

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 17th July 2025

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Steve Hedges, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Sam Ross, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Karen Walker, Tim Warren CBE and Andy Wait

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** David Biddleston, Deborah Collins, Sarah Evans, Ian Halsall, Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Hal MacFie, Onkar Saini, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren and Joanna Wright

13 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

15 MINUTES - 22ND MAY 2025

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of 22nd May be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Councillor Liz Hardman invited Councillor Karen Walker to the dais to present her with her past Chair's badge, as she had been unable to attend the annual meeting.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss and supported by Councillors Shaun Hughes, Sam Ross and Tim Warren that the Council places on record its appreciation of the services performed by Councillor Karen Walker in the office of Chair of the Council for 2024/25.

Councillor Karen Walker then addressed the Council and, in so doing, highlighted a number of the key moments of the year such as attending 85 events, meeting many people and presiding over 17 citizenship ceremonies. She thanked officers, colleague members and her husband, Dave for support over the year.

The Chair then asked the Council to show their thanks and appreciation to Mandy Bishop, Chief Operating Officer, as this was her last Council meeting before leaving to take up the post of Chief Executive at North Somerset Council.

The Chair then;

1. Made the customary announcements regarding microphones and phones;
2. Announced that the meeting was being webcast and invited anyone who did not wish to be filmed to make themselves known to the camera operators.

17 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

18 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Stuart Bridge spoke to Council about the 2 new pedestrian crossings on Bloomfield road, setting out the improvements this had made to safety in the area and thanking the Council for these upgrades. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Hillary Carr, Chair of Bathford Parish councillor, made a statement about the collaborative relationship between BANES & Bathford Parish Council and its community. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Theresa Franklin made a statement about bike hangars, expressing positivity for active travel and thanking the Council for increasing the number of bike hangars in the city from 21 to 41. She urged the Council to continue to promote active travel. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Phoenix Dewberry, a member of the Bath Pride Committee and founder of Safe Space Bath made a statement proposing measures to ensure the city protects trans and queer folks, assisted by their friend, Ross. Councillor Lesley Mansell asked if Phoenix was aware that the Supreme Court ruling has not changed the requirements of the Equalities Act, to which Phoenix replied that they were aware, but it still had had a considerable impact. Councillor Tim Warren asked Phoenix if they had personally been threatened, to which Phoenix replied that they had not personally experienced this, but had many friends who had. Councillor Sam Ross asked how Phoenix would define a safe space. Phoenix replied that it was somewhere that welcomes, celebrates and protects trans people. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Phoenix would like to meet with the Equalities Officer and Cabinet Member, to which they responded that they would. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Bob Goodman made a statement about the state of the Council. He referred to listed buildings consent concerns that he has previously raised with the Council, and in particular, at 10 Wellington Buildings. He gave his view that regulations had been breached and that the Council was not taking the action it should to deal with unauthorised activity. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked if Bob was aware that enforcement is left to the discretion of the Local Authority, to which Bob replied with his view that this was not the case. ~~Councillor Colin Blackburn asked how long the Chief Executive had known about the alleged criminal act that had been committed by the Council,*~~ to which Bob replied that he had brought this to the attention of officers in January/February 2023 and had been told at the time that the Chief Executive had been informed. Councillor Tim Warren asked what qualifications Bob had to be able to make these claims, to which Bob replied that he had been a trained Buildings Surveyor with Bath City Council and a fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and had considerable knowledge in this area.

Helen Bedser, Chief Executive of Julian House, made a statement about the future of Off the Streets service provision in B&NES and called on the Council to take urgent action to secure the future of the off-the-streets service and to commit to a fair, sustainable budget for the homelessness pathway. Councillor Robin Moss referred to Helen's mention of the two business cases they had submitted, and whether they had received a formal response from the Council. Helen replied that they had had constructive engagement with the Council and received £25k for a feasibility study which they matched for both business cases. Those were submitted 8 months ago and 2 months ago but as yet, no formal response had been received, which made planning for continuity of the service very difficult. Councillor Karen Walker asked if Helen was aware that, in May, the Council published a preliminary market engagement notice for the provision of a hostel. Helen replied that she was aware, and that the engagement notice had been extended again to 31st July. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Ed Browning made a statement setting out why a better public toilet strategy for B&NES was needed. He explained his personal perspective as to why this was vital, and also mentioned his experience as a Tour guide and the impact of poor toilet provision on the visitor experience. He urged the Council to support the motion later on the agenda, and press ahead with practical improvements. Councillor Kevin Guy asked if Ed was supportive of the idea of making the market toilets open to the public. Ed replied that he would welcome that, and added that improvements to them would be appreciated. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Ghika Savva, Student Community Partnership Manager, made a statement highlighting the beneficial work of the Partnership and the positive impacts it produced, but calling for further funding to help the work continue with increased student numbers. Councillor Colin Blackburn asked how much funding the University of Bath and Bath Spa University contributed each year, to which Ghika replied that it was 50% of the costs. Councillor Tim Warren asked about actual amounts, to which Ghika replied that the cost of the operation was about £100k a year and they commit to 3 years funding at a time. Councillor Karen Walker asked if there was a figure for the amount of students living in Peasedown St John, Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Westfield. Ghika replied there were a few, but not in HMOs and added that students were moving further afield as accommodation

options in the city reduced. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Malcolm Baldwin, a member of the Circus Area Residents Association (CARA) made a statement entitled 'Future-proofing our tourist economy sector: Part 2' and urging Councillors to support the motion later on the meeting's agenda. Councillor Karen Walker asked Malcolm if, should the motion be successful, he would agree that the benefits should be across the whole of B&NES and not just Bath. Malcolm agreed that should be the case, but proposed that resources should be targeted on where the need was greatest and some kind of sliding scale might work. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked if Malcolm considered that a levy would solve 'over-tourism', to which Malcolm replied that it would not necessarily do that, but that tourism needed to be managed differently, with a balance between visitors and residents. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked if it would be a good idea to devote some of the proceeds to the provision of public toilets, to which Malcolm replied that that would be a good example to use some of the funds. A full copy of the statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

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

[At the Chair's discretion, Councillor Blackburn made a brief statement and retracted his question.]*

19 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024 TO 2026 - REFRESH FOR 2025 TO 2026

The Local Authority has a statutory duty, in partnership with Health, Police and Probation, to produce a Youth Justice Plan. The Plan sets out how services are to be organised and funded and what functions will be carried out to prevent youth offending and re-offending across Bath and North East Somerset. The Plan was presented to the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panel and then to Cabinet and is now recommended to Council for approval. A final version will then be submitted to the national Youth Justice Board (YJB).

The Council considered the refresh of the Youth Justice plan for 2025-26.

On a motion from Councillor Paul May, seconded by Councillor Mansell, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to approve the refreshed Youth Justice Plan.

20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2024-25

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code), which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year, review performance during the year, and approve an annual report within six months after the end of each financial year. The Council considered a

report giving details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25.

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

RESOLVED that

1. The Treasury Management Report to 31st March 2025, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted; and
2. The Treasury Management Indicators to 31st March 2025 are noted.

21 FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

At its meeting on 7th July 2025, the Restructuring Implementation Committee considered the flexible retirement application from the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service). The Restructuring Implementation Committee now recommends to Council to approve the application for flexible retirement.

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

RESOLVED to approve

1. The flexible retirement of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) from 1 October 2025 for a period of four months in the first instance whilst a new Chief Executive is recruited; and
2. A delegation to the Director of People & Change, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the power to extend the flexible retirement arrangement by mutual agreement for up to one further month if required to ensure a smooth transition.

22 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - SUPPORT FOR VISITOR CHARGE POWERS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat Group about visitor charge powers for Local Authorities.

On a motion from Councillor Michelle O'Doherty, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

Council notes:

1. Over 1 million overnight visitors and 4.2 million day visitors come to Bath annually.

2. Tourism brings significant economic benefits to our area, generating nearly half a billion pounds in direct and related spend, supporting local businesses and over 8,000 jobs.
3. Direct income to the Council from visitor spending – including £12 million financial surplus from Heritage Services in 2024-25 – helps fund vital public services across Bath and North East Somerset.
4. High visitor numbers are also associated with disbenefits and additional costs to local authorities, through pressure on infrastructure, services, transport, waste management and cleansing.
5. Visitor charges, paid to local authorities by overnight visitors, are commonplace in other countries; similar schemes are beginning to be considered and introduced in the UK using a variety of mechanisms.
6. Visitor charges have the potential to raise additional income which could help mitigate the impacts of tourism on communities and invest in improved facilities and services benefiting residents and visitors.
7. Councils face long-term financial challenges, due to the decline in government grant funding and cost pressures, and have been encouraged to develop new sources of income.

Council therefore:

8. Calls on Government to give English councils the freedom and necessary powers to introduce locally administered visitor charges.
9. Welcomes the leadership B&NES is showing on this issue and the initiative by the Leader of B&NES Council to establish a joint position with Leaders representing other key heritage cities in England.
10. Endorses the joint letter from the Leaders which calls for new engagement between Government and councils to explore and develop strategies for ameliorating the adverse impacts of tourism and to consider how the benefits can be as impactful and wide ranging as possible.
11. Believes any visitor charge schemes in England should be designed locally, based on evidence and tailored to local needs. Furthermore, believes that income should be available to the administering local authority to allocate and should not be to the detriment of other government funding allocations.

23 MOTION FROM THE LABOUR GROUP - PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

The Council considered a motion from the Labour group about public toilet provision.

On a motion from Councillor Robin Moss, seconded by Councillor Paul Roper, it was then unanimously

RESOLVED that

Council notes that:

1. Bath attracts over 6 million visitors a year¹ and is one of Britain's most visited cities by overseas tourists²
2. Tourism brings over half a billion pounds to our economy³
3. Everyone needs to use the loo throughout the day, but for very many people, access to a public toilet can be hard to predict. The Royal Society of Public Health estimates 1 in 5 limit going out and 56% limit fluid intake on purpose, because they're worried about toilet availability.⁴
4. Public toilets are essential for dignity, hygiene and public health. They protect social interaction and related economic activity for many:
 - more than 20% of the population are women of menstruating age⁵
 - urinary incontinence affects roughly 20%⁶
 - one in ten have problems with bowel control⁷
 - disability is "a lot" life-limiting for 6% of residents and "a little" for 10.4%⁸
 - and under-fives make up around 5%.⁹
5. In 2011 B&NES had 27 public toilet sites (B&NES' 2011-2026 Public Toilet Provision Strategy)¹⁰ but its public toilet website says we have just 20 today¹¹
6. A quick look on www.toiletmap.uk shows our loos are very few and far between.
7. Most of our public toilets close at 6pm, and many close earlier.
8. B&NES' Public Toilet Provision strategy should be reviewed on a five-yearly basis, so if this motion is passed this should have no budgetary implications.

Council recognises that:

9. People limit trips when they can't confidently access public toilets – this impacts long-term physical and mental health, the public space and local economy.
10. Our residents, visitors and traders will all benefit from more public toilets.

Council agrees that:

¹ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/journey-net-zero-public-consultation-january-2022/visitors-and-tourists>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/articles/traveltrends/2023>

³ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/journey-net-zero-public-consultation-january-2022/visitors-and-tourists>

⁴ <https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/taking-the-p-the-decline-of-the-great-british-public-toilet.html>

⁵ https://www.ahpma.co.uk/menstruation_facts_and_figures/

⁶ <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/continence-problems-in-the-uk/>

⁷ Same source

⁸ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SEB%20Population%20%26%20Demography%20Apr25.pdf>

⁹ Same source

¹⁰ https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/public_toilets_provision_strategy_-_december_2011_adopted.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/find-public-toilet>

11. A full review of the Public Toilet Provision Strategy is now needed as the Strategy reaches its end-date. It should:

- engage with communities and partners to identify gaps and solutions,
- include a needs assessment, and
- prioritise better provision of clean, accessible public toilets across B&NES.

24 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillor Duncan Hounsell made a statement explaining progress being made on re-opening Saltford Railway station as part of the vision of MetroWest. A full copy of the statement is linked online and has been added to the Minute book. Councillor Tim Warren asked if there was time on the timetable for a train to stop, to which Councillor Hounsell replied that it would be addressed as part of the feasibility study, which would then feed into a business case.

The Chair thanked the Councillor for his statement.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

COUNCIL MEETING 17TH JULY 2025

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Public (item 7)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Hillary Carr | The collaborative relationship between BANES & Bathford Parish Council and its community
(<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 2. David Redgewell | Transport issues David did not attend |
| 3. Theresa Franklin | Bike hangars (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 4. Phoenix Dewberry | Measures to ensure the city protects trans and queer folks (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 5. Bob Goodman | The state of the Council |
| 6. Stuart Bridge | New pedestrian crossings on Bloomfield road (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 7. Helen Bedser | The future of Off the Streets service provision in B&NES (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 8. Ed Browning | Why we need a better public toilet strategy for B&NES (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 9. Ghika Savva | Highlighting the work of the Student Community Partnership (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 10. Malcolm Baldwin | Future-proofing our tourist economy sector: Part 2 (<i>statement attached</i>) |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

Page 10

P	01	Question from:	Helen Bedser
What are the key milestones and deadlines in the recommissioning process for the 'Off the Streets' service and how confident is the council that a new service will be commissioned in time, to avoid any break in provision when the lease on the current Manvers Street hostel site ends?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
The Council is aware that the property owners of the Manvers Street hostel have advised Julian House they require their premises back, preferably by August 2026. Julian House is therefore looking for alternative provision and the Council is assisting where practical and helpful. Whilst the Council is confident that Julian House are actively and aggressively pursuing options for reprovision it is acknowledged that finding suitable and affordable accommodation within this timeframe will be a challenge. As such the Council is unable to provide any definitive statement at this stage around the likelihood of a potential break in provision.			
P	02	Question from:	Helen Bedser
What contingency plans has the council got in place if there is a delay in commissioning the new 'Off the Streets' service, and which stakeholders have been involved in developing these?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
The Council is working with Julian House to offer support to ensure that the provision can continue in the future in a new location. However, the Council is also pursuing other options including whether there are alternative providers or indeed whether the Council could provide a suitable site. The Council would best consider contingency plans and how stakeholders could be involved in developing these at the appropriate time			
P	03	Question from:	Helen Bedser

What are the estimated financial and social costs of a delay in 'Off the Streets' service provision (e.g. increased rough sleeping, emergency interventions) and how have these costs been calculated?

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

Whilst recent cost-benefit analysis of homelessness services is unavailable, earlier data from the Centre for Housing Policy in 2015 indicated the annual cost to public services of one person's homelessness was typically over £20,000 per annum. In terms of social costs, the Council recognises that these are wide ranging, including to the individual, the wider community and businesses within the City. These are factors that will be considered in any future decisions by the Council.

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Bathford Parish Council - Statement to BANES Council, 17 July 2025
by Hillary Carr, Chair, Bathford Parish Council

I'm Hillary Carr, Chair of Bathford Parish Council. I've been a Councillor for five years and Chair for two years. Bathford is a parish located 3 miles east of Bath, with a population of 1,880 residents. We are part of the Bathavon North Ward, and our Councillors are Cllrs Kevin Guy and Sarah Warren.

Our interaction with BANES Council has grown significantly in the last three years as the Council has been more proactive in identifying and addressing key local issues and, in collaboration with BANES, providing both funding and solutions.

Most collaboration has been on Highways matters. Our Road Safety Survey in 2022 identified the key issue being pedestrian safety from speeding vehicles on the three key arterial routes through the parish and to provide a 'Safe Route to School' for children crossing these routes.

We discussed the issues with our Ward Councillors and BANES Highways and the prime requirement identified was for a crossing point on the High Street, which could also provide traffic-calming measures. Following surveys and funding approval, the zebra crossing was installed within 12 months. Poignantly, I received a dossier of thanks from the whole school, for making their journeys a lot safer!

The school also identified the need to address the illegal parking around the school by drivers arriving late on the school drop-off and pick-up runs. The Parish Council proposed 'Parking Buddies' be placed on the surrounding streets to deter the latecomers. The Ward Councillors kindly provided the funds, and the problem has now been eliminated.

The Parish Council recently raised concerns about the notable increase in injurious collisions taking place at junctions along the A363 and requested the matter be addressed urgently. Our Ward Councillors had already anticipated the request and set up a meeting with Highways Division.

To this end, a £50k fund has been procured and proposed measures are currently being deliberated by all parties to provide speed reduction and increased safety, to be implemented within the next 12 to 24 months.

A recent Community Survey voiced a desire for more events to reflect and enhance the thriving, social, friendly Bathford community. 'Follyfest', the first summer community celebration for Bathford in nearly twenty years took place successfully two weekends ago thanks to sponsorship from our Ward Councillors.

Our most recent collaboration was just last week to address an issue of a convicted person being housed within yards of the Primary School. Councillor Guy responded immediately with advice and guidelines on safeguarding matters to concerned parties, resulting in a satisfactory resolution of the matter within 24 hours.

In all the areas of interaction and transaction with BANES the Parish Council acknowledges that, thanks to the rapport that we have built together over recent years, it's ultimately resulted in an enhanced quality of life for the Bathford community.

Thank You.



Bathford Zebra Crossing



Bathford School Parking 'Buddies'

03 – Theresa Franklin statement

Cycle hangars

Good Evening.

My name is Theresa Franklin.

I am a resident of the Lansdown area. I decided when I reached a certain age I would give **aging gracefully a miss and age with vitality instead.**

The City of Bath has always been my chosen city to achieve that goal.

Now:

- Bath's active travel program,
- its dedicated cycle lanes,
- its inner city vehicle access restrictions in high footfall areas,
- plus the introduction of Liveable Neighbourhoods

have increased opportunities for physical activity for everyone.

So, I am here today, **to express positivity for active travel and to thank the Council for increasing the number of bike hangars in the city from 21 to 41. Each with the capacity to store 6 bikes in the size of 1 car parking space.**

The cycle hangars are a crucial element in active travel and reducing reliance on cars, resulting in

a greener,

cleaner,

healthier city.

I walk almost everywhere in Bath but **I would like an e-trike - indeed I see one in my future.**

Many of our Georgian terraces and crescents are split into flats.

For example - The Georgian crescent I live in, has 33 homes spread across the original 11 houses.

In addition there are plenty of purpose-built modern apartments and many larger older buildings which have been converted into flats.

Most flats, but especially Georgian flats, have no place to store bikes.

Our Georgian building appears to have an increasing volume of younger residents, some with young children, we have in recent years seen an increase in bike usage.

I have witnessed the effect, little or no bike storage, can have on the flat dwelling lives of my neighbours.

Like:

1. Issues with insurance because bikes cannot be stored in communal spaces which are required to be “clutter free.”
2. Carrying bikes all the way to the top floor on a daily basis.
3. Moving home because young children did not have the space to keep their bikes.

My top floor neighbours have 2 bikes which they store in the cycle hangar situated on Lansdown Place West. They have recently bought a cargo bike to take their daughter to and from school.

In short - many households, find it very difficult to own and store bikes.

Importantly - The addition of cycle hangars, by this Council has made owning a bike easier - it's levelled the playing field especially for those without adequate indoor storage.

I would like to end by saying

We are all so lucky to live in a walking/cycling/scooting city.

Recent guests, from Cape Town, had this to say about Bath:

“No need to use a car in Bath, we love it.

It's such a liberating experience, to walk, scoot or cycle, exploring at your own pace. And to find hidden corners, local shops, and interesting architectural details.”

Please continue to be brave in your pursuit of active travel.

Continue to help the City of Bath to play a meaningful role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and global warming.

Thank you for your time.

Hello everyone,

My name is Phoenix and this is Ross and I have lived in Bath for 2 years. I work on the Bath Pride committee and I am the founder of Safe Space Bath. It is a UK wide project to involve as many local businesses as possible to show their support and inclusion of trans folk.

The UK Supreme Court recently ruled that the terms 'sex', 'man' and 'woman' in the Equality Act refer to 'biological sex' only, and do not extend to trans people. This decision has increased transphobic hate crimes and heightened fear within and for our trans community. It has made an already difficult environment even harder to navigate as a trans person.

LGBTQ+ people have been part of Bath for as long as it has existed. They are our family, friends, coworkers and members of our community.

We asked B&NES residents to share their experiences since the court ruling. This is what they said:

'As a victim of transphobia I find it very difficult to be honest about my gender identity & feel as though I have to lie about who I am for my own safety and sanity. Having to lie about myself for my own safety and happiness feels unjust and unfair.'

'I have recently bought a RADAR key so I can access disabled toilets when I'm out. I no longer feel safe using gendered toilets under the new guidelines, as either toilet I use leaves me open to verbal or physical abuse.'

Another trans person described being physically assaulted in the Labyrinth night club due to their gender identity. Security staff stood by and took no action. It was due to the actions of friends that they were able to escape this horrific situation.

You may have heard that a council library in Kent have removed LGBTQ+ books from their shelves in the children's section. We are fearful that it will not stop there, and hope that this is not something that will be repeated in B&NES.

Safe spaces are integral for LGBTQ+ folks to navigate society. We asked trans folk in B&NES what a safe space means to them:

"A safe space for me is somewhere that everyone can report hate of any kind and have it taken seriously."

"A safe space feels like a warm hug after a long day, or a breath of fresh air, or the first sip of a glass of water after exercise. It lets you focus on what matters in life - human connection and understanding."

"A safe space is somewhere that treats people as people no matter what."

We are aware of the council's support and acceptance of trans folk but we are asking this for real and meaningful action. We as trans folk should be leaving our homes feeling safe, welcomed and supported by the Bath community.

Stockport council have recently signed a movement that I have sent to Bath council ahead of time which could be used as a framework.

We have provided a separate document listing commitments for B&NES council to read through and we ask that you councillors agree and champion them.

We thank you for your commitment to creating a safe space for your residents. We know that as councillors your commitment to protecting marginalised groups from discrimination is a key task and we look forward to working with you to ensure that B&NES is a safe space for trans people as well.

Supporting Stockport's LGBTQ+ Community - alteration

Alter the motion to read as below. The new text is in green/italics and takes the very welcome and helpful additional parts of Labour's proposed amendment whilst not deleting any of the original elements, which came from the LGBTQ+ community's original suggestion that we move such a motion and would weaken the support on specific issues.

Reference to setting up an LGBTQ+ Working Group from the proposed amendment has been changed to ensuring the existing cross-party Working Group on Inequality is used (ensuring there is no delay whilst another committee is formed and scheduled) and the deadline for reporting back changed to July 2025 (as there is no regular Council Meeting next civic year before then).

This council recognises:-

- *LGBTQ+ people have been part of Stockport for as long as it has existed. They are our family, our friends, our coworkers and members of our communities.*
- There should be no conflict between improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people and improving anyone else's lives. Any attempt to suggest there must be a conflict between for instance women's rights and LGBTQ+ people's rights is false.
- *That improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people contributes to building a more inclusive, fair, and supportive society for everyone. Advancing equality, acceptance and inclusion for one group should strengthen the foundations of equality for all.*
- LGBTQ+ people are facing rising levels of discrimination and hate crime. We should all be working together to eliminate all discrimination and hate crime.
- *That, according to official statistics, between March 2021 and March 2022, sexual orientation hate crimes rose by 41%, and transgender identity hate crimes increased by 56%. More recent official figures, ending March 2024, show that there has been a 4% reduction in sexual orientation hate crimes and a 5% reduction in transgender identity hate crimes. Whilst this decline is welcome, the overall number of sexual orientation and transgender identity hate crimes in 2023/24 remains significantly high at 29,000, compared to 4,500 in 2012/13. As such, we should be working together, particularly through the Safer Stockport Partnership, to eliminate all hate crime.*
- Due to the systemic oppression they face LGBTQ+ people can often face significantly worse outcomes when it comes to healthcare, education, housing and work.
- *That, in particular, transgender people within our communities face severe challenges in accessing healthcare, work and education opportunities*
- LGBTQ+ people have been part of Stockport for as long as it has existed. They are our family, our friends, our coworkers and members of our communities.
- That in the most recent iteration of the Safer Stockport Partnership there is a commitment to identify and work to eliminate the causes of hate crime.
- *That the* council has already taken actions to support Stockport's LGBTQ+ community such as previously passing a motion condemning conversion therapy, supporting its own staff's LGBTQ+ network and currently funds Stockport's LGBTQ+ Network known as the RESPECT Network.

This council calls on the government to:

- Fully ban all forms of conversion therapy relating to gender and sexual orientation.
- *Fully enact its manifesto commitment to implement a comprehensive ban on conversion therapy, including protections for transgender individuals, and reform the Gender Recognition Act to simplify the process for transgender people to obtain legal recognition of their gender.*
- Add a gender-neutral option on all forms of official documentation such as passports and remove the requirement for gender markers on such documentation.
- Produce and fully fund a robust, community led and well researched plan to identify and eliminate the causes of discrimination and hate crime.
- Improve LGBTQ+ people's access to official documentation, healthcare, education, housing, government services and work.

This council resolves to:

- Provide quarterly updates, to the council and relevant stakeholders, on the progress of the Safer Stockport Partnership's aim to identify and work to eliminate the causes of hate crime.
- Fully progress its membership of Stonewall's Diversity scheme. Or a similar scheme that provides independent, external accreditation.
- Encourage Stockport's schools and colleges to sign up to programmes, such as those provided by The Proud Trust, aimed at improving LGBTQ+ students experience during education.
- Encourage more Stockport GP's to sign up to the Pride in Practice initiative offered by the LGBT Foundation which works to improve the experiences of LGBTQ+ people accessing primary care services.
- When creating and altering the council's constitution, policies and documentation to, where appropriate, use gender neutral language.
- Offer help and advice to Stockport's LGBTQ+ groups to access funding and support to help with the good work they do.
- Encourage councillors and council employees to, when they are able to, attend LGBTQ+ events and initiatives in Stockport.
- Encourage council employees to make use of the Employee Volunteering Policy, using a proportion of their paid time to volunteer with local Stockport groups doing good work, including for the LGBTQ+ community.
- *Continue to support the LGBTQ+ community in Stockport asking the existing cross-party Inequalities Working Group to:*
 - *Fully consider the needs of all those within the LGBTQ+ community that face discrimination. Whilst we would not want to be prescriptive in the scope of issues addressed, we would like to ensure particular attention is given to:*
 - *The ability of the LGBTQ+ community, especially transpeople, to access adequate support for their physical and mental healthcare and how the council can provide practical support.*
 - *The issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community due to discrimination and bullying within educational settings and consider practical solutions to protect them from harm.*

- *Identifies how the council and its trusted partners can meaningfully embed diversity, equity and inclusion across all its work and policies.*
- *Offers help and advice to Stockport's LGBTQ+ groups to access funding and support to help with the good work they do.*
- *Considers the requirements for progress reports to include existing initiatives such as the Safer Stockport Partnership's aim to identify and eliminate the causes of hate crime.*
- *Reports back to the council with its recommendations for service improvement by July 2025 and at quarterly intervals thereafter.*

Moved by: Councillor Dan Oliver

Seconded by: Councillor Rosemary Barratt

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An article about Kent council library removing LGBTQ+ books:

<https://www.thepinknews.com/2025/07/07/kent-county-council-trans-books-removal-dee-whitnell/>

Stockport council movement:

<https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=88544>

Commitments we ask of B&NES council:

- We would like the council to show a staunch stance against gay and transgender conversion therapy, which is still shockingly legal in the UK.
- We would like to see an increase in gender neutral spaces (toilets, changing rooms etc).
- Encourage councillors and council employees to, when they are able to, attend LGBTQ+ events and initiatives in Bath.
- Offer help and advice to Bath's LGBTQ+ groups to access funding and support to help with the good work they do.
- When creating and altering the council's constitution, policies and documentation to, where appropriate, use gender neutral language.
- Address the issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community due to discrimination and bullying within educational settings and consider practical solutions to protect them from harm.
- Identifies how the council and its trusted partners can meaningfully embed diversity, equity and inclusion across all its work and policies.

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Council, thank you for allowing me to speak this evening. I want to say a few words about the recent upgrades to Bloomfield Road.

For a number of years, residents of Bloomfield Road, which is in the Lyncombe part of the Widcombe and Lyncombe ward and is one of the historical southern routes in and out of Bath, have been working collaboratively with ward councillors and BANES officers on how to improve safety for pedestrians crossing the road. This has been a big worry for residents, especially considering the number of schoolchildren at local schools and we have seen a number of collisions and near misses.

Initially a community action group was formed which led to the creation of the Bloomfield Road Residents Association who campaigned on this issue. An important factor was the local speed watch group who provided the data to show something needed to be done.

The result of these campaigns was the recent installation of two new zebra crossings at the junctions with St Lukes Road and Englishcombe Lane. This is a big improvement and improves the safety for local residents.

Julie Ingerfield, who leads the Speed watch group on our road and can often be seen at the St Lukes crossing said the percentage of drivers who breach the speed limit has fallen from a range of 15-20% before the zebra crossings were installed to 5-10% afterwards. This has meant they now have reduced the occasions they monitor this part of the road and are able to focus on other areas.

A Beechen Cliff pupil who crosses the road each school day by the Englishcombe Lane crossing said “the new zebra crossing has made me feel safer as the cars slow down in anticipation of the crossing. This means crossing the road is safer and easier for me each day”.

A parent with children at Moorlands School said “I feel much more confident now allowing my child to walk to school on his own”.

So, in summary, Bloomfield Road is now a safer place to live, cycle and walk for both residents and school pupils. I would like to thank the council for these upgrades as this has made it safer for pedestrians in our area and I encourage you to continue improving the infrastructure in the rest of the authority. As someone who lived in the Netherlands for 10 years I can tell you there is still a long way to go if we want to increase the active travel opportunities for our residents.

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The future of Off the Streets service provision in B&NES

Julian House has proudly supported the council's homelessness pathway for nearly 40 years – delivering outreach, emergency accommodation, and supported housing to some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Like many charities, we've faced the triple threat of rising costs, growing demand, and funding cuts. These pressures have forced us to make difficult decisions to protect our long-term sustainability – most recently, the closure of our Bike Workshop social enterprise this October.

We don't take these decisions lightly. But we make them so we can continue delivering high-quality support across all our services in the South West.

In B&NES, we've had to direct a significant portion of our unrestricted charitable income to subsidise essential services – particularly the Manvers Street Hostel and our outreach team. These services have been underfunded by as much as £250,000 per year. Thanks to generous public donations and support from charitable trusts, we've kept them going – but even those sources are now under pressure due to the cost-of-living crisis.

Beyond the hostel, we provide 68 additional bed spaces across B&NES. Of these, 22 are entirely unfunded by the council – yet they still add vital capacity to the homelessness pathway. Again, we cover the shortfall through our own resources.

Despite this commitment, the future of the hostel remains uncertain. Our lease ends next summer, and we still have no confirmation of future funding or a new site. We've been raising our concerns about the future of the hostel for over two years and have been actively searching for a new site and submitted two detailed business cases at the council's request.

Unfortunately, delays in the council's procurement process have already cost us one potential location – and now a second is at risk.

The new Procurement Act was meant to streamline public sector commissioning and support local providers. But this does not seem to be the case here.

Combined with recent setbacks for other local charities like Bath Mind and DHI, and recent examples of bringing services in-house, our team is understandably concerned about what lies ahead.

We urge the council to act swiftly – both to secure the future of the off-the-streets service and to commit to a fair, sustainable budget for the homelessness pathway.

Julian House remains ready and willing to work in partnership with the council to end rough sleeping in B&NES. But we need the funding, the policy backing, and the political will to make that vision a reality.

Helen Bedser
Chief Executive
Julian House

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Public Toilet Provision

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak, I'm here to talk about why we need a better public toilet strategy.

I come here with three different hats on

Personally

I live with a genetic medical condition. Which affects, among other things, my digestion and bowels. I was born here and I grew up here and so I have been acutely aware of the decline in public conveniences within the city. And having said that I will no longer use the word convenience in this context, it is not "convenient" to not wet yourself or soil yourself in public as you are unable to access a free to use toilet.

Professionally

For over ten years the Guildhall Deli, in the Guildhall Market, has been run by members of my family and I work there regularly too. And aside from "what's scotch egg?" The most commonly asked question we get on a daily basis is "can you tell me where the toilets are?" It's always seemed ridiculous to me that a market with a delicatessen, a coffee shop and a cafe has no public toilet and I have send people out of the market and away from local independent businesses to supermarkets and chain coffee shops.

Tourism

Finally for the past 4 years I have worked in tourism in the city as a guide for Savouring Bath and Akeman tours. As I said I'm born and raised here and I have learned so much about this amazing city, it's history, heritage and the people working right now to make it a fantastic place to live, work and visit. Combining that with my own family's history in the area I am immensely proud to take tourists and locals alike around this fascinating and beautiful place. But the one constant negative is the embarrassment of apologising for the lack of public facilities. To bring the voices of my colleagues to this proceeding, they talk of their own shame and embarrassment as the meet coaches at Terrace walk and have to tell there aren't any public toilets and the best idea is to find a coffee shop, make a purchase, and then use their toilet. And if we are taking a large group on a walking tour 10-20 minutes can be taken up as we wait for clients to traipse through Marks and Sparks or Waitrose. Worse still are the stories of elderly and impaired clients in tears as they have been unable to make it to the loo in time.

In conclusion, I want to say it's going to be easy to vote yes in favour of this motion and then forget all about it so please get local people, organisations and experts around the table to solve the toilet problem. Let's turn this in to an opportunity to be proud

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SCP Statement for full Council Meeting, 17th July 2025

B&NES, in supporting a Student Community Partnership, is leading the way in the UK. No other city has this length or level of partnership working across all their higher education institutions, students' unions and local authority. The SCP was set up in 2002 when there were 8000 students in the city to both celebrate and mitigate the impact that this number of students would have on a city the size of Bath. Today the number of students is over 31,000 approaching a third of the population.

A team of three staff based in Oldfield Park work across the eight partners to improve the relationship between students living in HMOs in the city and long-term residents. The SCP also offers a vehicle for partnership working on sustainability, safety for young people in the nighttime economy, river safety and addressing issues around housing quality and safety in the rented sector.

The benefits to B&NES include:

- increased and direct engagement with residents and students to address any issues that arise through door knocking campaigns over 20 – 22 weeks per year. (Most University cities run these for 1 -2 weeks twice a year.) Councillors will be interested to know there are students now living across all 15 Bath wards and may be moving further afield into other B&NES wards. We visit all wards with students during the Moving In campaign to encourage community cohesion and give information on handling waste and recycling and minimising noise and any potential ASB. Councillors are welcome to join us for these campaigns.
- Councillors in Oldfield Park and Westmoreland have seen a huge decrease in complaints about students. Councillors in other areas can (and do) refer issues to the SCP team for quick resolution, particularly in Southdown, Twerton and Widcombe and Lyncombe.
- improvement in the presentation of HMOs in Southdown, Oldfield Park and Westmoreland (resident comments)
- Community Warden does daily rounds across six wards of Bath for proactive and quick resolution of any visible issues.
- SCP Initiatives which have a direct financial benefit to B&NES eg Pack for Good campaign (BHF red donation banks). The current campaign figures are showing donations have doubled compared to this period last year – the total raised so far for BHF through bags of donation is £92,175 and 49.16 tonnes has been saved from landfill – this equates to a landfill/recycling saving of £54,000 to B&NES. **The work that has been done on this campaign over the last decade means B&NES support the SCP at minimal cost and in most years have made a net gain by funding the SCP.**
- positive publicity for Councillors and the city eg [Students urged to donate – not dump – end of term unwanted items - BBC News](#)

- significantly reduced demand on central services particularly Neighbourhood Services including the Waste and Environmental Protection teams and Council Connect. Collaborative working across the partnership to address resident complaints and support effective and quick resolution.
- partnership working to identify and resolve issues – eg Vape recycling and introduction of safety initiatives, eg NeverOK into city clubs, interactive river safety map and links with Bath's River Safety Group.
- Increased direct engagement with students for councillors through the Student-Councillor Forum set up in Autumn 2024 and held twice a year.
- Increased insight and support for council initiatives which involve students – eg introduction of RPZ in Section 28 and then support for Councillors in dealing with complaints in neighbouring areas.
- increased profile for Bath as sector leading as the SCP achieves national recognition.

Current Challenges

The SCP has a small staff but are achieving national recognition for the work we do. Securing funding is a continual challenge - two of the staff are on temporary one-year contracts as each year we need to apply to B&NES for support for their posts. Losing the current staff will jeopardise the work we do. In a four-year period we have lost two Community Warden postholders. The funding we need to keep the SCP is not committed beyond July 2026 nor in a core budget.

Statement 10 – Malcolm Baldwin, Circus Area Residents Association (CARA)

Future-proofing our tourist economy sector (Part 2)

Good evening,

When I last spoke to full Council in July 2024, I made the statement, albeit in the context of our Circus area's need for a meaningful Liveable Neighbourhood:

".....my catchment area may not yet be suffering from over-tourism although we are likely, in some respects, to be close to that point."

In September 2024, at the B&NES Policy Development Committee, I made a not so 'bold' assumption that:

"Both residents and tourist/visitors will support a better looking and better managed street-scape for our city and its surrounding areas."

"Over-tourism".....it's a lazy and can be an emotive term. (I use it.....but I guess I am a lazy person on too many occasions). What we really need throughout our city, but particularly in key heritage/high density visitor areas, are effective mechanisms for better management, and where necessary, better enforcement of our tourist sector and the issues it creates. (There is, of course, a financial cost to all of our aspirations for our city and this is no exception).

This evening Council you have the opportunity, in Cllr. O'Doherty's proposal, to support the concept for a visitor charge/levy proposal. This can provide a mechanism for vitally required additional resources to both assist in offsetting the issues created by the sheer magnitude of our tourist/visitor economy, whilst at the same time providing additional resources for significantly improving the quality of our public realm.

A tourist/visitor levy on commercial guest accommodation (including Airbnbs*) in our city is, I suspect, implicit within the proposal before you later this evening. Looking forward, such an additional revenue-stream would be wasted, in its level of opportunity to transform our important tourist sector, if it were ever merely used to offset budgetary gaps within the wider range of B&NES departmental spending.

A revenue-stream/tourist levy created from the local visitor-accommodation structure, if secured, should be re-invested into improving the quality of our public realm and its street-scape. This together with investment in more effective enforcement of all aspect of our tourism sector activities, which could and SHOULD be a quality exemplar for all other tourist cities in the United Kingdom.

We should not be tempted to allow any such additional tourist-sector financial resource streams, if they occur, to be diluted in their impact by being used to 'paper-over' budgetary gaps in other sectors or by reducing the assumed on-going base budget (plus annual inflation?) for the heritage - tourist sector, currently reflected within the BANES overall budget envelope.

Within the proposal later this evening we have the opportunity to create a virtuous circle of: additional financial resource - improved management of an increasingly pressurised but vital tourist sector - significant improvements to our public realm - all resulting in a more robust, a better managed and more genuinely satisfied visitor profile.

* Remember:

"The best thing about Airbnb is that it has made it much, much easier for people to rent out their properties as holiday homes and for would-be-guests to find them.

This is closely linked to the worst thing about Airbnb, which is that it has made it much, much easier for people to rent out their properties as holiday homes and for would-be-guests to find them!"

Malcolm Baldwin
Circus Area Residents Association (CARA)

I am pleased to report to Council the progress that has been made on re-opening a railway station at Saltford as part of the vision of MetroWest – that is frequent commuter services criss-crossing our sub-region. In December 2023 Cllr Jon Godfrey, Chair of Saltford Parish Council and I met with the previous West of England Metro Mayor to discuss the case for re-opening a Saltford Station. WECA Committee approval followed in January 2024 for a 'New Stations Feasibility Study' including a station at Saltford. Thanks to the advocacy of Cllr Kevin Guy, the West of England Combined Authority Committee in March this year went further and included Saltford in business case development for potential new stations as part of developing a new regional rail strategy. Work on a business case for a Saltford Station has never happened before and Cllr Guy is to be congratulated.

In early June, I met with Professor Rebecca Schaaf, Interim deputy Vice-Chancellor of Bath Spa University at the Newton Park campus to ask Bath Spa University to re-affirm its support last given in 2019 for a re-opening of Saltford Railway Station. I am delighted that Professor Schaaf has since written on behalf of Bath Spa University to leaders at WECA and B&NES reaffirming the University's support for the re-opening of Saltford Railway Station. In her letter, Professor Schaaf writes *"the proposed reopening of Saltford Station, approximately two miles from the Newton Park campus aligns closely with our values and would offer significant benefits to both the University and the region as a whole. It would help reduce car dependency, alleviate traffic congestion, and support climate emergency objectives."*

This support from Bath Spa University is very welcome and can only enhance the business case for a station.

WECA Mayor Helen Godwin has responded to the Bath Spa University letter *"Thank you for this letter which is indeed really helpful as we start to think about future transport strategy and how we can build the true suburban rail network that we need."*

These positive steps I have described are the consequence of the work and actions of Liberal Democrat councillors, B&NES officers, and others, and not anyone posturing on the sidelines.

One of the slogans we hear is a nostalgic "Saltford Station – Bring it Back". I say "Saltford Station -Bring it ON!"

END

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