

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

NOTES OF 'INFORMAL' VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 21st July, 2021

Present:- **Councillors** Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Sarah Bevan, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Gerry Curran, Chris Dando, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Douglas Deacon, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Michael Evans, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Liz Hardman, Steve Hedges, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Dr Kumar, Matt McCabe, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Paul Myers, Lisa O'Brien, 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, Chris Watt, Ryan Wills, David Wood and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Paul Crossley, Jess David, Andy Furse, , Bharat Pankhania, Lucy Hodge, Michelle O'Doherty and Andy Wait

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr Kumar declared an 'other' interest in item 11 (Commonwealth Veterans) as he comes from a Commonwealth country and item 12 (Memorial for Covid Victims) due to personal losses from covid.

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

The Chair made the following statement about the status of the meeting;

Due to a desire to retain a level of social distancing so soon after restrictions have lifted, we are holding this 'informal' virtual Council meeting to enable all Councillors to take part. The comments and indicative decisions from this meeting will help to inform the physically reduced, quorate decision-making meeting tomorrow on 22nd July 2021. We will review this approach for any future Council meetings, in line with government and health guidance at that time.

The Chair then invited the Leader to update the meeting about the latest covid situation in B&NES. Councillor Kevin Guy explained that infection rates continued to rise, placing intense pressure on services. He expected that the situation would get worse before there were any signs of improvement. He asked that, in order for people to feel safe and confident in all Council venues, masks continued to be worn while moving around the buildings. He paid tribute to staff who were under unprecedented strain and to whom the Cabinet owed a debt of gratitude for their continuing hard work in such difficult circumstances.

16 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items or urgent business.

17 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following people;

David Redgewell made a statement regarding various transport issues. Following on from the Leader's comments about maintaining caution, he urged everyone to continue wearing face masks on public transport. He referred to the statutory bus plan that needed to be prepared by October and urged the Council to put pressure on WECA to move forward with this, in consultation with Wiltshire and Somerset and other key stakeholders. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked Mr Redgewell if, in meetings on the bus services, he could speak up for rural areas and, in particular, the Chew Valley. Mr Redgewell responded that he was very concerned about the cuts to the 672 service and agreed the Chew Valley was not being well served.

David Andrews, Chair of Bath Trams, made a statement in support of the introduction of trams to the region; a full copy of which is attached to the online minutes of the meeting. Councillor Sarah Warren asked Mr Andrews if he was aware that WECA were consulting over the summer on a mass transit project, to which everyone could contribute. Mr Andrews replied that he was aware, but not optimistic that the consultation would be truly open. In response to a question from Councillor Karen Walker about whether he envisaged trams coming through Peasedown St John, Mr Andrews replied that he did. Councillor Robin Moss asked about the impact of trams over Bath's historic vaults, to which Mr Andrews replied that the impact was less than from the rear axle of buses and directed Members to a google search on this issue (with Bath Trams in the search) which showed diagrams about the levels of pressure.

John Mountford made a statement calling on Councillors, as custodians of local democracy, to play their part in securing a bright future for all our young people. This will require focussing on the bigger picture and ensuring society's dividends are distributed more equally to benefit the bulk of humanity. In the spirit of the Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration, the Council's focus needs to shift from the market to wider benefits, which the Council could demonstrate by its decision on the Mineral Hospital next week. Councillor Sarah Warren asked Mr Mountford if he would be willing to meet and discuss his comments further, to which he replied that he would.

The Chair thanked all speakers for their contributions which would be directed to the relevant Cabinet Members.

18 DRAFT B&NES LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Sally Davis, it was agreed to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021;

1. the B&NES Local Plan Partial Update proposed submission draft and the Policies Map changes (as contained in Attachment 1 to this report), and publish them for consultation;

2. that the consultation period should be 27th August to 8th October 2021;
3. that delegated authority is granted to the Head of Planning to make minor amendments and correct any errors to the Local Plan Partial Update proposed submission draft, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing, and to undertake the public consultation;
4. Following the public consultation, and subject to any changes made as a result of 3) above, that delegated authority is granted to the Head of Planning to submit the B&NES Local Plan Partial Update to the Secretary of State for examination; and
5. Grant to the Head of Planning delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing, to address any issues as they arise during the examination, but to bring any proposed modifications to the Local Plan Partial Update to Council to agree and to consult on if required by the Inspector.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision was carried on a named vote;*

Councillors voting in favour (43) – Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Sarah Bevan, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Gerry Curran, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Michael Evans, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Steve Hedges, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Paul Myers, Lisa O'Brien, 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, Chris Watt, Ryan Wills, David Wood.

Councillors voting against (5) – Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Robin Moss.

Councillor abstaining (3) – Yuktेशwar Kumar, Hal McFie, Joanna Wright.

2. *During debate, Councillor Liz Hardman, seconded by Councillor Grant Johnson, moved an amendment to delete and amend various references to Paulton sites from the Local Plan Partial Update. This was lost, with 9 councillors voting in favour, and the remaining 42 councillors voting against.*
3. *Subsequently, Councillor Robin Moss moved a further amendment, seconded by Councillor Eleanor Jackson to request that the results of the public consultation and any proposed modifications are brought back to Council before being submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. This was lost on a named vote;*

Councillors voting in favour (7) – Councillors Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Robin Moss, June Player, Joanna Wright.

Councillors voting against (43) – Councillors Rob Appleyard, Tim Ball, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Gerry Curran, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Michael Evans, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Steve Hedges, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Yuktेशwar Kumar, Hal McFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Paul Myers, Lisa O'Brien, 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, Chris Watt, Ryan Wills, David Wood.

Councillors abstaining (1) – Councillor Sarah Bevan.

4. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

19 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2021/22

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman, it was agreed unanimously to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021 to;

1. Agree that the Youth Justice Plan fulfils the requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and can be submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales;
2. Adopt the Youth Justice Plan as part of the Council's Policy and Budget Framework that can be accommodated within the Council budget; and
3. Note that the Youth Offending Service Management Board is responsible for ensuring delivery and ask the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to oversee performance.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2020/21

On a motion from Councillor Richard Samuel, seconded by Councillor Mark Elliott, it was agreed unanimously to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021;

1. To note the Treasury Management Report to 31st March 2021, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice; and
2. To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 31st March 2021.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

21 LGA NEW MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Duncan Hounsell, it was agreed unanimously to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021;

1. To approve the draft Code of Conduct.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

22 APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND MONITORING OFFICER

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Karen Walker, and following a recommendation from the Restructuring Implementation Committee, it was agreed unanimously to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021;

1. The appointment of Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer to Michael Hewitt on a salary of £80,108 per annum from 23 July 2021.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

23 MOTION FROM LABOUR GROUP - COMMONWEALTH VETERANS

On a motion from Councillor Grant Johnson, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was agreed to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2021 that;

Council notes that:

- 1 Commonwealth veterans have a long and proud history of service in the British military. From older conflicts such as World War II to more recent service such as in Iraq and Afghanistan, Commonwealth veterans have served with distinction alongside British-born veterans.
- 2 While serving across the Armed Forces, Commonwealth citizens are exempt from UK immigration controls. However, this exemption is removed as soon as they leave the military.
- 3 Personnel who have served for four years are eligible to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK but must pay visa application fees that have risen from £155 to £2,389 since 2003. This figure does not include associated legal fees. Many Commonwealth veterans face spiralling debt and uncertain immigration status.
- 4 Whilst their applications are ongoing, Commonwealth veterans are unable to seek employment or claim benefits.
- 5 The Government has undertaken a consultation on proposals to waive fees for non-UK military personnel applying for indefinite leave to remain. The consultation ran for six weeks and closed on 7 July 2021.

Council believes that:

- 6 It is wrong that, unlike, their UK national colleagues, Commonwealth personnel and their families can only continue to live in the country they've served at significant financial cost. This is unfair and should end.

Council agrees therefore:

- 7 To make our lead officers aware of the difficulties experienced by Commonwealth veterans and to ensure that those who are currently

experiencing financial or immigration problems, are not disadvantaged whilst their applications are ongoing.

- 8 To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Defence Secretary and the Home Secretary outlining this Council's support for all Commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge leave to remain in the UK and that any veteran who completes 12 years of service be automatically given British Citizenship.
- 9 To ask the Leader of the Council to write to our local MPs asking them to press the Government for a change in the legislation affecting those that have served diligently and honourably for this country.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision was carried with 50 councillors voting in favour, and 1 councillor abstaining.*
2. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

24 MOTION FROM CONSERVATIVE GROUP - MEMORIAL FOR COVID VICTIMS

Councillor Vic Pritchard withdrew the motion.

25 CROSS PARTY MOTION - SAFETY FOR WOMEN

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, and seconded by Councillor Liz Hardman, it was agreed unanimously to recommend to Council on 22nd July 2022 that;

Council

1. Believes everyone should have the right to be safe from violence and harassment on our streets.
2. Recognises that the killing of Sarah Everard has, again, brought the issue of behaviour towards women and girls and their safety to the forefront.
3. Acknowledges it's not just women who are at risk but that any individual may be vulnerable to attack for various reasons.

Council also notes:

4. There are already many excellent initiatives and campaigns by local and national organisations aimed at safeguarding the welfare of individuals e.g. 'Got Ya Back' and 'Ask Angela'
5. Violent incidents are thankfully rare in B&NES and our police force already work closely with Council officials to combat sexual harassment and other types of aggression.

6. However, every occurrence of intimidation or attack is one too many.

Council therefore:

7. Resolutely rejects behaviour and actions which may cause women and girls from any background to have to modify their activities in order to feel safe.
8. Champions the right of women and girls to be protected from violence and harassment in public places within B&NES.
9. Believes that this principle should be embedded in our Council strategies going forward.
10. Supports schemes such as 'Ask Angela' and calls on licensed businesses to participate and to take active steps to ensure harassment and sexual intimidation is taken seriously through participation in this scheme.
11. Calls on Council departments and other bodies responsible for public spaces e.g. housing associations, parish councils, transport providers, to improve the security of public spaces by encouraging them to review lighting (in streets, car parks and parks) CCTV provision and other pertinent means to improve safety.
12. Calls on schools, colleges, universities and youth organisations to renew their efforts to promote a 'safety and respect for all' agenda amongst their students.
13. Requests an update on progress on these matters to Council on 18 November 2021.

[Notes;

1. *The above decision has no legal status so will inform the Council meeting on 22nd July 2021 who will make the decision.]*

26 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.54 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Ladies and gentlemen thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I want to get over to you the simple idea that simply clamping down on car traffic in Bath using LTNs etc whilst a very good idea in principle, for climate, environment, and health reasons, will overall have a detrimental effect on Bath's economy and general well-being, unless an alternative form of transport is provided that is acceptable to motorists.

Something like 80% of the traffic in Bath is generated by motorists driving **to the city**, moving around the city shopping, visiting, school run, etc...it's not caused by people driving through it.

They do this because the bus service is unable to provide a reliable, sufficiently frequent and acceptable service. And there is irrefutable evidence demonstrated by numerous UK city failures that for technical and economic reasons a bus service is simply not able to provide an acceptable alternative.

The only technical solution that has proven to be attractive to motorists in 6 or so other UK cities has been to reinstall trams which for various reasons that are well understood, can offer a service acceptable to motorists. This is because they are fast, comfortable, not cramped, spacious, higher frequency, comfortable and more prestigious than buses and are in fact cheaper in the long term.

If cars are simply restrained by LTNs then the users will go elsewhere either shopping online or in other cities and this will continue to cause the gradual commercial decline of Bath and the general degradation of the pleasure and amenity of living here.

Therefore whilst it may well take 10 years to get our first tram in it is essential to start planning now on the assumption that we will be using trams.

Electric cars and electric buses are no solution to the traffic and congestion problem. Clearly just substituting electric cars and buses will not improve the congestion or moving around situation. Furthermore electric cars and electric buses are nowhere near as environmentally benign as is claimed due to the huge environmental bill in mining the rare metals. And electric cars and electric buses have a much high energy consumption than a similar tram.

There is also the issue of the rubber tyre dust which is a significant atmospheric pollutant.

Electric trams on the other hand which do not need overhead wires produce zero pollution at the point-of-use and have a much lower energy consumption.

We therefore urge the council to pressure WECA to build the first line which would be a tram line from Bristol to Bath running through to Batheaston and also support our proposal for trams from Radstock and Chippenham.

New houses should no longer be plugged down in Greenfield sites with two parking spaces on the assumption that residents will drive from the the housing estate to the nearest city for work education and other services.

Do what Freiburg does which is insist any new development is located within 400m of a like rail line with a resultant huge drop in car traffic.

We do not want a a Metrobus type scheme as these have universally shown to be useess in terms of attracting car drivers.

We do not want to see worker spending 10 million like Swansea did on a metro bus type scheme only to take it out a few years later.

Robust scientific evidence to backup these claims are all on the Bath and Bristol Area Trams Association website.

Best Wishes

David Andrews
Chair Bath Trams
Claverton Energy Group