

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 21st January, 2021

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

55 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Liz Hardman and Ruth Malloy declared an interest in item 7 – Food Poverty Action Plan – as members of the Food Poverty Steering Group.

56 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chairman informed Council of the death of former Keynsham Town Councillor Tony Crouch, who had served on the Town Council for 21 years, and was also a member of the Standards Committee. He extended the Council's sincere condolences to his wife, family and friends. The Council held a minute's silence.

The Chairman invited the Leader of the Council to make a statement, on behalf of the four Group Leaders, to all Council staff recognising their tireless work throughout the pandemic, from front line services to those behind the scenes. She expressed heartfelt thanks to staff for going above and beyond their normal exemplary level during this difficult period.

At the Chairman's discretion, the Leader updated Council on the latest covid situation in Bath & North East Somerset. She explained that, although case numbers were reducing with 380 cases (per 100K population) from 500 last week, and we are largely doing the right thing, this is still putting pressure on our health services and we must remain vigilant and still stay at home wherever possible. The Council is aware of the effect on mental wellbeing and highlighted the support available. She explained that the community hub had taken nearly 11,000 calls since its inception and continues to triage those in need with a variety of support. Councillor Romero concluded by thanking all our partners and volunteer groups, and the hard work of Councillors in supporting residents.

57 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

58 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Luke John Emmett made a statement expressing concern about his perception of a lack of arts and cultural representation in the B&NES One Shared Vision consultation. He outlined the many ways the arts had enriched people's lives during the pandemic and called for arts and culture to be placed at the heart of any future vision for the city. A full copy of Luke's statement, which had been circulated to Members, is available linked to the minutes. Councillor Dine Romero invited Luke to meet Councillor Paul Crossley and herself to explore how his suggestions could be progressed. Luke welcomed this proposal. The Chairman referred the statement to the Cabinet Member.

David Redgewell made a statement about transport issues, a copy of which had been circulated to Members and is linked to the minutes. He raised various concerns including precepting WECA powers, bus drivers without screens, the light rail project and the status of North Somerset joining WECA. Councillor Neil Butters asked David to email him about the screen issues so he could follow up. He also asked David if he was aware that the 3rd tranche of the railway fund is about to open, with a strong bid for Saltford station. David replied that he would fully support that, and hopefully it would also be supported by the WECA Mayor and MP Jacob Rees-Mogg. Councillor Paul Myers asked David to clarify the issues regarding bollard design in Bath which David had raised in his written statement. He responded that the consultation is now closed but they were concerned about partially sighted and disabled people being able to navigate the bollards. The Chairman referred the statement to the Cabinet Member.

Martin Grixoni made a statement about the rollout of 5G in Bath but raising concern about various recent planning decisions and the reasons behind non-approval. He expressed concern about Bath's reputation nationally as this had received negative press coverage. Councillor Dine Romero clarified that the Planning Committee was not the Authority's Administration. Councillor Tim Ball asked Martin if he was aware of the existing permissions for 5G masts in Bath, some of which were already installed. Martin replied that he was aware, but remained concerned that health reasons were being cited to turn down applications. Councillor Paul Myers asked if Martin considered the adverse publicity had damaged the reputation of the city as an attractive business location, to which Martin replied that he did. Councillor Grant Johnson asked Martin if he considered it was appropriate, at a time when anti vaxxers were a particular concern, for technological progress to be halted by misinformation from a vocal minority. Martin agreed it was a concern. The Chairman referred the comments to the Cabinet Member.

Bob Goodman made a statement regarding the Climate and Ecological emergency item. He expressed a number of concerns about how the Cabinet were approaching this, including approval of the gas generators in Midsomer Norton and damage to slowworms in Tufa field and called on the Leader to declare Tufa field as safe from development. Councillor Tim Ball asked Bob if he did not accept some

responsibility for his role in the Placemaking plan with associated planning decisions, as Cabinet Member in 2017. Bob responded that he did take responsibility but there was not an ecological emergency at that point, and there is now. Councillor Karen Warrington asked if it was easy to move a Tufa field, and the necessary environmental conditions. Bob responded that, according to Professor Everard at UWE, it's a very difficult thing to do. Councillor Karen Walker asked Bob if he knew whether this site was still owned by B&NES or had been passed, sold or given to ADL. Bob responded that planning permission was not yet granted as the S106 agreement had not been signed and it was therefore concerning that ADL officers appear to have been actively dealing with this site. Councillor Grant Johnson asked if Bob considered the Council had moved backwards in climate and ecological issues under the current administration, to which Bob responded that he did certainly consider this. The Chairman referred the points to the Cabinet Member.

59 CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY PROGRESS REPORT

The Council considered a progress report which updated on the action the Council has taken since the last Climate Emergency progress report in October 2019, further to the update and review of strategies and plans at the Climate Emergency and Sustainability PDS Panel in March 2020.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was

RESOLVED to

1. Note the wide-ranging action that is being taken to tackle the climate and ecological emergency including:
 - a. Strategic re-positioning of the core climate and ecological emergency policy through the new Renewal Programme to the heart of the Council's place-based work;
 - b. The development of the Renewal Vision with 'green recovery' at its heart, in order to create a stronger, more diverse and greener economy in the future;
 - c. The range of specific service actions undertaken or in hand, including, but not limited to: the Local Plan Partial Update in order to respond to the climate and ecological emergency and the Liveable Neighbourhood development;
 - d. The climate leadership training for members and senior officers that will be rolled out in 2021 followed by the carbon literacy training for staff.
2. Note the specialist work underway that will inform further detailed action planning on renewable energy development.
3. Note the degree of community engagement activity achieved despite the Covid constraints, enabling residents to have a bigger say.
4. Note the initial response to the ecological emergency.

5. Note the delay, due to Covid, in undertaking the annual carbon footprint review of the area and the review of the pathway to net zero carbon and endorse the recommendation that the results of this review are reported to the Climate Emergency & Sustainability PDS Panel meeting on 16 March 2021.

[Notes;

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 56 Councillors voting in favour and 3 Councillors abstaining.]*

60 FOOD POVERTY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Council considered a report providing an update on progress, local priorities, the evolving action plan and setting out the case to widen the scope of the food agenda for comment and engagement since the process for taking forward the development of a Food Poverty Action Plan for B&NES was agreed with the Children, Adult, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 28th January 2020.

On a motion from Councillor Rob Appleyard, seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Consider the information in the report and note the significant developments and progress made; and
2. Reaffirm its commitment to addressing food poverty as a whole council issue.

61 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Council considered the annual report of the Standards Committee.

On a motion from Councillor Duncan Hounsell, seconded by Councillor Sally Davis, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to note the work of the Standards Committee as set out in their Annual report.

62 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement as a backbencher, adding to the comments made earlier in the meeting by the Leader, recognising and appreciating the above and beyond work undertaken by staff during the pandemic. She asked for consideration to be given to an appropriate reward or commendation. The full statement is attached to the online minutes.

The meeting ended at 8.54 pm

Chairman

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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COUNCIL 21st JANUARY 2021

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

1. Luke John Emmett - Vision for Bath
2. David Redgewell - Transport issues
3. Martin Grixoni - Rollout of 5G in Bath
4. Bob Goodman - Climate & Ecological emergency

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B&NES One Shared Vision – Arts & Culture

Good evening everyone and thank you for allowing me to speak to you tonight.

I'm here to raise my concerns about the lack of arts and cultural representation in the B&NES One Shared Vision consultation, and the stories included therein.

Ever since the decimation of the Arts Development department and scathing cuts by the previous administration; arts and culture in Bath has lacked a unified voice within the city. We have a creative and cultural strategy which is sat on a shelf somewhere gathering dust – yet when we apply for funding, we're told we should be referencing it. The city needs a collective vision for the arts and whereas I was never a fan of the narrow vision of this document, the city does need an updated and future-looking cultural and creative strategy which reflects the city today.

Throughout lockdown, artists from all art forms have kept people entertained with live streams of music, theatre, comedy, poetry, storytelling, dance... the list is endless. Artists have done this although many of them have fallen through the Government's emergency funding gaps. We watched, as overnight our careers were ripped away. We were told to retrain. To get proper jobs.

I don't need to prove the economic benefits of the arts – the point has been proven time and time again. But, if Bath's arts and cultural scene thrives so do the many businesses that surround them and the night-time offer to tourists is greatly enhanced.

How many people's mental health benefitted from exposure to the arts during lockdown? The benefits of arts and culture on people's health and wellbeing is well documented and widely known.

In Bath we're very good at looking at the past. At our heritage. But what is often ignored is the part that arts and culture played in our history. From performances in the Roman theatre (believed to be somewhere underneath the Mineral Water Hospital). To the mystery and morality plays that were performed in St Michaels Without. The travelling players that visited here, including Shakespeare's company (although perhaps not Shakespeare himself). To the many different theatres and performance venues that thrived in the time of Beau Nash. The famous bands that toured here in the sixties and seventies. The many street performers and buskers. All the amateur theatre companies, comedians, musicians, poets, storytellers and

dancers who live and work here today. And then all of our brilliant festivals and events.

So why, in a post-covid vision of Bath, is there no mention of arts and culture?

You've declared a climate emergency – well I'm declaring an arts and culture emergency. Arts and culture should be at the heart of any vision for the city going forwards.

A vision of Bath that ignores all of this, is a vision of a city which is a shadow of its former self. A city without a heart.

I know that you cannot help the arts financially, but going forwards I urge you to include them in economic regeneration plans for the city. Arts and culture's value cannot be defined only in monetary terms but for the enrichment of life it brings to thousands of residents and cultural tourists each year.

Thank you for your time & I'm happy to take any questions.

We are very concerned now that public Transport and bus service have transferred to the West of England Combined authority as the city region Transport Authority. But without precept powers what resources are being allocated by the City and County of Bristol and Bristol mayor, Banes and South Gloucestershire council to revenue support socially supported bus services especially to serv Rural and orbital bus services in Bath and North east Somerset; for example Bath Spa bus station to Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton, Paulton and Farmborough, and whilst the Department for Transport is at present funding bus services via covid 19 bus operators grantm there is still a need for money for these services such also as local services in Keynsham and Saltford local services in Radstock and Midsomer Norton and the chew valley.

Links from Bath Spa bus station to Saltford and Keynsham to willsbridge ,North common warmley, kingswood ,Hillfields ,staple hill, Downend uwe Bristol parkway station and cribs causeway .and 19 same route but via Weston RuH back entrance, Kelson,Bitton

Their is also a need to have subsidies for the Severn Beach, Sst Andrew road Avonmouth Dock, Portway, Parkway, Shirehampton, Sea mills, Clifton down, Redland ,montpelier, Stapleton road Lawrence hill, Bristol Temple meads Keynsham ,oidfield park, Bath Spa Freshford Avoncliffe, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Frome or Warminster.

Revenue support is required for the Bristol Temple Meads via Ashley down, Filton Abbey wood, Filton, North Area to Henbury line, Bristol Temple meads to Pill and Portishead, Bristol Temple Meads to Gloucester central via Ashley down, Filton Abbey wood Bristol Parkway, Yate, Charfield station, Cam and Dursey, Stonehouse Bristol road and Gloucester central .

As part of metro West phase 1 and phase 2 requires revenue support from the council.

We would welcome progress on new station at st Anne's park and Saltford stations with Network rail.

We welcome the work on the 25% reduction in In service from 24 th January 2021 due to lock down and the protection of essential journeys key workers access to supermarkets, post office, banks, health care facilities and vaccinations centres, timetables drawn up in partnership between First group and the other operators and WECA mayoral transport authority. Similarly, will first group Great Western railway and south Western railway.

But regret the loss of catering services between Bristol Temple meads Keynsham Bath Spa Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge Westbury Salisbury and London Waterloo. The Department for Transport appears to be removing catering services on the Express train network on emergency recovery contracts.

On light rail system welcome consultation on the proposed line between Bristol and Bath via Brislington and Keynsham to south Bristol the Airport and North Bristol.

On Bath city centre we are concerned about bollards designs and disabled people and partly sighted people.

Finally, we welcome progress by Bristol City Council Mayor to find a way forward on a Devolution deal at WECA mayoral Combined authority and new governance to allow North Somerset council to join WECA Mayoral Combined authority between elections of a new mayor as per legal advice from Tim Borat at Bristol City Council Legal Department. Would still allow orders through the House of Commons and House of Lords and public consultation.

It is very important that we progress a strong Bristol and Bath Regional authority.

David Redgewell - South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside.

Thank you for letting me speak (possibly given the lateness of the hour, having the last word).

I am sure we all applaud and support the statement by the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Group leaders, and therefore on our behalf too.

However, I think there is merit in also having a statement from a humble backbencher, in my case someone who has very much benefitted from the efforts of officers to keep the council running and provide the support I need, especially in the IT department. Indeed, I expect we could all think of some extra help we have received, in Catholic theology, 'a work of supererogation' – going above and beyond anything one might expect from someone. In 2017 Westfield Parish Council and Radstock Museum put on an exhibition about the history of Westfield with the theme of 'ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things'. I suspect our officers would say they were just doing their job, but we ought to recognise their valour.

As the out-going Chair of Council, I started thinking about awards, like the Chair's awards for community service, and I asked the CEO, Mr Godfrey to think about this. It is a problem that our residents get recognition, and councillors can be nominated for honours, but officers are invisible, and perhaps not sufficiently appreciated.

Then I remembered this medal which my father received in 1945. It is not the Arctic Star awarded for valour on the North Sea convoys nor for any personal act of heroism, but it is the 'spam' medal, given to all veterans of WW2. I would like the 'powers that be' to consider some certificate, or better still a 'covid bonus' for all our officers, who have come through this extraordinary situation with so much courage and courtesy, and to have a positive commendation for their C.Vs, though I hope they will stay with us for a long time yet.

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