

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday 20th November 2025

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

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Sarah Evans, Alan Hale, Steve Hedges, Matt McCabe, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, George Tomlin and Chris Warren

37 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39 MINUTES - 18TH SEPTEMBER 2025

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Eleanor Jackson, it was

RESOLVED that the minutes of 18th September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair asked the meeting to stand in silence for a minute following the recent deaths of Honorary Alderman and former Councillor Bryan Chalker and former Councillor Mike Kelleher.

The Chair then made the customary announcements regarding microphones and webcasting.

The Chair noted that this would be the last meeting attended by Chief Executive, Will Godfrey and thanked him for his service with the Council. Will thanked the Chair and said a few words.

41 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

42 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Robin Kerr made a statement on behalf of the Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm, a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and online record. Robin spoke in support of the Movement Strategy, asking for it be aligned with the Local Plan and proposed 3 'quick wins' to support implementation.

Ian Sanders spoke to Council about challenges for new build developments in BANES, focussing on unaffordable service charges funding public amenities on the developments and local implications of the Government's recommendations for mandatory Council adoption and common adoptable standards. A copy of Ian's statement has been added to the Minute book and online record. Councillor Robin Moss asked if Ian was aware of other estate's residents in Keynsham experiencing the same issues. Ian replied that he was in contact with a number of other estates, sharing the progress and steps they had taken.

David Redgewell made a statement about public transport funding issues. He raised issues on the Bath Bus & Coach station and Railway station interchange, reopening the Travel centre, cleaning and maintenance of the interchange and reopening Saltford Railway station. David also raised the issue of public transport to new homes, employment, hospital and education facilities. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked David whether he considered the bus station was adequately designed for accessibility. David replied that work was needed to improve signage for partially sighted people, and that all parties involved needed to make a plan for accessibility improvements.

Charlie Siret made a statement on behalf of WESTACT (West of England Shared Transport and Active Travel) in support of the recent consultations on the Local Plan, 10 year Movement Strategy, and the A4 Bath to Bristol proposals. She flagged an upcoming event in Farmborough on Saturday 10th January about improving transport for Farmborough and invited councillors to attend. A copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Jackie Head from the Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership, the group that is working with WECA and the Big Lemon to deliver two *WEST*locals: the X91 and 99, gave a statement proposing a series of selection criteria for upcoming bus discussions with WECA, a copy of which has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Elaine Workman from the Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership continued the points from the same group, proposing further selection criteria. A copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

Phil Collins from the Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership concluded the presentation with the final proposed selection criteria. A copy of the statement has been added to the Minute book and online record.

43 ANNUAL CLIMATE AND NATURE PROGRESS REPORT 2025

The Council considered a report presenting the Annual Climate & Nature report 2025 which updates Council on the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies in 2024-25, both as a Council and as a wider district.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Joel Hirst, it was

RESOLVED to

1. Note the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies during 2024-25, as set out in the Attachments; and
2. Approve the Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report before publication.

[Notes;

1. *The above resolution was carried with the votes as set out below;*

For (44) – Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, David Harding, Ian Halsall, Gavin Heathcote, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Ruth Malloy, Hal MacFie, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Simon McCombe, Manda Rigby, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker and Sarah Warren

Abstain (3) – Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross, Joanna Wright]

44 WEST OF ENGLAND GROWTH STRATEGY

The Council considered a report on the West of England Growth Strategy developed by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). This strategy has been developed in partnership with the MCA, B&NES Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Bristol Council.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Paul Roper, it was

RESOLVED to

1. Endorse the West of England Growth Strategy as a Bath & North East Somerset Council document; and
2. Support the Mayoral Combined Authority in promoting the West of England Growth Strategy and the West of England as a destination for inward investment.

[Notes;

2. *The above resolution was carried with the votes as set out below;*

For (46) – Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Ian Halsall, Gavin Heathcote, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Ruth Malloy, Hal MacFie, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Tim Warren and Sarah Warren

Abstain (3) – Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross, Joanna Wright]

45 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE (HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

The Council considered a recommendation from its Restructuring Implementation Committee.

Before moving the motion, Councillor Kevin Guy congratulated the successful candidate and thanked outgoing Chief Executive, Will Godfrey for his service with the Council. This was echoed by Councillor Robin Moss and Councillor Karen Walker.

Councillor Guy then moved, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, and it was

RESOLVED unanimously to approve

1. The appointment of Ms Sophie Broadfield as Chief Executive on a salary of £175,000 per annum with a start date of 1 January 2026;
2. The designation of the postholder as Head of Paid Service under section 4 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 with effect from 1 January 2026; and
3. The designation of the postholder as Returning Officer for all elections and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from 1 January 2026.

46 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

The Council considered a report giving details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for the first six months of 2025/26.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor David Biddleston, it was

RESOLVED unanimously to note;

1. The Treasury Management Report to 30th September 2025, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice; and
2. The Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2025.

47 AVON PENSION FUND ANNUAL REPORT

The Avon Pension Fund Committee discharges the responsibilities of the Council in its role as the administering authority of the Avon Pension Fund in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (as amended). The Council considered the annual report of the work it has undertaken in the previous twelve months and reference is also made in the report to the future work programme. This report is for the 12 months to 31 March 2025.

On a motion from Councillor Toby Simon, seconded by Councillor George Leach it was

RESOLVED unanimously

1. To note the Committee's Annual Report to Council; and
2. To note the Pension Board's Annual Report.

48 AUDIT COMMITTEE 2024/25 ANNUAL REPORT

The Audit Committee has specific delegated powers given to it from Full Council and as such is required to report back annually on its work to Council under its existing Terms of Reference. The Audit Committee 2024/25 Annual Report details the work carried out by the Committee for the period April 2023 to May 2024.

On a motion by Councillor David Biddleston, seconded by Councillor Sam Ross, it was

RESOLVED unanimously to agree that

1. The Annual Report of the Audit Committee is noted, and Council confirms that it has received 'assurance' that the Committee are fulfilling the responsibilities as stated in the Committee's Terms of Reference.

49 MOTION FROM THE GREEN GROUP - AI

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliot, seconded by Councillor Grant Johnson, it was

RESOLVED that

This Council Notes that:

1. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasing rapidly, bringing significant benefits and opportunities for public good, as well as challenges that must be managed responsibly.
2. The UK's leadership in digital infrastructure – including data-centre growth – positions us at the forefront of the global technology economy

- a. The UK may already be the third-largest host for data centres, behind the US and Germany.¹
3. The government has designated data centres as critical national infrastructure, recognising their importance to the UK's economic future. While energy use is a factor, AI and digitalisation have the potential to drive energy efficiency, decarbonise industry, and support the transition to net zero, helping reduce long-term energy costs for households and businesses alike.
4. Innovation across the sector is reducing environmental impacts through renewable power sourcing, circular cooling, and waste-heat recovery systems, showing that digital transformation and sustainability can go hand in hand.
5. While some have raised concerns about over-reliance on automation, evidence increasingly shows that AI can enhance human decision-making, improve learning outcomes, and free people from repetitive work, allowing more creative, empathetic and community-focused tasks.
6. Local councils across the UK are successfully deploying AI tools aimed at streamlining tasks, for example in the planning process and social care, including note-taking.²
7. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology stated the technology could accelerate post committee meeting tasks, allowing officers to focus on the task at hand rather than paperwork. Early trials in central government show that officials saved on average, one hour of admin per one-hour meeting.³ This demonstrates how AI can directly improve public-service productivity and free capacity for front-line delivery.
8. Bath and North East Somerset has introduced the following AI:⁴
 - a. Microsoft Copilot: To assist in various administrative functions, speeding up repetitive or time-consuming manual tasks.
 - b. Magicnotes: Utilised specifically within social care, Magicnotes aids in transcribing and then producing high-quality summaries of a wide range of meeting types.
 - c. Zoom: Used for telephony and supporting our contact centre teams. It includes call transcription capabilities that use AI to help summarise calls for staff.

These examples show that the Council is already adopting AI in a careful, transparent, and effective way that improves staff efficiency and service quality to local residents.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyr9nx0jrzo>

² <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/61064-councils-to-use-ai-for-preparing-meeting-minutes-as-part-of-government-trial>

³ <https://www.localgovernmentlawyer.co.uk/governance/396-governance-news/61064-councils-to-use-ai-for-preparing-meeting-minutes-as-part-of-government-trial>

⁴ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/use-ai-technologies>

9. Bath and North East Somerset allocated £65,000 in the 2025/2026 budget for Artificial Intelligence (AI) investment aimed at improving resident facing services.⁵
10. The Digital Strategy 2023 states that the council will use data and intelligence to inform transparent decision making, including a defined and applied framework for the ethical and secure use of data, including leveraging new data technologies such as AI.⁶
11. None of your personal data is used by the AI technology provider to improve their AI products, other than specific improvements local to B&NES council's implementation, and all data is stored and processed in either the UK or EU.
12. AI tools are not employed in the decision-making process and all decision making is made by Council officers;⁷
13. AI-produced content undergoes review by a Council officer before being used further.⁸ These safeguards demonstrate the Council's responsible approach to innovation which keeps human accountability at the centre of all technological progress.
14. B&NES has internal policies on Use of Generative AI⁹ (which will be reviewed and updated early next year) and Data & Research Ethics¹⁰, as well as high-level webpages outlining the Digital Strategy and overall position on Use of AI Technologies.
15. AI presents an opportunity to make councils greener, smarter, and fairer. With ethical oversight, transparency, and innovation, Bath and North East Somerset can lead the way in using technology to serve people and the planet, supporting both the climate and ecological emergencies the Council has declared.

This Council Resolves to:

1. Recognise the importance of ethical and sustainable use of Artificial Intelligence in delivering services.
2. Request that this issue be referred to the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to review current operational AI practices & policies and consider whether a comprehensive AI policy (strategic & operational) should be developed and, if so, recommend what factors it should address.

[Notes;

3. *An amendment to the original motion (which had been moved by Councillor Joanna Wright and seconded by Councillor Saskia Heijltjes) was moved as set out above, and agreed with the votes below;*

⁵ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2025-2026>

⁶ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/digital-strategy>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ [LINK](#)

¹⁰ [LINK](#)

For (43) – Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Sarah Moore, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Malcolm Treby and Andy Wait

Against (3) – Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross and Joanna Wright

Abstain (3) – Councillors Gavin Heathcote, Karen Walker and Tim Warren

4. This became the substantive motion which was carried with the votes as set out below;

For (44) – Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, David Harding, Liz Hardman, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Sarah Moore, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Paul May, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait and Tim Warren

Abstain (5) – Councillors Gavin Heathcote, Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross, Karen Walker, Joanna Wright]

50 MOTION FROM THE INDEPENDENTS FOR B&NES GROUP - COMMUNITY LIBRARIES

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

51 MOTION FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - SEND PROFITS

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat Group.

On a motion from Councillor Paul May, seconded by Councillor David Harding, it was

RESOLVED unanimously that

Council notes:

1. In December 2024 the Government introduced the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, with an overall aim to better protect children and raise standards in education.
2. The Government also announced £740 million in new funding to support pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those needing alternative education within mainstream schools. Inclusion remains their overarching policy, so that our children and young people are educated together with their peers in their own community, where appropriate.
3. The SEND system is under severe strain, with some families struggling to secure vital support for their children which is compounded by some schools and councils struggling to provide the necessary support. Council recognises

the role of campaigning organisations, including SEND Sanctuary UK and Let Us Learn Too, to highlight the impact of inadequate funding on staffing and delays to provision.

4. The Council's budget for children's service provision, particularly for those children in the care of the local authority, is under considerable strain. Residential provision and foster care services are increasingly costly due to for-profit operators.
5. Children with SEND and those who are in care deserve the same opportunities as every child, including access to the support they need to thrive both in school and in later life.
6. Research commissioned by the Liberal Democrats has revealed that private equity-backed SEND providers are making combined profits of over £100m a year, with some achieving margins of over 20%.
7. Many of these companies are backed by firms registered in tax havens or foreign sovereign wealth funds.
8. The Government has taken some action to curb profiteering, but more is needed. Through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, government has introduced powers to cap the profits of providers of illegal or exploitative children's homes, alongside enhancing financial transparency and greater enforcement by Ofsted.
9. The forthcoming Government review of the SEND and Alternative Provision system, which has been delayed until next year, would be an opportunity to propose action against excessive profits by SEND providers.
10. The proactive work of hard-working officers in Bath and North East Somerset Council to improve our SEND and social care services, which is commended.

Council believes that:

11. Making excessive profits from the needs of children is unacceptable and must end. Children are not commodities for profit and should never be treated as such. In principle, Council believes that social enterprises are the ideal model for SEND and children's social care service providers.
12. Resources must be directed into improving provision, staffing and outcomes for children, not into shareholder dividends or inflated executive pay.
13. Local authorities and schools should be supported to provide sustainable, high-quality, inclusive educational and residential provision within both their mainstream and specialist settings, including by establishing more cost-effective local provision.

Council resolves to:

14. Call on the Government to take action to cap the profits of private providers of services for vulnerable children, including sanctions against providers who breach this, with any profits returned to local authorities.
15. Support further reforms to boost the SEND and social care system, including strong financial oversight of providers, transparency, and new powers and funding for councils to build and manage local mainstream and specialist provision directly and to prioritise non-profit-making organisations in commissioning.
16. Endorse the principle that Government reforms must put children and their families first.

17. Request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Education on this matter.

52 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Statements were made by the following Councillors;

Councillor Saskia Heijltjes made a statement raising concerns about the informal consultation process for the Residents Parking zone in Lambridge, a copy of which has been added to the online record and Minute book. Councillor Kevin Guy asked why Councillor Heijltjes had not raised these concerns earlier, to which she replied that she had.

Councillor Eleanor Jackson made a statement about transport to the RUH and the need for better provision, a copy of which has been added to the online record and Minute book. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked Councillor Jackson if she felt that the Cabinet and WECA understood her specific challenges and were listening to her concerns. Councillor Jackson replied that she thought they were listening but whether that would turn into action remains to be seen. Councillor Kevin Guy asked whether Councillor Jackson would like to share her thoughts with the WECA Transport Board when it starts next year. Councillor Jackson replied with a request to attend as an observer at WECA meetings.

Councillor Joanna Wright made a statement also raising concerns about the consultation process leading to the Lambridge Residents Parking zone, a copy of which has been added to the online record and Minute book.

Councillor Anna Box made a statement, thanking the public speakers who had raised issues about buses in the Chew Valley and stressing the leisure opportunities and enjoyment that adequate bus transport can bring, preventing isolation and loneliness. A copy of the statement has been added to the online record and Minute book.

Councillor David Harding made a statement also in support of Chew Valley buses. He pointed out that the Chew Valley is the worst connected part of B&NES, which leads to isolation and that has consequences in the area. He applauded the campaigners who had spoken at the meeting earlier and called for a meeting with WECA as the funding was due to run out in March 2026.

Councillor Simon McCombe made a statement echoing the comments from Councillors Box and Harding, and the public speakers about Chew Valley buses X91 and X99, a copy of which has been added to the online record and Minute book. He stressed the vital role these buses play and urged pressure to be put on WECA to continue these vital services.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

This page is intentionally left blank

COUNCIL MEETING 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC

Public (item 7)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Robin Kerr, Bath Alliance | Transport aspects of Local Plan and Movement Strategy consultations
(<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 2. Ian Sanders | Challenges for new build developments (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 3. David Redgewell | Public transport funding |
| 4. Charlie Siret, WESTACT | Transport in B&NES (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 5. Emilia Melville, Reclaim our Buses | WECA bus franchising (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 6. Jackie Head, Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership | Chew Valley buses (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 7. Elaine Workman, Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership | Chew Valley buses (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 8. Phil Collins, Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership | Chew Valley buses (<i>statement attached</i>) |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Brian Webber
I congratulate Councillor Stuart Bridge on his election at the recent by-election for Widcombe and Lyncombe ward. Please may I know (approximately) the total additional expenditure incurred by the Electoral Services Department in arranging the by-election.			
Answer from:			Cllr Mark Elliott
The cost of the by-election in Widcombe & Lyncombe ward was £11,960.			
P	02	Question from:	Brian Webber
On 20 August 2025 I emailed Councillor McCabe suggesting that the small area of little used open space near the Bethel in St John's Road, Bath could be used for a few small dwellings for older people in a sustainable location. As he did not reply I infer that he considered my suggestion had no merit. Please may I know why?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
Apologies for the delay. I am waiting for a replacement laptop so I'm currently unable to check what actions have taken place regarding this query. Once this is restored, I'll check and get back to Brian with an update.			
P	03	Question from:	Brian Webber
It is noticeable in many spots of central Bath that broken pavement slabs are being replaced by asphalt. While York stone or other quality			

material is expensive, does not cheap asphalt degrade the appearance of our World Heritage city?

Answer from:

Cllr Lucy Hodge

Unfortunately, many of our pavements in Bath City and other urban areas are subject to vehicle over-running due to the selfish behaviour of motorists who increasingly dominate pedestrian spaces by driving over pavements, causing significant damage and risks through trips and falls. The reality is there is more damage than we can repair, so in many cases we are faced with ensuring pavements are safe and serviceable by removing broken slabs and inserting readily available flexible asphalt concrete materials with the intention of returning at a later date to undertake a more specialist paving repair. Whilst we do hold stocks of certain paving slabs, we are also faced with the challenge in some cases of sourcing suitable replacement slabs to match in with the surrounding paving. Our highway inspection team take great pride in their work but as we are faced with an ever-increasing workload of damaged paving areas to address it can be frustrating not being able to undertake 'right first time' repairs and retain the historic feel of our world heritage city.

This page is intentionally left blank

B&NES Council 20 November 2025 – statement by Robin Kerr, Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm – The Movement Strategy for Bath

The Bath Alliance for Transport and Public Realm comprises twenty one Bath stakeholder organisations with shared interests in excellent transport and public realm. We aim to support B&NES Council's transport effort in Bath and urge the Council to develop and deliver a comprehensive, long term transport plan.

We think the Movement Strategy is very good. We support the three well-balanced goals of the Strategy.

We strongly support the proposal that through traffic should use the Strategic Road Network and Main Road Network (the A46, A4 London Road, and A36), not the historic centre. We also strongly support the aim of reducing traffic in Queen Square and recovering it as a high-quality public space. The heart of the World Heritage Site is not the place for heavy traffic.

It's important to get the strategy right, but that's just a beginning. The challenge will be to implement the strategy, and that will require determination and detailed planning. The 'Levers' of the Strategy cover almost all key issues. It is good that these include broad timescales for implementing the various strands. We propose three 'quick wins':

Declassify the A4 through the city centre. All roads below the level of the Strategic and Major Road Networks are under B&NES' control¹. In particular, this includes the A4 through the centre, and it would be entirely consistent with the Strategy to declassify it. By itself that would have a limited impact (although it might discourage satnavs), but it would send a strong signal of your intent to 'create great quality places'.

Parking control is a powerful demand management tool which is also under B&NES' control. Reducing meter parking in the city centre to encourage drivers to use alternatives such as Park-and-Ride would be a quick win for the Strategy.

The Strategy calls for reduced levels of freight traffic using unsuitable streets. A third quick win would be to get Avon and Somerset Police to enforce the HGV limit through the centre, or for B&NES to seek additional enforcement powers to do so.

One major omission is any reference to a Park & Ride to the east of Bath. This is essential if traffic coming from the east is to be reduced. We hope you will reconsider this. With that proviso, the Strategy has the full support of the Alliance.

Lastly, the Local Plan and the Movement Strategy should be aligned. The current Local Plan refers to "a city centre that is free of all but essential traffic"². This text should be retained in the new Plan, rather than the feeble wording in the current draft.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-road-classification-and-the-primary-route-network/guidance-on-road-classification-and-the-primary-route-network> paras 1.19 and 1.20

2. Composite Local Plan para 99. Para 112 refers to "a largely traffic-free centre by 2029". The current draft refers to "A pedestrian-oriented city centre".

This page is intentionally left blank

My name is Ian Sanders, a Keynsham resident, here to talk about challenges on new housing developments.

Although there are many challenges, I will focus on one in particular that the Council:

- are uniquely placed to address; and
- will face significant financial risks if not addressed.

The challenge is that of what is effectively public, but legally private, infrastructure and amenities on developments that development residents fund through exorbitant service charges, effectively privately maintaining assets for public benefit. These assets would otherwise be paid for by the Council. For clarity they primarily include assets such play areas, green open spaces, drainage systems, etc.

These residents are considered to “pay twice” through council tax and service charges.

This model is driven by:

1. motivations of cost saving and revenue raising; and
2. enabled by significant imbalances and abuse of power between parties.

Councils actively seek to minimise their adoption of these assets, whilst developers seek to avoid the costs of delivering to what they refer to as “**adoptable standards**”.

The Competition and Markets Authority (the CMA) have explored solutions such as council tax discounts or mandating that councils adopt the assets. Government have endorsed, and are taking forward through consultations a number of the CMA recommendations, the two most significant are:

1. Defining common adoptable standards; and
2. Mandatory council adoption of all such assets.

Councils being forced to adopt assets below “adoptable standards” transfers increased capital and operational financial liabilities and risks from development residents to the Council. If the Council act now, to push adoptable standards and council adoption they can significantly reduce these liabilities and risks.

This ‘**minimised adoption, maximised service charge**’ challenge is the tip of the iceberg affecting the delivery and management new housing developments.

I invite the council to consider actions in BANES of:

1. Mitigate the aforementioned risks in the spirit of the recommendations through any s38 agreements.
2. Commissioning a lessons learned review of new housing development delivery in the context of the recommendations.

This page is intentionally left blank

I'm speaking on behalf of Westact, for West of England Shared Transport and Active Travel. We are glad to see that there have recently been a myriad of consultations for the Local Plan, 10 year Movement strategy, and the A4 Bath to Bristol proposals. Whilst there was low turnout to the Local Plan consultation event we attended, we were pleased to join many other residents at an A4 consultation.

We hope whether there was high or low attendance at consultations, the diversity of communities' needs within BANES will be considered, including those who might have been less able to engage in consultations.

We are hoping to build on the conversation about transport in BANES with an event in Farmborough on Saturday 10th January, and would be glad to see any councillors who are invested in improving transport for the people of Farmborough there, as well as other BaNES residents who would like to join in the conversation.

- Charlie Siret, WESTACT coordinator

This page is intentionally left blank

Statement to B&NES Council meeting: 20th November 2025**Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership – 1 of 3 – Jackie Head**

I am here, with two colleagues, on behalf of Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership, the group that is working with WECA and the Big Lemon to deliver two *WEST*locals: the X91 and 99.

As you will know the journey to getting these routes in place has been a long one, and now a little over a year since they began to run we are uncomfortably aware of the potential funding cliff edge of March 2026. Did you know that to continue to run, these routes have to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner by 22nd January? Just 2 months away..

On the 1st December officers and council members will be attending a meeting in WECA to argue the case for buses in B&NES. You will have lots of routes to think about, many communities lobbying you for support and we realise it will be hard to know how you judge one route above another, so this statement is to suggest some useful questions you might want to ask.

We would also like to ask Kevin Guy (as WECA Deputy Mayor and B&NES Council Leader, to arrange a meeting with ourselves and relevant transport colleagues in B&NES & WECA where these issues can be discussed in more detail.

We have 9 proposed selection criteria that we'd like to put forward

- 1. How long has this route been running and is this sufficient time to have tested its potential?**

Bus routes are normally given 3-5 year trials? The X91 was introduced in skeleton form in April 2024 and the 99 in September 2024, so they are in their infancy. Will you give us this opportunity to grow?

2. Given the length of time the route has been operating, has it developed demand at a reasonable rate?

The X91 began as a test one return journey from 3 villages before we applied for it to be a 3x a day 5 days a week service from September 2024 and a 4x a day 6 days a week service from September 2025. It has built its present cohort incredibly fast. It is growing month on month and now has 3x the amount of customers it had a year ago.

The 99 initially grew well and quickly built a cohort of 6th formers using it to access Chew Valley 6th form as well as others. In an effort to simplify the route and bring in new people we changed the route in September 2025 and are in the process of seeking a further change by April 2026 to make it even more fit for purpose. Already numbers have grown from September to October when this change was made. The Chew Valley had no fixed route services so gathering new passengers takes time, but our group is working hard to continue to build passenger numbers.

I'm now going to pass to my colleague, Elaine Workman

Statement to B&NES Council meeting: 20th November 2025**Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership – 2 of 3 –
Elaine Workman**

Thank you Jackie, moving on.

3. Has the route's recorded growth been hampered by issues beyond its control?

- a) The X91 travels in and out to Bristol but after Imperial Park it is not permitted to pick up passengers on the bus stops it passes because of the arrangement WECA has with FIRSTbus, so every day it passes queues of people waiting who it can't pick up.
- b) The 99 being a very rural route struggles to operate to bus stops that don't even have marker flags let alone benches or shelters or any phone signal. This also means that the Ticketer Machine is significantly underreporting footfall on the bus. Indeed this is also an issue for the X91 albeit to a lesser degree. As our careful analysis of data has recently shown, both routes have large amounts of missing data not captured on the Ticketer. Routes on the 99 have 11%, 17%, 23% and in one month 41% of data missing. When viability of a route is judged on cost per passenger how can that be accurately done with such a data shortfall? Take a look at this example month: all of the yellow slots are where the ticketer machine was not recording.
- c)

Sun 1st	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Mon 2nd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Tues 3rd	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Wed 4th	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Thurs 5th	0	No record	No record	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	0	No record	No record	No record						
Fri 6th	0	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	0			0	0	0	0
Sat 7th	0	No record	No record	0	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record
Sun 8th	0	0	No record	No record	0	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	0	No record	No record					
Mon 9th	No record	No record	0	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	0	No record	No record	0						
Tues 10th	No record	No record	No record	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	2	12	0	0						
Wed 11th	11	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	9	0	0	0						
Thurs 12th	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	No record	14	0	No record	No record						
Fri 13th	8	0	1	0	0	0	4	2	19	6	0	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record
Sat 14th	2	1	3	3	0	1	4	0	0	0	2	0	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record
Sun 15th	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Mon 16th	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Tues 17th	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Wed 18th	7	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Thurs 19th	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Fri 20th	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record	No record						
Sat 21st	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	0	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sun 22nd	0	2	0	0	0	No record	No record	0	1	0	0	0	1	No record				
Mon 23rd	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0						
Tues 24th	8	1	2	8	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	6						
Wed 25th	8	0	8	8	0	8	0	0	0	2	0	7						
Thurs 26th	7	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	0						
Fri 27th	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sat 28th	2	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sun 29th	1	0	0	No record	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0						
Mon 30th	6	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	8	0	0	0						

4. What evidence is there that this route is meeting social needs?

Our Great Big Bus Survey

<https://tinyurl.com/GreatBigBusSurvey2025> shows that both of these routes are vital for the health and wellbeing of users, helping prevent rural isolation and connecting villages to each other. There are quotes on every page to show this and I would encourage you to also read the parts of the report which show how we have created a strong supportive community both on the buses and through our membership, events and social media campaigns.

5. What evidence is there that these routes are helping decarbonise transport?

As we have often said, B&NES will not meet its decarbonisation of transport targets if it does not provide public transport into its most rural areas. This carbon calculation provided by a WECA officer shows the dramatic decarbonising impact of swapping to the X91 and 99 buses. Our group has developed a strong following of bus users motivated by a desire to decarbonise (as well as those drawn to buses because they are cheap, efficient and provide a supportive community on board) and we believe this will continue to grow provided these routes are allowed to continue.

Route	Trip length (km)	Vehicle	Consumption /km	Total vehicle consumption (per trip)	Emissions factors (Carbon dioxide emissions per litre of fuel burnt / kWh used)	Total emissions (kg per trip, Carbon dioxide equivalent)	Max occupancy	Avg. occupancy (all-week, for bus exc. driver)	Emissions per person per trip (Kg CO2e)	Avoided emissions per person per trip
99	24	Petrol car (2025)	0.075736135	1.81766723	2.114	3.842548524		1.15	3.341346542	2.838733992
99	24	Diesel car (2025)	0.067128743	1.611089823	2.454	3.953614426		1.15	3.437925588	2.935313038
99	24	Electric car (2025)	0.19084	4.58016	0.211	0.96641376		1.15	0.840359791	0.337747241
99	24	Electric bus (2025)	1.191025	28.5846	0.211	6.0313506	16	12	0.50261255	
X91	34	Petrol car (2025)	0.075736135	2.575028576	2.114	5.443610409		1.15	4.733574268	4.021539823
X91	34	Diesel car (2025)	0.067128743	2.28237725	2.454	5.600953771		1.15	4.870394583	4.158360137
X91	34	Electric car (2025)	0.19084	6.48856	0.211	1.36908616		1.15	1.190509704	0.712034446
X91	34	Electric bus (2025)	1.191025	40.49485	0.211	8.54441335	31	12	0.712034446	

6. Is there evidence of high customer satisfaction on this route?

The Great Big Bus Survey was answered by nearly 1000 people. The satisfaction ratings (recorded quantitatively and qualitatively) on both routes are incredibly high and way above other fixed route services in neighbouring areas as well as being far higher than *WESTlink*.¹ Do other routes have evidence of their popularity?

I'm now going to pass to my colleague, Phil Collins

¹ <https://tinyurl.com/GreatBigBusSurvey2025> See page 36 onwards

This page is intentionally left blank

Statement to B&NES Council meeting: 20th November 2025

Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership – 3 of 3 – Phil Collins

Thank you Elaine. So, to finish off our statement

7. Is this route operating in an area with low connectivity?

In other words, how much public transport is on offer here if this route is withdrawn? Remember the black hole of public transport in the Chew Valley? Indeed in your evidence base to the present local plan the Chew Valley is recorded as having no public transport apart from WESTlink (as the report was written in 2023)

The WESTlink service has proved to be less functional in an ultra rural context (where the algorithm doesn't recognise two villages next to each other as ones where rides can be grouped,) and our group has become aware of high dissatisfaction ratings. Indeed, figures put on the public domain by North Somerset show that WESTlink only delivers 41% of requested rides. This data also shows by its mapping that in the Chew Valley WESTlink is effectively functioning as a school bus taking students from South Bristol (outside the qualifying area for free bus travel) to Chew Valley School...except it is three half full buses travelling in and out each day and making it impossible to get a ride from anywhere else in the Chew Valley.

Please don't assume that our Public Transport needs can be met by WESTlink. Our group is consistently told (and have experienced ourselves) of an inability to book a ride even when trying to do so in advance, the fact that booked rides arrive ½ an hour early or are often cancelled at the last minute and many experiences of customers being stranded when their return journey is cancelled. Also the vast majority of people have been the only passenger on board when taking a journey, meaning this kind of service offers no social, health or wellbeing value (unlike the 99 and X91)

8. Would the removal of this route have a strong negative impact on the local community?

We have worked very hard to get people to trust travelling by bus and this trust was hard won after the 672 was withdrawn and then the *WESTlink* service under delivered. We believe that a continuation of funding for a further period would help us build this trust further and ensure the reliable continuity of provision, which is needed to build habits. Please help us to do this by supporting BOTH the X91 and the 99 continuing after March 2026. Let them go and you might have lost the one chance you had for genuine climate and nature supportive behaviour change.

Not only that but you'd leave a key rural area within B&NES with no timetabled bus services at all.

Finally,

9. How do the other buses you are considering score against these core markers? Do you have the qualitative and quantitative information for them that you have for the X91 and 99?

Thank you for listening to us.

Chew Valley CIC Sustainable Transport Partnership
14/11/25

COUNCIL MEETING 20TH NOVEMBER 2025

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS

Statements from Councillors (item 17)

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. Cllr Saskia Heijltjes | RPZ in Lambridge (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 2. Cllr Eleanor Jackson | Public transport and access to RUH (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 3. Cllr Joanna Wright | RPZ in Lambridge (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 4. Cllr Anna Box | Buses in the Chew Valley (<i>statement attached</i>) |
| 5. Cllr David Harding | Chew Valley buses and WECA |
| 6. Cllr Simon McCombe | Chew Valley Explorer bus service and how vital to the Mendip Ward (<i>statement attached</i>) |

This page is intentionally left blank

Saskia's Statement on the Lambridge RPZ informal consultation

I want to speak today about the informal consultation on a Residents' Parking Zone in Lambridge, and the issues with the process that have caused real concern in our community.

First, the public meeting. The date was set without any discussion with us as ward councillors. Because of this, Joanna could not attend at all due to booked annual leave, and I could only attend for an hour and a half due to caring responsibilities. Residents were understandably disappointed, but this was not of our choosing, and it should not have happened.

We also need to highlight the lack of direct engagement with local businesses. We supplied officers with contact details for every business and venue, expecting meaningful conversations about their specific operational needs. Instead, aside from a leaflet drop, and informal meetings with one business owner, no meetings took place. Businesses are rightfully worried about viability, staff access, and customer impact, and they deserved proper engagement from the outset.

Similarly, we were not meaningfully engaged on the proposed number and location of dual-use and limited-waiting bays, which are critical issues to the success of an RPZ, as seen in Oldfield Park.

In the middle of the consultation, the Liberal Democrats distributed letters, both in shops and door-to-door, containing misinformation about RPZs and about our role as ward councillors. The letter claimed, and I quote: "RPZs are effective on specific streets but when applied across a large area, they often result in residents paying for a solution to a problem they didn't have." This contradicts the Council's own strategic direction: the Journey to Net Zero, the Residents' Parking Schemes Strategy, and the Movement Strategy.

The letter also claimed "the current scheme does not meet the needs of the community," when the entire purpose of the informal consultation was to ask the community what their needs are. Statements like this misled residents and undermined the hard work of officers during a critical stage.

We have been told by Cabinet Member Cllr Joel Hirst, that this letter was not approved by him. We asked him and the Leader to retract it and apologise for the misinformation, but we have received no response to date. It is especially concerning given that it contradicts Lever 8 of the Movement Strategy, which is out for consultation now.

Let me be clear: an RPZ consultation is not driven by one or two individuals. Officers, Cabinet Members, and ward councillors work together, supported by a strategic business case. Residents deserve clarity on that, not political point-scoring.

Joanna and I have supported the informal consultation professionally, stayed neutral, and listened carefully to residents. That is our role, and we are waiting for the outcome before forming any view.

Residents deserve honesty, respect, and a process they can trust.

Joanna's RPZ Statement

B&NES led by the Lib Dems is presently involved in consulting on the Movement Strategy for Bath with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Strategy stating:

“the Movement Strategy is a long-term blueprint that reimagines how we use, and view, our streets. It aims to rebalance the city’s transport network to better serve residents, businesses and visitors, while supporting our climate goals.”

In the Movement Strategy consultation it proposes:

“Lever 8 Managing car Parking More Effectively - We will expand Resident Parking Zones (RPZs) and develop a Parking Strategy to reduce car dependency”

In 2022 this Lib Dem Administration decided to introduce the Snow Hill and Walcot RPZ, RPZ 27 which also included streets in Lambridge. Emails from myself and former Lambridge Cllr, Rob Appleyard clearly stated that:

“Given the high level of resistance it does raise the question why this is proceeding...the issue of displacement to any changes proposed, and effect on the Lambridge Ward have not been recognised and will only go to increase the pressure on residents parking in the ward”

RPZ 27 went ahead anyway and several Lambridge streets were included.

Following the introduction of RPZ 27 B&NES Lib Dem administration failed to help on the impact of building RPZ car spaces on roads not wide enough to accommodate them and streets where people lived but were not given permits. As ward cllrs we repeatedly sought help for residents.

In December 2023 we received an email from the Cabinet Member:

“To progress forward with a new RPZ will take time. There are a few areas that are highlighting requests for RPZs – with limited officer capacity in the LN team.”

An email was then sent by an Officer to a Walcot Cllr in September 2024, which fortunately was forwarded to Lambridge Cllrs on proposals to again enlarge RPZ 27.

In February 2025 a local Lambridge resident received an email, but not the Lambridge ward cllrs that said:

“The council’s 2025/26 Budget, which was confirmed yesterday evening, includes funding for taking forward proposals for a Residents’ Parking Zone in the Lambridge ward.”

Saskia and I are therefore dismayed that an informal RPZ consultation process led at all stages by this Lib Dem administration is now being challenged by the James

Street West Lib Dem team. Do they support the Leadership in their “*aims to rebalance the city’s transport network to better serve residents, businesses and visitors, while supporting our climate goals.*”

Could this be political posturing with no moral compass?

Lambridge RPZ

Your chance to have a say!

Dear resident,

As you may be aware, there is currently a proposal, led by your local Green Party Councillors, to create a new Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) across the Larkhall area. This letter outlines the details and potential impacts of this change.

What is a RPZ? Residential Parking Zones are designed to address a lack of parking availability by introducing enforced parking zones during daytime hours, which residents must pay a permit to access. The cost of a single permit is about £120 a year, with a second permit for another car being forecast at £192 a year, due to a likely 20% increase in price (also under consultation). Blue badge holders are exempt from charges. RPZs are effective when applied to specific streets that have an issue with over-parking but when applied across a large area, they often result in residents paying for a solution to a problem they didn't have!

Location and Potential Impact of the Proposal: The RPZ covers the entirety of Larkhall and extends up to Valley View Road, affecting over 1,100 households, many of whom do not face immediate pressures on parking access.

This is especially true around the Hill View and Coxley/Uphill area, where the high cost of parking permits is very likely to outweigh the potential benefits in parking access.

Additionally, the loss of parking access for customers of businesses along Larkhall High Street is likely to have a knock-on effect for both local businesses and general access to publicly available parking.

While the idea of a Residential Parking Zone is not something we are fundamentally opposed to, the current scheme does not meet the needs of the local community.

We urge local residents to take part in the consultation and raise their concerns!

Best wishes,

Lambridge and Larkhall Liberal Democrats


**Liberal
Democrats**

Printed by BFW Lib Dems, 31 James St West, Bath, BA1 2BT. Published and promoted by C. Knight on behalf of Liberal Democrats, all at 31 James St West, Bath, BA1 2BT.



Scan here to
have your say on
the consultation!



Councillor's Statement to Full Council on the RUH bus service

Madam Chair

As it is getting late, and one can fall asleep in the council chamber just as easily as one can on a bus, I will just draw your attention to the most important points following my Question to Cabinet on 13 November and the responses concerning
A Proposed Hospital Flyer bus service. I asked

Are the cabinet members aware that access to the Royal United Hospital is very difficult even for seasoned patients familiar with parking arrangements in the vicinity?

Are they prepared to work in partnership with WECA to change this with the introduction of enhanced bus services from the Odd Down Park and Ride direct to the RUH and back, and from Keynsham/the Newbridge Park and Ride?

And I pointed out that there would also need to be work with Wiltshire and other authorities, as well as the hospital trust, because approximately 40% of patients are from other regions. Yet there is nothing at the railway station to indicate the stop for the 20C direct service to the RUH via the University. This is especially relevant for Keynsham patients arriving by train.

The RUH has become a national centre of excellence in many disciplines, but access is dire, especially if one uses the hcrp contracted 'home to hospital' transport.

The reason is that there is no dedicated direct service, and such buses as there are, are timetabled to send three through the RUH and then nothing for 30 minutes.

\Part of the problem is double parking in Weston village and on Bloomfield Road Odd Down, so that buses cannot get through, but that is a separate matter. The hospital flyer would leave the Park and Ride, turn at the Red Lion on Midford Road, and then cut through Southdown direct to the RUH, which is different to the old heavily used 42 route. It should therefore be eligible for funding as a community service.

I received a vague reply full of good intent, but little awareness of the scale of the problem, especially for the staff and volunteers. So I asked as a follow up question

Do you have a specific timeline, and can you give me a more practical and realistic answer as to how it is going to be paid for, when it will be paid for and what the service will generally look like?

Response

We are in the very early stages of discussions with the Royal United Hospital (RUH) on this important opportunity. As the largest daily trip generator in B&NES and a key anchor institution, the hospital is central to improving sustainable travel. Over the next year, we aim to strengthen engagement with the RUH and other anchor institutions to explore collaborative solutions and funding options. While there is currently no confirmed timeline, service specification, costings, or funding mechanism, we are committed to working together to shape a viable and impactful approach.

Just as when two buses come at once, two answers covering the same ground, but little specific. It is as bad as the so called real time bus timetable which rolls over automatically regardless of where the bus actually is. There might be a long wait ahead.

Yesterday was typical. I had to have some blood tests done. This took about 20 minutes, but I waited longer than that for a 3 to the bus station and missed the connecting bus to Radstock I was anticipating catching. The twenty or so cold and wet passengers were unanimous about the problem and would use a Hospital Flyer. I could have organised a petition – but was not well enough to. Please just take my word.

Note : At present letters with clinic appointments go out without any mention at all of public transport, only of the car parks available, and even then, nothing about free parking for radiotherapy patients. This makes a mockery of the Administration's environmental policies.

Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson (Westfield)
November 2025

20

I'll keep this brief, and I would like to thank my fellow residents and councillors for coming here tonight to speak about the importance of rural bus networks.

The comprehensive Big Bus Survey this year – shared with all of you – states that 40% of residents use the x91 and 99 for leisure. Now, I will never stand in this chamber and state that buses are not vital for work or important weekly activities like food shopping – but my point is a different one. Without joy, we are simply failing as a species. Leisure isn't simply about indulgent frolicking, like having a few ciders or in Bath – Dom Perignon – but exercise, social interaction, social mobility and to combat isolation.

Research shows time and time again that loneliness and isolation are an increased risk factor for all-cause mortality in all ages. Our duty as public servants is to look after our residents. I therefore urge you to continue to support and lobby WECA for rural buses as a high priority, thank you."

This page is intentionally left blank

Simon McCombe statement

The X91 and X99 Chew Valley Explorer services are not simply bus routes — they are vital arteries for our communities. They connect villages across the Chew Valley directly to Bristol, ensuring residents can reach vital amenities.

For young people, these services provide access to opportunity. For older residents, they safeguard independence and reduce isolation. And for all of us, they support cleaner air, less congestion, and a more sustainable future.

Every journey on the X91 and X99 strengthens our local economy, keeps our communities connected, and helps protect the beautiful environment we call home. That is why these services are not a luxury — they are essential.

The risk of losing funding for these routes would be devastating. It would cut off lifelines for many residents, undermine our sustainability goals, and weaken the fabric of community life across the Chew Valley.

We must press WECA to keep the funding in place, to recognise the essential role these services play, and to ensure they remain at the heart of Chew Valley life.”

This page is intentionally left blank