

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday 20th July 2023

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Colin Blackburn, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Sarah Evans, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Alison Streatfeild-James, Malcolm Treby, Karen Walker, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren CBE, Andy Wait and David Wood

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Alison Born, Deborah Collins, Fiona Gourley, Alan Hale, Lucy Hodge, Grant Johnson, Matt McCabe, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin and Joanna Wright

#### **18 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the agenda.

#### **19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Disclosable pecuniary interests were declared by Councillors Oli Henman and Joel Hirst in item 10 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

#### **20 MINUTES - 25TH MAY 2023 & 15TH JUNE 2023**

On a motion from Councillor Eleanor Jackson, and seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **21 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair was pleased to announce that the seven parks and green spaces managed by Bath & North East Somerset Council have been awarded the prestigious [Green Flag Award](#) for being welcoming places that are safe and secure, clean and well maintained and fulfil sustainable and conservation requirements.

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

There were no urgent items.

## **23 NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS ELECTED ON 22ND JUNE 2023**

Members noted that Councillors Liz Hardman and Grant Johnson had been elected to the Paulton ward on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

## **24 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Debbie Andrews made a statement regarding the nuisance from seagulls. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and attached to the online record. Mrs Andrews provided a number of examples of how seagulls were negatively impacting residents' lives and called on the Council to provide funding for a solution. Councillor June Player asked Mrs Andrews if she would like the Council to petition Natural England to allow egg and nest removal, to which Mrs Andrews replied that she definitely would like that, as the chicks needed to be taken to a more appropriate place. Councillor Tim Warren commented that nest removal used to take place and asked if Mrs Andrews had noticed an increase in the problem since this had stopped. Mrs Andrews replied that she definitely had.

Adam Reynolds made a statement raising two concerns; the Somer Valley Links consultation and urged councillors to attend the consultation events and delivery issues of the Liveable Neighbourhood trials, calling for the focus to change so that officer time was not spent on the wrong aspects. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and attached to the online record.

Chad Allen made a statement outlining his concerns about the destructive effect of English Ivy on buildings and other trees and challenged the position of the Royal Horticultural Society on ivy.

Natalie Barnett from Climate Hub B&NES made a statement calling for a permanent Climate hub to be provided in Bath city centre and setting out the reasons why this was necessary. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and attached to the online record. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Ms Barnett would like to meet with the relevant Cabinet Member to discuss this, to which she replied that that would be great. Councillor Liz Hardman asked why a physical space was needed to which Ms Barnett responded that they had considerable experience doing pop ups, but there were benefits that arose from a permanent physical focus. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked about plans to expand into North East Somerset, to which Ms Barnett responded that Bath was the current focus, but they would like to expand to other areas such as Keynsham and Midsomer Norton.

Leigh Samways from the Moorland Road Traders' Association made a statement expressing the community's concern about the Residents' Parking zone (RPZ) in the Westmoreland/Oldfield Park area and the impact it will have on local businesses and shops. She acknowledged the efforts that had been made recently by the Council to listen to and address their concerns and called on the Council to keep engaging with them so that their vibrant community was not negatively affected. Councillor Colin Blackburn noted that the signs for the RPZ had already gone up, 6 weeks before the scheme starts, and wondered if they felt this would have a detrimental effect on the community while they were trying to prepare for its introduction, to which Ms

Samways replied that she did think so as customers were already confused and unclear about whether they could park. Councillor Tim Warren asked Ms Samways if she considered this might signal the end of their business to which she responded that she hoped that was not the case but did think it will do so for some businesses and shops and it was not good to see gaps on the High street.

Andrew Dawes, Operations Manager at St Bartholomew's Church in Oldfield Park made a statement on behalf of 'The Oldfield Park Community Alliance' and presented a petition of over 1800 signatures with the following wording;

*“We, the undersigned residents of Oldfield Park & BANES ask that the Council cancel plans to introduce their proposed RPZ scheme and instead introduce a scheme that still prioritises residents but which also accommodates the needs of our valued community shops & institutions.”*

Mr Dawes urged the Council to re-think their proposals and continue to engage with the community to come up with a better solution. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked Mr Dawes if he was aware if the plan was still for the Permit app to be rolled out, which would allow organisations such as St Bartholomew's to book large volume visitor events such as weddings and funerals. Mr Dawes replied that he thought it was still on the table, but at the moment, parking was not possible for a large event over 200 people.

Malcolm Baldwin made a statement calling on the Cabinet to press ahead with implementation of its programme. A copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and attached to the online record.

The Chair thanked the members of the public for their statements, and the petition, which would be considered by the relevant Cabinet Members.

## **25 ANNUAL BUSINESS ITEMS DEFERRED FROM THE AGM**

The Council considered a report which covered those aspects of annual business which had not been able to be considered at the May AGM, due to the delayed Paulton election.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to

1. Approve the revised political proportionality table for the composition of committees and panels and the appointment of Members to those bodies in accordance with the requirements of political proportionality;
2. Expressly disapply the proportionality rule to the Restructuring Implementation Committee (with no Councillor voting against), as set out in section 3.9 of the report;
3. Agree the allocation of Political Assistants and Group Support Officers as set out in Appendix 2 of the report; and

4. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to make and publicise any amendment to the Council's Constitution required, or take any other necessary action, as a result of decisions taken at this meeting on this and other reports within the agenda, or otherwise as required by law.

## **26 REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Councillors Oli Henman and Joel Hirst had previously declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for this item and left the Chamber for the duration of the item, taking no part in the debate or vote.

The Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances were asked by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to specifically consider the new role of Cabinet Project Lead and whether an allowance was appropriate. They met on 19<sup>th</sup> June to consider this.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Sarah Warren, it was

### **RESOLVED to**

1. Note the comments and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on Members' Allowances, as set out in Section 3 of the report;
2. Agree that the job description for the role be slightly revised to reflect the volume of work and nature of the role, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, and that should this be incorporated into the Councillor Roles document linked from the Code of Conduct in the Constitution;
3. Agree that the Cabinet Project Lead role be paid an allowance equivalent to 1 x the basic allowance (currently £10,225);
4. Agree the necessary changes to the Constitution sections regarding Cabinet arrangements, as set out at Section 3.7 of the report to include the new allowance in Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Constitution;
5. Agree to increase the allowance rate for IRP members from £50 to £70 per meeting as set out in section 4.5 of the report; and
6. Formally thank the Panel for their work.

[Notes;

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 38 Councillors voting in favour, 5 Councillors voting against and 5 Councillors abstaining.]*

## **27 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER ADVOCATES**

The Council considered a report appointing Member Advocates who provide a voice for certain interests within the Council or community.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was

**RESOLVED** to

1. Appoint the following Councillors as Member Advocates;

Cllr Jess David	- Green Infrastructure & Nature Recovery
Cllr Fiona Gourley	- Rural communities
Cllr Kevin Guy	- Armed Forces and Veterans
Cllr Alan Hale	- Safer Roads
Cllr Ian Halsall	- Engagement with Students
Cllr Liz Hardman	- Looked After Children
Cllr Saskia Heijltjes	- Active Travel – Bath
Cllr John Leach	- Climate Adaptation
Cllr Ruth Malloy	- Great Spa Towns of Europe
Cllr Ruth Malloy	- Twinning
Cllr Sarah Moore	- Accessibility
Cllr Michelle O’Doherty	- Homeless people
Cllr Shaun Stephenson McGall	- Active Travel – NE Somerset
Cllr Shaun Stephenson McGall	- LGBTQ+ issues
Cllr Sam Ross	- Rural Housing and community buildings
Cllr George Tomlin	- Social Housing Tenants
Cllr Andy Wait	- Rivers and waterways

2. Agree the updated Member Advocate role description; and

3. Invite the above Councillors to report briefly to the Council AGM each year on their activity.

## **28 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-2027**

The Council considered the Corporate Strategy and its associated framework which will guide council activity and budget planning over the next four years.

Councillor Robin Moss, Chair of the Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel, presented the comments from the Panel, which looked at the wider national context as well as the local picture.

On a motion from Councillor Dave Wood, and seconded by Councillor Sarah Warren, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to adopt the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 as set out in the appendix to the report.

## **29 FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT WITH OLEKSANDRIYA**

At its meeting of 16 March 2023, the Council resolved to pursue and formalise a friendship agreement between B&NES Council and the city of Oleksandriya. Delegated authority was given to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to negotiate, agree and sign the friendship agreement on behalf of B&NES Council. The Leader has exercised this authority and Council is now invited to give its

approval to invite the Mayor of Oleksandriya City Council to counter-sign the document.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Chris Dando, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to

1. Note the attached friendship agreement developed in collaboration between Bath and North East Somerset Council, Oleksandriya City Council and local group - Friends of Oleksandriya;
2. Note that the Leader, under delegated authority provided by Council – 16 March 2023, has signed the friendship agreement on behalf of B&NES Council; and
3. Give its approval to invite the Mayor of Oleksandriya City Council to counter-sign and finalise the friendship agreement on behalf of Oleksandriya City Council.

### **30 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23**

The Council considered a report giving details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, and seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to agree that;

1. The Treasury Management Report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted; and
2. The Treasury Management Indicators to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 are noted.

### **31 AVON PENSION FUND TERMS OF REFERENCE JULY 2023**

The Avon Pension Fund Committee recommended a change in the quorum of the committee set out in its Terms of Reference (ToR) at its last meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 and this report seeks Council approval for the change.

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor Chris Dando, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

1. To approve the Terms of Reference of the APF Committee and Investment Panel including the change to the quorum in Appendix 1 of the report.

### **32 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023**

The Council considered the annual report of the Standards Committee.

On a motion from Councillor Toby Simon, and seconded by Councillor Michelle O'Doherty, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to note the work of the Standards Committee as set out in the Annual report (Appendix 1).

### **33 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - KNIFE CRIME**

On a motion from Councillor Paul May, and seconded by Councillor Michelle O'Doherty, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

Council:

1. Is horrified by incidents of knife crime in Bath and North East Somerset and expresses deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the victims and to all those people who are affected.
2. Notes the Police instruction against reporting, commentary or sharing of information or images online which could in any way prejudice proceedings. Notes that any juvenile defendants are legally entitled to anonymity, and that it is an offence to publicly name them while reporting restrictions are in place.
3. Thanks Police officers, the Ambulance service and other public services for their response.
4. Welcomes the support offered to young people locally by the emergency services, Children's and Adults social care, voluntary and community organisations and others.
5. Notes with concern that some young people are becoming increasingly afraid of knife crime.
6. Notes that Avon and Somerset Police say the vast majority of young people do not routinely carry knives.
7. Welcomes the preventative work carried out in partnership with the Council by the Police, NHS, Council services, youth and voluntary organisations, and other agencies to tackle the complex root causes of knife crime.
8. Recognises the vital role of the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership and Violence Reduction Unit; the Serious Violence Duty of councils and local services, including preparation of a Strategic Needs Assessment and a Strategy by April 2024.
9. Notes the importance of continuing regular engagement between the Council, Police, and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

10. Recognises the importance of education to divert young people away from crime and keep them safe and calls for information and support to continue to be provided through schools and other educational settings.
11. Recognises that Avon and Somerset Police participate in Operation Sceptre, a national initiative to tackle knife crime through education and enforcement.
12. Notes that the Police encourage parents and adults to talk with young people about the dangers and potentially devastating consequences of carrying a knife.
13. Notes that knife surrender bins are provided outside Police stations across the area, including in Bath, Radstock and Keynsham.
14. Supports Police and charity efforts to make emergency bleed control kits publicly accessible and to raise awareness of the role these can play in saving lives.
15. Notes that the BCSSP (B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership) and Violence Reduction Unit will need to consider the multi-agency response and will determine next steps.
16. Welcomes the proposal by the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing PDS Panel to hold an investigation into the issue of young people and knives in B&NES, **to identify other successful projects to reduce knife crime and draw up an action plan for B&NES.**
17. Suggests that young people impacted by these issues, and their families, should be invited to give evidence of their experiences and inform responses.
18. Welcomes the proposal from the Cabinet member for Children's Services of holding a multi-agency meeting to brief and listen to parent concerns.

[Notes:

1. *The underlined wording in resolution point 16 above was offered by Councillor Liz Hardman and accepted into the substantive motion by the mover and seconder.]*

## **34 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Onkar Saini made a statement about the proposed closure of train ticket offices, calling on his fellow Councillors to engage in the consultation to ensure the needs of vulnerable groups in the community are considered. A full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and linked to the online minutes. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Councillor Saini would welcome him writing to the Minister to express the Council's position, to which Councillor Saini responded that he would.

Councillor Ruth Malloy made a statement about single use vapes, calling on the Council to back the Local Government Association in calling for a ban on the sale and manufacture of single-use vapes, for both health and environmental reasons. A



full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and linked to the online minutes. Councillor Paul May asked if Councillor Malloy would welcome an item on the Health & Wellbeing Board agenda on this issue, to which she replied that she very much would.

The Chair thanked the Councillors for their statements, which would be considered by the relevant Cabinet Members.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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**COUNCIL MEETING 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023****STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC**

<b>PUBLIC</b>	Item 14		<b>Statement circulated</b>
1	Chad Allen	English Ivy & Bath CAZ	
2	Adam Reynolds	Liveable Neighbourhoods	✓
3	Mrs Harrington	Rural bus services	
4	David Redgewell	Transport issues	✓
5	Alexander Robinson	Students as Residents of the City of Bath - Developing the civic relationship between B&NES, students and education providers	

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There are two concerns I want to make the council aware of tonight.

#### Concern Number One!

The Somer Valley Links consultation (<https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/>) that ends on the 6th of August proposes that all cycle traffic from Hallatrow, Paulton, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, and Peasedown St John should be funnelled into Bath using the Two Tunnels via the Wellow to Midford permissive path. This privately owned path is an isolated, heavily cratered, bound gravel path that is a muddy mess and extremely dangerous after dark. At most this is a poor leisure route.

I would strongly urge all North East Somerset councillors to attend the consultation events and push for a much safer 3m wide shared path along the A367 between Radstock and the Bath Odd Down Park and Ride site. Making the A367 good for walking, wheeling, and cycling is critical and also serves the residents of Marksbury, Timsbury, Priston, Tunley, Camerton, and Carlingcott much better. Funneling the residents of North East Somerset that choose to use sustainable modes of travel via a muddy isolated dangerous privately owned farm track is frankly completely nonsensical.

#### Concern Number Two!

At the Cabinet meeting last week, two single member decisions were taken to proceed with the Mount Road and Temple Cloud Liveable Neighbourhood. Councillors should be made aware that both decisions have the following paragraph:

**“To note that the proposed shortlist was next subject to technical review, both in terms of alignment with the Liveable Neighbourhoods strategy and other factors such as cost, practicalities and timelines, as summarised in Appendix B of the report.”**

It should be also noted that the Mount Road decision explicitly states that:

**“For clarity the proposed scheme contains no modal filters at either end of Mount Road.”**

Reading the list of measures I could not identify a single intervention that would be classified as a traffic reduction measure and fundable through WECA's Sustainable Transport Settlement program.

I'm guessing the council will end up spending funds from its own coffers and other wards will lose out on road safety measures while Temple Cloud gets new benches for its playing field.

My big concern here is not about the money. My concern is about wasting precious officer time. If the cabinet wants to waste officer time on procuring and installing benches rather than running hugely transformative modal filter trials like Church Lane, Southlands, and Queen Charlton, then that is on them BUT you will not deliver on your Liveable Neighbourhood manifesto commitments.

It would be much better to create a phased delivery where ward councillors help trial and install traffic reduction interventions and only then are able to bid for other types of intervention.

Councillors need to recognise that the fast track Liveable Neighbourhood trials focused on traffic reduction measures have, quite frankly, been a huge success and should be replicated again and again over the coming three years. You really do not have the luxury to waste limited officer time installing benches while having fights with Dan Norris over who is going to pay for all this stuff.

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## **Bath needs a Climate Hub**

Hi, my name is Natalie. I am a Trustee of the Bath & North East Somerset Climate Hub. We are a registered charity that wants to bring people together for the planet. Our aim is to regenerate the earth for future generations.

I am here today to explain why Bath needs a Climate Hub. What we are asking for is a physical space on Bath high street that would act as a community meeting place for people and organisations to discuss the environment and take action.

### **Here are the key reasons why a Climate Hub is essential.**

#### **1. We are in a climate crisis.**

As you know B&NES declared a climate emergency. Fast forward four years and the need for change and action is even greater.

YOU are already a national leader in climate action So let's keep this momentum going! Your manifesto expressed your desire to:

“Support the creation of a vibrant Climate Emergency Centre”

We share this aim. We want to bring people together to create and increase awareness, educate and support positive actions.

Our Climate Hub will be an educational centre to provide people with information, guidance, signposting, support, and encouragement to help them change their behaviours. We will be a welcoming place that will answer questions from the community and provide inspiration as we look towards a low-carbon future.

We have nearly 3 years of experience running outreach hubs in Kingsmead Square, 15 New Bond Street and other locations and have evidence of our positive interactions over a range of climate topics with the public.

Not only will we be there for individuals, but we are also here to support organisations and businesses navigate the climate crisis. We already have working links with multiple organisations. We can give environmental groups a much-needed physical space.

#### **2. Establish community places and connection**

The second reason is that Bath needs to establish a community place where people can connect to adapt to the changes we face. We will make a welcoming and inclusive place centrally in the city.

The climate crisis brings up feelings of eco-anxiety in many people and a physical space would be a safe place to explore and work through those feelings. The Climate Hub would offer human connection, information and positive actions people could take.

An established long-term space creates more opportunities for more people and organisations to engage positively with the climate crisis.

### **3. High street regeneration.**

And lastly “high street regeneration.”

Bath needs more community spaces. A thriving high street isn't all Corporations and Coffee shops. We need creativity and diversity to keep our high street vibrant. We need spaces that foster community, information sharing and behavioural change.

The Climate Hub will increase footfall and therefore revenue to the high street, creating interest in the centre of the city.

In summary, the Climate Hub will help regenerate the high street, establish a community place and directly tackle the climate crisis.

Please consider continuing your amazing efforts to tackle the climate crisis by supporting us with a physical space in Bath city centre. Thank you so much for your time.



In comparison to many problems, seagull complaints might be deemed inconsequential. However, for the last 4 years there have been an increasing number of gull incidents: a friend walking through Oldfield Park, was attacked and blood drawn; an Oldfield Park community group warning about attacking gulls; two visitors' meals taken off plates in Kingsmead square (these visitors have vowed never to eat outside in Bath again); an elderly man losing bread from his trolley in Lidl car park.

These are just some incidents as well as the numerous accounts of seagulls defecating on residents and tourists.

I was attacked recently walking out of M&S with unopened sandwiches. As I was putting them in my bag I felt a heavy thud on my back; I only realised what it was as a wing hit me across my head, the bird bent over my shoulder to peck through the plastic and managed a bite out of the sandwich. I went back in store to report it but the manageress seemed resigned to accepting this as normal behaviour. Friends have boycotted many outdoor cafes as the gulls are becoming more confident and of course the chicks are learning from these increasingly violent attacks.

Many people may suffer these events, decide not to eat outside and go home to the peace and quiet of their homes and here lies the crux of the problem for me; there is no peace as the gull problem in many Oldfield Park streets has become intolerable.

For the last 4 years I have had gulls all around me at the front and back of the house so there really is no escape! I spent money on my garden when I retired but we don't eat out there as the gulls will gather! Gardening is a mind over matter fight to block out the noise which hardly makes it the relaxing retirement treat it should be. The mess on my car, my patio and furniture is disgusting and I risk having to wash laundry again if I dare to hang washing outside!!

The intense heat last summer was horrendous as we had to keep windows closed due to the unrelenting noise. As my husband and I have been diagnosed with conditions that means sleep is extremely important, this effected both our physical and mental wellbeing.

We thought the situation was going to improve due to the excellent time and effort of Gordon Dugan (Worcester gull officer employed by BANES) indeed he did manage to remove the chicks from one of the rooftops due to a disturbing undisclosed incident. The roof next door to this also escaped this year as builders were fitting a loft conversion which deterred returning gulls. However, the irony is that the dormer will provide another haven next year!! The situation in OP is exacerbated by the amount of HMOs-the landlords don't live with the gull problems and, as in the case of a particularly problematic nest, the landlord has refused to engage with me or Gordon.

Why is there not a stipulation that there have to be gull deterrents integrated into planning permission? Why do landlords again get away with taking no responsibility for the houses they rent out?

It is infuriating to know that funding has been withdrawn from trying to solve this problem. I would like to know why? When will funds be released to help a problem that is only going to get worse? You cannot surely dismiss the concerns of permanent residents of OP yet again so that it becomes both a gull ghetto!

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Time for effective delivery!

Good evening,

We are facing serious ongoing challenges both as a city and as particular individual neighbourhoods and communities. The challenges are not all the same but some remain serious and need immediate and perhaps more effective action and delivery.

Over the last week at Cabinet, at the most recent Policy Scrutiny Panel and at a recent forum I heard the point alluded to that we need to find additional ways to listen.

What have we all been doing over the last four years, if we have not been listening? What have you all been doing over the last four years if you have not been listening? Most importantly, what were voters doing on May 4th if they were not listening to your various parties' manifesto pledges .....and they made their choices, whatever anyone individually might think of those decisions!

Determining the achievements of an Administration, its Council, its Executive should not be a one-off examination every four years but a process of continual assessment. You will always have elements of the electorate who think that you are not consulting enough, not consulting meaningfully or indeed consulting too much .....for there is also such a thing as consultation fatigue!

Let's get moving from the beginning of this Administration and continue throughout its four, or more likely eight year term, with real and effective delivery on the key issues! We know the problems, they are many but unless we have more ACTUAL action we will never get ahead of the curve on any of them.

A few deliberately random examples:

- The regeneration of our main and local high streets: how are we going to correct and manage the importance of retail vs hospitality interests? That balance needs correcting, not least because the answer has MAJOR implications for the impact and costs to the upkeep and sustainability of our public realm! (The success of the Milsom Quarter Project as a 'touchstone' here will be key.)
- The battle against the impact of climate change on our city is now about mitigation not about eradication ..... are we taking that likelihood into account and are we moving fast enough?
- Are we conscious of the dangers of overtourism in our city ..... what are we doing about ensuring we do not become merely a museum-cum-fun-park? Year-round urban tourism is growing faster than any other type of vacations.....Bath is a prime example of that trend, including and particularly the 'Netflix effect'. (What about that tourist tax to re-dress the costs/impact on our public realm?).

The toxic mixture of significant unmanaged tourist/visitor footfall, rat-running and speeding traffic, my own residents association highlighted in a paper to Cabinet members in March 2021.....this ever increasing problem in a significant heritage area like ours CAN be resolved by the sensitive introduction of a meaningful Liveable

Neighbourhood [and in so doing it will validate the case for Liveable Neighbourhoods].

There ARE solutions, we just need to be more aspirational and self-confident to act on them!

As a residents association, we don't expect our Council to do everything for us ..... we undertake some of our own key initiatives. But we also expect to keep your feet 'in the fire' on delivering your commitments as well as what is right for Bath as a whole and we also expect you to keep the Executive's 'feet in the fire' to deliver those same commitments, effectively and within a 'value for money' context.

Malcolm Baldwin.

**COUNCIL MEETING 20<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2023**

**STATEMENTS FROM  
COUNCILLORS**

Councillors

1. Cllr Onkar Saini - Train ticket offices (*statement provided*)
2. Cllr Ruth Malloy - Single use vapes (*statement provided*)

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS**

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Cllr Jackson</b>
<p>What is the administration going to do about restoring bus services which have left both elderly and young marooned in their housing estates, and in some cases unable to get to school or to work? The need to get the 82 back in September to get 40+ children to Norton Hill and Somervale Schools is particularly acute?</p>			
<p><b>Answer: Cllr Warren</b></p>			
<p><i>I share many of the concerns that you have raised - residents in North East Somerset have been left with a public transport service which simply isn't working, some communities with frequent bus services and others with none. This is a deeply unsatisfactory situation and residents of all ages are impacted. The West of England Combined Authority is the regional transport authority responsible for planning bus services in cooperation with local bus operators. The combined authority has a budget of many tens of millions dedicated solely to transport and to economic development.</i></p> <p><i>Bath and North East Somerset Council pays an annual contribution towards the provision of supported services – those that are not deemed financially viable - through the regional Transport Levy. In this financial year we have increased our contribution by 30% to £1m, recognising the significant increases in costs to provide bus services. Unfortunately, however, the prices of our bus services increased by some 200%.</i></p> <p><i>Like other councils, B&amp;NES has no significant funding for buses over and above that which is already transferred annually to WECA as our transport levy. The remainder of our budget is fully committed to other purposes (including statutory services that we <b>cannot</b> choose to withdraw), such as social care, children's services (which together consume the vast majority of our budgets), housing, parks, waste management, libraries and so on, so there is very little remaining for discretionary expenditure such as on buses.</i></p> <p><i>We are lobbying the Mayor to spend a portion of the £57m of bus service improvement grant that he received from government specifically and solely for bus services, on our lost and at risk services, as the Secretary of State has indicated he should.</i></p>			

*My team and I have spent the last few months talking to B&NES and parish councillors from across North East Somerset, Cabinet leads from neighbouring councils, bus experts, campaigners and residents, as well as to the Metro Mayor and his staff. We have developed a proposal that provides a cost-effective solution to improve local services.*

*Key elements of the proposal are:*

- *Targeted new bus routes to help re-connect towns and villages that have been abandoned by the Metro Mayor*
- *Additional Westlink services along fixed routes at key commute and school times - to build trust in the new service, and to support other services.*
- *Funding solutions: including working with neighbouring councils on cross-boundary routes.*

*These proposals will safeguard threatened buses, and fill gaps where services have been lost – connecting communities with Bath and Bristol and between larger towns and villages in B&NES. We are very keen to work with the MetroMayor to find a solution. Cllr Guy has written to the Mayor to put our innovative ideas forward, and we hope he will respond positively to our constructive proposals. It is essential that, in the interim, the Mayor instruct his officers to protect existing services, whilst these new services are commissioned.*

*We encourage members of the public who are concerned about bus services to write to the Metro Mayor to ask for his support.*

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Thank you Chair, esteemed council members.

I want to address a pressing concern affecting not only our ward's residents but also our entire community. It is a matter of great importance that demands our immediate attention and collective action. I am referring to the recent decision made by the Great Western Railway (GWR) operating company to start a consultation on closing the ticket offices in our area.

This proposal, justified by the increasing popularity of digital ticketing, raises serious concerns about the accessibility and inclusivity of our transportation services. While digital ticketing offers convenience to many, we must recognize that a significant portion of our community still relies on staffed ticket offices. The data indicate that approximately 12% of our residents prefer and depend on the assistance provided at these ticket offices. The 12% figure refers to those purchasing tickets, the staffed ticket offices are far more than just an alternate way to transact a purchase.

We must consider the impact on various vulnerable groups within our community. Our elderly residents, persons with disabilities, individuals with limited literacy and IT skills, and those with visual impairments heavily depend on the support and guidance of staffed offices. By closing these ticket offices, we essentially deny them their right to access transportation services, hindering their independence and participation in our society.

Moreover, let us remember that Bath is a renowned tourist destination, attracting visitors from around the globe. The ticket offices are vital in welcoming and assisting tourists, ensuring their seamless travel experience. If we allow these ticket offices to close, we not only inconvenience our visitors but also risk damaging our local economy and the prosperity of our businesses.

In light of these grave concerns, I call upon council members of BANES to take action. We must make our voices heard and actively engage in the ongoing consultation process until the 25th of July 2023. Let us reach out to the broader sections of our wards, mobilize our communities, and ensure that every resident can express their concerns regarding the closure of Ticket offices by responding to the consultation.

Additionally, I request the council to write in to the consultation expressing our objection.

Closing staffed train ticket offices without adequate alternatives is not a step forward but a step backwards in our journey towards an inclusive society.

Let us champion the cause of accessibility, inclusivity, and equal opportunity for all.

Thank you for your attention, and let us work together to protect and enhance the services that our residents deserve.

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**My reason for making this statement is to raise awareness about a growing health and environmental problem. A resident recently contacted me about single-use e-cigarettes (or vapes) and asked if their use here in Bath and North East Somerset is much of an issue. From my regular litter-picking around Weston, I can say for sure that I'm finding more and more discarded vapes: last weekend I collected six in less than an hour.**

**First a definition: According to the NHS website, an e-cigarette is "a device that allows you to inhale nicotine in a vapour rather than smoke. E-cigarettes do not burn tobacco and do not produce tar or carbon monoxide. Using an e-cigarette can help you manage your nicotine cravings."**

**Although e-cigarettes were originally developed as an aid to help smokers break the habit, the trend now seems to be that young people and even children are starting to vape without ever having smoked cigarettes. E-cigarette manufacturers appear to be marketing their products to appeal to this demographic by using colourful packaging and offering a range of fruity and bubble gum flavours. Vaping is harming the health of our young people, and this alone is reason enough to be concerned.**

**The other reason for concern is of course the environmental harm caused by e-cigarettes, particularly by single-use vapes. Last week the Local Government Association published an article about disposable e-cigarettes, which included the shocking fact that 1.3 million are used every week, making an annual total of 67.5 million! Apart from all the plastic involved, single-use vapes have integrated batteries, which makes recycling them impossible. Some of the minerals contained in these batteries (lithium, for example) are highly flammable, and this has led to fires breaking out in waste collection lorries and at recycling centres. I should add, that as far as I know, nothing serious has happened to date here in B&NES.**

**The Local Government Association, representing councils in England and Wales, has now called for a ban on the sale and manufacture of single-use vapes by 2024. The Government is coming under increasing pressure to resolve this growing problem, from both the health and environmental points of view. (The Government is apparently also considering introducing compulsory licensing for retailers of all types of e-cigarettes in England, which would bring the law into line with that of Scotland.)**

**So, personally, I support the Local Government Association in calling for a ban on the sale and manufacture of single-use vapes - for both health and**

**environmental reasons. If Bath and North East Somerset Council has not already expressly done so, I would urge the leading members and officers to back the Local Government Association ban. Thank you.**