

Council

Date: Thursday 18th September 2025

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

To: All Members of the Council

Dear Member

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Council** on **Thursday 18th September 2025** in **Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath.**

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely



Jo Morrison
Democratic Services Manager
for Chief Executive

Jo Morrison

Democratic Services

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NOTES:

1. **Inspection of Papers:** Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. **Details of decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. **Recording at Meetings:-**

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control. Some of our meetings are webcast. At the start of the meeting, the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be filmed. If you would prefer not to be filmed for the webcast, please make yourself known to the camera operators. We request that those filming/recording meetings avoid filming public seating areas, children, vulnerable people etc; however, the Council cannot guarantee this will happen.

The Council will broadcast the images and sounds live via the internet www.bathnes.gov.uk/webcast. The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group.

Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting. This means that for meetings held on Thursdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 5.00pm the previous Monday.

The Council now has a maximum time limit for this, so any requests to speak cannot be guaranteed if the list is full.

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are signposted. Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

6. **Supplementary information for meetings**

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

Council - Thursday 18th September 2025
at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 5.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to complete the green interest forms circulated to groups in their pre-meetings (which will be announced at the Council Meeting) to indicate:

(a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.

(b) The nature of their interest.

(c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** or an **other interest**, (as defined in Part 4.4 Appendix B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

4. MINUTES - 17TH JULY 2025 (Pages 5 - 12)

To be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

These are matters of information for Members of the Council. No decisions will be required arising from the announcements.

6. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

If there is any urgent business arising since the formal agenda was published, the Chair will announce this and give reasons why it has been agreed for consideration at this meeting. In making this decision, the Chair will, where practicable, have consulted with the Leaders of the Political Groups. Any documentation on urgent business will be circulated at the meeting, if not made available previously.

7. QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Democratic Services Manager will announce any submissions received. The Council will be invited to decide what action it wishes to take, if any, on the matters raised in these submissions. As the questions received and the answers given will be circulated in written form there is no requirement for them to be read out at the meeting. The questions and answers will be published with the draft minutes.

8. APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE (SECTION 151 OFFICER) (Pages 13 - 16)

This report seeks Council's approval of the appointment of a Director of Finance (S151 Officer).

9. POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025 (Pages 17 - 26)

Council is asked to consider the Policy Development & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024-2025.

10. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) & INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (IPA) 2016 (Pages 27 - 30)

This report updates council on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Investigatory Powers Act, Policies, and Procedures.

11. STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 31 - 44)

The Council is asked to consider the Standards Committee Annual report.

12. LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MOTION - HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (Pages 45 - 46)

13. QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The Democratic Services Manager will announce any submissions received. The Council will be invited to decide what action it wishes to take, if any, on the matters raised in these submissions. As the questions received and the answers given will be circulated in written form there is no requirement for them to be read out at the meeting. The questions and answers will be published with the draft minutes.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Jo Morrison who can be contacted on 01225 394358.

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, 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, 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.

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:

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

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>

- 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

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Council	
MEETING DATE:	18 September 2025	
TITLE:	Appointment of Director of Finance (S151 Officer)	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report seeks Council's approval of the appointment of a Director of Finance (S151 Officer).

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Restructuring Implementation Committee is recommending that the Council approves:

- 2.1 The appointment of a new Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), Mr Stuart Donnelly from 8th December 2025 (date to be finalised).

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 On 10th December 2024 the Restructuring Implementation Committee appointed Mr Simon Parker to the substantive position of Executive Director of Resources starting on 17th March 2025. As Mr Parker is not a qualified accountant he cannot hold the S151 designation so alternative arrangements were required.
- 3.2 On 20th March 2025, Council approved that a current Director, Mr Jeff Wring, be appointed to the role of S151 Officer on an interim basis from 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025.
- 3.3 The substantive post of Director of Finance (S151 Officer) was advertised externally during late July and August 2025 with a closing date of Monday 18th August 2025. Penna were appointed as the partners to support this recruitment.
- 3.4 12 applications (4 female and 7 male and 1 not stated) were received for the role.

- 3.5 2 applicants (1 female and 1 male) attended face-to-face interviews with a peer panel and the Restructuring Committee on 4th September 2025.
- 3.6 The Committee was impressed by the standard of the shortlisted candidates. After careful consideration of all assessment information, its unanimous decision is to recommend the offer of appointment of Stuart Donnelly, currently Deputy S151 Officer at Reading Borough Council whom it considered demonstrated the necessary skills and experience to lead the Finance function for the Council. He is a qualified accountant and a full member of CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting) since 2008.
- 3.7 It further recommends that the appointment be offered on a starting salary of £104,000 per annum.
- 3.8 Subject to Council agreeing the Committee's recommendations in this report and the completion of necessary checks, it is anticipated that Mr Donnelly will take up the appointment on 8 December 2025 (date to be finalised).

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's Recruitment and Selection policy was followed ensuring that we meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), to have responsibility for those arrangements. As such, the CFO must lead on a local authority's financial functions and ensure they are fit for purpose. CFOs must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 This is a new post. The salary and costs for the post will therefore need to be considered as part of the Council's budget processes for 2026/27.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has not been undertaken. It is a legal requirement for the Council to appoint a Section 151 Officer.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 An impact assessment has not been carried out. The recruitment and selection process was conducted fairly in accordance with the Council's recruitment and selection procedures.
- 7.2 The RIC has ensured, as far as possible, that a diverse range of applicants is considered for the post.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 All council officers have delegated responsibility for ensuring that the Council delivers against its Corporate Strategy with regards to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. This will include ensuring that the Council leads by

example in all its activities, making the radical changes needed, as well as taking a lead role in influencing and working with partners across all sectors locally, regionally and nationally and ensuring wide and deep citizen engagement.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been cleared by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer for circulation.

Contact person	<i>Will Godfrey, Chief Executive</i>
Background papers	<i>CV and financial qualification</i>
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING:	Council
MEETING DATE:	18 September 2025
TITLE:	Policy Development & Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-2025
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: 1. Policy Development & Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-2025	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the Policy Development & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024-2025.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to;

- 2.1 Note the contents of the Policy Development and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024-2025.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 As part of its statutory duty Council is required to appoint at least one overview and scrutiny committee / panel that has sole responsibility to discharge the functions (under Sections 9F and 9FA to 9FI) of the Local Government Act 2000. The council's current model includes three policy development and scrutiny (PDS) panels. The panels hold the executive to public account, whilst also assisting in the development of council policy.
- 3.2 The PDS function has agreed to provide an annual report to Council summarising the work of its panels over 2024-2025, the second year of the (2023-2027) administration.
- 3.3 The annual report provides a synopsis of the work that each of the panels carried out during 2024-2025. It highlights the positive work undertaken by the PDS panels, both internally/externally and evidences the continued importance

the PDS function has in ensuring council decision making is in embedded in good governance.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The PDS function is not required to produce an annual report however it is good practice to do so and demonstrates the council's commitment to ongoing high quality, inclusive and transparent governance.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 This report recommends that Council notes the activities undertaken by its Policy Development and Scrutiny function over the last twelve months, as such a risk assessment has not been conducted in relation to this report.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 The Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel includes equalities within its remit. Members regularly raise questions about the equality impact assessments that accompany reports presented to all three Panels

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 The report highlights work carried out by the Climate Emergency and Sustainability PDS Panel, which takes an active role in supporting delivery of the council's climate commitments.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

- 10.1 PDS Chairs and Vice Chairs Group, Monitoring Officer and S151 Officer.

Contact person	Ceri Williams – Designated Scrutiny Officer (01225 396053)
Background papers	None.
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Policy Development and Scrutiny

Annual Report 2024–25

Foreword



As Chair of the Chairs and Vice Chairs Policy Development and Scrutiny Group, I am proud to present this year's Policy Development and Scrutiny Annual Report. The past year has seen our Panels engage in a wide range of complex and impactful issues, from climate resilience to health inequalities. Our work has focused on the values of openness, collaboration, and evidence-based decision-making. I would like to thank all members, officers, and residents who have contributed to our scrutiny processes. Together, we continue to help shape a more responsive, inclusive, and forward-looking Council.

This report outlines the work of the Council's three Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels during 2024–25. It reflects the council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, and highlights how scrutiny has supported the delivery of the Corporate Strategy 2023–27. Each Panel has taken a proactive approach to identifying key issues, engaging stakeholders, and making evidence-based recommendations to Cabinet and partners.

Cllr Dine Romero

Policy Development and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024–25

1. Effective scrutiny is fundamental to good governance. It ensures that decision-making is transparent, evidence-based, and accountable to the public. In Bath and North East Somerset, the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panels play a vital role in holding the executive to account, shaping policy, and improving outcomes for residents.
2. Over the past year, the PDS Panels have worked constructively with Cabinet Members and senior officers to provide robust challenge and informed support. This collaborative approach has helped to strengthen the quality of decision-making and ensure that the Council's strategic priorities are delivered in a way that reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities.
3. Among the overarching achievements of 2024–25, scrutiny has contributed to the development of a more outcomes-focused Corporate Strategy, supported the council's response to the climate and nature emergency, and championed improvements in health and social care integration. The Panels have also embraced new ways of working, including greater use of data dashboards, hybrid meetings, and targeted engagement with residents and stakeholders, particularly through the use of task groups.
4. This report provides an account of the work of each PDS Panel over the past year. It highlights the breadth and depth of scrutiny activity and demonstrates the value that effective scrutiny brings to local democracy by working collaboratively across the political spectrum.

Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Chair - Cllr Robin Moss

Vice Chair - Cllr Malcolm Treby (replacing Cllr Lucy Hodge)

Strategic Oversight and Performance

5. The Corporate PDS Panel played a central role in monitoring delivery of the Corporate Strategy. It reviewed the 2023–24 End-of-Year Performance Report, which showed strong progress in areas such as climate action, visitor economy, and digital engagement. Members scrutinised the alignment between strategic objectives and operational delivery, ensuring that the council's ambitions were underpinned by measurable outcomes.

Key Scrutiny Topics

Corporate Strategy Delivery:

6. The Panel reviewed performance against the council's strategic indicators, with a particular focus on prevention, infrastructure, and inclusive growth. Members challenged the robustness of the data and called for greater transparency in how outcomes were linked to investment decisions.

Commercial Estate Strategy:

7. The Panel scrutinised the updated strategy for managing the council's commercial estate. Discussions focused on risk mitigation, diversification of income streams, and the balance between financial returns and community benefit.

Value for money and budget scrutiny:

8. The Panel supported the external audit process by reviewing benchmarking practices and data usage. It recommended a deeper dive into procurement efficiency, contract management, and the use of digital tools to track performance. The Panel led a successful review of the developing 2025-26 revenue and capital budgets. Members requested to be provided with detailed budget information as early as possible to enable further value to be added to the process. The Panel has taken quarterly budget monitoring reports enabling scrutiny members to track progress against the medium term financial strategy (MTFS).

Public Engagement

9. The panel noted a record 10,600 responses to online consultations and welcomed the increased use of Power BI dashboards to share performance data. Members praised the accessibility of the new digital tools and requested further development of ward-level insights to support local decision-making.

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel

Chair - Cllr Andy Wait

Vice Chair – Cllr Grant Johnson

Climate and Nature Emergency

10. The Panel reviewed the joint Annual Climate and Nature Progress Report, which highlighted a 25% reduction in Council emissions since 2019. It welcomed the adoption of an energy-based net zero policy for new housing and continued investment in active travel and sustainable transport.

Key Scrutiny Topics

Local Plan Options:

11. The Panel contributed to the first iteration of the Local Plan 2022–2042 Options Document, focusing on sustainable development, climate resilience, and the integration of green infrastructure. It called for stronger policies to support low-carbon housing and nature-based solutions.

Waste Services Transformation

12. The Panel received detailed updates on the transformation of waste services, including the relocation of operations to the new Keynsham Recycling Hub.

Fleet Electrification and Depot Modernisation

13. The Panel considered the electrification of the council's fleet, including the deployment of electric small panel vans, sweepers, and ancillary vehicles. It noted upcoming trials of electric heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) scheduled for autumn 2024, with plans to begin electrifying refuse trucks

in 2025. Additionally, the Panel reviewed the establishment of an authorised HGV MOT test facility and vehicle wash, which will be open to external customers.

Green Infrastructure:

14. The Panel reviewed biodiversity net gain, tree planting, and nature recovery networks. It requested a clearer delivery plan, improved metrics for monitoring progress, and stronger links with community-led initiatives.

Transport and Air Quality:

15. The Panel scrutinised the Journey to Net Zero strategy and monitored air quality data. Members raised concerns about the pace of modal shift and the need for stronger incentives for active travel, including safer cycling infrastructure and improved public transport.

Regional Collaboration

16. The Panel considered the work taking place through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) on regional climate funding and MetroWest rail operations. Members welcomed the joint approach but called for greater transparency in funding allocations, delivery timelines, and the integration of regional and local priorities.

Call-in

17. The Panel considered and dismissed a call-in relating to the New Sydney Place and Sydney Road through-traffic restriction and the decision to make the scheme permanent as soon as possible. This was the only call-in considered by the three PDS Panels in 2024-2025.

Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing PDS Panel

Chair - Cllr Dine Romero

Vice Chair - Cllr Liz Hardman

Health scrutiny

18. The Panel continued to work closely with the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care System (BSW ICS); key areas scrutinised included health inequalities, access to mental health services, and adult social care commissioning.
19. The Panel focused on ensuring that services were person-centred, equitable, and responsive to local needs.
20. The Panel did submit a request to the Secretary of State to call in the decision to award the integrated community-based health and care services contract to the HCRG Group, around concerns on the approach to consultation. No response has been received to date. The Panel has subsequently welcomed HCRG to brief members on a number of occasions. The focus has been to ensure that residents can access appropriate care within the new arrangements.

Children's Services:

21. The Panel reviewed safeguarding, SEND provision, and early help services. It raised concerns about waiting times, workforce pressures, and the need for earlier intervention to support families and reduce escalation. The Panel ran a task group review on knife crime prevention, concluding the importance of early intervention. This has led to a new task group being established to look at targeted early help and the emerging Families First programme.
22. From an educational perspective the Panel continues to support the work taking place to address the area's educational attainment gap, whilst also exploring data trends and interventions aimed at improving school attendance.

Public Health:

23. The Panel scrutinised responses to obesity, substance misuse, and health protection. It called for more targeted interventions, better integration with community services, and stronger links with schools and voluntary organisations.

Adult Social Care

Workforce Development:

24. The Panel explored recruitment and retention challenges in social care, highlighting the importance of pay, conditions, and career pathways.

Community Engagement

25. The Panel has offered a positive forum for community engagement particularly in regards to Newton House, with regular attendance from respective stakeholders.

Conclusion and Forward Look

26. The three PDS Panels have provided robust challenge and constructive input across a wide range of policy areas.
27. In 2025–26, the panels will deepen their focus on prevention and early intervention, strengthen scrutiny of regional governance and funding. This will include the informal clustering of the BSW ICB Board with its Somerset and Dorset equivalent.
28. There is a huge commitment to ensure scrutiny continues to add value, drive improvement, and reflect the voices of local communities.
29. Policy development activities have and continue to take place around knife crime and targeted early help. There is an appetite across the authority to go even further in response to this work. Policy development will be a key priority over the next 12 months for PDS and its officer support.

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Bath & North East Somerset Council			
MEETING:	Council		
MEETING DATE	18 th September 2025		
TITLE:	Annual Report on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) & Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report:			
Appendix 1 Usage Statistics 2024-2025			

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 This report updates council on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and Investigatory Powers Act, Policies, and Procedures.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the summary of statistics on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (RIPA/IPA) by the council (Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Note the RIPA & IPA training module (Link para 3.4)
- 2.3 Note and Approve the Council's Policy on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) & Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016 (link at para 3.5) which has been unchanged since the report to Council in 2024.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 permits Councils to carry out covert (secret) surveillance of alleged offenders for the prevention and detection of crime and the protection of public health. This is undertaken by either the use of directed surveillance or the use of a covert human intelligence source (CHIS). The

Investigatory Powers Act 2016 allows the council to apply to telecommunications providers for data information (but not the contents of communications) about individuals who are suspected of committing crimes. when RIPA & IPA are applied, It ensures that the actions taken by the council comply with the human rights act 1998. resource implications (finance, property, people).

- 3.2 The Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) is responsible for the inspection of public authorities with regard to compliance with RIPA & IPA. The council has previously been inspected in May 2014 and June 2017 and in 2020 a 'desk top' inspection was undertaken. the frequency of inspection for local authorities is every 3 years and in all likelihood the council will be inspected in the near future.
- 3.3 A summary of the Council's Annual Return on its use of RIPA and IPA powers to the IPCO is at Appendix 1.
- 3.4. The Council is committed to the continued professional development of Officers using RIPA and IPA powers. Officers using RIPA and IPA powers, therefore, are required to undergo annual training. The RIPA and IPA training module were updated last year and made available through the Council's online 'Learning Zone' portal with a Certificate generated on successful completion of the training module. The Learning Zone is available to all Officers and will be available to the IPCO on inspection. A link to the RIPA and IPA training module is at Appendix 2 of the 2024 Annual report to Council here.

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s83756/RIPA%20Report%202024>

- 3.5 The Council's Policy on the use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) & Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016 is at Appendix 3 of the 2024 Annual report to Council here:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s83756/RIPA%20Report%202024>

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The revised code on Covert Surveillance and Property Interference recommends that elected members should review the use of RIPA/IPA powers and set the policy annually.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report. Although the Council is an infrequent user of RIPA/IPA powers, the IPCO requires the Council 's procedures to remain in a good state of readiness should these need to be implemented. Consequently, the financial implications are limited to the cost of periodic refresher training for officers in the use of RIPA powers.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 There are no impacts on climate change arising from this report.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Monitoring Officer and Council S.151 Officer have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Contact person	Donna Marks – Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Annual Return - Key Statistics 2024-2025

SURVEILLANCE DATA

None

COMMUNICATIONS DATA*

1

REQUEST FOR USE OF COUNCIL CCTV BY PARTNER ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

None

Key Statistics 2024-25

SURVEILLANCE DATA

None

COMMUNICATIONS DATA

None

REQUEST FOR USE OF COUNCIL CCTV BY PARTNER ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

None

Bath & North East Somerset Council			
MEETING	Council		
MEETING	18 th September 2025		
TITLE:	Standards Committee Annual report 2024-2025		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report:			
Appendix 1 Standards Committee Annual report 2024-2025			

1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1 To consider the Standards Committee Annual report

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Council is asked to;

- 2.1 Note the work of the Standards Committee as set out in the Annual report (Appendix 1).

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Standards Committee is responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Authority, helping to secure adherence to the Members' Code of Conduct, monitoring the operation of the Code within Bath & North East Somerset Council, conducting hearings following investigation, and determining complaints made against Councillors in respect of alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

- 3.2 The Standards Committee agreed it would provide an annual report to the Council, summarising the work of the Committee over the previous year.

4. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Standards Committee is not required to produce an annual report; however, it is good practice to do so.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 No direct implications.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Adherence to robust standards of conduct mitigates potential complaints about standards issues.

7. EQUALITIES

- 7.1 No direct impact.

8. CLIMATE CHANGE

- 8.1 No direct impact.

9. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 9.1 None.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 The S.151 and Monitoring Officer have been consulted.

Contact person	Donna Marks – Head of Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer donna_marks@bathnes.gov.uk
Background papers	None

Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format

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APPENDIX 1

Standards Committee

Annual Report 2024-2025

Chair's Foreword

The Standards Committee fulfils a most important role for Bath and North East Somerset Council and for the Parish and Town Councils within its area. The Committee members are all volunteers: some are Unitary Councillors; some are Parish or Town Councillors drawn from Parish or Town Councils in the Bath and North East Somerset Council area, whose nominations are facilitated by Avon Local Councils Association, and some are Independent Members, being independent members of the public. In addition, as legally required, the Authority appoints an 'Independent Person', to work alongside the Standards Committee and Monitoring Officer.

All committee members have given willingly and generously of their time and talents in approaching issues most thoughtfully and constructively.

The following detailed report shows the range of matters within the scope of the Standards Committee. In the past year, since April 2024 there have been:

- i. 17 matters raised: of which 15 initial assessments required 'no further action' to be undertaken, 1 which was assessed as a Breach of the Code of Conduct and an apology issued; and 1 withdrawn; and
- ii. there have been another 3 matters that are currently being investigated since the 1st April 2025

To put these figures in context, the Standards Committee has within its purview, the unitary authority and 45 Parish and Town Councils: in total over 500 councillors.

In Bath and North East Somerset, the Standards Committee has two Independent Persons: Tony Drew, Roger Morris and in this authority, the Committee is chaired by an Independent Member. I am most grateful to all my colleagues for their help and support and wish to highlight the exceptional commitment of the Independent Person[s], Tony Drew and Roger Morris who both provide such valuable service to the standards regime.

Furthermore, I commend the Monitoring Officer Michael Hewitt, Deputy Monitoring Officer Donna Marks and their officers for their most professional and successful operation of the Standards regime.

Dr Axel Palmer
Chair of the Standards Committee

1. Introduction

The Standards Committee has agreed that it will submit an annual report summarising the work the Committee has carried out during the previous year for the consideration of Council. This report comprises the Annual Review covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, together with background information regarding the standards regime established within Bath & North East Somerset Council. All references to 2024-25 in the report refer to this time period.

The Standards Committee

The Standards Committee is responsible for the promotion of ethical standards within the Council, helping to secure adherence to the Code; monitoring the operation of the Code; conducting hearings following investigation and determining complaints made under the Code. The Standards Committee's terms of reference are set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 2, Responsibility for Functions. The Committee conducts proceedings using the Authority's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members updated in 2022. The Committee is also responsible for granting dispensations to Members.

Where a Final Report from an Investigating Officer recommends a finding that there has been a breach of the Code, the Committee undertakes a hearing in accordance with the Council's Local Arrangements for dealing with complaints under the Code. The Committee will determine the facts, whether there has been a breach and if so any sanction. It can also make recommendations to Council.

The Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct and for reporting any actual or potential breaches of the law and maladministration to the full Council and/or to the Cabinet (as set out in s.5 (1) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989).

The Monitoring Officer and their team administer the local arrangements for addressing complaints made under the Code of Conduct. This includes the assessment of every complaint received under the Code of Conduct. Following consideration and consultation with one of the Authority's Independent Persons and Chair of the Standards Committee, the Monitoring Officer decides whether the complaint will be investigated. The decision will be based on whether the allegation, if proved, would constitute a failure to observe the Code of Conduct and the application of the Council's adopted assessment criteria. The Monitoring Officer may also consider that a complaint can be reasonably resolved informally and will discuss this option with the complainant and subject member where appropriate.

Independent Persons

The Council has appointed two Independent Persons who are invited to attend all meetings of the Standards Committee. The Independent Persons must be consulted by the Council before it decides on a matter that has been referred to it for investigation; they can also be consulted by the Council in respect of a code of conduct complaint at any other stage; and can also be consulted by a member or co-opted member of the Council against whom a complaint has been made. It has been emphasised that the involvement and consultation of the Independent Person is important at all stages.

Standards Committee Membership

In 2024/25 the Standards Committee comprised the following Members:

2024 –Councillor Toby Simon, Councillor Michelle O'Doherty, Councillor Alan Hale, Councillor June Player and Councillor Alison Streatfeild-James

Alan Hale and Alison Streatfeild-James left during the year.

2025 - Councillor Toby Simon, Councillor Michelle O'Doherty, Councillor June Player, Councillor Tim Warren, Councillor George Leach

Independent Members Dr Axel Palmer (Chair), Sophie Sidonio (appointed March 2022). There is one vacancy for an independent member.

2. The Authority's Independent Persons

The Authority's Independent Persons are Tony Drew and Roger Morris who are non-voting observers of the Standards Committee. The Council also has access to a reserve Independent Person through informal arrangements with neighbouring local authorities.

3. Training for Standards Committee Members and Independent Persons

Initial and refresher training on the duties and responsibilities of members serving on the Standards Committee of the Authority is important to ensure the probity and credibility of the Authority's decision making processes. Members are required to undertake basic training through the Authority's member induction programme, on election or re-election, and this is refreshed annually, before they can serve on the Standards Committee. Training is also provided for the Independent Persons appointed by the Authority in order to ensure they are able to carry out their role.

Half day training sessions, were held jointly with the Avon Fire Authority, on the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct for Members (adopted by BANES in 2021) provided for:

- 30 October 2023 between 10:00 -12:30 in person at Keynsham Civic Centre
- 15 November 2023 between 17:00 – 19:30 online via Zoom/Teams

A training session for Standards Committee Members on Holding Effective Hearings is to be arranged and delivered by the Monitoring Officer and the Legal Services Manager later this year.

5. Review of Standards Committee Work Programme and Action Plan for 2024/25

The Committee has not met in 2025 so far as there had been no significant matters to report back on . However, the Monitoring Officer has continued to monitor its Work Plan and noted the current position with complaints using the Complaints Tracker.

6. Committee Meetings and foremost workstreams

At the start of each year the Standards Committee agrees its Work Programme/Action Plan for the year, which is then monitored at meetings throughout the year. Standard Committee sessions are scheduled every 2 months in advance. If not required, these are cancelled. The Standards Committee were due to meet on the following dates but these were cancelled:

Tuesday 23 rd January 2024 at 5pm - (Kaposvar Room) CANCELLED
Tuesday 23 rd April 2024 at 5pm – (Kaposvar Room) CANCELLED

The following dates are pre-arranged up until 2025

Date of Despatch	Date of Standards Committee
Monday 13 th January	Tuesday 21 st January 2025 at 5pm (Kaposvar Room) cancelled
Monday 14 th April	Tuesday 22 nd April 2025 at 5pm (Kaposvar Room) cancelled
Monday 7 th July	Tuesday 15 th July 2025 at 5pm (Kaposvar Room)
Monday 6 th October	Tuesday 14 th October 2025 at 5pm (Kaposvar Room)

7. Progress on the Work that the Committee has undertaken since 31st March 2025

Training will be delivered for Standards Committee Members on Holding Effective Hearings and is to be arranged and delivered by the Monitoring Officer and the Deputy Monitoring Officer within the next year.

There has been a consistent approach to how investigations are handled in accordance with the Code of Conduct which has enabled a better management of complaints. To assist with the governance of dealing with Complaints an additional process for 'Conflict of Interest Checks' will be undertaken before the Independent Person is appointed in any complaint.

Continued 'horizon scanning' with neighbouring authorities is undertaken to seek to understand the types of complaint[s] being raised and to address this in further training with a focus on:

- Lessons-learned or good practice reports from other local authorities.
- Monitoring impact on Councillors' that may be subject to threats and if necessary the ability to withdraw details from the register if councillor[s] are harassed by the public to protect their home address and placing safeguards for sensitive information.

8. Complaints under the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members for the last 5 years

i. Complaints by complainant

Type of complainant	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024	2024/2025	Total
BaNES Councillor	1	4	4	1	3	13
Parish / Town Councillor	1	0	0	1	0	2
Member of the public	13	13	11	8	14	59
Council Officer	0	1	0	0	0	1
Parish Clerk	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	16	18	15	10	17	76

ii. Complaints by subject member

Subject of the complaint	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024	2024/25	Total
BANES Councillor	5	13	14	4	13	49
Parish / Town Councillor	11	5	1	6	4	27
Total	16	18	15	10	17	76

iii. Complaints by type

Type of complaint	2022/23	2023/2024	2024/25	Total
1. Respect	6	1	8	15
2. Bullying Harassment, discrimination	6	0	6	12
3. Compromising Impartiality	0	0	1	1
4. Dealing with Information	0	1	0	1
5. Disrepute	5	2	6	13
6. Improper use of position	0	4	4	8
7. Improper use of resources	0	1	0	1
8. Co-operating with Code of Conduct	0	2	0	2
9. Registering/disclosi ng Interests	3	0	2	5
10. Gifts & Hospitality	0	0	0	0
Total	20	11	27	58

Note: A complainant may make several types of complaint about a councillor.

iv. Initial Assessments

Local Assessment Decisions	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
No Further Action/no breach	11	11	10	8	15	55
Informal Resolution	2	2	0	0	1	5
Referred for Investigation	0	1	0	0	0	1
Ongoing	0	1	0	2	0	3
Withdrawn/rejected	3	3	5	0	1	12
Total	16	18	15	10	17	76

v. Outcome of complaints

Outcomes	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/2024	2024/2025	Total
Other Action	1	0	0	0	0	1
Ongoing	0	0	0	2	0	2
Apology/Breach	1	0	0	0	1	2
No Action Required	0	0	7	8	15	30
Withdrawn/rejected	3	0	5	0	1	9
Breach	0	0	0	0	0	0
No Breach	11	18	3	0	0	32
Total	16	18	15	10	17	76

9. Conclusion

The Committee has dealt with a variety of matters in the past year and aims to continue to develop and maintain the Council's ethical governance framework for the benefit of the Authority and ultimately local people. The Committee is looking forward to the next year.

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Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting 18 September 2025

Liberal Democrat Group Motion on Houses in Multiple Occupation

To be proposed by Councillor Sarah Moore

Council believes:

1. HMOs are an essential part of the local housing market, particularly within Bath, providing affordable accommodation not only for students, but also for professionals, key workers, lower-income workers and temporary workers among others.
2. Students are an important part of the fabric of life here in Bath and North East Somerset; that the universities and colleges are vital strategic partners; and that both bring important social, community, cultural and economic benefits to our area.

Council notes that:

3. 'House in Multiple Occupation' (HMO) and 'large House in Multiple Occupation' are defined terms under housing legislationⁱ.
4. Council tax exemptions applied to those HMOs solely occupied by students represent a reduction in potential income to the local authority and in funds available to support the vital public services on which all residents rely.
5. Government no longer compensates local authorities for this reduced tax income via grant funding.
6. More widely, overall grant funding awarded to B&NES has been reduced by central government from £31 million in 2013/14 to just £1.3 million in 2025/26, a reduction of over 95%.
7. Government has indicated willingness to recognise the impact of mandatory discounts and exemptions in the Fair Funding Review.
8. B&NES faces a housing affordability crisis which is exacerbated by new HMO conversions reducing the supply of affordable family homes.
9. B&NES Council has previously adopted planning policies to support the aim of maintaining an appropriately balanced housing mix in the city of Bathⁱⁱ.
10. The forthcoming Local Plan Options consultation represents an opportunity to consult on new potential policy approaches to HMOs.

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*

Council therefore:

11. Calls on government to recognise the challenges faced by university cities in the Fair Funding Review formula proposals.
12. Highlights the opportunity for B&NES residents to participate in the Local Plan Options consultation, from 2 October to 13 November 2025.
13. Invites the Council Leader and local MPs to press central government to acknowledge the impact of student HMOs on local authority finances and to address it with a Fair Funding formula that compensates local authorities in full.

ⁱ See: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/hmo-legislation-standards-guidance-required-documents-and-checklists>

ⁱⁱ See: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/houses-multiple-occupation-bath>

- *Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.*
- *Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.*