted and reviewed and there has been routine contact with Direct Payment users to ensure they are still able to get the care and support they need.

The Coronavirus Act did bring in a number of easements to the Care Act 2014 however the expectation has been that we will continue with business as usual whilst observing social distancing requirements. Providers have endeavoured to do this to the best of their ability and remained in touch and undertaken assessments creatively. Inevitably a small number of services such as day services for adults with learning disabilities have not been able to open however staff have been either redeployed to support other teams or they have been in contact with the service users in other ways to ensure they are safe.

We did see a drop in safeguarding adult referrals in March however during April these rose again with 100% of planning meetings taking place on time. We have continued to raise awareness of safeguarding and have a weekly newsletter that goes out to the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership. Whilst still ensuring we have sufficient bed and staff capacity in case of a second surge, we are also starting to plan for recovery and are mindful that more people may need care and support going forward.

Children's Social Care

Although contacts to children's social care have dropped by 32% (468 in April 20, compared to 869 in April 19) the number of social care assessments has increased slightly, from 85 to 89. The Council has also held its first online child protection conferences. Up to 50 children are seen face to face on a weekly basis.

Established an alternative operating model for the lockdown period, including a virtual duty team and home visiting team, with staff rotation to maintain resilience; risk assessing children known to the service in light of lockdown measures in order to prioritise contact and school attendance, and supporting vulnerable families impacted by lockdown in a range of creative ways.

Education

63 schools and 74 early years providers (down from 203 normally) in B&NES were open in the week leading up to 29 April. There were 586 children in primary and secondary schools and 315 in early years.

Working with schools and academies and early years settings to co-ordinate arrangements for access for critical workers and vulnerable children, and for preparations for re-opening; arranging distribution of government-provided laptops for vulnerable children; and establishing an online portal for delivery of music lessons; This is alongside the delivery of statutory services for vulnerable learners and children with Special Educational Needs and Disability, and all core education business functions, admissions, schools capital and finance etc.

Public Health

- ➔ Liaison with PHE, advice to senior leadership team and the wider health and care community on the expected progress of the pandemic and interpretation of national statistics and guidance
- ➔ Supporting the planning for excess deaths
- ➔ Local coordination of testing, tracking and tracing system (major area of focus for coming months)
- ➔ Supporting care homes with advice and training in infection control
- ➔ Developing detailed local policies on, and advising on, use of PPE
- ➔ Supporting local response to increased risks of domestic abuse
- ➔ Running a public health rota to answer questions from the public and other stakeholders
- ➔ Major input into setting up the “food pod” element of Compassionate Communities Hub and other work on food poverty during crisis
- ➔ Advice to drug and alcohol, sexual health and children’s early help services on changing offer to meet COVID-19 challenge
- ➔ Support to Council comms team with public health content of messaging
- ➔ Liaison with LRF.

Environment

- ➔ ‘Fix My Street’ requests for waste and cleansing service requests has reduced (-29%) compared to April last year. There has also been a small reduction (-11%) in service requests regarding Fly Tipping.
- ➔ On the first week in April, 561 tonnes of recycling were collected. This is a 25% increase (over 100 tonnes) compared with the same week last year.
- ➔ The April 2020 Google Mobility study suggested that residents responded to lockdown with an 87% reduction in retail and recreation travel and a 60% reduction in workplace travel.

Homelessness

We have 70 households currently in temporary accommodation, of these 48 have been housed due to COVID-19.

Planning and Development

There has been a 40% drop in the average number of planning applications received each day, compared to the same time last year, reductions have also been seen in Building Control Applications (-67%) and Land Charges searches (-55%).

One Stop Shops and Libraries

- ➔ During April, there were only 1,290 visits to the temporary spaces in OSS/Libraries - 95% down from 2019 as the building is closed other than for essential services to the vulnerable. Top 5 enquiries - Make a payment; Bulky waste; Welfare support; Curo; and Council Tax.
- ➔ During April, **180 Welfare support Retail Food Vouchers** were issued to the vulnerable in the temporary spaces in OSS / Libraries, an increase of 56% from 2019.
- ➔ Library e-books uptake **increased by 30%**, e-Audio by **11%** and e-Magazines by **22%** during April.

Information Technology

- ➔ There were 92,629-page views to the Council website and **73,083** unique page views have been made to the Council's **COVID-19 webpage** (the second most visited page, after the homepage) - see next page.
- ➔ On average **1,500 staff** have been successfully **connected and working remotely** each day during lockdown.
- ➔ 250 additional tokens / passwords and over **230 items of kit issued** to support homeworking during lockdown.
- ➔ **4,800 contacts** have been made to the **IT helpdesk** during lockdown supporting homeworking.
- ➔ During April, **411 Zoom meetings** took place with almost **2,800 participants** lasting on average 43 minutes.
- ➔ During April, **3,131 Skype video meetings, 21,594 Skype calls** and **85,596 instant messaging conversations** took place.
- ➔ During April **4,920 calls were made to Council Connect** and **5,786 calls to Switchboard**, both almost **50% down** from April 2019.

The following news stories provide specific examples of support and activity that the Council has provided in response the COVID-19 pandemic. They are extracted from the Council's press releases to show the decisions and actions that have been taken and shared over the last few months:

Council Tax Hardship Relief Scheme

Bath & North East Somerset Council has made an urgent decision to reduce council tax liability to lessen people's financial burden at a time when they may already be on a reduced income due to stay-at-home measures. The Council's Deputy Leader, Richard Samuel, made the decision which authorises officers to immediately reduce the council tax liability for all working age recipients of Local Council Tax Support during 2020/21 by the lower figure of their remaining liability for that year, or £150. In many cases, this will reduce the amount residents have to pay to nil.

Supplier Relief Scheme

The Council is thanking its suppliers for continuing their services during the coronavirus pandemic and alerting them to a scheme that will help them to continue operating during this challenging time. The supplier relief scheme, supported by Government, is being offered to companies which supply goods and services to the council to ensure that essential services for residents continue. The council is

working with its suppliers to help them to keep operating in the normal way wherever possible and is offering support via the relief scheme on a case-by-case basis, including faster payments, contract alterations and time extensions.

Compassionate Community Hub (see update on p5)

A new community hub is helping the most vulnerable people in Bath and North East Somerset access critical support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Co-ordinated by B&NES 3rd Sector Group with support from Virgin Care in B&NES, Bath & North East Somerset Council and the NHS, the hub has made hundreds of referrals to experts and volunteers from people needing help with food, mental health, wellbeing and welfare. The hub works closely with food banks and volunteers to ensure people can access direct support when they need it.

Temporary facilities at Haycombe Cemetery

Work to install dignified temporary facilities is set to get under way at Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium in Bath. In these difficult times the council has had to plan for a temporary expansion of facilities to help serve Bath's Royal United Hospital and to meet the needs of local funeral directors. Temporary units will be screened are being installed in line with national guidance.

Business Grants Online Form (see update on p8)

Businesses which need to access urgent financial help from the Government due to the coronavirus can do so using an online form set up by the Council. Our Invest in Bath business support service has a dedicated team to provide targeted help to companies during the pandemic and the new online form aims to speed up the process so that most payments will be made within a few weeks.

Set up Virtual Library

The Council has set up an exciting virtual library to help children and adults keep their love of literature going while libraries are closed during the Coronavirus pandemic. The virtual library launches on Monday (30 March) and will have dynamic, changing content each weekday to suit all ages via the library service's social media accounts. Mornings will be dedicated to children and will offer links to education, creative learning, fun facts, rhymes, stories and crafts. Afternoons will focus on adults by sharing a range of e-books and e-magazines alongside tips on literacy, finding reliable online information, jobs and income support and how to access help from partner services. Book groups haven't been forgotten and every Friday afternoon customers will be signposted to virtual book groups, recommendations and reviews by both staff and other readers.

Free e-bike Loans for Key Workers

Bath & North East Somerset Council has loaned free e-bikes to key workers at Bath's RUH to help them travel easily on essential journeys during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The ten bikes are part of a fleet of 35 that are being offered to employers of key workers to help them travel quickly and sustainably at a time when public transport has had to be reduced. The council is now calling for other employers of key workers to come forward and borrow the remaining 25 bikes that are available.

Virtual Council Meetings to start

The Cabinet will hold its first public meeting 'virtually' on May 29 as part of its response to keeping council business running during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Council's first virtual meeting is the Planning Committee on Wednesday May 6 at 2pm. All meetings will be open to the public to watch and the Council is making sure that all necessary training and safeguards are in place so that meetings will be effective. The Council has prioritised holding the most urgent meetings remotely, for example planning and licensing and it anticipates scheduling in at least two further virtual meetings in May and then additional meetings in June and onwards. It is keeping public participation under review and assessing how members of the public and other interested parties can be involved in virtual meetings, with appropriate safeguards in place.

Virtual music lessons keeping the beat going in Bath and North East Somerset

Hundreds of children missing out on school-based music lessons during coronavirus are carrying on playing and singing thanks to online tuition set up by Bath & North East Somerset Council in partnership with Musictutors.co.uk. The Council's music service team has arranged a safe, bespoke online teaching platform that allows pupils to enjoy lessons virtually with their usual tutor in real time. More than 500 children have already signed up to the service with the number of applications increasing daily.

6. Communication

Information and Advice to Residents, Communities and Partners

Effective communications are vital for supporting and managing sensitive and rapidly evolving situations such as Covid-19. Our aim throughout has been to be a clear, readily available and trusted information source to local people and businesses about Council services and our response, reinforcing national messages, providing reassurance and signposting to where further help is available, particularly for the most vulnerable.

A wide number of ways of getting key messages out to people has been and will continue to be used including:

- ➔ The introduction of dedicated web pages, regularly updated, have been created to help the communities of Bath and North East Somerset understand and manage the impacts of the coronavirus in their day-to-day lives. The **COVID-19 website** is accessible from the homepage on the Council website and includes the following types of information and support:
 - Latest information and advice on the coronavirus, i.e. what people need to know and where they can access help
 - Residents' letter from the Leader and Chief Executive
 - What people need to know to stop the coronavirus spreading
 - Help for vulnerable people with support and advice from the Compassionate Community Hub (see Section 8 for more details)

- Changes to Council services and how to make payments during the outbreak
- Help and support for communities, businesses, parents and carers.



A dedicated **COVID-19 email address** (Covid19incidentcomms@bathnes.gov.uk) was also set up on the 14th March for people to ask questions, request updates, seek additional help etc. It is managed by the Council Connect team and by the beginning of May, it had received over 1,500 enquiries. They are all recorded where appropriate on the log and signposted for appropriate action where necessary.

- ➔ There has been a 17% increase in subscription to the Council e-connect newsletter from 3,305 subscribers to around 3,850 at end of April 2020. The weekly newsletter is now sent over 40,000 email addresses, focusing on public health messages, changes to council services and help available such as the Compassionate Communities Hub. We have received positive feedback about the usefulness and clarity of the newsletter. A dedicated stakeholder newsletter was also produced in conjunction with Public Health, which focused on providing access to NHS and government guidance.
- ➔ Early provision of “flash briefings” on key topics such as community response, business support and help for parish councils.
- ➔ Regular contact with parish and town councils to help co-ordinate the response. To provide even greater reach into localities, the Council also posts to the **Nextdoor** neighbourhoods site, which has more than 12,000 members in Bath and North East Somerset.
- ➔ Regular updates through its Newsroom web pages including to elected members and town and parish councils. Key performance information compared the 39 days pre-lockdown (13th February to 22nd March) with 39 days post lockdown (23rd March to 30th April), and there has

been 25% more traffic during the incident than previously. News items have covered a wide range of topics ranging from the Compassionate Communities Hub to updates on waste services and how to get support for your local business. We have also set out our online provision during lockdown such as our virtual library and highlighted domestic abuse services under the campaign “At Home shouldn’t be At Risk”

- ➔ Daily social media posts - Twitter following of over 19,000 and also reach into Facebook and Instagram. Our tweet on the provision of hand sanitiser from the Glastonbury Festival had a total reach of over 235,000. We have also regularly used social media to highlight the ground-breaking work of the Compassionate Communities Hub.

We have also been acutely aware that not everyone is online. Local radio has been a particularly useful outlet during this period, and we have worked closely with BBC Radio Bristol to get key messages out - for example through their “make a difference campaign”. The Compassionate Community Hub has been regularly publicised on BBC Radio Bristol and BBC Radio Somerset and the Council also secured radio advertising about the Hub on The Breeze. In addition, the Council Leader has a ten-minute slot on BBC Radio Bristol’s breakfast show every Tuesday to talk about the Council’s response to COVID-19 including public health messages. Community radio such as Somer Valley FM have also been very useful local outlets.

However, in order to ensure all households receive key information, the Leader and Chief Executive wrote to 84,336 households in Bath and North East Somerset providing information about the Compassionate Communities Hub helpline, the availability of business support and highlighting the financial challenges faced by the Council, as set out further in this statement. Highlighting this issue has increasingly become the focus of communications activity so that local people and our partners understand the scale of the financial challenge facing us.

As well as using this wide range of communications channels, Council staff have kept fully in touch with local communities and partners. Community engagement team and other council staff have worked as part of the Compassionate Communities Hub during this period, liaising with local third sector groups, parish and town councils and others, as well as providing direct practical help where needed. A newsletter setting out the latest information from the Hub is now distributed through the Interagency Network. Councillors have also been provided with information mapping out the local community activity in their area to help the most vulnerable.

Working with partners has been crucial to our response. Early on, the Leader convened a teleconference with partner agencies including the RUH, CCG, Curo and the Police to co-ordinate the local response in Bath and North East Somerset. This group has been convened regularly during this period and has recently been joined by our two Universities whose support will be crucial for our recovery.

7. Council Staff

Lead	Amanda George - Interim Director, HR & OD
Role	Advice and Support to Council Staff, primarily on Business Continuity Workstream

The key resource of the Council is its staff. In response to the pandemic, many changes have been required to enable staff to continue to operate as effectively as possible and to ensure they could continue to support local communities, businesses and partners.

With a few exceptions such as IT and Social Worker duty teams, all office-based staff were asked to start working remotely from home in March, in accordance with government guidance. This placed considerable pressure on the IT team to ensure that the technology infrastructure and appropriate IT resources were available to ensure the success of remote working. This was completed successfully and enabled up to 1,500 members of staff to work remotely.

The HR Service have been responsible for implementing a number of key responses including:

- ➔ Staff redeployment scheme
- ➔ Changes to pay and policy related activity (see below)
- ➔ An approach to organisational development and staff wellbeing
- ➔ A revised approach to staff communications and daily staff briefings
- ➔ A vacancy management procedure.

Below are some of examples of **changes to staff pay and policies** undertaken in response to the COVID-19:

- ➔ **Carers Leave** - initially extended to 19 April to cover the Government's first three-week lockdown. Staff now require people to use a mixture of annual leave / unpaid leave / flexible working to cover their caring responsibilities.
- ➔ **Annual Leave** - Request that people who are available for work but cannot work (due to service closure) to start using annual leave that they accrue each month (normally 2 days per month).
- ➔ **Enhancements** - Decision to cease paying enhancements (e.g. non-standard working rates / first aid etc) for anyone who is not working.
- ➔ **Shielded List** - Staff on the national shielded list were recorded (this was a very small number)
- ➔ **Casuals** - Pay a % retention payment to people who have worked regularly over past 12 weeks
- ➔ **Furlough** - Collating information about who is available for work / unable to work and consider putting them on furlough
- ➔ **Honoraria** - Any COVID related requests for additional payments to be put on hold so that they can be reviewed
- ➔ **Vacancy Management** - Created an approval to recruit process joined up with the finance team.

- ➔ **Employee and Manager Guidance** - Continued to be updated and provided a link from the daily communications

A lot of work has been undertaken around **staff wellbeing and engagement** to ensure staff look after themselves and are communicated with to ensure they are kept up to speed with the latest developments and messages from the leadership team. Some examples of the work include:

- ➔ **Remote Working** - Guidance and E-learning created
- ➔ **Supportive Conversations** - Organisational Development team reached out to managers down to group manager level to offer a call to provide additional support, advice, guidance or resources to help them and their teams
- ➔ **Comms Message** - Now sent 3 times a week; working with managers and staff on staff stories
- ➔ **Wellbeing Information** - Continue to develop five ways to wellbeing and promote on the intranet and via the comms messages
- ➔ **Working well from home** - information about workstation set up and risk assessments available on the intranet
- ➔ **Staff Engagement Group** - Established - first meetings, virtual coffee with the CX
- ➔ **Stress and Resilience** - First virtual course completed
- ➔ **HSWB** - The team has been in contact with managers regularly and giving bitesize briefs in terms of H&S
- ➔ **Leading together group** - Zoom call planned Monday 18 May, led by Chief Executive
- ➔ **All staff briefing** - Workplace call planned for the start of June, led by the Chief Executive.

Staff Survey

A staff survey was commissioned in April⁵ following the significant changes in Council working practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary purpose was to review staff health and wellbeing, and to establish how they were finding working remotely:

Working Status

- ➔ At the point the survey was completed, 82.5% of respondents stated they were working from home. Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, just under one third of staff worked from home at least one day a week, with a further 30% never working from home.
- ➔ Approaching 90% of the respondents have a suitable place to work from home and the necessary IT equipment to do so, however less than two thirds fully understand how to use the available communications technology.

Support and Communication

- ➔ Most respondents agree that they feel supported by and have enough contact with their manager. This includes support to balance caring and work responsibilities.
- ➔ Daily communication messages are largely on point with regards the level of detail.

⁵ The survey was undertaken between 22/04/20 and 06/05/20 and received a 59% response rate (1,260 responses).

Physical and Mental Wellbeing

- ➔ Only half of the respondents rated their mental wellbeing as good or better, with anxiety about the people they care for and their longer-term future the top reasons.
- ➔ Less than two thirds of respondents feel they are getting adequate levels of exercise, have an effective work / life balance or are getting enough sleep.
- ➔ More than three quarters have a plan to organise their day.

Internal Recovery

We are looking at how we can start our internal recovery and are undertaking the following activities:

- ➔ Evaluating options with our buildings
- ➔ How to redesign our buildings to bring people back to work safely
- ➔ Safe working practices
- ➔ Carrying out risk assessments
- ➔ Identifying how many staff need to come back urgently (wellbeing or cannot work from home)
- ➔ All other staff remain at home for the present time
- ➔ Ensuring staff have the right equipment and workstation set up.

Appendix 1 - Decision-Making under Covid-19 using the Constitution

Unless specified, these emergency processes do not require a notice period and cannot be called in (see commentary for further details).

1. Emergency and urgent decisions outside the policy and budget: If Council cannot meet, under the Constitution, the following can take decisions:

i. the Chief Executive under Part 4 (G) Rule 5, using the Officer Decision process

Or

ii. Cabinet Members or Officers, under Part 4 (C) Rule 4, using the Single Member or Officer Decision process, with agreement of relevant Chair of PDS and advice from CE, MO and CFO.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.

2. Urgent non-executive decisions covered by the policy and budget: If the Council or Committee cannot meet, under the Constitution:

i. the Chief Executive or Director, under Part 4 (G) Rule 3, using the Officer Decision process, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Group Leaders (for Council matters)

3. Urgent executive and key decisions covered by the policy and budget: If Cabinet cannot meet, under the Constitution, the following can take decisions:

i. a Single Cabinet Member, under Part 4 (G) Rule 4 and Rule 15, using the Single Member Decision process, if all councillors and the relevant Chair of PDS have been informed, 5 working days' notice has been given and advice of MO and CFO obtained.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.

Or

ii. a Single Cabinet Member, under Part 4 (G) Rule 4 and Rule 16, using the Single Member Decision process, with agreement of the relevant PDS Chair and advice from CE, MO and CFO.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.