

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

### **CABINET**

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

Thursday, 2nd July, 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

## **12 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.

## **13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Legal Services Manager issued a dispensation on behalf of the Monitoring Officer in relation to any Councillors, including their family members, that were in receipt of any grants that had been awarded by the government under the COVID-19 Regulations, such as business grants or furloughing or were in receipt of Council services, to allow all Members of the Cabinet to take part in the debate.

## **15 RULE 16 COVID19 LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN (LOMP) - URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the meeting that she has agreed to bring Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan under urgent business agreed by the Chair.

This decision would be made under Part 4B Rule 16 of the Council's Constitution as an urgent decision. This matter was urgent because of the expectation that the Council would need to have an agreed plan in place for the beginning of July 2020 in light of the Covid19 pandemic.

The report has received an endorsement from the Health and Wellbeing Board on 23rd June.

Councillor Rob Appleyard said that the COVID situation has always been fast moving and clarity on what was required from all of us was not always been as we would have liked it. The Council were tasked by the government to have a Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP). The Director of Public Health, Dr. Bruce Laurence, and his team have been working very hard over the last few weeks to bring this quite comprehensive document together, which should give an indication of actions needed. This document was not just about the Council; it's about working with partners such as the CCG, hospitals, Virgin Care and a range of other partners.

Councillor Rob Appleyard moved the recommendations.

The Chair seconded the motion by saying a particular thank you to Dr Bruce Laurence, and also to officers who have managed to put this plan together in record time, in order to meet the demand of government to have this plan published by the beginning of July. The Chair thanked to all those who have been part of the pandemic stakeholders' group (group that will form the basis for the local outbreak engagement board) and for their continued commitment to working together. The Chair also thanked all those that have worked above and beyond to help and support others and provide services during this crisis, such as staff and a wide range of volunteers and many others, including those who think they have just helped their neighbours.

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

2.1 Accept the Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan as a suitable framework plan on which to base further planning of the local response to this pandemic.

2.2 Commit the Council to providing local leadership during this period of crisis, working with communities and other stakeholders in order to protect the health, wellbeing and prosperity of people in Bath and North East Somerset.

2.3 Commit to the provision of adequate material support for the implementation of this plan, while also taking into account other Council needs and pressures. (This is a commitment in principle: the framework plan does not detail any specific requests, but these will follow and be subject to separate decision making processes).

There were 15 questions from Councillors and 1 question from 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.]*

## **17 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 Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson in a statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website*] brought up some issues that residents and traders from Radstock and Westfield were facing during Covid-19 pandemic.

## **18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

There were none.

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

The Chair invited Councillor Paul Myers (Chair of the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel) to address the Cabinet.

Councillor Myers read out the statement [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 4 and on the Council's website*] in which he summarised findings by the Panel from its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, and the recommendations made by the Panel to the Cabinet.

The Chair thanked Councillor Myers for the statement and said that the Cabinet have noted comments and recommendations from the Corporate PDS Panel.

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

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## 22 COVID-19 2020/21 FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

The Chair invited Councillor Richard Samuel to introduce the report.

Councillor Richard Samuel read out the following statement:

*'The COVID crisis has wreaked havoc across our economy and throughout our populations in the UK with this Council being no exception. So, just as businesses and households have to repair the damages to their finances, we have to do the same to ensure that we remain financially viable today, and ways ahead. Now, there are some who say that this shouldn't could been anticipated. However, those people are flying in the face of the facts globally no country, no government, a local administration, fully anticipated the scaling problem, and none was able to set aside funds to cover the current scale of the crisis. Those who make such arguments are seeking to make cheap, political capital, out of the misery of a truly global crisis. It could have been different if the UK acted more quickly, as countries such as New Zealand did well probably, but that's a debate for a different day. Now, as members will know pressure has been building on the government to honour the commitments they gave at the start of the pandemic. And we have played our part in lobbying our special case for this little assistance. We are delighted that the detailed work we have carried out with government officials, finally appears to have paid off with the announcement of new assistance this morning by Robert Jenrick.*

*It is actually too early to interpret exactly what the additional local additional funding announcement means for the council and the detail is yet to be published. However, on the face of it, it seems that we are now more in the green scenario we originally planned, where budget reductions will still be required, but will be less severity yet it remains unlikely that all the losses that we have identified will be covered. And there will still be a need to reduce expenditure this year.*

*However, it was never the case that we should do nothing and rely on hope that at the end on finances would magically return to balance because income has returned to pre COVID levels, and our government has provided lots of unexpected funds. Well the choice we had was to take control of that situation and take decisive actions to secure our finances thus securing a quicker return to stability. It was never an option to do nothing.*

*I want to turn to the root of the difficulties faced by the Council because this is relevant in the light of today's announcement.*

*As members will know the council achieved the highest levels of externally generated income of all unitary councils in proportion to its budget. This means that our budget was one of the most exposed to reductions in income, and why we have had a particularly difficult position to deal with. And those income reductions can be exactly traced to the government's decision to lock down population thus choking off those income streams. And as I said earlier, we have argued strongly for assistance with ministers and officials and last week as we held a meeting with the local government minister Simon Clarke to press our case for special support.*

*Now today's announcement, not only provides unrestricted emergency funds although those are very limited, and they've already produced a negative reaction from local government sector, but they also announced the grant support package*

*that recognises authorities income losses in a bespoke way as we have argued for right from the beginning. Now, in a nutshell, the government has argued as announced that losses, over and above first 5% of planned income from sales fees and charges will be compensated at a rate of 75 p in every pound. This appears to cover heritage and parking income losses, but it is silent as to whether commercial estate income will be compensated.*

*The detail as to how this scheme will be administered has not yet been announced, and when we are aware of that we will return to later on.*

*I just want to just deal with some of the points that Councillor Myers raised in his presentation to Cabinet at the PDS panel earlier this week.*

*I speculated as to what might happen to those three main income streams and I'm just going to repeat these for the record, we do not believe that heritage income will fully recover in 2021. So, although the Roman Baths will open next week, because of social distancing requirements, we still expect capacity to be reduced to 30% of normal. And, the same applies to the Assembly Rooms and the Pump Room, longer term prospects depend, to some extent, on the world appetite for international tourism.*

*Some mitigation is possible through increased UK tourism, but we expect income to be depressed below 2019/20 levels on parking income. We do expect that to return closer to pre COVID levels, particularly if greater car use occurs due to social distancing requirements on public transport.*

*Commercial income is not expected to return to pre COVID levels during 2021, and longer term prospects are highly unpredictable due to uncertainty about the financial health of the retail and hospitality sector, many of whom are our tenants and some businesses have argued publicly for rent free periods to be granted. I have asked what the estimated additional loss to the council would be where we do that. And what I've been advised is that the increased losses, would be around a million pounds a month if we were to grant rent free periods, say to all of our tenants. I think in the environment the report sets out, it is not prudent to go down that road with our tenants, but we are prepared to negotiate and discuss deferrals and different payment arrangements with all of our tenants and indeed have been doing so.*

*I want to just return now to the report itself. First to say what the report is not. It is not a new medium term financial strategy that tries to plot the course of the next three years, rather it is a recovery plan that deals with the urgent situation we face. A revised medium term financial strategy will be prepared that addresses and examines some future cost pressures the council will face, and will as part of its content consider the fiscal environment post COVID. I believe that's the correct way to approach our financial management, not in reverse order as suggested by opposition members. When there is fire - you put it out quickly, and then you rebuild your house. You do not rebuild your house and then allow the fire to take hold. So, we are taking urgent action as is necessary to secure this year's finances, and we will deal with the longer term position in due course. I would like to place on record thanks to everyone who has shaped this plan and prepared this plan in such a short time. This has been a terrific piece of council wide teamwork, in quite difficult circumstances. And, as has been mentioned, our auditors have expressed their satisfaction with it.*

*I'm not going to repeat the headline savings they remain at the moment in this report at £20.7m.*

*It would mean that when we are aware of any additional government funding, we will have choices about whether we need to do any draw down from reserves and to what extent.*

*Now, in the light of the high levels of government unrestricted grant announced today, the Cabinet will reassess the position when full of details are known, and we will make adjustments to these proposals. We will also keep a very close watch on COVID related spending to ensure it can be contained within the resources provided by government, and that would apply in the event of any second spikes within our area.*

*As members will know as part of the recovery plan of prepper preparation a full review of the capital programme was undertaken and adjustments made to reducing the borrowing costs as well as reprogramming slippage caused by the COVID lockdown.*

*We were concerned about the continuing impact pandemic would have on the ability of council tax and business ratepayers to pay their bills, as this ultimately feeds into future year's budgets. So, in this regard we welcome the announcement by the government state of greater flexibility in the treatment of election fund deficits. The full details of our proposals for the plan are contained within the appendices in the report, together with a full equalities impact assessment. I do not propose to speak to these details but I'm happy to take comments on them.*

*As we know the pandemic is a fast moving situation, and they will be, and there may be unexpected twists and turns ahead.*

*And it is really impossible to predict these future events, because so much depends on sensible behaviour by the public and adherence to government and local public health guidance.*

*We intend to monitor the delivery of this plan very closely, but also changing conditions locally, that may impact on the council's finances will be followed by corrective action if that is required. I have no intention, as some members opposition members have suggested to allowing the council's finance to drift. Such an intervention is necessary by the director of finance and it remains my intention that despite the exceptional circumstances we face, the books will balance at year end.*

*I commend this report to the cabinet for approval. I move the recommendations set out in report but they also move and additional recommendation 2.7:*

*2.7 - To welcome the announcement of additional government funding to the Council in particular the proposed income compensation scheme and agrees that once the detail has been received and analysed a further report will be brought forward setting out any adjustments to the Financial Recovery Plan.'*

*Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations 2.1 to 2.6 with additional recommendation 2.7 (as above).*

The Chair seconded the motion by thanking Councillor Samuel, other Cabinet Members and officers for their input in the report. The Chair also said that she welcomed additional support to councils and that she was grateful that the government had listened their concerns. However, the 'devil is in the detail' and the Council would need to analyse carefully the announcement from the government and consider the impact it would have on Council's recovery plan. The Council would need set a framework which would be flexible enough to deliver services to its residents.

Councillor Paul Crosley made an appeal to all residents to take their litter home rather than leaving it across parks in the area. The collection of litter over the last few weeks has had significant financial impact on the Council. Councillor Crossley also said that Roman Baths have re-opened but with reduced visitor capacity due to social distancing. This would have negative financial impact on the Council, too. Also, Fashion Museum and Victoria Art Gallery would open around Easter 2021. Councillor Crossley concluded his statement by thanking Stephen Bird and his staff on drawing plans for re-opening Roman Baths and Pump Room.

Councillor Sarah Warren also welcomed the report and thanked the officers who worked so hard to resolve the financial difficulties that have arisen directly after the pandemic. The climate emergency was one of the highest priorities of this administration, and despite the turmoil brought to the community by COVID-19, this priority would must remain. Councillor Warren also said that the climate and nature emergency has not gone away and that she was delighted that despite the enormous financial challenge, the Council would keep the additional funding allocated in February for work on the climate emergency. Councillor Warren added that the Council would continue to work with local business to create new jobs and also to continue with the climate emergency measures as set out in the vision.

Councillor Tim Ball also supported the report and paid tribute to Council officers who have worked hard to deliver services to the community in these difficult times. Councillor Ball also welcomed the announcement from the government for additional support to councils and highlighted the need for funding grass cutting in the area.

Councillor Rob Appleyard welcomed the report and the news about government's additional support, and thanked the volunteers from 3SG and third sector for their support to the community. Councillor Appleyard highlighted that people who were shielding due to their medical conditions should be looked at in terms of their re-engagement with the community.

Councillor Joanna Wright also welcomed the report and highlighted the work of the Community Compassionate Hub did in the last few months. Councillor Wright felt that the report was well written and added that the Council would face real challenge to deliver its services to the community taking into consideration financial difficulties. Councillor Wright expressed her concern of community expectation from this Council to deliver a huge amount of infrastructure that would support lots of people to move to sustainable transport, The Council would need to make sure that our pavements were wide enough, and that parking is removed, so that people can move about as easily as possible, and to stay well and healthy. Councillor Wright thanked Andy Rothery and his team for the report and also to officers from highways and transportation for their hard work in the last few months.

Councillor Kevin Guy thanked the officers for the report and added that these were quite challenging times to protect and enhance services for children in need. The Council has been working closely with its partners to find new ways to support children and young people. The Council commissioned services from a range of charities and organisations to support vulnerable children and young people. Council Guy informed the Cabinet that resources and support have been put in place with an offset of up to £57,000 by an agreement reached with St John's Trust. This would benefit most vulnerable children in the society. This support would be formalised with the relevant providers and would form part of the wider work, which St John's are implementing in Bath and North East Somerset, as part of their recently launched a foundation fund to help enhance children's lives. This cooperation means that there would be zero frontline reduction in preventative services that provide support for the most vulnerable in our society.

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

- 2.1 To note the Covid-19 financial impact on the Council's revenue budget.
- 2.2 To note the planned commitments and utilisation of the £10m Covid-19 grant.
- 2.3 To note and approve the Director recovery plans, which are in line with the delegation given within the Council's Budget Management Scheme.
- 2.4 To support and approve the 2020/21 revenue budget financial recovery plans.
- 2.5 To note the changes in the capital programme as result of the capital review and approve the rephasing of the programme budgets as set out in appendix 2.
- 2.6 To note the commitment of £11.43m Council reserves to be earmarked and utilised as the deficit funding source in the event of an over budget position after revenue mitigations and government grant.
- 2.7 To welcome the announcement of additional government funding to the Council in particular the proposed income compensation scheme and agrees that once the detail has been received and analysed a further report will be brought forward setting out any adjustments to the Financial Recovery Plan.

The meeting ended at 3.20 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

**CABINET MEETING 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**

**STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC  
AND COUNCILLORS**

1. David Redgewell
2. Councillor Eleanor Jackson

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor June Player
<p>When is Westmoreland Ward going to get Residents Parking Zones?</p> <p>We have been requesting this for a number of years now and common sense tells us that this is a scheme that needs to be undertaken before the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, more Cycle Lanes and the Clean Air Zone. The latest Council AECOM Parking Stress and Occupancy Survey clearly demonstrates how Westmoreland Ward more than any other Ward suffers with serious parking problems and issues.</p> <p>The residents of Westmoreland Ward deserve better.</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Joanna Wright
<p><i>We are currently reviewing both low traffic neighbourhoods and residents' parking across the whole city, including how Residents Parking Zones operate now and whether new zones are needed. We're also looking at how best to use the zones to support our wider transport strategy to reduce shorter car journeys and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport. This will mean looking at the criteria we use to decide where the zones go. The review is thorough and wide-ranging and we hope to be able to share the outcomes as soon as possible.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>In press releases about Covid19 financial challenges it is noted that the Council has received a £10 million grant from Government and is hopeful further funding from National Government will be announced in the coming weeks.</p> <p>As the emphasis has to be on 'hopeful' what contingency measures does the Council have should this 'hope' not materialise beyond political blame?</p>			

<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Richard Samuel
<p><i>The financial recovery plan as set out in the Cabinet report shows how the 2020/21 forecast outturn after recovery measures can be funded without any further government grant. At this stage, this is the prudent approach to take in advance of further financial support from Government, the contingency measure is that Council reserve has been earmarked which will not be drawn down with additional grant funding.</i></p>		
<b>M</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Karen Warrington
<p>Although the Pandemic and subsequent Lockdown has had a significant positive impact on Climate Change and the environment, including wildlife, as the economy recovers what assurances can you give us that you will endeavour to maintain that positive impact and what is the Impact of the deficit on the Climate Emergency budget?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Sarah Warren
<p><i>We are setting up a new Economic &amp; Community Renewal Programme which is designed to do exactly that. The programme has green recovery at its heart and will ensure that the opportunities to build on positive behaviour change are taken along with the opportunities for economic and social renewal and resilience that action on the three Council net zero carbon 2030 priorities provide. We have not made reductions in the budgets that support the corporate activity and will look to build on this by pulling together resources from across the Council departments. The Leader and I will be running a webinar on Climate Emergency on 13 July. We are also participating in the UK100 Resilient Recovery Task Force.</i></p>		
<b>M</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Paul Myers
<p>What budgetary forecasting assumptions and contingency planning has been prepared to fund the costs of any potential local outbreak of Covid19 – particularly given that the response would largely be the responsibility of this Council to coordinate under the recently prepared public health plan?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Richard Samuel

*The Covid-19 revenue grant has been utilised to add capacity to strengthen the local response to Covid-19, this has been managed through the B&NES emergency planning process and work with the Local Resilience Forum. In addition, the Council is developing its local outbreak management plan to commit the £0.85m test and trace grant focussing on co-ordination, testing, tracing and prevention measures.*

**M 05**      **Question from:**      Councillor Paul Myers

There is a general assumption that as the weather gets colder, we could potentially face a major national resurgence of the Covid19 virus as we enter the autumn and winter of 2020 and into the spring of 2021. What budgeting assumptions have been made within the Recovery Plan to prepare for another prolonged national lockdown and even greater losses/a significant delay in recovery of the projected Council's business revenues. How would the Administration anticipate funding this situation given that Council reserves will by then have already been significantly drawn down?

**Answer from:**      Councillor Richard Samuel

*We have been prudent in our assessment of the financial risk on our revenue budgets in 2020/21, particularly the impact on income which accounts for extended periods of the national lockdown. For example, in our Heritage Services forecast we are anticipating gross revenue income of c£3.5m compared to £23m generated last year. We are confident that our modelling and reported revenue pressure takes into account further risk.*

**M 06**      **Question from:**      Councillor Paul May

How many staff have been furloughed during the Lockdown?

**Answer from:**      Councillor Richard Samuel

*Under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, all UK employers with a PAYE scheme are able to access support to continue paying part of their employees' salary for those that would otherwise have been laid off during this crisis. This applies to employees who have been asked to stop working, but who are being kept on the payroll, otherwise described as 'furloughed workers' backdated to 1 March.*

*As at 30 June, the council has furloughed 290 staff in total - 189 with permanent positions and 101 with casual positions furloughed in total (staff in Heritage and those who work with schools)*

**M 07**      **Question from:**      Councillor Paul May

Your recovery plan makes no direct reference to consultation with the trade unions about the recovery plan. How many staff will be made redundant and what protections are you building in for the BAME community we employ?

**Answer from:**      Councillor Richard Samuel

*The Council shared the details of the financial recovery plans with trades union representatives (Unison, Unite, GMB and schools unions) before they were published and the Chief Executive and Director of HR&OD met with those representatives on Monday 22 June to discuss these in detail and to listen to feedback. We do not anticipate having any redundancies.*

*We have carried out an equality impact assessment against the financial recovery plan as a whole and we undertake an equality impact assessment for each service restructure – considering the impacts on race as a protected characteristic and looking to mitigate that impact where possible.*

*The Council has detailed risk assessments in place for all staff during Covid-19 and have included special provision for BME staff as part of these. We are also currently looking to extend support specifically for BME staff with a BME led community-based charity.*

**M 08**      **Question from:**      Councillor Paul May

Within your recovery plan will you carry out a fair zero-based budget approach to value assess services that will be cut, stopped or protected?

**Answer from:**      Councillor Richard Samuel

*No. Due to the timescale pressures and urgency to manage costs, the recovery plans focus on in year one-off measures without altering the 2020/21 budget. When the recurrent impact on the Councils budget is understood in more detail, a thorough review of*

*resource allocation will be carried out for the future years budget setting process.*

<b>M</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
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Thank you for confirming that the S114 idea has been dropped.  
Within the recovery plan I remain concerned that the references to the commercial estate seem non-specific and whilst the commercial market place is depressed can you confirm no action will be taken to dispose of properties the council owns on behalf of the residents in Bath or elsewhere in Banes at less than pre-Covid valuations?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Richard Samuel
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*In the event the Council cannot balance its budget and fund its deficit a S114 notice will be a concern for the Council.*

*The 2020/21 financial recovery plan has not incorporated any new property disposals.*

<b>M</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Grant Johnson
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In response to a question asked at the last meeting of cabinet, I was informed that the Council was "opening negotiations with the Midsomer Norton gas generator plant developer, in seeking a more sustainable model than the current proposal of a standby gas generator." Where have we got to with these negotiations and will the current development still be going ahead?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Tim Ball
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*The Leader and I have met with the developer in order to investigate alternative options and mitigations. I am pleased to report that the discussions were very positive and the developer is considering next steps.*

<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Grant Johnson
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On the 29th of May 2019 I asked our equalities team about the paintings that are on display in the Council Chamber and questioned whether these were a fair representation of Bath & North East Somerset Council.

In response to this, I was told by the equalities team that they would do the following:

- A. Ask the facilities team at the Guildhall for input on how the current selection was made and if there was any possibility of change to make the paintings displayed more representative of our current community/elected members.
- B. They would look into rotating or introducing new art when there is decoration in progress.

As we all know, the Guildhall has undergone a large renovation over the last year and I was wondering what, if anything, had been done to address my concerns for the way this Council chooses to represent itself?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Paul Crossley

*The fifteen portraits in the Council Chamber belong to the Council's collection curated by the Victoria Art Gallery. A list of the portraits is given below. They are all glazed for protection and are periodically condition-checked for damage or deterioration, usually by volunteers from the Friends of the Victoria Art Gallery.*

*The selection exhibited was made many years ago and pre-dates the formation of Bath & North East Somerset Council in 1996. It reflects the nature of the public collection and the prominent public figures recorded in it rather than the preferences of the present or past administrations. The criterion was that all the portraits depict former Councillors, Aldermen and Mayors of Bath. Most, like their setting in the chosen decorative scheme, are appropriate to the High Victorian nature of the Chamber which dates to 1896. The earliest portraits date to 1728, the latest to 1974.*

*The south wing of the Guildhall which contains the Council Chamber has always been the seat of local government and, until 1989, the magistrates courts. This is reflected in the curved frieze of figures on the outside of the building representing Administration and Justice. (The frieze on the north wing, which contained the art and technical school, depicts Arts, Science and Learning. The adjacent Victoria Art Gallery was built shortly afterwards).*

*The Gallery's collection includes a limited number of portraits. All were collected in the period when the city of Bath was the extent of*

*the Gallery's collecting area. Many already hang in the Guildhall meeting rooms, with some displayed at the Gallery and a few at the Pump Room. Unfortunately, the collection contains no portrait of Helen Hope, the first woman councillor in Bath, nor of Kathleen Harper the first woman appointed as Mayor in 1950, nor of any of the numerous other woman Mayors since. Since 1996 when Bath & North East Somerset was created as a unitary authority, no portraits of Chairs of Council from any part of the district have been accessioned into the Gallery's collection. The most recent mayoral portrait in the Gallery's collection is that of Alleyne Berry and this already Hangs in the Chamber.*

*As the question indicates, redecoration of the Chamber would be the best time to effect changes, as walls behind paintings do not discolour in the way that the surrounding paint does. Even if suitable replacements could be found, they are unlikely to be of the same size so fixing holes would need filling and making good, new ones drilling and the section of wall repainting. Some of the present portraits are fitted with picture lights and new fittings may be needed to fit them to the frames of imported portraits, which would also need to be glazed. As yet no estimates for these works have been prepared.*

*It should be noted that more modern works, whether portraits or landscapes, would be out of keeping with the period decorative context of the Chamber. They could also prejudice the suitability of the room as a film location, an activity that earns the Council much-needed revenue. In 2019 one day's filming for McDonald and Dodds (ITV) earned £840 while the use of the Chamber and other rooms in the Guildhall for Bridgerton (Netflix) yielded £8,566 in income.*

*As with all the Guildhall's meeting rooms, and probably most other council chambers around the country, the display of portraits remains static, although there is no reason why that should remain the case On occasions such as Heritage Open Days and Museums Week, public access to the Council Chamber is arranged when existing bookings permit. The practice of periodically rotating works of art in the public collection is principally enacted at the Victoria Art Gallery, while loans to museums elsewhere, such as those to Chippenham, Barnsley and Kistefos (Norway) in 2019, further extend the opportunity for exposure of the collection to public view. In the Guildhall the publicly accessible ground-floor space outside the Chair of Council's Office, is already used to exhibit the work of local art groups on a rotational basis.*

***As a way forward, officers will investigate options for making the display of portraits in the Council Chamber more representative of the authority and of public life in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.***

.....  
*Portraits in the Council Chamber:*

*John Stone (1818-1899) by Alexander Stanhope Forbes. Served on Council for a short period, then as Town Clerk from 1860 to 1888*

(BATVG 1900.31)

*Henry Harrington (1727-1816) by Thomas Beach. Born at Kelston; doctor and musician in Bath; Mayor in 1793 (BATVG 1942.175)*

*Cedric Chivers (1854-1929) by William Orpen. A bookbinder in Bath; credited with introducing the card index into English business life and public libraries; Mayor six times between 1922 and 1928 (BATVG 1984.46)*

*Francis Allen (1818-1869) by William Duffield. A barrister in Bath; Mayor in 1852-3 (BATVG 1984.17)*

*Philip George (1750-1822), artist unknown; Deputy Town Clerk 1777-1800, Town Clerk 1800-1817 (BATVG 1984.57)*

*Frederick Dowding (1795-1861) by Edwin Long; a solicitor in Bath; Mayor in 1849; instrumental in passing the Bath Act for paving and lighting the city (BATVG 1984.31)*

*Alleyne Berry OBE (1904-1989) by Martin Fisher; a surveyor in Bath; served 37 years on Council; Mayor in 1952; the first contemporary portrait to be hung in the Chamber and the first of anyone wearing glasses (BATVG 1984.18)*

*Eight portraits by Johan Van Diest surviving from a collection of 30 portraits of city councillors commissioned in 1728 by Field Marshal Wade who lived in Abbey Church Yard. These portraits would have hung in the Council Chamber of the former Guild Hall that stood in the market-place at the lower end of High Street before the present Guildhall was built. The Atwoods were a family of plumbers and glaziers in Bath.*

- *Ralph Allen (1693-1764) Mayor in 1742 (BATVG 1984.9)*
- *Thomas Atwood senior (d.1732) Mayor in 1728 (BATVG 1984.10)*
- *Thomas Atwood junior (1709-1770) Mayor in 1753, 1760 and 1769 (BATVG 1984.11)*
- *James Atwood (d.1760) Mayor in 1734 and 1748 (BATVG 1984.12)*
- *Unknown councillor (BATVG 1984.13)*
- *Henry Atwood (d.1763) Mayor in 1741, 1750 and 1758 (BATVG 1984.14)*
- *William Chapman (d.1729) Mayor in 1727 (BATVG 1984.15)*

- *Richard Ford (1665-1733) Mayor in 1713 and 1730 (BATVG 1986.1)*

**Supplementary Question:**

Your response talks a lot about both historical and current factors that have shaped the way we see our Council Chamber today. In the novel *Persuasion*, Jane Austen's character Anne Elliot says, "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands." Do you believe your answer to be a perfect example of the kind of persistent structural inequality that has not only tarnished this council since before Jane Austen's time, but still tarnishes it today?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Paul Crossley

*No. I think that you are looking only at art in the Council Chamber. If you look in the broader context in advance, before the leaks started coming in over the entry by the Leader's office, we had the wedding day party which was two young ladies. We have Harry Patch outside the Chamber, which is a modern image. So, there is a continual changeover of art, around all the places that we display them, and as we redecorate, and refurbish them we do review at that point, what goes on and the images we want, and changes have been made before you brought up this interesting points to about diversity.*

**Supplementary Question:**

In your answer you mention that the period decoration in the Council Chamber earned us £9,406 in 2019, due to it being used as a film location. You also mention that the addition of any modern images, which are more in keeping with our equality standards, would prejudice the ascetics of the room. Does the cabinet not agree that the only prejudice being displayed here is that of a Council which appears to care more about a small amount of revenue than it does the equality of its citizens?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Paul Crossley

*The fact that we only get direct income of £9,000 plus is actually marginal compared to the benefit that we get as an authority when our facilities are shown on primetime TV, in very popular locations in very popular series, not just in UK but around the world. So, the impact of the filming in Bath goes way beyond the direct revenue that Council earns, and this helps support many places and venues*

*around Bath and North East Somerset. We have to have a look at a balance of pictures and images in the Guildhall, and it is certainly true that we are currently in the process of looking at the images that are in the Guildhall Chamber. But, as part of that process, we would be looking for things that are in keeping with the decor of the Council Chamber. So, I don't think we would be having for instance, a piece of Modern Art in the Chamber. Instead, we might have different images and different portraits. What the citizens want from us is use great assets, gaining revenue for them so that they get good value from the Council Tax that we collect, and that is the best way that we could ensure the quality of all our systems, by providing good services and good facilities.*

**M**

**12**

**Question from:**

Councillor Eleanor Jackson

Will the Cabinet Members re-consider the decision to remove practically all the parking from Fortescue Road and The Street, Radstock? The concession of disabled bays being retained is also problematic because they are at the furthest possible point from the surgery. I appreciate that the government's safety measures are important, but if enforced this will be at the cost of several Westfield owned businesses going under. Has an Equalities assessment been done, given how important these food shops, takeaways and the hardware shop have been to the elderly and carless during the Emergency?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

*The original proposal for suspension of a number of parking spaces & use of barriers to widen footway was put forward as an option by Officers in light of the requirement to provide social distancing schemes in locations where local shops or other facilities had the potential to generate footfall.*

*However, as ward members did not support the proposals and a meeting held by Town Council resulted in objections from businesses to the proposals, along with the fact that officers have observed only low pedestrian numbers and no issues with social distancing the proposals have been removed. However, road safety posters will be offered and installed as necessary.*

**Supplementary Question:**

In BANES, particularly in Radstock in Westfield where I know the actual figures, there's quite a few pedestrian safety issues so I would like to ask whether Cabinet Member would consider reviewing the crossings on the Frome Road and general measures to make things

safer for people to walk instead of come by car? And, if Cabinet Member could do something to get a bridge built across from Nelson Drive to St Nicholas's primary school, so that children have a much safer way to walk to school?

**Answer from:** Councillor Joanna Wright

*Thank you for your supplementary question. I would very much like to look into the detail of your questions, and I will provide an answer to you in 5 clear working days.*

**M 13 Question from:** Councillor Robin Moss

Homeless people have been offered accommodation over the Covid-19 crisis period. What steps are being taken to make sure they do not have to return to the streets?

**Answer from:** Councillor Tim Ball

*As part of the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis the Council, working with partners, assisted 69 rough sleepers to find accommodation, including housing 42 of these directly. The outcomes have been very positive including better engagement with support services and reduced begging. I want to build upon these positive outcomes. As such officers have prepared an action plan to prevent a return to the streets. This includes a number of actions including continuing to provide accommodation to at least the end of the year; prioritising rough sleepers and former sleepers for social housing; continuing to expand our Housing First initiative and finally drafting a bid to MHCLG for extra funding to deliver permanent supported move-on accommodation for rough sleepers.*

**M 14 Question from:** Councillor Robin Moss

What are the long term plans for the residential homes being 'returned' to B&NES from Curo?

**Answer from:** Councillor Rob Appleyard

*In answering this question – I have assumed you meant Sirona, not Curo.*

*B&NES council are working constructively with Sirona, the transferring staff and the residents to ensure a safe and seamless transfer of services into the Council on 1 October 2020.*

*Once this transfer has been safely achieved the Council is committed to reviewing this provision to develop and update the adult care services model and strategy, of which the Community Resource Centres (CRCs) are a key element. This will also work to ensure that these provisions are the best they can be for the residents and recipients of the extra care services.*

*The staffing team are positive about joining or returning to the council and are looking forward to developing the extra care and residential services to the benefit of residents and the wider community.*

*The CRCs once in-housed will offer opportunities to explore our approach to Adult Social Care alongside engagement with existing providers in the market. In the current circumstances appreciating the impact of Covid 19 we are particularly mindful of the need to review market provision carefully and sensitively. Our approach will ensure any services meets the changing needs of those requiring care, balancing residential care requirements alongside supporting people to live independently.*

<b>M</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Robin Moss
What is the current percentage occupancy rate for care homes in the B&NES area and does the Cabinet Member responsible believe this will achieve financial sustainability for those businesses?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Rob Appleyard
<p><i>As of 26 of June 2020 the occupancy rate for care homes is at 92.46 %. Of the 1403 available places for older people in B&amp;NES, 310 are funded by the council (22% of the market) and the rest by a mix of private funding / other Local Authorities and small percentage funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (less than 1%). Of the 1403 places, 860 are nursing places (18.6% funded by B&amp;NES) and 543 are residential places (27.6% funded by B&amp;NES). The Covid 19 Pandemic has been a difficult and challenging time for care homes. However, they have coped with determination and an on-going commitment to keep their residents safe. At the height of the crisis overall occupancy dropped to 89.38%.</i></p> <p><i>However, we have been actively working with all our homes to support them through this time and it is worth looking at the published</i></p>			

*return given to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) noting the many ways B&NES have been able to support care homes and home care providers. <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/support-care-homes-bath-north-east-somerset>. The DHSC also identified significant new funds for care providers last month and the first tranche of this funding has been sent on to care providers in the last 2 weeks.*

*We do expect to see further changes in the market, early indications suggesting that those needing care in the future may prefer to receive care in their own homes rather than in residential/nursing homes. This is furthering an approach that B&NES is already developing, balancing our market shaping responsibilities under the care act alongside our actual market share. We will want to work proactively with the market to enable them to respond to future changes and also ensure that we maintain best value for the council.*

*Therefore, this will also be part of the wider review to update our local adult care services model and strategy. In addition we will need to be cognisant of related activity in health and social care at a national level planning for the support and sustainable funding for Adult Social Care in the future.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

<b>P 01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	James Carlin (3SG)
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After 10 years of austerity, the Covid19 pandemic has shown how essential the VSCE community is to people's wellbeing and ability to be supported. Can we ask the Cabinet how they plan to ensure the most marginalised in our community and the charities that support them are not further impacted?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Dine Romero

*As the question highlights, Covid-19 has brought into sharp relief inequalities in our communities but also the key role of third sector organisations in improving people's lives and supporting our most vulnerable. Our Compassionate Communities Hub has demonstrated how close working across a wide range of organisations can transform how we do this. I and my cabinet colleagues are determined that this approach will continue.*

*It is also important that we design and develop this in close co-operation with the partners involved. So I am delighted that we now have a Compassionate Communities steering group to take this forward and I look forward to further strengthening our joint working with 3SG and other partners through this.*

*Getting timely support for our third sector is particularly crucial at the moment and so we have also championed support for charities and community organisations through the Government's Discretionary Grant scheme. To date this has delivered £125,000 of grants to our local community organisations.*

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David Redgewell statement – Cabinet 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

We would like know when weca mayoral Transport authority. is going to restore the rural bus service's.

I The Bath Weston back of the Ruh hospital ,Kelson , Bitton,longwell, Green,Hanham,st George,Lawrence hill station, Bristol bus station. Bus 37 .

18 Bath spa bus station,saltford,keynsham,North common ,warmley,kingswood,Hillfields staple hill,Downend,u we bus station, Bristol parkway,cribbs causeway bus station

178 Radstock,midsomer Norton,Paulton,keynsham,Brislington,Bristol temple meads and Bristol bus station. Weekend service s .

172 Bristol to the chew valley service s

Hct group.

Keynsham town service s and links to south Keynsham.

96 route from Brislington to Hengrove south Bristol hospital.

Connection at Brislington for the Hospital with buses from Keynsham and Bath. On the wells road connection at Knowle for south Bristol hospital.

No weekend service.

35 route Marshfield to Bristol

There are a lot of local service also not operating.

With shopping. Restaurant and public houses open.

Can we understand when weca is going to restore this service s.

We have no weca mayoral transport forum on Zoom. Meeting.

Can we set up a forum. also weca has no public transport information help line. We are unhappy weca did not bid for rural bus grant s.

We still need to see The Transport board meeting in public. Like all other combined authorities.

North Somerset council also need to join weca mayoral combined authority. For next year s election. An order needs promoted in parliamentary order. And public consultation carried out in the 4 unity authorities in the Bristol and Bath city region.

We support the closure of Keynsham High street for social distancing. Providing that bus facilities are provided toward Bath in Ashton way with waiting shelters.

## Cabinet speech Coronavirus 2 July 2020

Others may summarise the government's failings over the coronavirus crisis and its impact on our residents better than I, lament the shortfall in funding for remedial measures more eloquently and praise all the myriads of volunteers and staff who went 'above and beyond', sometimes at terrible cost to themselves more loudly. But I am here this afternoon to plead for a bit of common sense – **gumption** in plain English. Sadly it is not just the virus which can prove fatal, but the measures put in place to combat it, or equally tragically, removed prematurely. As a council, as parish councillors and as individuals we need as many hard, science evaluated facts as possible, and I am sure our officers are doing their best to extrapolate the information we need from all the confusing and contradictory government statements in a rapidly evolving situation.

I came here to represent the Radstock/Westfield traders, businesses and shoppers because I have been campaigning since 2006 to get the area recognised as a retail destination in its own right, a social hub and a good place to do business. It has been very tough because certain officers fail to hear what senior planning officers have said about the 100 space lack of parking in the town centre, cyclists about the lack of connectivity of the National Highway 24 cycle track and the various community groups about the shortage of community space for meetings and events. However, in this new, challenging, far from normal world, I am sure **you** are listening. I am so glad that common sense about the proposal to remove parking in The Street and Fortescue Road has prevailed. You just need to get the enormous hedge stretching across the pavement from the Children's Centre in Church Street cut, and the scaffolding sticking out into the road by the Victoria hall removed. Ideology driven policies on walking and cycling have to be flexible if villages in NE Somerset are not to be even more isolated.

So may I leave you with the Otley (edge of the N Yorkshire moors) solution. Get all pedestrians to walk up and down streets on the left hand side, and cyclists to keep off the pavements.

Thank you.

Cllr Eleanor Jackson.

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**Special Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday**  
**30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

**REPORT TO CABINET 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2020**

**Meeting Summary and Recommendations on COVID-19 2020/21 FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN**

The Panel acknowledged the report that had been submitted to them and thanked the officers for their time taken to prepare and present it.

Detailed questioning was undertaken by the Panel and they raised points on a number of matters during the discussion of the report including:

- Income to the Council
  - What % of activity may return and when?
  - Council Tax collection fund
  - Business Rates income
  - Reintroduction of Parking Charges
  
- Financial Recovery Plans
  - Directorate recovery measures
  - Use of un-earmarked Council reserves and comparisons with other councils
  - MHCLG additional support
  - Noted auditors aware
  
- The Commercial Estate
  
- Council's Capital Programme
  
- Implications for the Council's Budget 2021 / 22
  
- Second Wave / Spike Preparations – should one occur

The meeting concluded with the Panel agreeing the following recommendations.

The Panel **RESOLVED** that it;

- (i) Commends the overall shape of the recovery plan, given the balance shown between the use of reserves, assumptions over Government funding and reduction in spending.

- (ii) Asks the Cabinet to consider the implications on the Council's Commercial Estate business tenants with regard to the timing of seeking rent arrears to be paid by the end of the year.
- (iii) Asks the Cabinet to review parking charges whilst being mindful of Climate Emergency issues.
- (iv) Asks the Cabinet to directly reference the points raised by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Richard Samuel during the debate in relation to the Council's future plans / assumptions. In particular;
  - Income levels to the Council that it has grown to rely on will not return by next year.
  - Parking income may return sooner as people are likely to be less reliant on public transport.
  - Heritage income will not return to its previous levels for some time due to the likelihood of some form of social distancing being in place over the next twelve months.
  - The Commercial Estate may take around five years to return to its previous levels of income.