

# BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

## CABINET

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

Thursday, 13th July, 2023

### Present:

Councillor Kevin Guy (Ch)	Leader of the Council, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Mark Elliott	Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Matt McCabe	Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Highways
Councillor Paul Roper	Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel
Councillor David Wood	Deputy Council Leader (non-statutory) and Cabinet Member for Council Priorities & Delivery

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Cllr Sarah Warren made the following statement regarding bus services:

"As many residents are aware, several essential bus services in North East Somerset have now stopped running due to an ongoing funding crisis, including services 82, 179 and 768, and further services are currently at risk. I want to provide an urgent update on the work that we are doing to address this situation.

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.**

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%.

Like other councils, B&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 **cannot** 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.

We now need the Metro Mayor to contribute 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. Other local authorities, who are not part of the West of England Combined Authority, have been able to do this – including North Somerset and Gloucestershire.

In the New Year, we were informed that the Metro Mayor planned to commission several new rural buses throughout North East Somerset. The 522, designed without consultation by the West of England Combined Authority, was introduced, and takes far longer than previous buses, travelling through areas with good bus services rather than villages with none.

The Mayor also decided to put a large proportion of his Bus Service Improvement Plan funding into the Westlink Demand Responsive Transport (or DRT) service. As many residents have found, DRT in its current form is not working. Westlink has proved unreliable and hard to access, and as the vehicles are usually seen almost empty, must be costing **much** more per passenger journey than the bus services they replaced, and that residents are desperate to see returned.

The Mayor has also chosen this month to commit **some £8m** to free travel on buses for residents in the month of their birthday. This birthday bonanza is of huge benefit to Bristolians with frequent bus services but is a further insult to our more rural residents, having recently lost all access to public transport and some now newly confined to their homes.

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.

To address this desperate situation, 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 Metro Mayor to find a solution. This week, Cllr Guy has written to him to put our innovative ideas forward, and we hope he will respond positively to our constructive proposals.

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

## **6 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were 14 questions from Councillors and 15 questions from members of the public.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

## **7 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Robbie Bentley – Public Transport Issues *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 2 to these minutes)*
- Joy Arnold – Loss of 179 Bus *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 3 to these minutes)*
- Paul Roles (Rosewell Court Residents' Association) – Damage to Pavement *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 4 to these minutes)*
- Nicolette Boater – Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-27 - *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 5 to these minutes)*
- Cllr Dine Romero – The Future of Culverhay - *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 6 to these minutes)*
- Malcolm Baldwin – Time to press the re-set button - *(a copy of which is attached as appendix 7 to these minutes)*

## **8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING - 9TH MARCH 2023**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

No single member items were requisitioned to Cabinet.

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

Cllr Robin Moss, Chair of the Corporate PDS Panel attended the meeting and gave feedback following the Panel's consideration of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-27 at its meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

Cllr Moss highlighted the following issues:

- Concerns were expressed by the Panel regarding the cost-of-living crisis and how this would impact the Council over the next couple of years.
- There are three main elements to consider within a Corporate Strategy – internal (i.e., budgets and staffing), external factors not within our control and unforeseen consequences (such as the Covid pandemic).
- It is likely that Local Government will have to deal with the financial crisis with no help from Central Government.
- He thanked the Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for Council Priorities and Delivery for attending the PDS Panel meeting to present the Corporate Strategy.

The Leader thanked Cllr Moss for attending the meeting and Cabinet noted the feedback from the Panel.

*(A document setting out the detailed feedback from the Corporate PDS Panel is attached as Appendix 8 to these minutes).*

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

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## **12 UPDATE ON PROGRESS ON DELIVERING THE CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-24 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2022-23**

Cllr Dave Wood introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation, and made the following statement:

“This is a moment to really reflect on the last four years and the incredible achievements this Council and its staff have made against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic and rising inflation.

We have:

- Invested extra millions into road repairs and cleaner streets, starting to reverse a decade of cuts to local government
- Introduced the first charging clean air zone (CAZ) outside of London
- Invested in high streets in Midsomer Norton, Keynsham and Bath
- Sharply increased renewable energy in the district
- Achieved and sustained our best recycling rate ever
- Built more pedestrian crossings, segregated cycle lanes and 20mph zones than ever before
- Created the Chew Valley recreational trail
- Found new ways of engaging people through Citizens' Juries
- Created the first new social rent properties in a generation
- Built a state-of-the-art new recycling centre in Keynsham
- Is the first Council in England to adopt a net zero based housing plan

These are the building blocks of future success as we embark on the historic second term voters have given us. The first administration to prove itself worth being re-elected for another four years. This is our record of action and I'll go on to talk about our promise of more in the next item."

Cllr Alison Born seconded the motion and made the following statement:

"As has been noted, this systematic approach to planning and performance was introduced by the previous Liberal Democrat administration. It has provided a structure for articulating our aims and our planned programmes of work; it has increased transparency and accountability to the residents we serve. Our clear guiding principle is to improve people's lives and this report accounts for progress across our services.

When developing the strategy for our first term, we were not expecting to spend two years in the grip of an unprecedented global pandemic that had a massive impact on people's lives, but the authority responded well to that challenge, we continued to deliver services throughout the pandemic, supporting residents and businesses and adapting to meet changing needs and circumstances. Our focus during the height of the pandemic was to protect, contain and mitigate the impact of the emergency and to lay the foundations for an effective and sustainable recovery.

The 2022/23 performance report provides information on the extent of that recovery and demonstrates the success of that strategy. I am going to focus particularly on actions we have taken to meet the needs of vulnerable people. We have continued to invest in social care and are now supporting significantly more looked after children with many more on child protection plans. Our Connecting Families Service has continued to provide effective support for families with complex needs and our children's services were rated Good by recent OFSTED inspection.

We have increased support to local third sector groups through the Community Contribution Fund and through targeted use of community Infrastructure Levy funds. We have responded positively and robustly to issues in local care homes, ensuring rapid improvements. We have worked with the community to welcome refugees to the area and have provided support and warm spaces to help residents deal with the cost-of-living crisis; we have provided free internet access at council libraries.

Our public health services responded very well throughout the pandemic, helping to keep local residents safe, they have also invested in social prescribing and other preventative measures that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population.

This is not an exhaustive list, and it is not the end of the story, we plan to build on this progress over this current term and I am happy to second this motion.”

Cllr Tim Ball noted that the authority has delivered services and moved forward throughout the Covid pandemic, and he looked forward to continuing this in the next four years.

Cllr Paul May spoke regarding the new footbridge which is now operational and providing access to a school in Radstock. This is an example of how the Council is improving people’s lives as it will enable children to walk to school safely and will reduce the need for parents to drive pupils to school in line with the Council’s policy on climate change.

Cllr Matt McCabe noted that the Council’s Planning Team had been under a lot of pressure during the pandemic. He congratulated Planning Officers on winning two awards in the last year – the RTPI South West Award, Planning Authority of the Year and an Award for Planning Excellence.

Cllr Sarah Warren noted the declaration of a climate emergency and the introduction of an ecological emergency action plan. She welcomed the Local Plan Partial Update and highlighted the fact the B&NES was the first council to require net zero emissions for new housing developments and one of the first councils to require a net gain in biodiversity. She also welcomed the outcome of the clean air zone as there has been a 20% reduction in nitrogen dioxide levels.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

To note the progress made in delivering the Corporate Strategy and the highlights of Council performance and activity during 2022-23.

### **13 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-2027**

Cllr Dave Wood introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following statement:

“The Corporate Strategy is a framework for what the Council will deliver for residents over the next four years. It brings together what you’ve told us is important, what you voted for in the election in May – and integrates this into the Council’s plans and way it makes decisions.

Listening to residents and acting on their concerns is our commitment. We will find new ways to reach residents to find out their views and priorities. We will work with communities to identify the local priorities that people really care about. Area working will ensure Council thinking is joined up and focussed on local communities.

We will continue to improve frontline services. Services declined after a decade of central government cuts to local government, but over the last four years we have started to reverse those cuts – millions extra invested in road repairs and cleaner

streets as one example. We will continue to improve frontline services and take pride in our area.

We will continue to put climate at the heart of everything that we do and will use an evidence-based approach to ensure all our decisions are helping us on our journey to Net Zero.

I'd like to thank the residents of B&NES for trusting us and giving the Lib Dems a historic second term in control of the Council, and with an increased majority. We will repay that trust by listening to you and focussing on the issues that matter to you the most."

Cllr Sarah Warren seconded the motion and made the following statement:

"This evening I am proud to support this corporate strategy, the first time ever that an administration in Bath and North East Somerset has been entrusted by voters with a second term to really embed their policies. This will be an opportunity to double down on action on the climate and ecological emergencies declared in the last four years.

This month, the world has repeatedly recorded the hottest day since records began, and it follows the UK's warmest year on record. Lord Deben, Chair of the Committee on Climate Change told the Prime Minister a fortnight ago that, "the UK has lost its clear global climate leadership", and that, "game-changing interventions from the US and Europe, which will turbocharge growth of renewables, are leaving the UK behind."

The situation also remains serious for nature. The Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs published biodiversity indicators for the UK last December, showing declines since 2015 in biodiversity of marine life, of habitats and species of European importance, of wild birds, and of pollinating insects. Bearing in mind of course, that the natural world provides our food, our clean air and water, and ultimately disposes of our biodegradable waste. The same report also shows declining investment in biodiversity over the same period.

It is in this context, of an ambivalent UK government that has lost interest in developing net zero industries, backtracked on fossil fuel commitments, and whose progress the Climate Change Committee has criticised as too slow and lacking urgency, that it is beholden now on local government to show leadership, and this is what Bath and North East Somerset's Corporate Strategy aims to do for the next four years.

We are in no doubt that we will be delayed and stymied at times by lack of government support: for instance, by restrictive national planning rules, by government prevarication around support for making homes energy efficient, by a profit-led bus industry, by an inadequate electricity grid, by transport ministers actively undermining our efforts to enable walking, wheeling and cycling, and by government's failure to control airport expansion, to mention just a few.

Nevertheless, I am proud that our latest corporate strategy shows a clear determination that Bath and North East Somerset council will continue to do all within our power to provide the support to enable our community to be carbon neutral and nature positive by 2030. Over the next four years, we will further embed these values into all our decision-making, which will be made in the context both of an

understanding of the environmental limits of our planet, and overlaid on a social and economic foundation, in line with the principles of doughnut economics.

I am delighted to second the recommendation this evening.”

Cllr Tim Ball stated that he was happy to see Liberal Democrats working hard for residents and stressed the importance of remaining focussed on the delivery of this strategy.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 attached at Appendix 1 of the report and to recommend it to Council for adoption.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Cabinet member for Council Priorities and Delivery) to develop and implement an organisational decision framework tool to support implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

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

Cllr Mark Elliott introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following statement:

“Just to provide some context, this is an information report on Treasury Management performance for the last year in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Code of Practice which requires council to approve an annual Treasury Management report within 6 months of the end of the financial year.

So, it's a backward-looking report, detailing how the council's savings and borrowing performed over the financial year from April 2022 to March 2023.

Treasury management is obviously a vital part of the council's financial activity and whilst it can seem a dry topic, sound and successful treasury management is a major part of the bedrock on which the council's finances are built.

Looking at our investment performance – the average rate of interest earned across the portfolio was 2.09% but that obviously hides some volatility. It's important to remember this period starts in April 2022, when the economic environment was very different - prior to the disastrous period of Trussanomics and the KamaKwasi budget in the early Autumn. Bank of England Base Rate increased to 4.25% from 0.75% over the year with Bank of England interest rate action remaining robust in line with their remit for tackling inflation. This trend has continued with rates now 5% following further increases as inflationary pressures remained elevated.

The average return has continued to increase during the year from around 1% in April to just below 4% in March, as the Bank of England interest rate rises over the period fed through to our investments.

The report highlights the impact on the investment market of persistent inflation, increasing interest rates and risk of recession which has led to decrease in the valuation of the Council's strategic long terms investments which reduced from £10.3m to £8.8m over the year. However, this change does not directly impact on the



revenue position of the Council as there is currently a statutory override in place. Under the current rules any movement would only affect the revenue position if the investments were sold - and these are long term investments, so that is not our intention.

Turning to borrowing - at the end of the year our total borrowing was £210m - a reduction of around £9m from the start of the year. This is because we didn't take out any new borrowing during the year, and obviously principal capital repayments continued on our long-term Annuity Public Works Loan Board loans, and some shorter-term borrowing was repaid as loans reached maturity. Overall - an underspend of £2.8m was achieved in respect of interest and capital financing, as result of higher than budgeted investment income, a delay in borrowing and savings on Minimum Revenue Provision due to capital spend reprofiling.

Finally - The report includes performance against all the indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy and confirms that these are all within approved limits. I'd like to commend officers on both the production of the report and more importantly on their sound handling of the council's investments over the period."

Cllr Matt McCabe seconded the motion noting that Local Authorities have been affected by the current economic situation.

Cllr Kevin Guy highlighted the sound financial management of the Liberal Democrats in difficult circumstances.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To note the Treasury Management Report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.
- (2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

## **15 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23**

Cllr Mark Elliott introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following statement:

"Again, this is a backward-looking report, this time setting out the revenue and capital outturn for 2022/23 - in other words, it reports how the council performed compared to the budget set out at the beginning of the year.

The main headline here is the extremely positive news that the council had a favourable outturn position of £60,000 in 2022/23. In other words, we finished the year £60k better off than the budget predicted.

This is all the more impressive given that at Quarter 3 last year we were forecasting a £1.54m negative position, and in Q2 that figure was well north of £4m. Balancing the books has been made extremely difficult for everyone by the national Tory government's financial incompetence, with the current Sunak administration seeming unable to stop the rot started by Johnson and accelerated by Truss and Kwarteng, and that affects local government as much as everyone else.

It's nothing I can take credit for of course, having only taken up this role in May, but I'd like to congratulate my predecessor, the officers and the previous cabinet, on their hard work in pulling that position back in line despite the pressures outside their control. It demonstrates a really constructive, collaborative and positive approach to dealing with the financial pressures we, along with all other local authorities, are facing.

However, the overall figure does smooth over some significant variability between different services. The main pressure continued to be in Children's Services which resulted in an over budget position for that service of £5.4m during the year.

This was largely mitigated by increased income in both Heritage & Transport services, by reduced borrowing costs, by higher interest earned on cash balances and by the release of corporate contingencies.

The year-end position of uncommitted non-earmarked reserves was £12.6m which is in line with the risk assessed requirements agreed in the 2022/23 Budget Report.

The capital spend in 2022/23 was £74m against a budget of £107m giving a variance of £33m. This is primarily because of the delivery time to complete some projects moving them into future financial periods.

The report seeks the Cabinet approval to the revenue carry forwards of £158k to fund commitments that will now take place in 2023/24, and to transfer the £60k net underspend to the Revenue Budget Contingency Reserve which provides for future revenue pressures during the year which can't be mitigated by management action. So again, I'd like to thank officers for the production of the report, and for their hard work throughout the year."

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the report and made the following statement:

"I am very pleased to second this report and endorse all that my colleague Cllr Elliott has said.

First, I need to wholeheartedly echo his praise and thanks for all those who worked so hard to bring us in on budget. You don't have to look too far to see examples of where local councils have not been able to do this. The quality of reporting is also worth highlighting, we have the information made available to us in a timely fashion to be able to make the decisions we need to in order to claw back overspends, or support income generation.

That bit is important. We haven't managed to hit budget by stopping all activity and cutting it to the statutory bone. We have managed to hit it, whilst also delivering the vast majority of our priorities and what our community needs.

Being able to deliver our commitments has also relied a lot on external funding, and or grant applications. I long for a return to a time when local government is adequately funded, does not have to burn up cycles of officer time in preparing speculative bids against changing criteria, forcing councils to compete against each other for resources in an inefficient and non-strategic way. It is entirely in the governments gift to choose to fund local councils correctly, they have chosen not to do so.

I want to give special thanks whilst seconding this report to the highways team. Anyone who has tried to do personal construction work over the past year knows how both labour and materials costs have rocketed. Highways work in the council has not been immune to these pressures, but through good negotiation and management we have retained best value for our residents and have protected the income so necessary to the council's finances.

Absolutely we can't take for granted that we came and will continue to come in on budget. But we can rest assured we have a great team who have delivered and are best placed to deliver again.

I'm delighted to second the report."

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To note the revenue budget outturn on budget position for 2022/23, after allowing for carry forwards and transfers to reserves.
- (2) To approve the revenue carry forward proposals listed in the tables in paragraph 3.7 of the report.
- (3) To approve that all other over budgets are written-off as an exception to the Budget Management Rules for 2022/23.
- (4) To approve the transfer of £0.06m to corporate earmarked reserves.
- (5) To note the revenue virements for 2022/23 reported for information in Appendix 2(i) of the report.
- (6) To note the reserve positions and the use of flexible capital receipts shown in paragraph 3.21 of the report.
- (7) To note the outturn position of the 2022/23 capital programme in paragraph 3.30, and the funding outlined in paragraph 3.32 of the report.
- (8) To approve the capital rephasing and write-off of net underspends as listed in Appendix 3 of the report. This reflects the outturn spend position on projects against final budgets as detailed in Appendix 4(ii) of the report.

**16 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL TO JUNE 2023**

Cllr Mark Elliott introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following statement:

"Rather than being a backward-looking report, this one is giving the current, in-year position compared against this year's budget. It's designed to give an early review of budget performance using the first two months of financial data. This is to help us identify budget risks early.

I mentioned in previous reports the national Tory government's inability to get inflation under control, and UK Inflation (CPI) is still proving very stubborn - holding at around 8.7% - which is obviously affecting the cost of delivering Council services.

To cover the easy topic first, the 2023/24 Capital Programme is a forecast of £92.8m against a budget of £95.0m - so a small underspend. Whilst we want to see our capital programme proceeding according to plan, I don't think there is anything of serious concern here.

With regard to the Revenue Budget, the current forecast to the end of the year has identified above budget pressures of £3.96m. For context that's against an overall revenue budget of just over £135m - so just shy of 3% over budget. Whilst 3% might not sound like a lot, this is in the first two months of the financial year - there is absolutely no room for complacency and we, the whole cabinet, need to be working to bring this back in line as quickly as possible.

The major part of the overage is down to the continuing pressure on Children's services which makes up £3.3m of the forecast budget pressure. This is a national problem being faced by all councils across the country - central government simply isn't providing enough funding into the system to cope with the constantly rising pressures in this area.

There are also workforce pressures across Council services which is creating a reliance on higher cost agency staff, and we need to reduce that reliance as quickly as possible.

On the upside, we have seen good income performance across our corporate budgets and chargeable services that is helping to mitigate some of the rising costs in other areas.

I don't want to be too gloomy - identifying the issue this early in the financial year is a really good thing. I know the council's leadership team are now working on financial recovery plans to bring us back into budget, this will be reported back to Cabinet as part of our Quarter 2 monitoring. I urge all cabinet colleagues to continue to work closely with their senior directors and other senior leaders over the coming couple of months to quickly identify, and then monitor, mitigation plans for your individual portfolios. Whilst we're seeing particular pressures in one portfolio, getting the budget back on track is something for us all to pull together to resolve.

I'll finish with thanks again to officers both in the finance dept and across the council. We have a great team and I'd like to thank them for their efforts in less-than-ideal financial conditions."

Cllr Paul May seconded the motion and made the following statement:

"Thank you I wish to second this item and specifically address the children's services pressures.

The previous council resources cabinet member made it clear we would be transparent re council budgets and monitoring, so it is essential to the public that we manage and show pressures where they exist at the earliest stage possible.

B&NES children's services is respected and well run being rated as 'Good' across all services by Ofsted at our latest inspection confirmed by them recently in their annual assessment. The predicted overspend is in addition to additional support given in the approved Council budget for this year.

We deal with the most vulnerable children in our community and the work of our staff to support them and their families is something to admire.

The forecast is based upon the Conservative government allocating non-resident unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to local authorities. We welcome them, but the funding does not reflect their needs. Their status takes years to resolve by the Home Office, so as they become adults at the age of 18, our legal commitments then continue until the age of 25. We have no control over this system, and it creates officer and financial pressures at a time of increasing needs of local families following the pandemic. This is not just a local pressure and national discussions are taking place.

There are two other main drivers of this over-budget position. One is the demand-led placement and package budgets and the other is the increasing pressures from ongoing cost increase across Home to School Transport.

The service continues to look at all its costs and pressures to minimise long term these revenue increases, but I welcome the openness of our system to report things so early.”

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To note the 2023/24 revenue budget position (as at the end of June 2023).
- (2) To note the revenue virements listed for information in Appendix 3(i) of the report.
- (3) To note the capital year-end forecast detailed in paragraph 3.19 of the report.
- (4) To note the changes in the capital programme including capital schemes that have been agreed for full approval under delegation listed in Appendix 4(i) of the report.

The meeting ended at 7.42 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

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## CABINET MEETING – 13 July 2023

### STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. Robbie Bentley – Public transport issues
2. Joy Arnold – Loss of 179 bus
3. Paul Roles (Rosewell Court Residents' Association) – Damage to pavement
4. Nicolette Boater – Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-27
5. Cllr Dine Romero – The Future of Culverhay
6. Malcolm Baldwin – Time to press the re-set button!

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall
<p>Back in early 2022 positive changes were made to the Highway Code. Although the law and advice changed immediately, changes in drivers' behaviours will take years to embed. Alongside investing in Active Travel through engineering changes to our roads, what is the Council planning to do to run future poster campaigns to remind drivers not to close pass horse riders and cyclists on our rural roads in North East Somerset?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>Over the years we have held several events highlighting the dangers of close passing vulnerable road users and advising drivers that a minimum of 1.5m is required to do so safely. We have also had input into the Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Close Pass initiative, helping highlighting areas where these negative behaviours occur. Additionally, in 2020 a poster campaign was run advising drivers to pass cyclists and pedestrians at safe distances. These were predominantly used in areas where conflict between vehicles and cyclists/pedestrians had been reported or heavy cyclist flows are experienced. Through the Safe Systems approach, the Road Safety Team and its partners remain committed to highlighting the dangers of close passing and will continue to do so through various means. They will continue to work to protect all road users and strive to minimise risk of personal injury collisions on the highway.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall
<p>Nationally increased demand as well as historic reductions to local public health budgets have put sexual health services at risk of breaking point. Recent figures published by the UK Health Security Agency show diagnoses of certain sexually transmitted infections, such as Gonorrhoea, doubled last year. What is B&amp;NES Council doing to improve funding for sexual health services locally as demand for their services increases? How is the Council lobbying central government to ensure sexual and reproductive health funding is increased to levels which match the increased demand in services as we all know that investment in early intervention helps to save costs to the NHS and</p>			



prevents problems in the future?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Alison Born

*In B&NES, new STI diagnoses are generally lower than the England and South West averages, and generally stable in terms of growth. Gonorrhoea shows an increase during 2022/23 to date, although still lower than the England average, and in line with the ongoing South West outbreak and increased diagnoses across England. Some areas of service activity have increased, including patient attendance at B&NES's main sexual health service, and GP prescribing for Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), whilst other activity has reduced or remained stable.*

*All local authorities receive a ring-fenced nationally determined public health grant for use on a number of public health functions. B&NES Council allocates funding for sexual health services via this grant.*

*There is a South West Sexual Health Commissioners Network and a National (English) Sexual Health and HIV Commissioners Group which raise issues of concern to the Department for Health and Social Care. The national group is supported by funding from the Local Authorities and secretarial support from the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).*

*The ADPH is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK and represents the professional views of DsPH as the local leaders for the nation's health, including on sexual health. The ADPH advocates nationally for improved population health, and this includes advocating for adequate funding through public health grant allocations.*

**M**

**03**

**Question from:**

Cllr Sam Ross

All funding for supported bus routes in North East Somerset comes to an end at the end of July, and many rural communities lost their only bus to Bath at the beginning of June. The Metro Mayor, Dan Norris has offered 50% funding to help B&NES Council with these routes, allocated from the Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). Will B&NES actively work with the Metro Mayor to ensure that these bus routes are reinstated and protected for these communities by finding a way to put in place the other 50% needed?

<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllrs Kevin Guy and Sarah Warren	
<p><i>B&amp;NES, as a unitary authority 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 council services such as social care, children's services (which together consume the vast majority of our budgets), housing, parks, waste management and so on, so there is very little remaining for discretionary expenditure such as on buses.</i></p> <p><i>The Combined Authority has been awarded £57m for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, as well as an additional £500k specifically for the support of bus services. On the 8<sup>th</sup> June we, alongside South Gloucestershire Council, wrote to Mayor Norris welcoming the news that the Minister has confirmed that Bus Service Improvement Plan funds can be spent to extend supported bus services, and in response to his offer to match the funding provided by the UAs for bus services. We reminded him that B&amp;NES had already contributed £1.04m towards bus services, South Gloucestershire had contributed £1.454m. Cllr Kevin Guy has also written this week to the Mayor to put forward a more cost effective proposal for a bus network for North East Somerset. As you are aware, this plan was worked up with cross party input from councillors around North East Somerset, and it includes pointers to sources that WECA, as transport authority, could use for funding.</i></p> <p><i>We remain ready to work with the Mayor and his team at any time to develop our innovative plans for our communities further, as we understand the vital importance of public transport to some of our most vulnerable residents.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Sam Ross
<p>In a recent press statement from B&amp;NES Council it states how the Redevelopment of the Council depot in Keynsham significantly lowers emissions. It would appear that the embedded demolition and construction costs were not included in these emissions calculations and were omitted from the press release. Please could you give figures on the emissions output for demolition and the construction?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Sarah Warren	
<p><i>At the time of project award, it was not the intent to approach the demolition and construction under BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment). This route of delivery would have helped measure the environmental impact of a building asset</i></p>			

as well as measuring sustainable (emissions) during demolition and construction, however, it also comes at a cost with considerable resource required for monitoring and assessing. The process looks at locality for resourcing, materials specification, transportation (delivery area) and site management, which as you will appreciate, requires resource and further cost implications for this project.

**However, we can positively report on the following:**

**Demolitions:** Undertaken by Penny's a local demolition and plant hire contractor from the Radstock area. Penny's were appointed to undertake the full demolition of the existing properties across the Pixash recycling hub's 4 hectares of land. This included a sizable former MOD warehouse and print works, 2 residential properties and a small number of outbuildings. The scope included for removal of ground slabs, driveways and all foundations. All stone / concrete and brick was crushed and retained onsite for sub ground hardcore for the construction of the new development. All metal and re-enforcing steel work was separated on site with band magnets, loaded into 40yarders onsite and removed for recycling. Green waste as also separated for re-use where possible onsite and remainder taken off site for composting / recycling. Timber separated for off-site recycling. Total waste vehicles leaving site for either recycling or disposal 24no. approx. over 80% of these were recyclable materials rather than hazardous or non-recycling. Sourcing of local contractor, onsite separation and recycling of bulk materials ensured this phase of the project had low emissions.

**Construction:** On going and through appointment of Farrans Construction. (18-20month project). However, the site works are delivering the following:

**B-Rated Cabins** - Our site cabins are the most energy efficient within the market. We worked with our suppliers to develop a 'greener solution' for the project. This comprised the provision of a total of 12 'B' rated cabins. These 'B' rated cabins significantly reduce energy demands as they have far better EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings than traditional accommodation units. Their features include on-demand ventilation to reduce energy and heat loss, improved temperature controls and LED lighting, as well as neurodiverse features such as coloured plug switches to assist the visually impaired and wider corridors to improve access for wheelchair users. As the power requirement of the 'B' rated cabins is significantly less than standard units, this allowed Farrans Construction to downsize to a Stage V 60kVA generator.

**Hybrid Power** - Farrans delivered innovative, greener and cleaner methods of sustainable construction and management throughout the works, including on-site renewable energy generation.

With a hybrid power system reducing carbon emissions and allowing the site to power cabins overnight with zero emissions, zero noise and zero fuel consumption. A battery storage unit (BSU) was installed alongside the generator, providing a more sustainable and cost-effective

*alternative to having the generator run 24 hours a day.*

*These measures have enabled Farrans Construction to reduce generator use by 54%, equating to a reduction in fuel consumption of 54% based on average power loads.*

**HVO** - *One of the most carbon efficient fuel sources is being used to power the site and in onsite vehicles - white HVO fuel.*

*In order to reduce carbon emissions further and move towards a diesel free site, we used ISCC certified white HVO fuel. This is managed by a central hub where remote monitoring of fuel usage on-site and only refill when required to reduce unnecessary journeys from carbon emitting vehicles.*

*Farrans have used 16,078 litres of HVO on the project to date providing a carbon saving of 37,308Kg of CO<sub>2</sub>e.*

**Vibro-Piling** - *Vibro-displacement is a method of constructing columns of granular material up to 5.0m below ground level in order to improve the load bearing properties, stiffness, hydraulic conductivity and shear strength of the existing ground. The spacing of the columns is determined by design and the proximity of columns reflects the load which will be supported, and the settlement criteria. Farrans used the vibro-piling technique as an alternative to CFA piling using 40mm to 80mm aggregate / crushed recycled concrete – approx. 0.8 Tonnes per column. With 4,500 piles in total, using this technique provided a 92% carbon saving by reducing use of virgin materials, reduced deliveries through the use of site won materials and reducing programme.*

*The piling option would have generated around 3,689 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e), while the vibro method produced just 118 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, by using recycled aggregate.*

**Local Sourcing** - *for staff, materials and plant where possible. This reduces travel time and provides a positive net gain to the local social value and economy.*

*(The above response was sent within five working days of the meeting).*

**M**

**05**

**Question from:**

Cllr Sam Ross

In a recent B&NES press statement, '**Chew Stoke Church School recognised for success in encouraging sustainable travel**', it states that:

"Pupils and staff at a Bath & North East Somerset school have been recognised for their exemplar achievements to encourage more

active, safer and sustainable ways to travel.”

Chew Stoke Church School represented the South West region at the National STARS School Travel Awards event in London last week, competing against five other primary schools for the National Award for Primary School of the Year.

Modeshift STARS recognises and rewards schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel.

Chew Stoke Church School has achieved Platinum Accreditation the highest level of accreditation for the last two years for its School Travel Plan initiatives and is the STARS South West Primary School of the Region 2022/23. Deputy head, Vicki Hennessy and teacher, Carole Hope attended the event with four students.

Councillor Sarah Warren, deputy leader and cabinet member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel, said: “Chew Stoke Church School is an excellent example of what can be achieved when a whole school, supported by a committed group of parents and teachers, works together to support sustainable travel. It is an exemplar school, leading the way in changing behaviour and championing healthy and active ways to travel to and from school, as well as embedding those habits for pupils in later life.”

However, it would appear that there are no pavements near this school and young children are expected to make the change to get to school, while the Council have not committed any infrastructure funding to enable a safe route to get there. Further in February 2023 Full Council the Liberal Democrats refused to agree to an amendment to the Council’s budget for school streets. Can you explain why all the emphasis is being placed on young children aged 7 to 11 years old to make change whilst no infrastructure to support them is being put in place by adults who can release the necessary funds?

**Answer from:**

Cllrs Sarah Warren and Manda Rigby

*The Council’s transport delivery programme prioritises schemes that support active travel. The B&NES School Travel Officer is reviewing with Chew Stoke Church School opportunities for improvements and will liaise with the Council’s Traffic and Safety Team. We will continue to work together to support sustainable travel and any proposals will be assessed for inclusion in future work programmes. Funding has been identified for the school year 2023/24 to explore the piloting of school streets, and we will be working with schools to bring this forward.*

<b>M</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Robin Moss
Following the recent reports of sewerage discharges by Wessex Water into the river Avon, what steps are B&NES taking to monitor water quality and potentially warn residents who swim and play in the river?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Tim Ball
<p><i>The Council does not have a statutory duty to monitor water quality in rivers in our district, the Environment Agency (EA) are the statutory body responsible for monitoring water quality in rivers. Water quality in river basins is governed by The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. Information about water quality can be found on the Govt website <a href="https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/">https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/</a>. However, if B&amp;NES officers become aware of sewage problems in our local rivers, this should be reported to the EA. If a stretch of river achieves designated bathing water status, which is determined by DEFRA, then local authorities are required to put up signage to indicate the quality of the water from monitoring undertaken by the EA.</i></p>			
<b>Supplementary Question</b>			Is the Cabinet Member aware that the Environment Agency is not good at responding to or acting on concerns raised? I hope that the Cabinet Member shares my concern about this and is aware of the role of community leaders on this potential health crisis.
<b>Answer</b>			I am aware of the Environment Agency's failure to respond on a number of occasions, but the Council does not have a budget to deal with the issue as it is an Environment Agency responsibility. I will undertake some further research on this and perhaps assist with some monitoring. However, this can only take place if a suitable budget can be found.

<b>M</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Robin Moss
<p>Recently Lisa Nandy MP, shadow Secretary of State, said that "my mantra is council housing, council housing, council housing". Can the administration please provide an update on progress to their commitment to build council housing in B&amp;NES.</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>I am pleased to confirm that the Council has now delivered 39 units of council owned housing. This includes supported housing for some of our most vulnerable residents, shared-ownership housing for those who were unable to buy on the open market and the first social rented council housing in the district in a generation. The social rented scheme was also a finalist in the prestigious national Best Affordable Housing Scheme Awards organised by the Municipal Journal. Contractors are on-site delivering another 14 units of supported and social rented accommodation. We have secured planning permission for another 8 units on the Lower Bristol Road and have further schemes at pre-planning application stage. However, we want to do more which is why we are currently reviewing our delivery strategy to ensure we deliver on our manifesto commitment for 100s of council house units by 2027 and with an aspiration of over 1,000 units by 2030.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Grant Johnson
<p>Local campaigners in the Somer Valley have been fighting to stop the development of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone in Paulton, which has been zoned for industrial use for some time. Is the cabinet committed to delivering this project, and will it be supporting the Local Development Order (LDO) following further consultation?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) is an allocated site for employment via the Local Plan in 2007 and was re-established in the Local Plan Partial Update in 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery of SVEZ is a manifesto commitment which the Council has pledged to complete. The next stage for SVEZ is to submit the LDO for a</i></p>			

*secondary statutory consultation via the Local Planning Authority, for the LDO to then be adopted by Cabinet. Within the documentation for the LDO resubmission will include a Statement of Clarifications which is to address the main concerns raised by the public via the initial statutory consultation.*

<b>M</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Grant Johnson
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Is the administration committed to extending the cycle lane from Midsomer Norton to Farrington Gurney, as was proposed during the development of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ), but later removed?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Sarah Warren
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*Through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), B&NES is working closely with the Combined Authority to deliver walking, wheeling, and cycling improvements between Farrington Gurney and Old Mills Lane (south of Paulton) that will provide a safe route for cyclists via a shared-use path on the northern side of the A362 that is segregated from traffic. This route is proposed as part of the Somer Valley Links project, which is currently at public consultation. Combined with the proposals for Old Mills Lane, this would create a mostly traffic-free route between Farrington Gurney and Paulton. Residents are encouraged to provide their feedback on the proposals at the Somer Valley Links consultation website: [www.haveyoursaywest.co.uk](http://www.haveyoursaywest.co.uk)*

*East of Old Mills Lane, the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) is proposing improvements to the walking, wheeling and cycling offer to Thicket Mead, enabling a link to the Norton Radstock Greenway at Midsomer Norton. The Somer Valley Links proposals have been developed with these in mind and, whilst they can be delivered independently, the combination of the two sets of proposals will deliver a traffic-free route for cyclists between Farrington Gurney and Midsomer Norton.*

<b>M</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Grant Johnson
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is there a plan in place to extend the same cycle track (see question 9 above) North to Bristol from Farrington Gurney?



<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>The Somer Valley Links project has proposed options to improve the cycling provision between Hallatrow, Clutton, Pensford, Publow, and Whitchurch through the development of a 'quiet route' that would provide a safer alternative to use of the A37. The 'quiet route' would use existing but direct rural roads to the east of the A37 to achieve this, with safe cycling supported through several measures, including reduced speed limits, reductions to vehicle speeds achieved through road narrowing and speed bumps, the creation of new passing places to provide adequate widths, new road markings, and a comprehensive wayfinding strategy to direct cyclists. In addition, the proposals include new shared-use pavements designed to the latest guidance standards (LTN1/20) alongside the A37 between Chelwood roundabout and Pensford, and between Hursley Lane and Queen Charlton Lane, and a new crossing between Chelwood roundabout and Pensford. These proposals are subject to further design review and feedback received from the public from the current consultation exercise.</i></p> <p><i>The consultation additionally highlights a future opportunity to consider the reinstatement of parts of the old railway path to Hallatrow, which could provide a fully off-road route, and which could link into the proposals for a shared use path along the A362 between Farrington Gurney and Old Mills Lane. This route is more complicated to deliver and would require discussions with landowners around its feasibility. It is not possible to achieve this within the approved budgets or required timescales of the Somer Valley Links project but is an opportunity for future consideration.</i></p>		
<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>
		Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>BANES Council has plans to further electrification of the Council's fleet, will any of the current internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles in the fleet be replaced by cycles or electric cycles?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>No <b>current</b> replacements of ICE vehicles with cycles or electric cycles are planned. (These are always evaluated on a case-by-case basis). However, this is principally because we have already made some changes in the past few years. In the city centre we already have the following 8 ebikes in use, and partially financed by grant funding:</i></p>		

1. 3x enforcement officer ebikes for use in the city centre (as well as 3x electric vans for fly tipping / rural enforcement etc duties)
2. 2x city centre supervisor ebikes (replaced one ICE van)
3. The Waste Education and Campaigns Officer has 1x ebike which is in regular use
4. 1x pool e bike formerly based at Ashmead Road Recycling depot is about to be relocated to the new Keynsham recycling hub.
5. 1x pool ebike in use by a project manager on the construction project.
6. In August, a 4th enforcement officer hire van will be replaced by an electric van following consolidation of a dog warden and environmental enforcement role

Where range / payload is an issue then it may be more appropriate to purchase an e van. For example, 8 Nissan e vans have recently been purchased for the highways department.

<b>M</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
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On the recent Climate Connect June email sent out by the Council, it implies that by responding to consultations, making lifestyle changes or joining a local action group will help the Council reach net zero. Why is this the only net zero action being asked for by the Council?  
<https://mailchi.mp/1c7f3fbb2d01/climate-connect-refresh-9351689?e=7079ae0eac&gt>

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Sarah Warren
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*The Climate Connect newsletter forms one part of a range of communications which are provided to our residents. Other campaigns have included encouraging residents to take part in the West of England solar together scheme, inviting those who are eligible to take advantage of home energy efficiency grants and taking part in events such as the upcoming Green Open Homes weekend. Our close connections with parish councils have also supported local action planning and working groups to form. We have raised awareness of the climate and ecological emergencies through events like the Climate Festival and the Festival of Nature. We will also be promoting the recently launched Retrofit West service which aims to support residents to retrofit their own homes. These all form a suite of actions residents can take to help the council reach its net zero target.*

<b>M</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>Recently the Government announced which local authorities had successfully received Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 funding. B&amp;NES applied to this funding through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and we have learned that Bristol successfully received £3.8 million whilst B&amp;NES council failed to receive any for their application. Please can you inform us as to why no community groups were included in the consultation on the Active Travel Fund tranche 4?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>The bid to Active Travel England was developed and submitted by the West of England Combined Authority. It would be more appropriate if this question was addressed to them.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>In 2015 Lidl opened a superstore on the Lower Bristol Road in Bath. In 2018, the Co-op closed a store in Twerton High Street.</p> <p>Please can you give full details about what and how much B&amp;NES has spent on improving Twerton High Street in the last 4 years, including grants from WECA and any other funding bodies?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>The Regeneration team has expended £94,585.05 on Twerton High Street from 31/08/21 onwards. We do not have expenditure recorded for the remaining period of the request (which begins in 2019).</i></p> <p><i>Exclusions: the summary below does not include items such as salary and certain other costs which relate to the Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme as a whole, rather than being attributed to a specific local centre.</i></p>			

<b>Cost category</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Key items funded</b>
<i>Art and events</i>	<i>£5,718.37</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Foyer mural</i></li> <li>• <i>Sensory garden planting and nature event</i></li> <li>• <i>Art for new planters, designed by local children</i></li> </ul>
<i>Consultation</i>	<i>£297.95</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Venue hire and printing</i></li> </ul>
<i>Meanwhile uses</i>	<i>£53,005.69</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2x long term vacant shops have been reanimated – now used as an arts and community space and a local artist residency and exhibition space</i></li> <li>• <i>Fit out and ongoing rent, utility etc costs funded by the Council for an agreed period. Management and activity costs external</i></li> </ul>
<i>Public realm</i>	<i>£34,741.00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Sensory garden</i></li> <li>• <i>Planters</i></li> <li>• <i>Hanging baskets</i></li> </ul>
<i>Replacement, repair and maintenance</i>	<i>£450.04</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planter and hanging basket maintenance</i></li> <li>• <i>Graffiti removal</i></li> </ul>

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

<b>P</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Chad Allen
Would it be possible for the Council to provide me with some funding to purchase some tree climbing equipment to enable me to properly remove English ivy from the trees?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Tim Ball

*The Council does not accept your repeated assertions, at Council meetings, that English Ivy damages healthy trees. The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting on 14th March 2019 and an ecological emergency at its 23rd July 2020 meeting. The Council considers that English Ivy provides a suitable habitat for many wildlife species and pollinators especially during the winter period.*

*In the circumstances the Council will not provide any encouragement, equipment or support to enable you to remove English Ivy. Indeed, the Council requires that you stop damaging ivy by removing it from any tree growing in any public space within the Council area.*

*If you continue to remove ivy from trees in any public space within the council's area, then the council intends to support any Police action against you to prevent you from damaging the ivy and the natural habitat as a result.*

*The answer to your questions is therefore: No.*

<b>P</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Chad Allen
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Can the Cabinet provide me with a letter or documentation to produce to the Police to avoid arrest when entering public spaces to clear ivy from the trees?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Tim Ball
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*No (see PO1 above).*

<b>P</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Chad Allen
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Would it be possible for me to have a job with the Council specialising in the removal of English ivy?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Tim Ball
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*No (see PO1 above).*

<b>P</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Lisa Loveridge
<p>The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) have stated that there is a need to reduce car miles by 40% if 2030 targets are to be reached. Will the B&amp;NES Climate Strategy and Journey to Net Zero document be updated to say 40% reduction in car miles is needed by 2030 as per latest targets from WECA?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>Bath and North East Somerset's Journey to Net Zero strategy contains an aspiration to reduce car mileage per person by 25% by 2030. The basis for this figure is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Local Figure of a 25% reduction was produced in 2019 by Anthesis as part of the original work that supported the need for a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019</i></li> <li>• <i>The figure covers the B&amp;NES district only</i></li> <li>• <i>The 25% reduction is a figure for passenger km per person per year and as such is a distance reduction, rather than a modal shift target.</i></li> <li>• <i>The 25% figure has been developed using the SCATTER model which is based on the Department for Energy &amp; Climate Change work published an open source 2025 pathways calculator tool. Anthesis made some modifications to this including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Scaling down the data by building in localised data sets to the model</i></li> <li>• <i>Technology specifications changes were reviewed and updated where judged to be out of date and constraining ambition</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>The 40% figure provided by WECA was published as part of their recent Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan. The basis for this figure is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The figure excludes aviation and maritime but does include emissions from all of the West of England land-based transport modes, including those in North Somerset</i></li> </ul>		

- *This figure has been derived from a Transport Decarbonisation Model developed by WECA*
- *The model provides bottom-up calculations based on inputs from rail, bus and coach, and road traffic (traffic models) to reflect a baseline year (2019) and future year forecasts of transport emissions (2030 and 2050)*
- *The model takes the outputs of the regional and local traffic model and converts vehicle km to carbon emissions*

*From this it's clear that the two figures for carbon reduction above have been derived using two different methods. They also cover two different geographies and are based on different assumptions and base data. As a result, it's no surprise that they give a different end figure. The conclusion therefore is that there is currently no agreed consistent way of calculating carbon emissions associated with transport. On this basis, we consider it correct that we still refer to the locally derived figure of 25% reduction in passenger-km per person per year. This is the figure that was agreed as part of our climate emergency in 2019 and the figure we are working to at a local level. The Journey to Net Zero is a local transport plan, not a regional transport plan.*

<b>P</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Lisa Loveridge
How much did B&NES Council spend on AECOM reports for Active Travel and Liveable Neighbourhood projects?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllrs Sarah Warren and Manda Rigby
<p><i>B&amp;NES has commissioned AECOM to provide consultancy services to support the Liveable Neighbourhoods project. This support has to date cost £609.5k and has included:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In 2021, prioritisation of 15 liveable neighbourhood schemes, development of public consultations, support at events and provision of data analysis</i></li> <li>• <i>In 2022, development of co-design workshops, support at workshop events and provision of data analysis</i></li> <li>• <i>Throughout 2023, development of pre-liminary designs for measures identified at co-design workshops for 15 liveable neighbourhood schemes</i></li> <li>• <i>Throughout 2023, development of the full business case for submission to WECA</i></li> </ul> <p><i>In addition to the Liveable Neighbourhoods projects, B&amp;NES has commissioned AECOM to provide consultancy services in support of</i></p>			

several Active Travel schemes recently. These included proposals for improving user safety, and proposals for new and improved active travel routes. The incurred costs and commitments for outstanding work for these recent projects are:

- Highway safety improvement studies (six corridors): around £81k
- Bristol to Bath Railway Path extension options report: around £62k (funded through WECA grant fund)
- Bath Quays Links: around £65k spent to-date, with commitments for around a further £45k (funded through WECA grant)

Scholars Way: around £279k spent to-date, with commitments for around a further £98k (funded through WECA grant and B&NES match funding).

<b>P</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Lisa Loveridge
Will the Cabinet conduct a transparent review of the impact of the AECOM reports for Liveable Neighbourhoods, as there is a perceived failure in these tax-payer reports?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Manda Rigby
<p>All technical reports, irrespective of the consultancy producing them, undergo appropriate scrutiny by B&amp;NES officers to ensure that they meet the scope of the commission. They are then further reviewed as part of the project governance process and the Cabinet Member who has responsibility for the functional area or portfolio according to Para 1.6 of the Council's constitution will sign off the next steps in the project delivery. The Cabinet also has responsibility for receiving performance management reports including updates on action plans and major projects, in accordance with Para 2.2.2 of the Council's constitution.</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s77259/Constitution.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s77259/Constitution.pdf</a></p>		
<b>P</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Erica Davies
The Council purchased an electric cargo bike for use by the Parks team. Is this bike still in use and if so, how often is it used?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Sarah Warren



*The Council's Parks & Green Spaces Team did have an electric cargo bike which they had been trialling across their various teams, however, it was proving impractical under our current operational models. Therefore, they approached the events team, who have taken the bike and will use it during Bath Christmas Market supporting the traders with deliveries and product restocking, reducing the need for traders to drive into the city every day to replenish their chalets, as well as the events team in delivering equipment across the city and supporting our climate emergency commitments.*

*The bike will also be used for other events and be made available for other teams, should they require access as we further develop our approach to sustainable transport service delivery.*

<b>P</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Erica Davies
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Please can you give full data on car miles and number of vehicle trips in B&NES since the Journey to Net Zero document was first published. Does the council know where they are in terms of progress in reducing car miles by 25%?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Sarah Warren
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*Whilst it isn't possible to know the exact number of vehicles entering or travelling around Bath & North East Somerset, the Council does monitor traffic flows at key points on the traffic network using a number of permanent traffic count sites. In total there are 73 automatic traffic count sites located across the district and these continually monitor and provide data on traffic flows, traffic speeds and vehicle classification. Using these sites as a proxy for traffic levels across the district, it is possible to monitor traffic flows and the long-term trends in terms of numbers of vehicles on our network.*

*We are currently reviewing the data we have in order to develop a set of meaningful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that we are able to accurately monitor our progress towards the key aims of the Council.*

<b>P</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Erica Davies
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Please can you give full details of how many signalised pedestrian crossings there are in B&NES and how many were optimised for pedestrians in the past 4 years?

<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>In B&amp;NES we have 75 signalised pedestrian crossings and 44 signalised junctions, of which 34 include pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian wait times at signalised crossings in B&amp;NES are significantly lower than in many cities in the UK. In Bath last year we reduced the wait time at the A36/Widcombe Parade crossing and we have also reduced the wait time at the Charles Street/James Street West crossing.</i></p> <p><i>We have recently started a review of the operation of the signalised junctions and crossings in Bath that operate under Urban Traffic Control, which is a system that coordinates a series of traffic signals in close proximity to each other in order to minimise congestion. As we undertake this review we will look to reduce pedestrian wait times. We are also upgrading the system that allows us to remotely monitor traffic signal faults across B&amp;NES, which will enable us to review pedestrian wait times at locations outside of Bath too. These reviews are taking place over the next few years.</i></p> <p><i>In reviewing wait times we have to be mindful of the impact on buses and general traffic, particularly in locations where there are issues with air quality. However, we are reducing pedestrian wait times wherever this is possible.</i></p>		
<b>P</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>
		Barbara Gordon
<p>The Council are presently consulting on emission-based parking charges. As buying a least polluting car requires upfront financing it is often the wealthiest in society that can afford the least polluting cars. Does the Council have any data on who owns the least polluting cars in B&amp;NES using socio-economic data?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>The introduction of emission-based car park charges is proposed for public car parks in Bath to reduce air pollution by encouraging drivers of higher polluting vehicles to seek cleaner, more sustainable travel options, such as the city's park and ride service where the charges will stay the same, rather than pay higher charges to park in the city centre.</i></p> <p><i>The impacts of air pollution on health are well established and any amount of pollution can be damaging to health, but the more that you are</i></p>		

*exposed to, the bigger the risk and this further increased among vulnerable groups including children; older people, and those with lung or heart conditions.*

*We do not have any vehicle ownership data that can be matched to socioeconomic data. However, analysis undertaken for the introduction of emission-based charges for residents on street parking permits in 2021, which looked at permit holder data rather than entire vehicle population, showed that there was no relationship between older/more polluting vehicle ownership and deprivation. It was acknowledged that this did not mean that those individuals living in more deprived areas would not be disproportionately impacted by a higher price for their permit and mitigations, such as a more flexible and affordable 1 month permit, were introduced.*

*Not all drivers using our car parks in Bath will be affected by the increase, only those with more polluting vehicles, and we estimate that 34% of customers (which includes regular commuters and visitors from outside B&NES) will see no change because of these proposals. However, the remaining 66% will see their parking charges increase by on average a modest 11p per hour if they continue to bring their vehicles into the city centre, having a negative impact on the health of people living and visiting the city, rather than seek cleaner and more sustainable travel options.*

*It should also be noted that some of our communities have much lower vehicle ownership rates than others, with recent census data from 2021 showing that within Twerton, which has the highest proportion of households being economically inactive (due to sickness or care of family members), 37% of households own no car or van. Whilst an individual within this community may be impacted by these proposals to a greater extent than one from a less socioeconomically deprived community, there is less impact across the community due to the lower rates of car or van ownership. Those households that do not own cars or vans are equally affected by the health impacts of poor air quality but contribute less to the air pollution that causes it.*

<b>P</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Barbara Gordon
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Please can you give full details of how many 3G pitches have been given planning permission in the last 2 years and how sustainable this product is?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Matt McCabe
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*Only one artificial pitch has been approved (issued) in the last 2 years - at Larkhall Football Club in December 2022. One was also*

*approved at committee last month (at Bath University) but the decision hasn't actually been issued yet.*

*The Planning Department can't comment on the sustainability of artificial grass as a product as that is not a planning issue/area of expertise.*

<b>P</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Matt Cooper
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Keynsham High Street has recently had parklets installed on the street so that residents can find a place to sit and enjoy the local ambience and location. Can the Cabinet Members involved in selecting this location confirm that the Ward councillors in Keynsham were in agreement?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Paul Roper
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*Yes, the Keynsham Ward Councillors were engaged as part a multi-stage design process in the Temple Street Improvement project which included the design and installation of parklets, and there was also full public engagement in the design process. Detailed information summarising the designs and public consultation can be found on the Keynsham High Street Heritage Action Zone website [www.hikeynsham.co.uk](http://www.hikeynsham.co.uk)*

<b>P</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Matt Cooper
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Has the council applied to Active Travel England for funding for School Streets in B&NES? If not, will they do so for Active Travel Fund tranche 5?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Sarah Warren
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*Funding has been identified within B&NES for the development of a number of pilot school street schemes in B&NES in the 23/24 school year.*

*Should this prove to be effective, further funding will be sought from all potential sources to roll this out further.*

<b>P</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Matt Cooper
<p>The Church Commissioners for England, which manages the Church of England's £10.3bn endowment fund, recently decided to "exclude all remaining oil and gas majors from its portfolio, and will exclude all other companies primarily engaged in the exploration, production and refining of oil or gas, unless they are in genuine alignment with a 1.5C pathway by the end of 2023."</p> <p>In a Response to Public Committee Statements at the Avon Pension Fund Committee on 23rd June 2023, it was stated:  "Along with 10 other local government pension schemes across the South West, Avon Pension Fund (APF) is served by the Brunel Pension Partnership, an asset manager based in Bristol. Brunel's climate policy reflects extensive input from all 10 local schemes including a strong consensus that blanket divestment is ineffectual in driving real world impact. However, we do expect companies to demonstrate plans to transition to net zero 2050 or before, underpinned by tangible actions and evidence of progress. Companies with a mere verbal commitment without a credible delivery plan or those with no commitment will form no part of the portfolio beyond 2030."  How will you be influencing the Avon Pension Fund to act in the same way as the Church Commissioners for England?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>Bath and North East Somerset Council delegated its responsibility as administrator for the Avon Pension Fund to the Avon Pension Fund Committee. As such the administration of the Avon Pension Fund is not a Cabinet function. I welcome the statement from the Avon Pension Fund Committee that it is reviewing its climate goals and policies with a view to setting more ambitious targets before the end of 2023 and encourage engagement in that process.</i></p>			
<b>P</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Anne Coghlan
<p>A recent tweet post on Nextdoor by a B&amp;NES councillor states that "in the past four years, B&amp;NES has become a leader amongst councils in Climate Action (i.e reducing the areas carbon footprint). The goal is in the next four years to make B&amp;NES a leader in Climate Adaption."</p> <p>Can you therefore explain how the emission numbers in B&amp;NES have in real terms gone up and explain how B&amp;NES scores badly in national reports?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Sarah Warren

*The most recent greenhouse gas emissions data from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero show that overall district emissions to the end of 2021 continued on a downward trend year on year with the exception of 2021 relative to 2020, where emissions were lower than 2019, but increased compared to 2020 due to Covid 19.*

Footnotes:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1168138/2005-21-local-authority-ghg-emissions-statistical-release-update-060723.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1168138/2005-21-local-authority-ghg-emissions-statistical-release-update-060723.pdf) states: 'Between 2020 and 2021, greenhouse gas emissions increased in 358 out of the 374 local authorities in the UK (96%). This is consistent with the increase in overall UK emissions in 2021, which increased by 5% largely due to COVID-19 restrictions easing and colder temperatures increasing the use of heating in buildings, though emissions were still lower in 330 local authorities (88%) than they were in 2019.'

The most up to date info re district wide GHG emissions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021> . Our latest report <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Climate%20Progress%20Report%202023.pdf>

**Statement by Robbie Bentley to Bath & North East Somerset Council Cabinet Meeting**

The recent announcement of planned closures of several railway station ticket offices threatens the development of an effective and strategic Public Transport Service. I welcome Metro Mayor Dan Norris stating that this policy is a step backwards which at this time is both unwelcome and unnecessary.

In addition, this policy is being carried out without reference in the form of an equality impact assessment. This endangers people's ability and freedom to travel as well as risking deterioration of the standards we expect when travelling by rail. As a regular user of the railways, I often find it uncomfortable on unstaffed or part-time staffed stations which reduces my ability to get about our region. I would ask that a letter be formally written to the Secretary of State for Transport requesting a formal rationale and explanation and to request that a formal equalities assessment be carried out. As a local authority BANES has a statutory duty under Section 17 of the Railways Act 1993 to ensure the ability to travel is maintained.

It is fair to say that this will affect Bath directly as it means fewer people will be able to travel into this wonderful city by Rail. Bath is an extremely popular city for tourism and hospitality, and this could damage the excellent National and International standing it has rightly earned. I would dread to imagine what that could mean for our regional economy.

In conclusion, I would ask you to consider:

Equality might be ensuring every region and every local authority area has a Rail Station and adequate local provision as part of that, but equity would be ensuring that we can have a ticket office to each of them. I would ask you to ensure we retain ALL our ticket offices. This country is run in a too centralised fashion already and we need to stop this policy.

Were all the cuts we have seen recently proposed implemented, we would not only be leaving people without rail station ticket offices but also unable to even get to them when they wanted to travel outside our region. And this will still be the case for the large number of communities that have been cut off from buses due to recent policy which has been reversed.

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Good evening everyone,

I've been asked by our ward councillor, Fiona Gourley, if I would explain how the loss of our local bus service has affected me personally. I'm Joy Arnold and I've lived in Tunley for sixty years, during which time we have always had a bus service to and from Bath, and onwards to Timsbury and Paulton.

The loss of the 768 and 179 bus services is a real problem to me. A few months ago I lost my husband John, who had always driven a car which provided us with family transport, and for John to get to work, but regrettably I never learnt to drive. I used the local bus for getting to and from work in Bath, and since retirement have continued using the bus into Bath to meet with old work friends, go swimming, hospital appointments, visits to the bank etc. My daughter takes me in her car to go shopping once a week.

I'm afraid that my experience of the West Link service has not been good. It is not reliable and is therefore of no use when you have to keep appointments such as doctors, dentist, hospital etc.

A week or so ago I rang West Link at 9.30 AM and the bus picked me up in Tunley at 9.55 to take me to the Odd Down Park & Ride. The driver said that either he or another mini bus would pick me up at the Park & Ride at 12.20 I then went into Bath on the P&R bus returning to the P&R at 11.55 in plenty of time for my 12.20 pickup. No West Link mini bus had arrived by 1.20 Unfortunately I realised that I had left my mobile phone at home, I asked a coach driver if he would kindly ring my daughter at work and ask her to come and pick me up. Her boss was understanding and sent one of his van drivers to pick me up and take me home. I tried ringing West Link when I got home but only had continuous music, by now I'd had enough and gave up. What should have been a 15 minute bus ride home ended up taking me an hour and a half. Luckily the weather was kind that day. When I was waiting in the bus station for the P&R bus there were 4 buses, the 172,173,174 & 522 waiting in the Peasdown – Wells bus bay.

We need a reliable bus service working to a timetable and a dedicated bus stop for West Link at the Park & Ride. My friend and another lady living in the village have had similar experiences as me with West Link, their driver was eventually located having his lunch in Keynsham.

I hope you will be able to persuade Dan Norris to restore our subsidised 768 and 179 bus services. Thank you for listening to me.

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**STATEMENT BY PAUL ROLES – ROSEWELL COURT RESIDENTS’  
ASSOCIATION**

**CABINET - 13 JULY 2023**

First of all, I would like to state my comments are not anti the Theatre Royal. The theatre has been and is an integral part of the city centre and has been for a very long time.

However, I have been living in Rosewell Court since 2014 and in that time, I have seen with my own eyes and have videos and photos of the on-going damage to the pavement on Monmouth Street by the Theatre Royal. Very large articulated trucks mount the pavement every time they back their trucks into the rear of the theatre, this is for scenery for old and new shows this can be 4 times a week. Only a year ago the whole pavement was changed to new blocks at a cost of £15k, in only three weeks new cracks were appearing. Right now, there are 26 damaged and cracked pavement slabs. I have been told by highways that this will be repaired by the council at a cost.

Why are we having to pay for damage by the theatre?

Why did we have to pay for the new slabs that were installed by the council due to damage by the theatre trucks. Isn't this criminal damage?

Or have they been told by the council it's OK, as the only other solution for this is for them to use two small trucks instead of one?

If this is the only solution, then can the paving be replaced with a material that is more appropriate to the use?

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## **Statement to B&NES Council 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Cabinet meeting**

Thankyou chair

I speak as a citizen of Bath whose triple passions are creating thriving resilient places, regenerating socioeconomic systems and empowering collaboration. I'm delighted to be speaking to this ambitious, strongly mandated administration on a visionary corporate strategy to tackle the increasing ecological, social and economic challenges coming our way. But I'm here because, as in my statements<sup>1</sup> to the previous administration, **I want to ensure this Corporate Strategy delivers,**

**and especially in regard to what I see as its Achilles' heels** - community engagement, which though improving is not commensurate with the ambitions of this strategy, and a lack of effective and empowering ways for citizens to "work with [the Council] in addressing their concerns<sup>2</sup>". For the themes and action priorities supporting the 'giving people a bigger say' core policy are less refined as well as less in number than those underpinning the 'tackling the climate and ecological emergency' core policy. (For example, the "equality and respect<sup>3</sup>" theme needs to go beyond statutory equality compliance and rigorously ensure disadvantaged and less well connected citizens are in practice able to participate in decision making and actions.) This concerns me, for given the interdependence<sup>4</sup> between the Strategy's two core policies, this deficiency could undermine the delivery of the Corporate Strategy as a whole.

I am also impatient with the linear mechanistic presentation of policies, themes and priorities, for **the problems besetting us are complex, contextual and interconnected, and so they need to be co-considered, co-addressed and outcomes multiply and diversely evaluated.** Were the themes and action priorities to be presented more holistically, your manifesto promises<sup>5</sup> around, for example, "regeneration and localisation in food production and farming", community access to land for food growing, and "low impact agricultural dwellings to support the long term viability of urban agriculture" might have had more prominence, and in co-addressing several corporate themes and priorities, would have had a better chance of catalysing<sup>6</sup> the change citizens, and the poli-crises we face, demand.

**Not only can a good picture speak louder than words, it can also broaden the locus for collaboration, behaviour change, and wider systemic change.**

- So why do we citizens have to wait to the penultimate page of this corporate strategy for a reference to the Doughnut when officers and its partners have been talking about it amongst themselves for 2 or so years?
- Why have the ideas and perspectives of less connected or affiliated citizens and communities been excluded from your "work with partners to identify key challenges for our area and shared outcomes" ?
- And whose ambition (or lack of it) is being furthered in the new Economic Development Strategy "currently being worked on" by a Board comprising "anchor" institutions?

**So bring on D.E.A.L (Doughnut Economic Action Lab)'s regenerative and distributive "decision wheel" indeed! And let all of us join the party** in the "space for local communities and organisations to collaborate and innovate<sup>7</sup>" for **the more people that are connecting and collaborating, the better "our shared future"<sup>8</sup> will be.**

***Nicolette Boater,***  
***Founder & Regenerative Economic Consultant, Emergent Enterprise***

*Also:*

*Chair, B&NES Council's Bath Area 'Connecting Communities' Forum*  
*Board Member, Bathscape Landscape Partnership*  
*Trustee, Promoting Economic Pluralism*

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<sup>1</sup> This statement builds on

- [my statement to 3.2.20 Corporate PDS](#) on the new “mould-breaking“ Corporate Strategy & delivery framework
- [my statement to 22.7.20 Cabinet](#) where I highlight how in practice the Corporate Strategy is rather exclusive
- [my statement to 9.3.23 Cabinet](#) on “three underutilised keys to unlocking change at the pace and scale we require”,

for although I am pleased that much of what I implored the last administration to do around strategic decision-making frameworks, narratives and metrics is reflected in this draft Corporate Strategy, I am still left wanting.

<sup>2</sup> The new commitment under the core policy of “giving people a bigger say” proposed on page 5 of the draft 2023 -2027 Corporate Strategy

<sup>3</sup> “Equality and respect” is one of 3 themes supporting the new commitment of ‘listen to and work with residents to act on their concerns included on page 5 of the draft 2023 -2027 Corporate Strategy under the core policy of “giving people a bigger say”

<sup>4</sup> See [my statement to 9.3.23 Cabinet](#) for a deeper insight into this systemic interdependence

<sup>5</sup> For as the [Land Gap report](#) concludes

- “Food system transformation based on agroecological principles is critical for achieving socioecological resilience to climate change, as well as the promotion and realization of human rights, and in particular the right to food”

and with a key message to policymakers

- “Agroecological principles contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation by restoring and enhancing ecosystem functions and services, while respecting and strengthening livelihoods (particularly of IPs and LCs), providing enough healthy and diverse food, and fostering human rights promotion and realization.”

<sup>6</sup> See page 24 of [Liberal Democrats’ manifesto](#)

<sup>7</sup> See page 9 of the draft 2023 -2027 Corporate Strategy

<sup>8</sup> For as I was cited in the subtitle on page 3 the [June 2021 “One Shared Vision”](#) report:

- **“Strong and resilient societies, economies and ecosystems evolve and thrive on diversity, inclusion and connectivity.”**

## **STATEMENT BY CLLR DINE ROMERO**

### **THE FUTURE OF THE CULVERHAY SCHOOL SITE**

I am here tonight to ask you to confirm your commitment to vocational education on the Culverhay school site, and, at the same time, as it is the same site, to confirm that you do wish to see the swimming pool reopened.

With regards to the school, I am aware that by there are plans for both primary and secondary alternative provision to be brought together in a new build replacing several of the stand-alone buildings. This I supported as cabinet member and continue to do so.

However, this should not be the limits of this administration's ambition.

Despite a commitment within the Lib Dem's manifesto of 2023 and indeed from 2019 the future for the main part of the site still is unclear.

We know there are education inequalities within our population, some of these are generational, we know that the current, mostly academic education offer is not right for every child, we also know we need to build up a skilled work force for the future in particular in green and renewable industries, so I hope you will work with Bath college to address these issues and bring vocational education to Culverhay.

As Cllr May is very aware, the college has been working over a number of years, and a number of administrations, on a proposal for vocational education at Culverhay for children from the age of 14.

They have asked for certainty from the council on Culverhay, without this firm assurance potential capital investment and the project itself could be at risk. So please let the college know that you, we, are committed to vocational education at Culverhay.

While I'm talking about Culverhay I also ask that this administration looks at reopening the swimming pool, swimming is a life skill, as well as a great form of exercise for many more people than high impact sports and should be accessible for everyone. The city centre pool and the one in Keynsham are not near enough to be a viable choice for many local families on low incomes or for older people so with Culverhay closed they no longer go swimming at all.

It is well known that swimming pools are expensive to run, since they have high energy bills, it is true few make money, but I would hope that improving the health of the residents in one of the more deprived parts of Bath would counter a purely financial argument.

Culverhay's aged boilers are well passed their best, so you could use this as a chance to try something new and radical and showcase your commitment to green energy. Why not create a self-sufficient system to heat the pool a system which is reliant entirely on renewable energy? Maybe you will create enough energy to heat and power the rest of the building?

If you open the pool and properly promote the sports facilities, you could finally address in a meaningful way health inequalities.

You have a golden opportunity to do better for the population in the SW of the city and for future generations across Bath.

But you need a vision for long term economic, social and health improvements, over many years and generations.

Will you commit to doing this, will you do everything you can to enable vocational education at Culverhay? Will you commit to addressing health inequalities where it is needed and so commit to reopen the swimming pool?

I hope so and would like to add an invitation to Cllr May, cabinet member for Children's services to update the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on progress.



## **STATEMENT BY MALCOLM BALDWIN**

### **CABINET MEETING – 13 JULY 2023**

This evening Cabinet you will be asked to approve the draft Corporate Strategy for 2023 to 2027.

(In reality this administration's mandate has the almost unique opportunity of being extended for an eight-year term not merely a four-year term.....your new current majority is extremely unlikely to be completely overturned in a single electoral contest in four years' time!)

Key areas such as the general condition of our public realm, the level and quality of support we give to the more 'distressed' members of our community and the quality, speed and effectiveness of our response to the impending climate crisis all require not just repetition but new focus ..... time to press the re-set button!

Within the context of both public realm and climate response improvements, our ability to turbo-charge and implement carefully selected but MEANINGFUL Liveable Neighbourhoods (LNs) which bring real value to a particular local neighbourhood but also to our city as a whole is vitally important.

A few pertinent quotations:

"We are a Council that listens to residents and takes action."

Source: B&NES Liberal Democrat Manifesto May-2023.

"Liveable Neighbourhoods sensitively implemented and effectively monitored ARE achievable. The mandate you have should not be wasted.....the LN genie is well and truly out of the bottle, be brave [BOLD: see below] in your implementation!"

Source: Public statement to Cabinet - May 2021.

"The debate about LNs has never been about mere changes to traffic flows, but rather about a real vision of how we can make a positive difference to our city, its residents, its visitors and as a consequence to its local businesses and local economy as a whole." Cabinet, we need that regeneration!

Source: Public statement to Cabinet - June 2021.

"We will continue to work with residents on designing and delivering MEANINGFUL improvements, such as reduced rat-running and speeding, through our Liveable Neighbourhood programme."

Source: B&NES Liberal Democrat Manifesto - May 2023.

"We have two core policies - tackling the climate and ecological emergency and giving people a bigger say."

Source: B&NES Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027.

"Detailed designs for 15 [liveable] neighbourhoods are almost ready for publication".

Source: B&NES Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027.

"Our four values - bold, empowered, transparent and supportive - continue to underpin all of our work."

Source: B&NES Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027.

So four stated values act as a useful catalyst for four questions:

- **BOLD:** Why not introduce and energise officers to 'turbo-charge' a MEANINGFUL LN which would bring, by its location in a key central or near central location, real added value to a substantial local neighbourhood as well as to our city as a whole.....its residents, businesses and visitors?
- **EMPOWERED:** Why not involve/empower that relevant community and its representatives in further developing, alongside appropriate officers, the 'ground-up' concept that the community has already proactively designed?
- **TRANSPARENT:** When can the detailed designs for the stated ".....almost ready for publication" LN concepts be made available to the respective communities to which they relate?
- **SUPPORTIVE:** Where local communities or particular catchment areas have already been pro-active in delivering their own public realm improvements, with the support of often very supportive B&NES officers, why not reciprocate in initiating a meaningful Liveable Neighbourhood to underpin the work already commenced?

.....and one final question, unrelated to the Council's stated values above:

- What criteria will be used to re-prioritise the remaining LN area 'candidates' within the 15 designated in the "Liveable Neighbourhoods" document dated 23 June 2021?

Cabinet, it will be more than disappointing and could be judged by some as less than satisfactory if we are unable to see at least the commencement of the introduction of a substantive and meaningful Liveable Neighbourhood, such as that of CARA's concept, within our city within at least the last quarter of 2023.

It's time to press the re-set button!

Note:

Appendix (i) below: [Liveable Neighbourhood/LTN] Criteria Assessment - 17th March 2021.

(Above Appendix re-included for new Cabinet members who might not be familiar with this 'journey' which actually commenced for CARA in September 2019.)

## **Cabinet - 13 July 2023**

### **Item no. - 10 Matters Referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Bodies**

#### **Feedback to Cabinet following consideration of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 by the Corporate PDS Panel**

1. The Corporate Strategy forms a key part of the council's Policy and Budget Framework, with the Constitution recommending that prior to adoption components of the framework be subject to scrutiny. In response, the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panel met on 11 July 2023 to consider the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027.
2. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Priorities and Delivery introduced the draft Strategy to the Panel. PDS members were then given an opportunity to ask questions, from which some of the following themes emerged:

#### **Cost of living challenges**

3. Members highlighted the current cost of living challenges faced by many residents and asked whether the Corporate Strategy provided a framework for the council to offer appropriate support and whether our economic policies were accordingly aligned.
4. Reassurance was given that the Corporate Strategy principles committed to tackle inequalities and to protect the most vulnerable across communities. The Cabinet Member highlighted that for some of our population the challenges were generational and there was a need to address these inequalities; the Strategy offered this opportunity.
5. Examples of how the council was already offering support to residents were provided, including the wellbeing hub. In regards alignment with economic policies, the Panel heard that the Strategy prioritised good jobs to improve the local median wage for residents.

#### **Giving residents a bigger say**

6. Members questioned the mechanisms and strategies in place to allow residents to have a bigger say.
7. Reassurance was given that this remained one of the council's two key policies. Through examples such as the area forums, consultations, parish liaison there was extensive opportunity for engagement.
8. The draft Strategy included the extended commitment to listen to and work with residents to act on their concerns. The Cabinet Member in response would be exploring new engagement opportunities to help further understand the key issues for local communities. An example of an interactive area forum where attendees were invited to vote was discussed and seen as a good example of innovation.

## **Providing better jobs**

9. The Panel questioned how the Strategy would lead to the creation of good jobs?
10. Members were told that the new Economic Strategy, which will underpin the Corporate Strategy, was developing a new approach to the local economy, addressing the area's strengths and weaknesses, and identifying how BANES will move towards a resilient, sustainable economy with good jobs that increase median wages.

## **Decision wheel**

11. Clarification was requested in relation to the bracketed wording contained within the framework – p7-8.
12. It was confirmed that the council was intending to implement a decision wheel to ensure the Strategy is embedded in all decisions taken across the authority. The decision wheel would include a social and economic foundation, an environmental and ecological ceiling and a middle ring where the council worked with communities. Examples of decision wheels had been seen in other councils across the south west.

## **The potential impact of external factors**

13. The Panel asked whether the council was able to respond to external shocks, such as a potential deepening cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures.
14. Members noted that the council had successfully responded to the pandemic, as an example and had an officer team that was adaptable, and which put the community first. The draft Strategy reemphasised the council's purpose of improving people's lives and this would continue to be the core focus for the authority, in the face of any potential external challenges.
15. It was confirmed that the council extensively modelled against the impact of various inflationary scenarios, including best case and worse case using a traffic light rating.

## **Resolved**

- i) **To thank the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Priorities and Delivery for sharing the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 with the policy development and scrutiny function**
- ii) **To ask Cabinet to note the summary of the Corporate PDS meeting held on 11 July 2023**
- iii) **To request that Cabinet continues to engage with PDS on delivery of its Corporate Strategy 2023-2027**

**Cllr Robin Moss Chair – Corporate PDS Panel**

**11.07.2023**