

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday 19th September 2024

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Matt McCabe, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Alison Streatfeild-James, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Karen Walker, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren CBE, Andy Wait, David Wood and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Colin Blackburn, Deborah Collins, Sarah Evans, Liz Hardman, Steve Hedges, Shaun Hughes, Grant Johnson, John Leach, Bharat Pankhania, Paul Roper and Toby Simon

### **25 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

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

### **26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Monitoring Officer issued a dispensation for all Councillors that are in receipt of the State Pension and therefore have an interest in the Winter Fuel Payments motion, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Dave Wood declared an 'other' interest in agenda item 8 – 'Annual Climate and Nature Progress report' as Chief Executive of Avon Needs Trees.

### **27 MINUTES - 18TH JULY 2024**

On a motion from Councillor Matt McCabe, seconded by Councillor Andy Wait, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair made the customary announcements regarding microphone use.

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

There were no items of urgent business.

## 30 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair made reference to the questions from the public and the responses that had been circulated.

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Niels Steinhoff read a statement on behalf of Michael Coffey regarding the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme. The statement was in support of the scheme outlining the benefits it delivered and calling on the Council to show leadership by pressing ahead at the end of the trial to deliver a safe and healthy scheme on behalf of all residents.

Sarah Toy made a statement also in support of the above scheme. She referenced her experience as a chartered civil engineer and highlighted the benefits such as air quality improvements, safer routes to school and active travel. She urged the Council to focus on the silent majority benefitting from the trial and make it a permanent scheme. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if Sarah knew the cost of putting in the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme. Sarah replied that she didn't have that information but had been told that it was cheap within the overall scheme.

Christine Harrington read a statement on behalf of Robert Stone, also supporting the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme. She explained that there was a clear need, as previous driving behaviour had caused problems and she outlined some of those. The trial has been a success, despite the misinformation, intimidation and threats and it needs to be made permanent.

Susan Charles, Corston Parish Councillor, made a statement calling for accessible housing, a copy of which has been added to the online record and placed on the Minute Book. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Susan if she knew how many accessible houses had been built by this Administration in the last 5 years. Susan replied that she didn't know but thought it didn't sound like it was enough.

Matt Cooper made a statement, a copy of which has been added to the online record and placed on the Minute Book. Matt highlighted the benefits of plant-based eating and called on the Council to support plant-based eating within all Council settings. Councillor Saskia Heijltjes asked Matt if he knew how many emissions could be saved by switching to a plant-based diet, to which he replied that switching to a vegetarian diet typically produces a reduction of about 50% and a fully plant-based diet produces a reduction of about 75% (statistics from the University of Bath) and added that UK rates are higher than global rates.

Iris Gerosa made a statement "From Brazil to Bath tackling the ecological emergency", a copy of which has been added to the online record and placed on the Minute Book. Iris spoke about the problems of water pollution, deforestation leading to the loss of biodiversity, and excessive water waste. She called on the Council to implement a Plant-Based Action Plan to promote and prioritise plant-based eating wherever the Council has influence. Councillor Sam Ross asked about the health benefits of a plant-based diet, to which Iris explained about the reduction of coronary heart disease and diabetes.

Anthony Simpson made a statement also stressing the ecological and climate benefits of a plant-based diet, a copy of which has been added to the online record and placed on the Minute Book. He presented a number of statistics from Oxford University demonstrating the climate impact of a plant-based approach and asked Councillors to show courage and leadership by calling on the national government to support the transition towards a plant-based food system. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Anthony could send a link to the data that he had quoted, to which Anthony confirmed he could. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if it was possible for residents on a low income to follow the Council's lead of a plant-based diet, to which Anthony responded that Oxford University research has shown that a plant-based diet can be between 30/40% cheaper.

Philip Fawkner-Corbett read a statement on behalf of Martin Farrell, a copy of which has been added to the online record and placed on the Minute Book. Martin set out his view that there was a current disconnection between policy makers, project assessment and the decision process for decisions concerning the World Heritage site of Bath. He called for the planning authority to be supported by an independent scrutiny panel and that the Council fully engages with stakeholders before any decision is required at committee.

Gracie Allen spoke about the Rights of Nature motion, giving a youth perspective. She described all the positive benefits for young people's physical and mental health for spending time in nature and urged Councillors to support the motion. Councillor Joanna Wright asked for Gracie's opinion about the implications of the motion not being supported, to which Gracie replied it would be terrible, as nature needed to be considered as a crucial part of our society.

Alison Harper called for Councillors to support the Rights of Nature motion on the agenda and set out her concept of eco-literacy; that of humans being connected to everything on the planet. This motion goes towards addressing some of the catastrophic effects humans are having on the natural world. Councillor Kevin Guy asked Alison if she had supported Bath Meadows being transferred to the National Trust, to which she replied that she had. Councillor Sam Ross asked Alison of the implications of the motion not succeeding, to which Alison replied that it was a frightening prospect as people don't know what the future holds.

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

## **31 ANNUAL CLIMATE AND NATURE PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel, introduced this item and commended the Annual Climate and Nature Progress report to Council. She mentioned some clarification that was needed to the walking and cycling numbers before final publication.

During debate, clarification was sought that paragraph 3.9 did not compromise Planning Committee members when the application came to committee, and this was given by the Monitoring Officer.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Oli Henman, it was

**RESOLVED to**

1. Note the positive progress achieved over the past year across the priorities set out in the Climate Emergency Strategy and Ecological Emergency Action Plan and
2. Approve the Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report, noting that a clarification will be included in the final version published on the website, to correct an error in the data on walking and cycling numbers.

*[Notes:*

1. *The above successful resolution was carried with 43 Councillors voting in favour and 3 Councillors abstaining.]*

**32 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

Councillor Dine Romero introduced this report and highlighted some of the key activities and achievements during the year.

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Policy Development and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023-2024.

**33 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) & INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (IPA)**

The Council considered a report updating them on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Investigatory Powers Act, Policies, and Procedures.

On a motion from Councillor Dave Wood, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED to**

1. Note the summary of statistics on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (RIPA/IPA) by the council (Appendix 1);
2. Note the RIPA & IPA training module (Appendix 2); and
3. Adopt the Home Office Covert Human Intelligence sources code of practice (revised December 2022) set out at paragraph C.1.13 of the Council's Policy on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) & Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016 (Appendix 3).

**34 MOTION FROM THE GREEN GROUP - RIGHTS OF NATURE**

Councillor Joanna Wright moved this motion, seconded by Councillor Sam Ross. Following a vote, this motion was

## **NOT CARRIED**

Council:

- Recognises that nature has rights. By considering these rights in decisions, the Council can promote economies that renew resources and enhance communities' safety, strength, and resilience.
- Understands that nature is a connected system where all living things depend on each other. The rights of others balance the rights of one living thing, and any conflicts between them should be resolved in a way that keeps nature healthy and balanced.
- Acknowledges that all living things, including nature, have the right to live and be respected. This means nature has the right to renew itself, maintain its natural state, contribute to our ecosystem, and be free from harm.
- Recognises that everyone is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with nature - human well-being aligns with nature's by protecting, conserving, and restoring ecological cycles and balances.

Council therefore Resolves:

- To request Cabinet to commission officers to prepare a report to Council outlining how to integrate the "Rights of Nature" into the Council's day-to-day operations, planning procedures, and decision-making processes.
- Following this report, to ask the Council's Constitutional Working Group to recommend how the Council's Constitution can be amended to incorporate the Rights of Nature.
- To ask Council Leaders to write to the Government calling for the "Rights of Nature" to be made statutory.

*[Notes;*

1. *The above motion was lost, with 5 Councillors voting in favour, 39 against and 3 abstentions.]*

## **35 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS**

During debate, an amendment from the Labour group was moved. Councillor Alan Hale sought assurance that it was a valid amendment and the Chief Operating Officer, on behalf of the Chief Executive, confirmed that it was, as it was on the same subject matter, has not been considered in the last six months and sought to achieve something which could not be achieved by simply voting against the motion.

On a motion from Councillor Dave Harding, seconded by Councillor Michael Auton, it was

**RESOLVED** that

Council:

1. Notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.
2. Notes with concern that many pensioners on lower incomes will now not receive vital support with winter fuel costs. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).
3. Notes that in Bath and North East Somerset, the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 32,412. That means 91.9% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.
4. Believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for Pension Credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.
5. Notes with concern the low take up of Pension Credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so.
6. Recognises the importance of raising awareness of benefits, such as Pension Credit, to ensure people receive the support they are entitled to. Council welcomes the work being undertaken by the Welfare Support and Public Health teams, with Citizens Advice and Age UK, to promote the Pension Credit scheme to those who may be eligible, and also welcomes Government awareness campaigns, such as the Pension Credit Week of Action.
7. Further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October which, combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, risks pushing thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council therefore:

8. Asks the Leader of Council to write to the Government, calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately suspended and for a new threshold determining eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments to be adopted.
9. Asks the Leader of Council to write to all MPs covering the Bath and North East Somerset Council area, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

[Notes;

1. *During debate, an amendment was moved by Councillor Robin Moss and seconded by Councillor Lesley Mansell. The amendment was lost, with 5 Councillors voting in favour, 39 Councillors voting against and 1 abstention. The amendment is attached for reference.*
2. *The successful resolution above was carried with 38 Councillors voting in favour, 6 Councillors voting against and 4 abstentions.]*

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

Councillor Andy Wait made a statement about 10 years of KeynshamNow. A full copy of Councillor Wait's statement is attached to the online record and placed on the Minute book. Councillor Alan Hale asked if there was political balance amongst those advising the young people, to which Councillor Wait replied that there was, and that the mentors are there to facilitate what the young people want to do.

Councillor Saskia Heijltjes made a statement about Liveable Neighbourhoods, in support of them but pointing out that 4 out of the 11 going to WECA the following day didn't include traffic restrictions so fell short of the transformative benefits they could offer. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Councillor Heijltjes agreed that earlier speakers had mentioned the transformative difference Liveable Neighbourhoods had made to their lives, to which Councillor Heijltjes replied that they had, but that the schemes they were referring to had included traffic restrictions. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Councillor Heijltjes if she knew whether B&NES had any school streets, to which the Councillor replied that she didn't believe that was the case.

The Chair thanked both Councillors for their statements.

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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**BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

**MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Grant of a Dispensation**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Name of Members</b>   | All Councillors  |
| <b>Meeting and item of business for which the dispensation has been sought</b> | Full Council – 19 September 2024<br>(Agenda item 12 – Winter Fuel Payments Motion).  |
| <b>Reason for dispensation</b>   | The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors that are in receipt of the State Pension and therefore have an interest in this item, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote. |

Having received a request at the meeting from the councillors requesting this dispensation, it was granted.

Signed ..... **Michael Hewitt** .....

M Hewitt  
Monitoring Officer – Bath & North East Somerset Council

Dated 19 September 2024

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## COUNCIL MEETING 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

### STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

#### Public (item 7)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Michael Coffey – <i>read by Niels Steinhoff</i>         | Sydney Road Liveable neighbourhood scheme             |
| 2. Sarah Toy   | Sydney road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme             |
| 3. Robert Stone – <i>read by Christine Harrington</i>      | Sydney road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme             |
| 4. Susan Charles, Corston Parish Councillor                | Accessible planning                                   |
| 5. David Redgewell – <i>did not attend</i>                 | Public transport issues                               |
| 6. Matt Cooper   | Demonstrating climate leadership – food for thought   |
| 7. Iris Gerosa   | From Brazil to Bath tackling the ecological emergency |
| 8. Anthony Simpson   | Climate solutions – the elephant in the room          |
| 9. Chad Allen – <i>did not attend</i>                      | Tell the truth!                                       |
| 10. Martin Farrell - <i>read by Philip Fawkner-Corbett</i> | Planning policy and implementation                    |
| 11. Gracie Allen   | Rights of Nature motion – the Youth voice in Nature   |
| 12. Alison Harper  | Rights of Nature motion                               |

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC**

|  |           |                      |                          |
|--|-----------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>P</b>   | <b>01</b> | <b>Question from</b> | <b>Matthew Thomas</b>    |
| <p>My name is Mathew Thomas - I've been a resident of BaNES for over 25 years. I'm sure all councillors will share my concerns about the almost daily news reports of extreme weather events, for example this year's Spring was confirmed as the hottest on record by the Met Office. I am particularly interested in how BaNES council is planning to address one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, which are embedded in our Food-System. There is overwhelming scientific peer-reviewed evidence and data that meat and dairy production are one of the most significant contributors to climate breakdown, and the biggest cause of biodiversity loss. A 2018 Oxford University study stated that the biggest change we can all make to reduce our environmental impact is to adopt a plant-based diet, and a new Oxford University study published in July 2023 shows that the environmental impact of a meat-diet is far higher than one which is plant-based.</p> <p>Progressive councils elsewhere in the country are leading the way, by ensuring that all food and drink provided for their council meetings and events is plant-based by default. You might be aware of Oxfordshire County Council's decision to serve only plant-based food in council meetings and events, with city councils in Cambridge and Exeter following suit among others. As animal agriculture accounts for more emissions than the entire transportation sector globally, do you support an initiative for BaNES to transition in-house events to plant-based food for any catering, internal or external, to make changes in-line to those made by other climate leading councils? And of course to ensure to support our local food producers. After declaring a Climate Emergency, this really is the logical and necessary next step. It's a very small step and easy to implement, but one which will have a big impact, and it would be inspiring to see this happen here in Bath. So, I put it quite simply, that, regardless of whether you are personally a vegan, vegetarian, or flexitarian, do you agree that BaNES council should lead by example on the climate and ecological emergency and as a key step, simply agree to serve only plant-based food &amp; beverages, at the very small number of internal council events that are catered for each year? This, in conjunction with the council run "Pomegranate" canteen in the Civic Centre Offices in Keynsham to also transition to a fully plant-based menu by 2025?</p> |           |                      |                          |
| <b>Answer from:</b>  |           |                      | <b>Cllr Sarah Warren</b> |
| <p>B&amp;NES Council does not have any catering at its full Council, Cabinet or committee meetings. Sandwiches and tea/coffee used to be provided before full Council, but this ended with the pandemic.</p>   |           |                      |                          |

The Council does not provide any 'in-house' catering at its other buildings. All catering is provided by the operators of these buildings (e.g. Searcy's at the Bath Pump Rooms, Better at the leisure centres) or by concession holders (e.g. a local business runs a small café in the Keynsham Civic Centre) who will make commercial decisions on what menus they provide – but this will include vegetarian and vegan options. Individuals and organisations holding events at Council-owned venues (e.g. the Guildhall) make their own arrangements with outside caterers.

|          |           |                      |                         |
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| <b>P</b> | <b>02</b> | <b>Question from</b> | <b>Nicolette Boater</b> |
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Page 5 of the 2024 Climate and Nature Progress report states that “Participants mapped initiatives already underway as well as the challenges and opportunities to further the approach in our district” at the 3rd October 2023 Doughnut Economics Workshop held in Bath Abbey. On the 10th January 2024 Cllr. Warren circulated Workshop participants with a report on this event the Council had commissioned from Carra Santos (a Doughnut Economics Action Lab registered consultant) that highlighted “considerable potential for ‘The Doughnut’ to be the basis for shared vision uniting interconnected interests” but also identified significant ‘Challenges, tensions and barriers” that would need to be addressed in order realise this potential. Given the Council’s much publicised intent to incorporate a Doughnut Economics approach into its 2020-24 Corporate Strategy, Local Plan update and Economic Strategy, what progress has the Council made over the last year in overcoming the challenges, diffusing the tensions and navigating the obstacles to doing so (and especially those identified in the report it commissioned)?

|                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Answer from:</b> | <b>Cllr Paul Roper</b> |
|---------------------|------------------------|

Since the Doughnut Economics workshop held at Bath Abbey on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2023, the council has created a new Sustainable Economy service that brings together inter-connected agendas, including climate and nature, the economy, business and skills, with the aim of increasing collaboration across workstreams and ensuring a single direction of travel for the future of the economy. The programme of work under the Sustainable Economy service includes supporting and promoting sustainable businesses and alternative business models across the district, including for example B-Corps and community energy companies. This autumn the council will be holding a series of community conversations across the district, inviting more of our communities to engage with and share ideas on these and other topics related to climate, nature and the future economy, with the aim of further developing our programme of work based on the principles of Doughnut Economics.

|   |           |                      |                         |
|---|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>P</b>  | <b>03</b> | <b>Question from</b> | <b>Nicolette Boater</b> |
| <p>Following the adoption of its Economic Strategy and associated partnership approach to its delivery in January 2024, what progress has the Council made in;</p> <p>(i) formalising partnerships arrangements commensurate with the Economic Strategy’s ambition, whilst also</p> <p>(ii) developing governance mechanisms that enable and empower participation from all of the diverse communities, organisations and businesses in our district (rather than just the “anchor institutions” featured in pages 3 and 4 of the Economic Strategy) so as to ensure that the Council’s renewed commitment to “Giving People a Bigger Say” really is an underpinning Core Policy?</p>   |           |                      |                         |
| <b>Answer from:</b>   |           |                      | <b>Cllr Paul Roper</b>  |
| <p>Our Economic Strategy can only be delivered by developing and deepening our partnership working with a wide range of organisations, businesses and communities.</p> <p>As well as work with the anchor institutions as referred to in the question, and reflected in the launch of our Civic University Agreement in May of this year, our Future Ambition partnership arrangements include a number of theme groups. These cover the key themes within the strategy and involve a range of stakeholders including third sector and business. These theme and governance arrangements will continue to evolve in the light of new UK government policy and in particular its agenda for growth. More information can be found at <a href="http://www.futureambitionbath.com">www.futureambitionbath.com</a>.</p> <p>Recent and upcoming activity to engage diverse stakeholders and residents in our Economic Strategy delivery includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of our climate and nature theme, we are undertaking a “<a href="#">community conversation</a>”, focusing on the voices and experiences of Bathford, Bathampton, and Batheaston residents. The event will bring the community together to share concerns, explore solutions, and learn about local initiatives, leading to meaningful action for the community and informing the Council’s forthcoming refresh of our Climate &amp; Nature Strategy, which contributes to a Greener Economy.</li> <li>• In relation to the housing theme, Curo and the council held our area’s first Housing Summit on Tuesday 9th July, which attracted more than 100 people and which highlighted the need to address our area’s high housing costs and below-average earnings.</li> </ul> |           |                      |                         |

- Under the connectivity theme, the Bath Digital Festival saw a theme of digital inclusivity, identifying the need to tackle local digital inequalities and to ensure all Bath and North East Somerset residents get access to the benefits a digitally connected life can offer. Including a specific workshop on the Economic Strategy 'Digital doughnuts in Bath'.
- University of Bath chaired a Inclusive Innovation workshop to explore what inclusive innovation means in B&NES and how collective action can move this element forward.

Presentations and discussions around the Economic Strategy and the Business and Skills Plan at the B&NES SEND group, B&NES Targeted Recruitment and Training Management Board and the Youth Forum.

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**BNES presentation 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 – Evidence in support of making permanent the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) Sydney Road closure**

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to present.

Good evening and thank you for the opportunity to present. I am speaking as a chartered civil engineer and a transport expert. I have more than 25 years' experience designing, implementing and evaluating sustainable travel schemes that aim to improve public health, safety and wellbeing and reduce emissions. In other words, initiatives that improve people's lives.

My interests in this local scheme are strategic and professional, as an employee at the University of Bath. In 2020 I worked with BANES to co-create the 2030 net zero carbon One Shared Vision. The Bath Liveable Neighbourhoods strategy is key part of delivering this vision. I am currently employed as researcher at the University of Bath's Institute for Sustainability and am conducting a global study to identify cities which are implementing transport policies to incentivise healthier, fairer and low carbon forms of mobility. The BANES Liveable Neighbourhood programme could position Bath as world leader in sustainable transport, and the experimental closure of Sydney Road offers an exemplar "lighthouse" intervention for the city's LN programme. With the introduction of a cheap and simple road closure, you have initiated the opportunity to increase active travel, improve air quality and reduce noise levels in the area. You have also created a safe and attractive route to the schools, park and city centre for visitors as well as local people.

So, whilst there will be complaints from people who might have to drive for a few minutes more, the council's focus should be on the silent majority who will benefit from this closure now and in the long term. The ETRO needs to be made permanent to lock-in the benefits everyone.

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## Susan Charles statement

My suggestion/request is:

" To Reform Design in the Planning Process and Construct Accessible Homes for ' All ' new build at the Outset."

Thus saving the extra costs at present to the NHS and Social Service departments.

Grand Designs last June featured a couple who planned to build a new home as one had suffered a stroke in their fifties, and now a wheelchair user. Kevin McCloud asked 'what the most important features were needed in this new build' views, decor, kitchen worktops were not the most important.....

Access was.....

They asked for:

- 1.Level access throughout.
- 2.80cm wide doorways.
- 3.An Accessible bathroom for w/chair use.
- 4.Light and power point switches 90cms from the floor.
- 5.Light stairways.

Five changes that would enhance their new way of life.

Of course, strategically placed joists for a lift shaft could be incorporated in the original plans..... in case.

A movable bathroom wall creating more space ...in case.

A bath could be replaced with the previously prepared level access wet room. ...in case.

We are a growing older population, with long operating and treatment waiting lists ... bed blocking ... lack of care home space ... couples being split due to lack of access within the family home, causing mental and practical challenges for all around you because you cannot leave hospital and go home.

Statistics say:

50% of the population will receive a long or short term disability in their life time.

£72.BLN lost into the local economy per year, due to lack of access in homes and public transport for the mobility challenged.

WE ARE ALL ONE DIAGNOSIS AWAY FROM NEEDING AN ACCESSIBLE HOME AND TRANSPORT.

Independence and dignity can be lost. Imagine all that entails moving home, alterations, the upheaval, the cost, all at a time when you and those around you are coming to terms with a new way of life.

Access planned at the outset for ALL new build homes means they could be readily available if needed, with no need to move.

Not everyone can or wants to downsize to a multi purpose complex like the Chocolate Quarter as practical and nice as it is.

I know many who already worry about how they would manage "IF"

WE ARE ALL ONE DIAGNOSIS AWAY FROM NEEDING ACCESSIBLE HOMES AND TRANSPORT.

Thank you for your time.

PLEASE

Take a moment, close your eyes and imagine .... how would you get out of this building without use of your legs and eyes?

Susan Charles Cllr.

Corston Parish Council.

Access Banes Chair.

## **Matt Cooper statement**

Last year I gave a statement to council about the benefits of plant-based eating, and I am grateful to councillor Warren for meeting with me. I learned that BANES doesn't have much direct responsibility for catering, and it seemed, at the time, there was little scope or appetite within the council for progressing plant-based eating initiatives. The national Plant Based Councils campaign has had many wins, including councils at Exeter, Calderdale, Oxford, Oxfordshire and most recently Nottingham making statements or passing motions in support of plant-based eating. I am pleased to say that, along with Iris Gerosa and Anthony Simpson, who are also speaking today, a local Bath & NE Somerset group for Plant Based Councils has now been formed. See the website [plantbasedcouncils.org](http://plantbasedcouncils.org) for info.

I am here, again, because we are still in a climate emergency, it has not gone away. Globally, last month was the hottest August on record, making it the 15th consecutive month of record-high global temperatures. Last year was the hottest year for the planet on record, with this year on track to beat it. In the UK, the extremely high rainfall between last October and this March that caused such havoc for farmers, significantly reducing crop yields, was found by scientists to be made 10 times more likely and 20% wetter due to climate breakdown. Last week, storm Boris caused extensive flooding across central Europe, tragically killing 8 people and forcing the evacuation of thousands from their homes. In fact, so many measurable indicators of Earth systems are off the charts, and so numerous are the global impacts of climate breakdown, that I could be here for hours listing them. The word emergency doesn't even get close.

So we urgently need to get to net zero, but we simply cannot do that without addressing our food systems - they are responsible for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions. Considering European emissions for the food sector, 83% are due to animal agriculture. Plant-based eating is the elephant in the room. If you are serious about meeting your net zero commitment, and I quote - "to provide the leadership to enable the Bath and North East Somerset area to become carbon neutral by 2030 as well as doing the same for our own operations" - then you must get serious about reducing emissions from our food systems. And to do this, there has

to be a shift away from diets with high meat and dairy consumption, to diets that are predominantly plant-based.

Showing the leadership you lay claim to is really what I'm asking for, to lead by example. Despite having little direct authority over catering decisions, you could make the bold move to issue a statement in support of plant-based eating within council settings; this would demonstrate real leadership. The normalisation of plant-based menus and eating in wider society requires such acts of leadership by our institutions.

I'll conclude with one of the asks of the Plant Based Councils campaign: will you commit to ensuring that food and drink provided at all internal meetings and events is 100% plant-based, and prioritise seasonal British produce to support local farmers?

Thank you.

## Iris Gerosa statement

I'm here to talk about some of the most urgent environmental issues we're facing—water pollution, deforestation leading to the loss of biodiversity, and excessive water waste. These problems are all connected.

I am happy to know that the Bath & North East Somerset Ecological Emergency Action Plan is in place, but I believe it's missing a key point—the adoption of a plant-based diet.

Here's why. Firstly, water pollution, this is a major issue, and animal farming is a significant contributor. Releasing large amounts of animal waste and antibiotics, which contaminate rivers, lakes, and oceans, threatening both ecosystems and clean water access, for billions of people.

Furthermore the livestock industry also consumes an enormous amount of water—around 15,400 liters of water are needed to produce just one kilogram of beef. This is a stark contrast to plant-based foods like lentils, which require only about 250 litres per kilogram. With over 1.7 billion people living in areas of severe water scarcity, it's essential to rethink our consumption habits.

Deforestation is another major issue, much of it driven by the need for more land to raise livestock. Every year, an area about the size of Portugal is destroyed. This not only wipes out habitats and displaces wildlife, but it also speeds up climate change since forests absorb up to 30% of the world's carbon emissions.

The good news is that shifting to a plant-based diet can address these issues. It is stated in your action plan to “encourage environmentally-friendly diets,” so promoting plant-based eating is the logical next step. This helps preserve biodiversity, protect ecosystems like the Amazon in my home country of Brazil, and reduces the strain on local resources in Bath & North East Somerset.

As residents of Bath, we have a role to play in addressing this ecological emergency. By choosing plant-based options, we can reduce the demand for products that contribute to deforestation, water pollution, and biodiversity loss. As a council, you have the opportunity to lead by example, promoting policies that support sustainable food choices, protecting our local environment while also contributing to global conservation efforts.

I'd therefore like you to consider this ask from the Plant Based Councils campaign: please implement a Plant-Based Action Plan to promote and prioritise plant-based eating wherever the council has influence.

Thank you.

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## Anthony Simpson statement

After addressing the climate emergency head-on, I want you to imagine that Bath and North East Somerset has fully transitioned to genuinely sustainable, climate friendly plant based diets.

Then imagine someone then comes to a council meeting like this one and asks for you to support a motion to return to a UK diet with meat, dairy and other animal produce.

The council would need to weigh up the evidence and arguments for this. So what difference would it make?

Well, the constituency is 135 squares miles in size. We would need to clear half of this to put the animals on. We then would need to clear another 10% to grow crops to feed to the animals. So 60% - 80 sq. miles of our local land is needed for this purpose. This would wipe out the majority of local natural habitats including woodlands. And this extraordinary land clearance would extend abroad to places such as South America where much of the animal feed would be grown.

It would quadruple our greenhouse gas emissions from food. A family eating a plant-based diet saves more greenhouse gas emissions than another family with solar, an electric car and a heat pump put together.

A lamb curry has over 10 times the greenhouse emissions of a chick pea curry.

Our water would deteriorate greatly. Run off from animal manure once again becomes one of the largest pollutants in our rivers.

Our diets become about 25% more expensive, and instances of heart disease and cancers will increase and type 2 diabetes could double.

Of course no council would agree to this idea – to increase greenhouse gas emissions, devastate the majority of our land wiping out the majority of our wildlife, and increasing water pollution and health issues.

However, today 60% of Bath and North East Somerset land is taken up for this purpose leaving less than 5% of our land remaining for woodlands.

The majority of these numbers come from Oxford University – and all from academic research.

The BANES Plant Based Council community group also support the 'Rights of Nature' motion put forward today. Animal agriculture has been the driver of historical deforestation in the UK leaving us one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. A shift to plant-based diets enables the opportunity for the UK to quadruple our woodlands and other natural habitats without competing with providing nutritious food for us all.

I know that our Councillors are serious about the climate crisis. I therefore hope we can be open to the UK's world leading research on this topic rather than allowing the daily barrage of misinformation to undermine our actions and prevent us from taking the action so desperately required to create a hopeful and positive future.

I therefore ask the council to allow time for a longer presentation of the evidence to consider this more carefully.

I would then ask our Councillors to show courage and leadership by calling on the national government to support the transition towards a plant-based food system.

THE END

1 This statement seeks to draw the attention of this Committee to seek to ensure that this Council pays particular attention to the level of scrutiny given to proposals that directly affect the World Heritage sites of Bath, and for members to appreciate the current disconnection between policy makers, project assessment and the decision process.

2 Many years can pass between formulation of Policies and the consequential implementation. The lapsed time over which events may enable reflection and re-thinking. In addition members are entitled to and indeed insist that developments are of a quality that respects the World Heritage Site. This Council has legally signed for adherence to the policies documented by The City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan 2016- 2022 [current policy]

3 Decisions taken at committee rely on officer's reports and the personal interpretations of members. Who, in the case of the planning committee, are prevented by protocols, from having any prior knowledge of what they are to decide on at committee. This protocol can hardly be described as both transparent nor democratic.

4 Policy decisions involving the evolution of The Local Plan may gestate from developer lobbying and plan making by the policy unit. In depth investigation is sometimes lacking as to the appropriateness of policies, and the potential of achievable implementation, plus how they might be in conflict with policies in the NPPF, the World Heritage Site Management Plan, and the Placemaking plan itself. Policies can also be compromised by legal constraints rendering them non-compliant.

5 The clear and obvious danger is that when proposals come forward, they may be found to be problematic for any number of reasons, putting the planning department into the position when it defends proposals of its own making, that are shown to be systemically defective and lacking in terms of character and design finesse

6 The evidence of lack of any meticulous scrutiny is seen in the recent developments in Bath. I have yet to meet anyone who believes that the Western Riverside development in anyway graces the city and makes any positive contribution to its architectural heritage. There are no doubt more, but what is sure is that they lack evidence of creative design befitting to the World Heritage Site, and collectively inch closer to placing Bath on the "at risk register" at UNESCO

7 A City of the world importance of Bath deserves an independent Scrutiny Panel of experienced practitioners with the responsibility to advise on projects that have impact on the quality of the built environment with the express intention of ensuring the very best and appropriate solutions are found.

8 My plea therefore is that

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## Gracie Allen statement

There is a big similarity between the youth voice and nature and not one you have probably thought of before.

In conversations about planning and different motions you put through the council often young people and nature will be the most impacted by your decisions but when was the last time you had a young person involved in the conversations from the beginning and on an equal level to everyone in the conversation?

When was the last time nature was a priority when you thought about building new houses or new roads?

Nature and young people are often the most impacted areas by your decisions but they are silent in all of the conversations.

I'm not talking about primary school ages children they have forest school and play scheduled and built into their curriculum but as you get older and start to sit exams you could spend a whole day inside.

Too scared to cycle to school because the cycle lanes haven't been created safely so you get the bus.

Sat inside the classroom all day because there is no funding for schools to take you on a trip to see what your learning about.

And then walking home through a new housing estate that now covers the only green space that was once in your area.

The Royal Psychiatry Board found that being out in nature not only helps your mental health but also helps to lower blood pressure and benefits your physical health aswell. So in a time when mental health is at an all time low in young people because of the pressure we put on them to perform in exams, why are we making it so difficult for them to reach one of the easiest ways to help them feeling better?

I spend a lot of time outdoors and last year I had the opportunity to take 20 young people to the lake district and walk across the mountains and camp for 4 days and when we got there some of them didn't even know that mountains like that exist in the UK and one of them came up to me and said it was the best thing they have ever seen and they still talk about it now! This shows the immense power of nature and it's all just sat there waiting for us to explore it.

So I encourage you when you make decision about the future of our city to also consider the impact on those silent voices, on nature and the people that rely on it for their own health.

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## LABOUR AMENDMENTS WITH TRACKED CHANGES

Council:

1. Notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

2. amend: DELETE AFTER 'NOTES' AND REPLACE WITH:

Notes that in 2010, the Liberal Democrat/Conservative coalition government removed winter fuel payments from 60-64 year olds.

Notes that in 2013, former LD MP and Lib Dem-Conservative coalition Care Minister Paul Burstow said Winter Fuel Allowance should only go to those on pension credit.

Notes that in 2015, the Lib Dem-Conservative coalition targeted winter fuel payments further, removing them from pensioners living anywhere warmer than the south west of England.

~~with concern that many pensioners on lower incomes will now not receive vital support with winter fuel costs. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).~~

3. Amend as follows:

Notes that in Bath and North East Somerset, ~~the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 32,412. That means 91.9% of pensioners do not qualify for targeted currently eligible for support from the tax payer to pay for their winter fuel. payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.~~

Notes that BNES is one of the country's wealthiest areas, in the lowest quartile for income deprivation.

Notes that c8% of our pensioners still qualify for winter fuel payments.

Notes that, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies and BBC Verify, pensioners are the least deprived group, while 20% of the country's children live in relative poverty. Across BNES this is 11% but in Twerton it's 17%, Radstock and Keynsham 14% and Westfield, 13%.

Notes that 1,000 of the children in BNES in poverty are below school age.

4. Delete and replace to clarify: Believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for

~~couples) are eligible for Pension Credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate.~~

Notes that it is not ONLY those on a lower pension than this who qualify for pension credits. Government guidelines clearly say that, "if your income is higher, you might still be eligible for Pension Credit if you have a disability, you care for someone, you have savings or you have housing costs."

-5. Amend:

~~Notes with concern the low take up of Pension Credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so.that an estimated 1,700 BNES residents aren't claiming Pension Credit, but are eligible.~~

Notes that by working with the third sector, BNES should reasonably be expected to reach these 1,700 residents.

Notes that the third sector in BNES was called "the best in the country" at Scrutiny on 9 September, by the departmental director and plays a key role in reaching into the community in situations such as this.

Notes that the third sector have been waiting since February to hear how BNES will implement c£1m of cuts to their contracts, but in spite of repeated requests for engagement, has been told little, and worse, their engagement on the matter has been repeatedly misrepresented, as they have informed the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet this month.

6. Recognises the importance of raising awareness of benefits, such as Pension Credit, to ensure people receive the support they are entitled to. Council welcomes the work being undertaken by the Welfare Support and Public Health teams, with Citizens Advice and Age UK, to promote the Pension Credit scheme to those who may be eligible, and also welcomes Government awareness campaigns, such as the Pension Credit Week of Action.

7. Amend:

~~Further notes~~Notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, but thanks to Labour's decision to keep the pension triple lock, the state pension is expected to rise in April by around 4% - a rise of £460.

~~which, combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, risks pushing thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.~~Notes that GB Energy and the Warm Homes Plan will lower energy prices.

Notes that with the Warm Homes Plan, the Government is investing £6.6 billion extra to upgrade five million homes to cut bills for families, offering grants and low interest loans to improve home energy efficiency and cut bills and will work with councils to deliver this.

Council therefore:



8. DELETE

~~Asks the Leader of Council to write to the Government, calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately suspended and for a new threshold determining eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments to be adopted.~~

9. DELETE

~~Asks the Leader of Council to write to all MPs covering the Bath and North East Somerset Council area, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.~~

8. Believes we should support those most in need as a priority when poverty rates amongst children in BNES is harming their life chances and when resources are tight

9. Asks the Cabinet to work with the voluntary sector across BNES to find those eligible non-claimants as a matter of priority, and support them to apply.

10. Asks the Cabinet to expedite their delivery of home insulation across the district's social housing estate, and all homes where the most income-deprived pensioners live – regardless of who runs it.

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**COUNCIL MEETING 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024**

**STATEMENTS FROM  
COUNCILLORS**

Councillor (item 13)

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cllr Andy Wait        | 10 years of Keynsham Now |
| 2. Cllr Saskia Heijltjes | Liveable Neighbourhoods  |

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## B&NES Council Meeting KeynshamNow Speech

I would like to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of KeynshamNow by telling councillors a little about the work of Keynsham's Youth Town Council.

The first meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014. Around 15 young people met with four volunteer adult mentors, including myself. We elected a chair, secretary and other officers from the young people. Our discussions focused on what we were going to do. It was agreed the group would make all the decisions, including its name. We decided to meet once a month with a formal agenda and minutes. Our aim was to make sure that the voice of young people would be heard, especially by the decision makers and opinion formers.

The young people learned the skills needed so that issues close to their hearts were known. They learned how to work within the community, how to campaign on improving young people's mental health services, reducing plastic waste, poverty and knife crime, campaign for votes at 16, and how to create opportunities. To learn how this country is governed both locally and nationally. This essential information is not taught properly in schools. They learned how to speak in public, take part in community events, raise money for chosen local charities and meet with civic leaders.

The highlights include successfully campaigning for floodlights at the Keynsham Skateboard Park, costing £6000.00, raising over £3000 for local charities, discussing with school leaders on how to improve their students' mental health. Speaking in public about positive solutions to antisocial behaviour by young people. Q&A sessions with Dan Norris, WECA mayor, MPs Wera Hobhouse and Jacob Rees Mogg who also met us in London, last November, when we toured the Palace of Westminster. We have met the Mayor of Bath in his parlour, and the leader of B&NES Council. In November Clare Moody, our new Police and Crime Commissioner will be attending our meeting.

Most important of all, we now have young people who are local councillors in Keynsham and others who are active in the community because of KeynshamNow. This includes the young man sitting next to me who was a member of KeynshamNow for around five years. This is vital, difficult work. If our politics is to remain healthy, every community needs a youth council.

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# 19 Sept 2024 - Liveable Neighbourhoods

Saskia Heijltjes

The Full Business Case for the first phase of our Liveable Neighbourhood programme goes to WECA for approval tomorrow. It includes 11 Liveable Neighbourhoods—four fewer than originally planned.

As I mentioned earlier in response to the Climate and Nature Progress Report, we urgently need to reduce car journeys and miles if we're serious about meeting our climate emergency targets for 2030. Last week, a cabinet response revealed that between 2019 and 2022, traffic levels dropped by just 1.14%. That's nowhere near good enough, given the target is a 25% reduction by 2030.

Liveable Neighbourhoods are one of the most effective ways to help us achieve these goals, while also creating healthier, quieter, and safer streets for everyone.

Some of the proposed schemes look promising, particularly in areas like The Circus and the Pulteney Estate. However, four of the 11 proposed Liveable Neighbourhoods don't include any restrictions on through traffic—despite this being a key requirement for the WECA City Region Sustainable Travel Settlements Low Traffic Neighbourhood Fund. The areas in question are Temple Cloud, Entry Hill, Chelsea Road, and Lyme Road.

Instead, these so-called Liveable Neighbourhoods propose minor improvements, like a zebra crossing, traffic lights, or a one-way street. While these changes may improve road safety, they fall far short of the transformative benefits that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) can offer.

Through traffic restrictions—such as bus gates or modal filters, like the planters on Southlands—deliver far greater benefits for the cost. This higher Cost Benefit Ratio is crucial if we're going to make real improvements for residents within our limited budget.

We only need to look at Bristol City Council, which is moving ahead with an LTN trial in East Bristol, including over 10 through traffic restrictions—three camera-enforced bus gates and eight modal filters. Meanwhile, South Gloucestershire is on track to deliver multiple sustainable transport corridors alongside its Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.

When Councillor Clyde Loakes from Waltham Forest visited Bath in 2020, he urged us not to "tinker." But with four of these schemes, that's exactly what we're doing—tinkering around the edges. If we want to give people real alternatives to car use, as outlined in our Corporate Strategy, we need to be bold.

If we fail to secure the remaining £3.87 million from WECA tomorrow, it won't be because WECA is enforcing the rules too strictly. It will be because B&NES didn't follow the rules.

So my question is: how is our leadership working with WECA to ensure the best possible outcomes for our residents? How are we providing them with safer, healthier streets and genuine travel choices?