

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 25th February, 2025

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Matt McCabe, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren CBE, Andy Wait and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Deborah Collins, Sarah Evans, Alan Hale, Ann Morgan, June Player, Malcolm Treby and David Wood

8 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors who pay Council Tax, are Parish Councillors or School Governors and therefore had an interest in these items, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote on agenda item 8 - Budget & Council Tax 2024/25.

In addition, specific dispensations were granted for the below Councillors who have a family member in receipt of Council SEND support, social care support or are working for B&NES;

Sarah Warren

Saskia Heijltjes

Sarah Moore

Lucy Hodge

Tim Ball

Steve Hedges

10 MINUTES - 21ST NOVEMBER 2024

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Mark Elliott, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting of 21st November 2024, and the Special Council Meeting of 21st November 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair made the usual housekeeping announcements about phones and microphones.

The Chair offered congratulations to Julie Devey, a Senior Registration Officer, who was recently awarded an OBE for her work campaigning to tackle male violence.

The Chair then asked Councillors to stand for a minute's silence as a mark of respect following the recent death of former Councillors Doug Deacon and Jeremy Sparks.

12 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

13 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Alasdair Barron made a statement about the Sydney Place Liveable neighbourhood, and Liveable Neighbourhoods more widely. In response to a query from Councillor Shaun Hughes about the effect the roadworks and closure to the A36 had had on the traffic data, Alasdair responded that what it meant was that, in addition to the 3,100 vehicles displaced from Sydney road during the trial, an additional 15,000 vehicles will be added to the congestion when the road fully reopens meaning the traffic increases on the boundary roads will rise by a further 50%. Councillor Tim Warren asked if Alasdair considered it was beneficial for the air quality to have a Liveable Neighbourhood in his area to which Alasdair responded that he did think in theory it was, but the additional traffic has meant that air quality was worse and it did not benefit him personally. Councillor Joanna Wright asked how the criteria for the key decision had been made. Alasdair replied that it was his understanding that, in law, a decision which affects more than one ward is a key decision. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked, in the context of road diversions, if Alasdair was aware of the benefits of the D2X being diverted through Radstock and its popularity. Alasdair replied that he was not aware. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Jon Avent addressed Councillors on the subject of the Sydney Place Liveable Neighbourhood and Liveable Neighbourhoods more generally. Councillor Tim Warren noted Jon's comment that he had not any response from his ward councillor and wanted to check if this was the case. Jon confirmed it was. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Jon how long an ETRO could be in place before a decision was needed, to which Jon replied that he did not know. Councillor Shaun Hughes checked Jon was aware that the decision had been called in, to which Jon replied

that he was. Councillor Kevin Guy asked Jon about contact from the Liveable Neighbourhood team, to which Jon replied that he had been talking about a response from the ward member and there had just been one email about a basement vault. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Benazir Jatoi, one of 8 trustees of the charity Voices, a small Bath based, grassroots organisation that provides domestic abuse survivors prevention and recovery support. Councillor Joanna Wright asked what would be the consequences if this support was not available. Benazir explained it would be a false economy due to the costs of rehabilitating survivors. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if the charity would like to meet the Cabinet Member for Adult Services, to which Benazir agreed. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Tara Gelpy also spoke in support of the charity Voices, as a survivor of abuse who had been supported by the charity. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Tara what she thought might have happened if she had not been able to access this support. Tara replied that she would probably be in another abusive relationship as she had not been able to recognise the situation she was in. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Emily Denne, the CEO of Voices, addressed the meeting. Councillor Kevin Guy extended an invitation to Emily to meet with the Cabinet Member for Adult Services which she accepted. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Emily about the impact for young people in the longer term, to which Emily explained that most of the work they do is with adults, and so they support parents to help their children address trauma, which is vitally important as research shows the very high rates of children becoming abusers if they are not supported. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked about the ideal referral route from the RUH, to which Emily explained that the best case scenario was for hospitals to have an IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) who can then refer on. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Grace Wiltshire addressed Council about the plight of refugees in Bath, and in particular Palestinian refugees, and asked about progress on various aspects. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Jess Collier made a statement opposing the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme and calling for the Council to listen to views and reverse the decision. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Jess how many children attending the local school. Jess responded that she did not have that figure. A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

David Redgewell made a statement about various transport issues including the transport levy, the community transport network and the importance of continuing to work with WECA to reduce reliance on Westlink. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked David about the accuracy of real-time timetables, to which he agreed that they needed to be sorted out.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their statements, which were referred to the relevant Cabinet Member, Member or officer.

14 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2025/26 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The Council considered a report presenting the revenue and capital budgets together with proposals for increases in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept for 2025/26.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss and **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with rule 3.1.14 (Suspension of rules), rule 3.1.33 be suspended to allow the length of speeches for the Budget debate to be varied (NB: unless otherwise stated, all mover speeches 5 minutes, all others 3 minutes).

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor Paul May, it was

RESOLVED

1. To approve;

- The General Fund net revenue budget for 2025/26 of **£151.71m** and the individual service cash limits for 2025/26 as outlined in Annex 1.
- The savings and income plans outlined in Annex 2(i), funding requirements 2(ii), in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3.
- An increase in Council Tax of 2.99% in 2025/26 (an increase of £51.92 per Band D property or £1 per week).
- An increase of 2% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this service. This is equivalent to an increase of £34.72 on a Band D property (67p per week).
- The movement in reserves outlined in section 5.6 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £12.58m within a risk assessed range requirement of £11.8m - £13.0m.
- To note the Children's Services management plan update set out in section 5.2.6 of the report.
- The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4.
- The Capital Programme for 2025/26 of £76.41m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.8.3, and notes the programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme.
- The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(i) to Annex 5(iv)

to the relevant Director in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(v).
 - The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6.
 - The MRP Policy attached at Annex 7.
 - The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.8.7.
 - The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8.
 - The Community Contribution Fund extension outlined section 5.5.
 - The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/26 shown in the following link: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/Bath%20%26%20NE%20Some%20S13A%20202526%20FINAL%20.pdf> and referred to in 5.3.5 of the report.
 - The Fees and Charges schedule for 2025/26 at Annex 11 and support its publication following approval of the budget, with delegation to amend individual costs within the schedule in line with market needs, to the Director of Place Management, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
- 2.2 That the Council approves the technical resolutions that are derived from the budget report, and all the figures in that report, including the precepts for towns, parishes and other precepting bodies as set out in Annex 13.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet note the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in 5.7.
- 2.4 That the Cabinet note the budget consultation responses in Annex 10, and the PDS Panel feedback in Annex 12.

[Notes;

1. *An amendment was moved by Councillor Shaun Hughes and seconded by Councillor Tim Warren to reinstate the Parking Reinvestment fund (attached to the minutes). This was lost on a named vote;*

Councillors in favour (16): - Councillors David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Sam Ross, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Tim Warren, Joanna Wright.

Councillors against (36) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper,

Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait, Sarah Warren

Councillors abstaining (0)

2. An amendment was moved by Councillor Joanna Wright and seconded by Councillor Sam Ross, containing a series of proposals (attached to the minutes). This was lost on a named vote;

Councillors in favour (3): - Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross and Joanna Wright

Councillors against (49) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Samantha Kelly, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (0)

3. The above successful resolution was carried on a named vote;

Councillors in favour (36): - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Andy Wait and Sarah Warren.

Councillors against (8): - Councillors David Biddleston, Chris Dando, Liz Hardman, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Tim Warren.

Councillors abstaining (8): - Councillors Colin Blackburn, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Sam Ross, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Joanna Wright]

15 TREASURY MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

The Council considered its Treasury Management Strategy statement for 2025/26, fulfilling its legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code which requires this.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliot, seconded by Councillor Paul Roper, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Approve the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (**Appendix 1**); and
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in **Appendix 1**.

16 PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW

Following the recent by-election in Salford, the Council was required to re-consider its proportionality arrangements. The Chair referred to the alternative proportionality table that had been circulated (and is attached to these minutes) which automatically comes into play should any Member vote against.

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

RESOLVED to approve the circulated proportionality table, which shows the Restructuring Implementation Committee as a proportionate committee.

[Notes;

- 1. The above resolution was carried, with one Member voting against.]*

17 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement about funding for SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). A full copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and the online record.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

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COUNCIL MEETING 25TH FEBRUARY 2025

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Public (item 7)

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. Alasdair Barron | Liveable Neighbourhoods and Council governance |
| 2. Jon Avent | Sydney Place Liveable Neighbourhoods |
| 3. David Redgewell | Transport issues |
| 4. Benazir Jatoi | Survivors of domestic abuse |
| 5. Tara Gelpey | Funding for recovery support for domestic abuse survivors |
| 6. Emily Denne | The importance of prevention, early intervention and recovery work for survivors (and their children) of Domestic Abuse as well the crisis services commissioned by the Local Authority |
| 7. Grace Wiltshire | Refugees in Bath |
| 8. Jess Collier | Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood |

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Presentation to BathNES Council, 25 Feb 2025.

'Chair

Thank you for the opportunity to address Council.

My name is Alasdair Barron, and I'm speaking as a Bathwick Estate resident.

My comments concern the Sydney Place LTN and LTNs more widely.

It is hard to understand why this LTN was built out in final form, before the start of the trial. Why was it not trialled with temporary planters – which would have been low cost, easy to install and easy to remove. Surely, in a genuine trial this would have been the norm? Your action seems to presuppose that the trial would be made permanent, otherwise why would you spend £306,000 before the trial started?

The displacement of 4,000 traffic movements a day onto the A36 is significant. So surely the concerns of Bathwick Estate residents who live adjacent to it, should have been a priority?

Another hard thing to swallow is that the LTN benefits a small number of residents when many more object. To me this is simply favouritism.

The Council's own press announcement just before making it permanent, recognised that only 24% of respondents to the public consultation survey supported it, demonstrating its unpopularity.

Regarding trialling: the A36 has been closed at Limpley Stoke for long periods. That means traffic flows are not representative and so making decisions based on them must be unreliable.

When multiple communities and interest groups are involved, a Single Member Decision is not appropriate. Surely the whole Council, with Councillors representing many different groups, would want to consider those many interests and to make that decision as a whole Council?

More widely, the LTN issue is extremely divisive and will continue to be so – just look at the multiple opposition groups across Bath who oppose or feel under represented in the decision making process.

One reason for that is that the Council's power is massive compared to that of busy individuals. It's simply unrealistic to expect individuals to read numerous documents, but why even bother when there's a widespread feeling that nothing will alter the Council's mind!

My plea to every Councillor is to get engaged, because the injustices built into the system won't go away and need urgent resolution.

Thank you. I'd be happy to answer any questions.'

25/2/25 Alasdair Barron

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Presentation to BANES Council, 25th February 2025 – Jon Avent

Chair, I'm grateful for the opportunity to address Council members

I am Jon Avent, I am speaking as a Bathwick resident and a Bath business owner.

My comments concern LTNs across Bath but most specifically the Sydney Place LTN.

I've lived in Bath over 60 years, born here, went to school here, worked here, run my own business here and work on historic buildings across the uk and beyond. Despite all the wonderful cities I visit I've chosen Bath.... and specifically Bathwick to me, the most Liveable of Neighbourhoods imaginable.

Sydney Gardens opened in 1795 to provide an open space for amusements and relaxation for the residents of Bath..... the most beautiful place to walk, preambles...relax... all the things BANES believe didn't exist and will come from closing Sydney Place.

But all that has changed by the actions of this council.... Trying to solve a problem that didn't exist.

The mythical rat run..... creating dangerous roads....
Not true.... A FOI request showed no recorded accidents on the road..... why would BANES lie about this?

In fact the road where the traffic is displaced to, Beckford Road and Bathwick street did have recorded accidents.....

So BANES solution to safety?..... close the safer road.

BANES claimed they would consult local residents on the trial closure.

So I asked BANES what was the criteria on which a decision will be made? ...
SILENCE.

Never mind.... We have local ward councilors who will surely listen to residents.

Cllr Rigby... SILENCE.. NO RESPONSE and No engagement.

Monitoring data from the trial.... That would be useful to look at and form an opinion on what the trial revealed..... BANES refused to release the data, saying the trial was 'continuing' and the data hadn't been analyzed yet.... The

data was eventually released.... But only after the single member decision had been made.

The closure means I travel with other vehicles heading to the north of the city when I want to go south adding congestion..... or alternatively I now take the real 'rat runs' that BANES have created.

The extra traffic congestion around the Beckford Road and Bathwick street junction is causing impatient delayed drivers to jump the red lights. I witness this regularly. Such dangerous behavior occurring at the entrance to Sydney Gardens.... the Liveable oasis that was always there but is now more dangerous to access as a result of this scheme.

The majority of local residents are against the New Sydney Place Liveable neighborhood scheme and that is well documented.

I visited our MP Wera Hobhouse to express my views and objections to the New Sydney Place LTN and was reassured by her support. I commend her willingness to engage and discuss. Unfortunately she also informed me that the council would not engage with her.

We have an MP that listens but a council that does not.

The Nolan Principles require councils to adhere to standards of.....

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

We all reasonably expect councils to support their local residents and to take heed of expressed views..... that is democracy.

We expect councils to fix things that are broken.... not break things that are working perfectly well.

Bathwick used to be the most beautiful Liveable neighborhood..... until this council stopped listening to the people who live there.

25th February: Full BANES council meeting
VOICES

Dear Council members,

I sit here before you as one of 8 trustees of Voices, a small Bath based, grassroots charity that provides domestic abuse survivors prevention and recovery support.

Voices was established in 2014 by 4 survivors of domestic violence who believed, after having gone through the existing services in BANES, that the system did not cater effectively to them – their experience was never heard, valued or used to better services.

For the past 11 years this small organisation has had a huge impact on the lives of survivors and has provided trauma informed services to hundreds of survivors of domestic abuse. Testimonies by survivors themselves detail the change Voices has made to their outlook and future. Voices has been successful in creating a platform where lived experience informs and improves service provision.

Having worked in the area of human rights and GBV policy and legislation for many years with the UN, I feel I can say with some degree of confidence that Voices's approach of centring the survivor is unique and fundamental to bring about change. In addition to providing services to survivors, it has also made some very effective interventions such as being a member of **the** CAFCASS learning and improvement board and working with UCL and Bristol university on GBV related research projects that aim to feed into future govt policy.

Voices is now in a funding crisis. Because of this - we are foreseeing potential cuts in our service provision or even closure of SOME of our services.

BANES relies on charities, including on VOICES, to pick up on their core work. Are you, respected Councillors, prepared to see a charity close that provides essential services that the local authority itself relies on and refers clients to?

1 in 4 women suffer domestic abuse in the UK¹ and the figures are only rising, with domestic abuse making up 18% of all recorded crime in England and Wales². Violence Against Women and Girls is now considered a national epidemic and the UK rightly has international obligations to proactively take steps to prevent, respond and support survivors. All political parties also have made some form of commitment towards addressing GBV. Why then are there no funds when there are promises?

¹ <https://refuge.org.uk/what-is-domestic-abuse/the-facts/#:~:text=Fact%3A%20The%20police%20receive%20a,domestic%20abuse%20in%20her%20lifetime.>

² <https://www.npcc.police.uk/our-work/violence-against-women-and-girls/>

According to Women's Aid there is a £321 million gap in domestic abuse services³. Yet funders are closing and Councils are cutting down on funding – it is the perfect storm.

Voices representatives come before you tonight to seek your support: Will the council meet us to discuss long term CORE funding support and a free or subsidized safe space to continue our vital work?

Without this, many survivors of abuse - the most vulnerable amongst us, often where children are also involved - will be left without the support they need to recover and move forward.

Thank you for your time.

³ <https://www.womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-publish-price-of-safety-report-exposing-cost-of-fleeing-domestic-abuse/>

Honorable members of the Bath Council Budget Team,

We are here today to speak on behalf of Voices a Bath based grassroots organisation that provides domestic abuse survivors with longterm prevention and recovery support.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Tara Gelpy and I am a survivor of domestic abuse and I also work for Voices. I am here to share my story, to express my deep gratitude for the support I received from Voices, and to raise an urgent concern: **Voices service provision could be at risk due to lack of financial support**, and it is simply unacceptable that our council still has not supported this essential service that so many individuals and services refer into.

When I first reached out to Voices, I was broken, overwhelmed by trauma, and unsure of how to move forward. Voices gave me more than just help; it gave me a lifeline. Through their Freedom Programme and Recovery Toolkit group work, coupled with professional trauma counselling, I was able to start the long journey of healing. These services work and were crucial not only for my recovery, but for the recovery of many others in our community who are survivors of domestic abuse and health of our community.

However, Voices is now in a precarious position. Despite the incredible impact they have had on survivors like me, the organisation is facing an uncertain future. **It is now time for this council to take the responsibility to your constituency to ensure that Voices, a service that has been providing crucial, life-saving support for years continues to do so long term.** If this is not addressed many survivors will be without a guaranteed source of help. If Voices were to close, countless survivors would lose access to the resources that have helped them rebuild their lives and in turn their families.

The cost of domestic abuse to our public services is staggering, from healthcare to housing and law enforcement. By investing in Voices, the council can save not only lives but also reduce long-term costs to the public purse. The need for a **free or subsidized safe space** for Voices to continue its vital work is urgent. Without it, many survivors will be left without the support they need to recover and move forward.

I urge the council to act now. Financially supporting **Voices is not just a moral responsibility; it is an investment in the long-term well-being of our community and a chance to break the cycle of abuse.**

Thank you for your time and for considering the needs of survivors in our community.

Footnotes.

The **Freedom Programme** group work was particularly transformative. It helped me understand the dynamics of abusive relationships and the patterns of control that I had experienced. Being part of a group of survivors also allowed me to feel seen, heard, and less isolated. It reminded me that I was not alone, and that I could regain control of my life.

The **Recovery Toolkit** group work was another vital part of my journey. It provided me with practical tools to rebuild my confidence and emotional resilience. Through this, I learned how to set boundaries, manage my emotions, and protect myself in the future. This wasn't just about surviving; it was about learning to thrive again.

The **six months of professional specialist counseling** I received allowed me to process the deep emotional trauma of my experiences. It was through these sessions that I started to heal, unpacking the complexities of the abuse I had endured. The support I received was life-changing, and I am forever grateful for it and to all at Voices.

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Emily Denne and I am CEO of Voices charity.

Voices is a small Bath based, grassroots organisation that provides Domestic Abuse survivors prevention and recovery support.

We were founded ten years ago by four survivors of Domestic Abuse who recognised that while support existed for those in crisis, there was a significant gap - no one was prioritising their recovery, or that of their children.

A decade on and we continue to be led by the voices of lived experience, working to support survivors of abuse, not just to recover, but to thrive. Our outcomes measures consistently demonstrate the profound impact of our work:

- 85% of clients feel more capable of recognising abusive behavior as a result of our support.
- 91% gain a deeper understanding of the impact of abuse on children, thereby breaking the cycle of abuse for future generations.
- 81% of clients reported improved health and well-being, underscoring the effectiveness of our holistic approach to recovery.
- 85% expressed an increased understanding of trauma and how to manage their symptoms.

Nationally, there is a cost of living crisis and grants and trusts are closing down or changing their parameters. As we move into a new financial year, Voices is facing its toughest year to date, with many of our existing funding sources set to end in March.

At the same time, every year, we see an increase in our referral numbers and the demand on our service consistently outweighs capacity. This is only set to rise, with the news that another wonderful local charity providing trauma-informed support is due to close in March as a result of a lack of funding.

The financial costs of Domestic Abuse are stark. It costs the UK £66 billion per annum; with research by the Government indicating that the average cost of domestic abuse per individual victim is £34,215. Without preventative and recovery services, these costs will only increase.

We know that every £1 spent on victim services represents a £9 saving to the public purse. Put simply, it is a false economy to not fund Domestic Abuse support - and yet we receive no support from the Council.

Today therefore, I am asking you to change this. Can the council provide financial support to Voices?

If you cannot provide financial support, I urge you to consider helping us in alternative ways. Can you help us with a fundraising drive, can you share our communications, or can you offer infrastructure and a safe space to deliver our services?

Please support Voices and help us continue to keep delivering trauma informed specialist services for victims and survivors across BANES.

Thank you.

I want to talk about refugees in Bath, particularly Palestinian refugees, and ask what the Council is doing to support them.

I've been a volunteer with Bath Welcomes Refugees for the past 10 years. BWR works with refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine in the main. Through this experience, I've seen first-hand the challenges refugees face when trying to rebuild their lives in a new country. It's been an eye-opening and rewarding experience.

I want to emphasise that I'm speaking here tonight totally in a personal capacity and not on behalf of Bath Welcomes Refugees.

Bath Welcomes Refugees is a charity that helps with housing, furnishing homes, and providing resettlement and befriending services. They also offer vital support in areas such as English lessons, navigating benefits, finances, and accessing healthcare, as well as running social groups, gardening projects, and homework support

I'm proud to be part of a city that provides such comprehensive support to those in need.

However, while the UK has rightly welcomed nearly a quarter of a million Ukrainian refugees, the response to Palestinian refugees has been different. Most Palestinians do not want to leave their homeland, but due to generations of displacement and ongoing conflict, many have no choice but to flee. Unfortunately, the UK asylum system is difficult to navigate, and there's no specific resettlement programme for Palestinians. This leaves many in limbo, struggling to reunite with their families and access the services they need to rebuild their lives.

The UK has a long history of offering sanctuary to those fleeing war and persecution, and I believe that same principle should be extended to Palestinians.

With that in mind, I have two important questions for the Council regarding local refugee support:

- 1) At the last Council Meeting which I watched online, the Council were informed of the appointment of a refugee officer. Can you provide more details of their role and how they plan to address the needs of refugees including Palestinian refugees?
- 2) Could the Council give a report about how it supports refugees to resettle in the area as it feels important to have that information in the public domain?

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Jess Collier statement

Thank you for having me. I am here today as a resident of Beckford Road, regarding councillor Mark Elliott's single decision to permanently close Sydney Road/Sydney Place, otherwise known as A36 South.

Beckford Road, similar to A36 south has numerous residential properties, but unlike the A36 south, Beckford Road also has a cycle lane, a bus stop, is the entrance to Bathwick estate, the main entrance to Sydney gardens and the road used to access the local primary school.

Now because of the closure of A36 south, residents, cyclists, pedestrians and school children, and bus passengers are now faced with a 40% increase in traffic, that's 10,000+ cars every single day. Beckford Road is simply not built to accommodate this vast amount of traffic so what we now see is congestion. Local busses stuck in traffic, emergency services stuck in traffic, cyclists dangerously navigating around traffic, near misses, actual collisions, drivers sounding their horns, drivers shouting/swearing and vehicles now sitting on the yellow boxes preventing pedestrians from safely crossing the road (which I encountered walking to this very meeting)

All of this is happening, whilst A36 south residents brag to the local media that they are enjoying hearing bird song.

It was fine I kept saying to myself, during the trial, because the council would surely read the findings of the report they themselves have commissioned and make the right decision to undo what they have created, an unlivable neighbourhood.

On the 7th Feb the final report was published and i simply cannot understand how this council can claim this is a success.

The key findings show:

- This scheme has had a detrimental negative impact to hundreds of residents, local businesses and the local primary school, creating an unsafe environment for those walking or cycling through the area, including residents, commuters, school children and visitors
- Local Primary School Headteacher has strongly opposed the scheme noting its now dangerous at drop off and pick up times; and now less safe for those walking to school.
- Parents have commented the LTN trial has made 'cycling and walking to school with my children a more dangerous experience'.
- The Holbourne Museum have opposed the scheme, noting the increase in congestion deterring museum visitors.

- Out of the 1889 replies to the consultation, the vast majority opposed (76%)
- Overall vehicle numbers have not changed, traffic has simply been displaced to nearby streets

I am at a loss as to what motive this council has to force this through when it's so abundantly clear that you have created an unsafe environment that residents do not want. Does this council simply not care as it's not impacting you personally.

If you do in fact care about this city and its residents then please do the right thing, like you have done with Camden Road bus gate, please listen to us, keep us safe, don't make a mockery of this city and waste public funds.

Reverse this decision.

**** THIS AMENDMENT WAS LOST ****

Council 25 February 2025

Budget Amendment

Proposed by Councillor Shaun Hughes

Seconded by Councillor

Transport Proposal: Parking Reinvestment Fund (one year only)

Council notes that this action would:- As stated in the Council budget papers

- Delay investment improvements of car parks with Midsomer Norton & Radstock.
- Vulnerable people such as older, younger, disabled, pregnant people may be of increased harm if car parks are not well maintained.
- Improvements to street lighting and CCTV coverage across car parks may be delayed resulting in night time security risks for those who feel or are more vulnerable.
- Wider implications for the economy as people may choose to go elsewhere

Council resolves to

Reinstate the Parking Reinvestment Fund into the 25/26 budget, value £210k the funds to be reinvested from the increased parking revenue budget.

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**** THIS AMENDMENT WAS LOST ****

Council 25 February 2025

ITEM 8 – BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX

AMENDMENTS FROM THE GREEN GROUP

Revenue savings

Annex Revenue Growth Annex 2ii

1.Extend Free Bus Travel for Disabled People Before 9AM -

Costs: £40k

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: More Enforcement Cameras – reduced from £120k to £80k

2.Invest in Public Toilets Across B&NES - Report to prepare for Investment in Public Toilets Across B&NES

Costs: £46K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements More Enforcement Cameras – further reduction from £80k to £34k

3.Part-time Administrative Officer for the Planning Enforcement Team -

Costs: £42K (Pro Rata)

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: More Enforcement Cameras – further reduction from £34k to £0

& Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Speed Indicator Funding – reduced from £40k to £32k

4.Improve School Streets with Additional Funding - Design for the 4th, 5th and 6th School Street

Costs: £50K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Investment – reduced from £65k to £15k

5.Improve Cycle Parking Facilities at Bath Sports & Leisure Centre

Capital Costs: £20K

Capital Funding from Bath Leisure Centre capital item reduction from £155k to £135K from Annes 5 iv CORPORATE ESTATE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2025-26

6.RPZ for Lambridge

Costs: £25K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Highway Speed Indicator Signage £40K further reduction from £32k to £7K

7. Retraction of Paper Parking Permits for Councillors

Costs: No cost

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSALS

1. Extend Free Bus Travel for Disabled People Before 9AM

Bath and North East Somerset Council is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible transport system. However, the current restriction on free bus travel for disabled pass holders before 9am limits their ability to attend work, education, medical appointments, and other essential commitments.

A successful trial in Warwickshire showed that 22% of disabled pass holders benefited from all-day free travel, with over 12,400 early-morning journeys recorded in just seven months. This increased accessibility supported employment, education, and training while reducing reliance on costly alternatives. The estimated cost of extending the scheme was approximately £40,000 per year, covered within the existing budget.

Officers sought cost estimates from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Their response indicates that a regional rollout would cost around £160,000 per year while implementing the scheme solely in B&NES would cost an estimated £45,000-£55,000 annually. However, the actual cost may be lower, as changes in travel patterns are expected rather than a surge in additional journeys.

Expanding free bus travel before 9am for disabled residents aligns with B&NES' commitment to social inclusion and reducing transport barriers. The Council urges immediate action to fund and implement this extension, ensuring equal opportunities for disabled residents to access work, education, and vital services.

2. Report to prepare for Investment in Public Toilets Across B&NES

Public Toilets - the council presently has a budget spend of £330K per annum for public toilets. The management of the public toilets is currently under contract with Healthmatic until 2029. Presently there are few public toilet facilities, with the council's facilities being reduced and other private operators closing toilets.

The impact of visitor numbers in the city due to tourism and the Christmas Market is significant creating much demand for access to public toilets. In preparation for a new contract in 2029, a report is needed to undertake the real need across the city centre for more public toilets that are easily accessible to be created and financed through possible options, including having an attendant that charges and keeps the toilets clean?

Residents and visitors, particularly those with mobility issues, elderly people, women and parents with young children, without adequate access to essential services. The lack of public toilets is also a growing concern for tourists, as Bath continues to attract millions of visitors each year.

We propose a report on the real needs and cost of toilet provision with a detailed report in preparation for a new contract in 2029.

Cost for full time employee to undertake report £43K, including looking into the following issues:

- Upgrade existing toilets to meet modern accessibility and hygiene standards.
- Install new toilets in key locations with high footfall, including tourist areas, transport hubs, and parks.
- Ensure accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness to provide safe, well-maintained facilities for residents and visitors alike.

In 2018, the council set aside funding for public toilet closures, but alternative schemes like the Community Toilet Scheme do not fully address the need for publicly accessible, clean, and safe facilities. With tourism and local footfall increasing, especially in Bath, investing in public toilets will improve the local environment, public health, and tourism experience.

3. Part-time Administrative Officer for the Planning Enforcement Team

Currently, the Planning Enforcement Team lacks dedicated administrative support, which limits the effectiveness of qualified enforcement officers in their core duties. A dedicated administrative role would significantly improve efficiency by allowing enforcement officers to focus on critical investigative and compliance work rather than administrative tasks. This change would lead to faster response times, improved case management, and enhanced service delivery for residents.

The estimated cost of employing an administrative staff member (full-time) is £42,000 per year, comprising a £32,000 salary and £10,000 in employer national insurance and pension contributions, but a part-time role would be needed to cover the day-to-day administrative tasks currently being covered by enforcement officers. This funding would ensure that the Planning Enforcement Team is better resourced to meet its duties and support the timely resolution of planning enforcement matters.

By reallocating administrative responsibilities, the team will be able to handle cases more efficiently, reducing delays and improving outcomes for the local community.

4. Improve School Streets with Additional Funding

Annex 2 (ii) of the proposed 2025/26 - 2027/28 Funding Requirements outlines a £87,000 allocation for the creation of three school streets. While this is a step in the right direction, it is important to note that last year, outside of the formal budget process, £250,000 was allocated from the Clean Air Zone fund for a single school street pilot.

We understand that initial engagement with all schools in BANES has taken place and we suggest 50K additional funding is invested in designing the 4th, 5th and 6th School Street. This additional funding would support the start of a delivery programme that is needed to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and ensure safer routes for children to walk and cycle to school. School Streets are an element that can be funded by the CRSTS and the projected underspend of this fund at WECA-level could be leveraged by having schemes ready to bid for funding.

5. Improve walking, wheeling and cycling facilities at Bath Sports & Leisure Centre

While car park security improvements are important, investing in active travel infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists is equally essential, particularly in a busy facility like the Leisure Centre.

There is currently no safe pedestrian crossing from the set of steps to the main entrance to the set of steps to the other entrance, where many classes for children take place.

The current cycle parking facilities at the Leisure Centre are insufficient and do not fully accommodate the diverse needs of all users. One of the existing cycle racks is unsuitable for non-standard bicycles, such as tricycles and cargo bikes. Furthermore, access to some of the racks is problematic, particularly for individuals using these types of bikes. For instance, the "wiggly" stand is currently inadequate, as it only supports two standard two-wheeled bicycles and is positioned in an area with no dropped kerb. This configuration limits the practicality and accessibility of cycle parking, especially for those with mobility challenges.

To address these issues, we propose that part of the £20K allocated for car park security be redirected to:

- Replace the existing "wiggly" stand with Sheffield-style stands or other suitable alternatives that provide more space and security for all types of bikes.
- Install a dropped kerb to improve access to the new cycle stands, ensuring that cyclists, including those with tricycles or other non-standard bikes, can reach the stands safely and easily.

- Enhance pedestrian safety in and around the car park by creating safer walking routes and improving crossings, particularly between the main entrance and the trampoline park, where there are currently risks from drivers entering and exiting the car park.

Investing in these improvements will not only better serve the growing number of cyclists but also contribute to safer and more accessible routes for pedestrians. This proposal aligns with the council's commitment to promoting sustainable transport options, improving community infrastructure, and ensuring accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities.

6. Lambridge RPZ

Following the Cabinet Project Lead for Highways attending a public meeting at New Oriel Hall on 19 March 2024, in which they stated that they realised the impact of the Walcot RPZ (zone 27) on Lambridge residents. It became clear that implementing an RPZ in Grosvenor or RPZ in Lambridge on its own would be detrimental to the residents of the other area, because they are adjacent and both experiencing a significant increase in commuter and visitor parking since the Walcot RPZ was introduced.

We therefore call for a Lambridge RPZ to be progressed at the same time as a Grosvenor RPZ.

7. Retraction of Paper Parking Permits for Councillors

Bath and North East Somerset has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to providing leadership to achieve ambitious climate goals, including reducing vehicle miles by 25% by 2030.

Currently, 15 councillors in B&NES use paper parking permits, which allow unrestricted parking across the district. While MiPermit ensures accountability for council-related parking, paper permits pose a risk of misuse. HMRC could view the unreported use of these permits as taxable income, potentially creating compliance issues.

This amendment proposes an immediate retraction of paper parking permits for all councillors at no cost apart from officer time to train Councillors in how to use MiPermit on a mobile device or to declare expenses when using cash.

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POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY TABLE – AGREED FEBRUARY 2025

Compulsory cumulative proportionality	Number on Committee	Liberal Democrat (40) 68%	Labour (7) 12%	Independent (6) 10%	Green (3) 5%	Conservative (2) 3%	Unaligned (1) 2%	Chair Allocation	Vice Chair Allocation	Co-opted members
Corporate PD&S	9	6	1	1			1	LAB	LD	
Climate Emergency & Sustainability PD&S	9	6	1	1	1			LD	LAB	
Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing PD&S	9	6	2	(1)*	1*			LD	LAB	4
Planning Committee	10	7	1	1		1		LD	LD	
Audit Committee	5	3	1		1			LAB		1
Avon Pension Fund Committee	5	3	1		1			LD	LD	12 voting, 3 non voting
Employment Committee	3	3						LD		
Standards Committee **	5	3		1		1		LD	LD	6 non voting
Restructuring Implementation Committee	5	3	1	1						
TOTALS	60	40	8	6	3	2	1			

* Independent Group offering their seat to the Green Group

** Standards cttee: current working practice is that the Chair is an independent member, unless Chair vote required

Compulsory individual proportionality	No. on Cttee	LD	Lab	Ind	Green	Con			
Licensing Sub-Committee	3	2+1***	(1)***	(1)***		(1)***	LD		
Optional proportionality									
Licensing Committee	11	8	1	1		1	LD		
Fixed memberships									
WECA Overview & Scrutiny Committee	2	2							
WECA Audit Committee	2	2							
Public Health & Wellbeing Board	2	2 (appropriate Cabinet Members)	1 (observer)	1 (observer)		1 (observer)	<i>Shared between CM & CCG Chair (or equivalent)</i>		
Pensions Investment panel	3 (Chair & Vice of APF)	2	1						3
Charitable Trust Board	5	1 Cab Mem + 3	1						
Alice Park Trust	5	3			2 (Ward member)				2

- CTB - 5 councillors (to include Cabinet member responsible for Community Services) plus at least 1 Councillor who is not a member of controlling group but appointed by controlling group, plus 3 others).
- APT – 3 Councillors from the membership of the Charitable Trust Board (*excluding the Cab Member*) + the 2 Ward members for Lambridge as voting members + 2 co-opted non-voting members.
- *** No other group prepared to fill the Licensing Sub place hence 3 LDs

Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson - Ward Councillor's Statement to Full Council

25 February 2025

The purpose of this statement is to draw Council's attention to a most unfortunate situation in which the Council could potentially be breaking the law, and if no financial remedy is found, almost certainly will be, despite the hours and hours of time dedicated to the SACRE by volunteer representatives of different faith communities and RE teachers' representatives in Bath and North East Somerset.

Secondly it is most regrettable that an award winning body with a national reputation should be placed in such a situation, losing the gold standard ability to deliver services. Whatever councillors' personal beliefs or allegiance to religious or philosophical organisations, this 'fall from grace', if I may use a theological term, does not enhance the reputation of the whole Council.

The requirement to have Religious Education and Collective Worship in schools dates back to the 1944 Education Act, and no doubt was inspired by the community debates around Religion and Life and the need for a Welfare State 1941 onwards. Every subsequent Education Act or Children's Act has continued this, but requiring unitary authorities to create and pay for a monitoring body, the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) only emerged in the 1980s. The most important matter was the representation of the Council on the body, and for representatives to be drawn from local faith communities. It was heavily weighted in favour of the Church of England and in Scotland, the Church of Scotland, which in different ways, legally, are 'established', Now this has gone, and the representatives are local, and there are also representatives of the teachers' unions. Of all the tasks, drawing up an Agreed Syllabus and Guidance on Collective Worship are the most important duties in law.

The Council, as I told the Scrutiny Panel, found it has a shortfall. An Agreed Syllabus review is due, and as part of it, there needs to be a complete update in consultation with schools. Our Advisor is not paid the hours to do this work, and the legally required monitoring of school practice. Support to schools will be limited.

Recently, very recently, we discovered that by law 2 per cent of the Central Schools budget should be paid for SACRE. For the last few years this has not been done. We calculate that on average £5,000 per annum went missing. We also find in the revised SACRE annual accounts a carry forward sum which we do not think was ever paid. If this were corrected, if only from 2022, we could fulfil all legal requirements. Legally, a SACRE is an 'associated body', not an 'outside' body. External funding, for example from the Westhill Trust, or the St Luke's Trust, are for specific optional projects we have undertaken. We have won Wider Inclusivity in RE awards for our excellent schools but none of these pay the running costs, as it were.

So please make this happen. Close the gap!

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