

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

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

Thursday 13th November 2025

Present:

Councillor Kevin Guy	Leader of the Council, LD Group Leader, Member Advocate for Armed Forces and Veterans
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Mark Elliott	Deputy Council Leader (non-statutory) and Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Joel Hirst	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Strategy
Councillor Lucy Hodge	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Delivery
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Matt McCabe	Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Communications and Community
Councillor Paul Roper	Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset

40 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

41 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

45 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 22 questions from Councillors and 17 questions from members of the public.

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

46 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Cllr Dine Romero – Adoption West (*a copy of the statement is attached as an appendix to these minutes*).

47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th September 2025 and of the Special Meeting held on 25th September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

No single member items were requisitioned to Cabinet.

49 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

50 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

No matters were referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

51 GREENER PLACES PLAN FOR BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET 2025-2035

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the report, moved the amended officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The Greener Places Plan aligns with Natural England's green infrastructure standards.
- It updates the 2015 Green Space Strategy.
- The Plan aims for 30% of land in Bath and North East Somerset to be positively managed for nature by 2030.
- It seeks to embed nature-conscious practices across all council operations.
- This moves beyond isolated green spaces to interconnected, larger ecosystems and emphasises nature's role as humanity's life support system.
- This will enhance quality of life, mental health, and urban cooling and supports active lifestyles and healthier environments.

- The Council works with landscape-scale partnerships (e.g., Bathscape, Chew Valley Reconnected) and engages with the West of England Nature Partnership.
- The Council also collaborates with developers and social housing providers.
- The Local Plan consultation could yield 200 hectares of accessible green space alongside 27,000 new homes.
- The Greener Places Plan will have statutory influence on development standards as it will be linked to the Local Plan.
- It will provide an evidence base to prioritise funding, especially in deprived areas which have less green space.
- Cllr Warren thanked partners and officers for their contributions to biodiversity and policy development.

Cllr Matt McCabe seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The document sets out the kind of environments we should be building in terms of the natural world and biodiversity. It is an important piece of evidence for the emerging Local Plan.
- When we look at biodiversity net gain the document can give some evidence in relation to place shaping within the area.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the Greener Places Plan for Bath and North East Somerset and the accompanying five-year Investment and Delivery Plan 2025-2030.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, to make textual changes to the Greener Places Plan prior to its publication.

52 ANNUAL CLIMATE AND NATURE PROGRESS REPORT 2025

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- 2024 saw record rises in atmospheric CO₂ and methane, intensifying global heating.
- The UK experienced four heatwaves this year during its hottest summer on record.
- The COP30 in Belem, Brazil highlights insufficient global commitments, risking 2.5°C warming.
- The International Court of Justice suggests that climate reparations may be due from non-compliant nations.
- Renewables are accelerating globally, but climate denial from major emitters like the US poses challenges.
Bath & North East Somerset Council continues to lead among similar local authorities on climate and ecological action.
- Carbon emissions in B&NES have halved per person over 20 years.
- B&NES Council is ranked top among small provincial unitary authorities in the UK's climate action scorecard.

- The Council has added 15 electric vehicles to the council fleet; £10M has been budgeted for electric waste/recycling HGVs.
- We have secured funding for the first new national forest in 30 years with Forest of Avon partners.
- Rooftop solar panels have been installed on Bath Sports and Leisure Centre.
- There are planned upgrades for Carrswood Adult Day Centre and Keynsham Civic Centre with solar/heat pumps.
- Decarbonising buildings and transport remains a major challenge.
- We are collaborating with the West of England Combined Authority to promote walking, cycling, and public transport.
- We are supporting retrofitting of listed buildings via the Green Heritage Homes project.
- £4M has been budgeted for further building decarbonisation.
- We are exploring hydroelectricity at Pulteney Gate to power heat pumps in historic buildings.
- There is a proposed increase in the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement from 10% to 20% in the new Local Plan.

Cllr Joel Hirst seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council has developed strong partnerships and is taking action on the council-owned estate and vehicle fleet.
- Across the authority emissions are down by 46% since 2005.
- In B&NES we continue to have lower emissions per capita compared to the rest of the South West and England averages.
- Decarbonising of transport remains one of our biggest challenges – we are slightly ahead in B&NES in Ultra Low Emission vehicles – but we need to do much more on EV chargers and more on supporting our bus network to get passenger numbers back to pre-Covid levels, with WECA support.
- We need to deliver the new railway station at Saltford.
- We are seeing high demand for cycle hangers, which are very popular across the authority.
- In terms of the ecological emergency there is much to celebrate including:
 - The delivery in green infrastructure projects.
 - Tree planting in places like Rush Hill open spaces, Pennyquick.
 - The Bath River Line project.
 - The Somer Valley Rediscovered greenspaces.

Cllr Paul May welcomed the progress that has been made and the engagement of local communities in this work.

Cllr Matt McCabe highlighted the adaptations unit work and the installation of charging units so that the fleet can switch to electric vehicles.

Cllr Kevin Guy acknowledged the progress made and was pleased to note that the Council is a forerunner in this work.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies during 2024-25, as set out in the attachments to the report.

- (2) To approve the Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report before presentation of the report to Council on 20th November 2025.

53 ESTABLISH A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP (LLP) FOR THE REGENERATION OF THE BATH QUAYS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PLOTS

Cllr Matt McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- There is an affordable housing crisis across B&NES, we have 6,000 people on the waiting list, 500 of whom, at any one time, are in crisis.
- The market is unable to deliver affordable and social housing in the quantum we need.
- Given this situation, we signed up to the Housing Mission Delivery Board's cross-party Housing Accord. In doing so, we committed the Council to take an innovative and collaborative approach to delivering more affordable housing. The aim is to find greater efficiencies in delivery that allow us far more opportunities to invest in, particularly, Social Homes.
- Advice provided from Bishop Fleming concluded that the most efficient model for the Council and Aequus Group is to incorporate a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) for the development of the Bath Quays North site.
- The primary purpose in forming the proposed LLP is to:
 - regenerate the Site which has stalled following the demise of its development agreement with Legal & General;
 - increase housing supply; and
 - to promote the development of energy efficient homes.
- Any profit created by the regeneration of the site, which is subsequently received by the Council should be used to either further regeneration activity in the Council area and/or provide additional subsidy for social housing on future sites.

Cllr Lucy Hodge seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council is again stepping in to address a market failure and build new homes where possible on brownfield sites. Through use of our own building company, Aequus Construction Limited, the Council is focusing on developing two sites north and south of Bath Quays Links to deliver around 160 new homes – all EPC A rated.
- An LLP is a business structure which in this case will create a separate legal entity around the development. This then sits outside the Council to mitigate risk and associated costs. The sort of risks we are thinking about are typical to any city construction site, for example increasing construction costs (due to delay or materials inflation), archaeological discoveries, and occasionally unexploded munitions. There is a cost implication to setting up an LLP which is justified here by the scale of the development.
- The LLP will allow these two developments to be brought forward to deliver about 160 new energy efficient homes in the city centre, helping to regenerate the area whilst mitigating any risk to the Council. It also reduces the Council's

tax liability which will enable continued investment in the provision of social housing on future sites.

Cllr Joel Hirst stated that there has been a market failure to provide affordable housing, especially for young people. The Council has a responsibility to innovate to provide new homes.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To agree to the establishment of a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) between the Council and the Group.
- (2) To approve the proposed membership agreement of the LLP set out in Attachment 1 of the report.
- (3) To delegate to the Director of Capital & Housing Delivery the authority to take all steps necessary to form the Limited Liability Partnership for the regeneration of the Bath Quays North plots 6 & 7 and Bath Quays south (collectively referred subsequently as the Site) in the proportions provided for in attachment 1 of the report.
- (4) To agree to loan the LLP the Site development costs.
- (5) To agree in principle to the use of the existing Aequus Development Loan Facility and the Aequus Working Capital Facility by the LLP.
- (6) To delegate to the Director of Capital & Housing Delivery in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources and S151 Officer authority to transfer the Site to the LLP.
- (7) To delegate to the Director of Finance (S.151 Officer) in consultation with the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, the power to approve the Full Business Case to develop the Site and enter into a loan agreement with and take security for the loan from the LLP.

54 CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) LOCAL AUTHORITY ASSESSMENT - ADULT SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillor Alison Born, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- We took our Adult Social Care (ASC) services back in house in April last year and the CQC inspection process started two weeks later. The inspection report was published in January with a rating of “requires improvement.”
- Authorities whose services are assessed by the CQC as inadequate or requiring improvement are assigned a Care and Health Improvement Adviser to help support the development of an Improvement Plan to address areas of concern. As we are committed to ensuring that we provide a good service for our residents, the ASC team has engaged actively with our Improvement Advisor, to develop a programme of transformation for our services.

- The Plan has nine priorities delivered by 15 projects, with progress overseen by a monthly Programme Board that include representation from across the Council, ensuring broad ownership of and support for the Plan.
- Work is ongoing with residents and staff to shape services delivery, a new operational structure has come into place and there is significant improvement in access and reductions in waiting times, better use of data and technology to drive efficiency and improvement, and investment in the workforce.
- A further update will be provided in six months' time.

Cllr Paul May seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the summary of progress towards the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan which highlights the main themes and action for achieving a Good CQC rating.
- (2) To agree that a further update report on the progress against the ASC Improvement Plan is submitted to Cabinet in May 2026.

55 ADOPTION WEST CONTRACT

Cllr Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- Adoption West is a Teckal Company which is jointly owned by six Local Authorities (the four former Avon authorities (B&NES, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset) plus Gloucestershire and Wiltshire councils).
- Current arrangements are due to expire at the end of February 2027. There are three possible delivery models. These are: continuing with Adoption West; a local authority-hosted service; or working with a voluntary adoption agency.
- The clear recommendation is to continue with Adoption West as our preferred model. This is regarded as the optimal and only practicable solution, based on:
 - Adoption West's record of effectiveness, including governance, oversight and partnership working
 - the opportunity to consolidate and build on progress to date
 - the opportunity to innovate and weather challenges from a secure base
 - minimising disruption and distress for children, families and staff
 - lack of evidence to support moving to an alternative delivery model and clear risks of change
- Adoption West has been a very successful organisation. It has a Good Ofsted rating, "overwhelmingly positive" service user feedback, and performance indicators which match or exceed national averages.
- Since 2019, Adoption West has delivered over 500 adoptions and is providing ongoing support to about 2000 families.

Cllr Alison Born seconded the proposal and noted that Adoption West is providing a good service and value for money.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To agree, in principle, to continue with Adoption West as the council's preferred option for their regional adoption agency (RAA), beyond February 2027.
- (2) To delegate to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to work with key stakeholders and partners (including adoptive family representatives) to further develop Adoption West, taking account of the matters set out in paragraph 11.1 of the report.
- (3) To bring a further report to a future Cabinet meeting once this work is completed setting out revised proposals for Adoption West beyond February 2027.

56 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The Council went through a thorough peer review by the Local Government Association in July this year. This was its first review since 2019.
- The Council was assessed against five criteria:
 - Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
- The results of the Peer Review highlighted our strong leadership, outward-looking approach, and commitment to making a genuine difference. We can all be proud that B&NES Council has been recognised for excellence across a wide range of services following the review.
- It also identifies areas where we can go further—particularly in tackling local inequalities and strengthening strategic planning. These are important challenges, and we welcome the opportunity to improve.
- The draft action plan recommends eight actions to undertake within a specific timeframe and some of these actions are already underway.

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the proposal and made the following points:

- The Council should be proud of the outcome of the peer review. However, there is no room for complacency, and we can always strive to do things better.
- A key theme that came through was the need to address more publicly some of the inequalities in the district. There are many ways in which we seek to

address inequalities, but they haven't been consolidated into an overall plan which we have been able to communicate.

- As a mature administration we should not be fearful of outside scrutiny from a critical friend team or of embracing their recommendations.

Cllr Kevin Guy thanked the peer review team for their comprehensive report and stated that they would be welcomed back next year for the follow up visit.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the draft action plan.
- (2) To agree to a follow up visit in Summer 2026 to help the council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress made in response to the review's recommendations.

57 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The report provides an update on a selection of performance indicators which have shown movement over the first half of the year.
- There has been good performance in waste and recycling, as well as compliance with air quality goals and positive trends in social care.
- However, there have been challenges, particularly in areas where the council has less direct influence or where there is influence of national trends, such as the district-wide greenhouse gas emissions or households in temporary accommodation.

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the proposal and made the following points:

- The Cabinet should review what is being measured and what plans are in place for the areas where we are not hitting our targets.
- For example, as set out in the peer challenge document, some further work is needed around inequalities and how we promote this work.
- The Key Performance Indicators need to continually evolve in the light of challenges such as the peer review.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To note the findings of the performance report and to consider any follow-up actions or information requirements.

58 2026/27 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- There are many challenges over the next five years, in particular the unprecedented level of uncertainty due to the government's ongoing "fair funding" review.

- Due to this uncertainty, we must base our entire Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on assumptions and modelling rather than on confirmed figures.
- The MTFS models the following:
 - A projected budget gap of £8.9 million for 2026/27 - and further gaps of over £10 million in each of the following two years.
 - A cumulative funding gap of £38.6 million over the next five years (2026/27 to 2030/31), even after accounting for planned savings and income generation.
 - Estimated reductions in central government funding of £13 million over the next three years - broken down as £4 million in 2026/27, £4 million in 2027/28, and £5 million in 2028/29 - and that is purely because of the anticipated impact of the “fair funding” review.
- The modelling suggests that Bath and North East Somerset will be a net loser from the new system.
- This uncertainty comes on top of sustained inflation, rising demand for social care and continued pressure in Children’s Services.
- We are taking a prudent and proactive approach by maintaining unearmarked reserves of £12.6 million to manage in-year pressures and unforeseen risks.
- We are also reviewing all capital spending to ensure affordability and alignment with our strategic priorities.
- We are also investing in transformation and prevention – including digital transformation, new ways of working and early intervention in social care.

Cllr Lucy Hodge seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council is operating in an environment across the board of increasing pressures, leading to difficult decisions.
- Local funding per resident remains, on average, 19% below 2010 levels.
- We are aiming for a balanced budget but there is a gap which needs to be addressed by trying to find new sources of income, growth and difficult decisions about savings to the extras we want to deliver.
- The administration will continue to demonstrate sound financial leadership and to steer our way carefully through these challenges.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

59 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2025

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendations and made the following points:

- The report provides a detailed overview of our financial position at the mid-year point and is a vital part of our commitment to transparency and sound financial management.
- The current position of the 2025/26 Capital Programme is a forecast spend of £106.2 million against a budget of £146.4 million, giving a variance of £40.2 million.

- Of this variance, £39.6 million (the vast majority) is anticipated to be rephased into future years, reflecting the reality of project delivery timescales and the need to align spend with actual progress on the ground.
- At the end of September, the Council is forecasting a £2.4 million overspend against the revised revenue budget. That is after the use of £9.8 million in budgeted contingencies and £1.5 million from the pay and grading reserve.
- This position reflects the continued challenges facing local government nationally, including rising demand for statutory services, inflationary pressures and the ongoing impact of pay and grading reviews.
- Children's Services has a forecast overspend of £6m. This continues to be driven by high-cost residential placements for vulnerable and complex young people, increased demand and continued reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies.
- Adult Social Care is forecasting a net overspend of £1m. The main drivers are increased demand for residential care, and home care, as well as pressures in learning disabilities services.
- Heritage Services are facing a £2.3m shortfall, primarily due to lower than projected visitor numbers at the Roman Baths and associated retails and catering income.
- There are also pressures in the Corporate and Commercial Estate as well as in Waste and Fleet Services.
- While the capital programme remains on track overall, the revenue budget continues to be under significant pressure. Directors are actively developing mitigation plans to bring the budget back into balance by year-end.

Cllr Paul Roper seconded the motion and made the following points:

- It is very difficult to manage demand-led services such as Children's Services.
- Heritage Services have not yet seen the return of the Asian and USA market and visitors are not spending as much as they have in the past.
- We are seeing some signs of improvement in our High Streets with regeneration.
- There is still room for optimism as Bath is a great city, and various projects have been undertaken or are underway such as:
 - Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
 - Midsomer Norton High Street renewal
 - Radstock Regeneration Programme
 - Milsom Quarter Masterplan
 - Bath Quays North
 - Fashion Museum

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the 2025/26 revenue budget position detailed within the report (as at the end of September 2025).
- (2) To note and approve where required the revenue virements listed in Appendix 3(i) of the report.

- (3) To note the capital year-end forecast detailed in paragraph 3.32 of the report.
- (4) To note the changes in the capital programme including capital schemes that have been agreed for full approval under delegation listed in Appendix 4(i) of the report.

60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- **Borrowing Position:** At 30 September our borrowing stands at £278 million, which is well within the authorised limit and operational boundary approved by the Council. We have not undertaken any new long-term borrowing in the first half of the year, reflecting our strategy to minimise costs and maintain flexibility.
- **Investment Performance:** Our liquid balances were at £41.8m primarily invested in highly secure counterparties. The average return achieved was 4.19%, which is above the benchmark and reflects the continued high-interest rate environment.
- **Compliance:** All treasury activity is carried out in full compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's own Treasury Management Strategy. All the prudential indicators remain within approved limits.
- **The Council's treasury management remains prudent, compliant and aligned with strategy.** There are strong investment returns while maintaining flexibility and managing risk.

Cllr Paul Roper seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the Treasury Management Report to 30th September 2025, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice
- (2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2025.

The meeting ended at 7.50 am

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

CABINET MEETING – 13th November 2025

**STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC
AND COUNCILLORS**

1. Cllr Dine Romero – Adoption West

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
The Council is using the AI tool Microsoft Copilot extensively. What is the impact on CO2e emissions from using this technology?			
Answer from:			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>Microsoft have committed to be Carbon Negative by 2030 along with removing all the company's historical carbon emissions by 2050. This includes all AI CoPilot usage along with all our use of Office 365 applications such as Teams, Outlook, Word, PowerPoint etc. We are also currently reviewing the setting up of an Emissions Impact Dashboard see web page here for details</i></p> <p>https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/sustainability/emissions-impact-dashboard</p>			
M	02	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
The Council is using the AI tool Microsoft Copilot extensively. What training on this system has been offered to elected councillors?			
Answer from:			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>There are two version of Microsoft CoPilot available. A free version of CoPilot is available for all staff, including councillors, to use for free. Training has been offered to everyone at BANES including councillors and these have been held most weeks for the last 9 months. These training sessions continue to run weekly. The free version of CoPilot is accessible to all via a web link.</i></p> <p>https://m365.cloud.microsoft/chat</p> <p><i>There is also a paid for version which has been offered to cabinet members along with selected officers across council services. Approximately 10% of BANES staff now have access to the paid for version costing ~£240 per user per year. The primary difference</i></p>			

between the free version and the paid for version is that CoPilot is available built into Word, Teams, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint on the paid version.

For cabinet members specifically, training was delivered initially at the informal Cabinet meeting on 11th February. Following this session, licences were allocated to cabinet members who required them.

Training is available to all councillors on the use of CoPilot and we have offered sessions for anyone to attend. Councillors have also been advised that they can contact either Sam Comley or Steve Taylor directly for additional guidance. For those who have a paid for CoPilot licence but have not yet used it, we have followed up individually and offered further training opportunities. A small number of cabinet members and councillors have reached out for additional help, and we have provided one-to-one training where requested.

The offer of additional training and support remains available to all councillors on the use of CoPilot AI.

M	03	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>The University of Bath and the council are signatories of the recently launched Civic Agreement for Bath, whose purpose is to strengthen the relationship between universities and the local community, addressing challenges and opportunities collaboratively. Yet councillors across Bath and North East Somerset were not informed about the recent community consultation on the University's new travel plan. Was the Council aware of this consultation?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Kevin Guy
<p><i>B&NES Council was made aware in September that the University of Bath intended to go out to consultation on their Travel Plan, but we were not informed of the timescales nor were we notified when the public consultation was launched. The University has now invited us to prepare a response, and we are now preparing that response.</i></p> <p><i>B&NES Council and the University of Bath have plans for more regular liaison and this will help to identify further linkages between our strategies, initiatives and consultations for the mutual benefit of our residents, visitors, businesses and students. We encourage Councillors to get in contact as soon as they can if they wish to submit any comments on the recently closed Travel Plan consultation.</i></p>			

M	04	Question from:	Cllr Toby Simon
Can you please publish a definitive statement of the Council's current policy relating to noise emission controls and applicable noise levels from concerts and similar events; and ensure that this policy is easily accessible on the council's website?			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>The Council's current approach to controlling noise from concerts and similar events is to refer to the Noise Council's Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts (1995), which has been incorporated into the Council's 'Guidance on Noise Control for Open Air Events (2025)'. This ensures continuity and clarity for organisers and residents. When the Noise Council's Code is revised and issued, this will be implemented into the existing guide and creation of new Policy.</i></p> <p><i>The Environmental Protection Team provides detailed guidance, that is underpinned by this code of practice, including advice for event organisers, consultants, and residents on best practice and legal frameworks. Organisers are encouraged to engage with the team and submit a Noise Event Application Form at least eight weeks before an event as part of their noise management plan.</i></p> <p><i>The document and supporting guidance are available on the Council's website and following a request from me, work is underway to make this information more prominent. It's essential for residents and organisers can access this easily:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Preventing noise nuisance</u> • <u>Event forms and guidance</u> <p><i>Where music noise forms part of regulated entertainment, a premises licence may be required. During licence consultations or reviews, conditions are recommended to prevent public nuisance, including approval of a noise management plan. Statutory nuisance provisions under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 remain enforceable where no licence applies.</i></p> <p><i>(This response was provided within 5 working days of the Cabinet meeting).</i></p>			
M	05	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
A Vision Zero motion was passed in 2023 by B&NES unanimously - what actions have taken place to date to ensure that the reduction of			

road danger is a priority?

Answer from:

Cllr Lucy Hodge

The Council remains committed to reducing road casualties and is focusing on implementing Safe System ideologies throughout its working practices. While we continue to focus on historical collision sites and targeted education and promotion using collision data, we have also started inhouse training for our highways staff on the implementation of Safe Systems methodologies, which aims to significantly reduce personal injuries on the public highway through our strategic planning and highway design schemes. Furthermore, the formation of a new formal Road Safety Partnership is underway, which will allow us to reach B&NES road users beyond the limits of the local authority and improve targeted enforcement and education.

M

06

Question from:

Cllr Saskia Heijltjes

A Vision Zero motion was passed in 2023 by B&NES unanimously - how many deaths and serious injuries have there been in B&NES since 2021?

Answer from:

Cllr Lucy Hodge

While figures remain comparatively low compared to authorities of a similar size, the casualty trends in B&NES mirror those that are going on nationally and are remaining consistent after a decade of decline. The figures for Killed or Seriously injured people through vehicular collisions between 2021 and 2024 are as follows;

	<i>KSI Casualties</i>	<i>KSI Collisions</i>	<i>KSI Pedestrians</i>	<i>KSI Cyclists</i>	<i>KSI Motorcycles</i>	<i>KSI Children 0- 15</i>	<i>KSI Over 60</i>
<i>2021</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8</i>

2022	43	38	6	4	10	3	16
2023	42	33	4	8	9	1	10
2024	47	42	8	8	10	5	10

M	07	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
A cabinet decision to implement 3 School Streets was recently published. When will a wider school streets strategy be published?			
Answer from:			Cllr Lucy Hodge
<p><i>Our overarching strategy for School Streets is included in the Draft Movement Strategy for Bath, currently being consulted on (until 28 November 2025), as School Streets are one of the 15 potential 'levers' the Council could 'pull' to help achieve the aims of the Movement Strategy. The Council has no immediate plans to develop a separate School Streets Strategy document but is instead focusing on delivering for residents the first tranche of Schools Streets following engagement with all schools in B&NES so that we can bring forward safety improvements for school children.</i></p>			
M	08	Question from:	Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson
<p>Proposed Hospital Flyer Bus Service:</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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,</p>			

nothing about free parking for radiotherapy patients. This makes a mockery of the Administration's environmental policies.

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

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 be eligible for funding as a community service.

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The Council recognises that access to the Royal United Hospital (RUH) can be difficult and shares the ambition to make travel there more sustainable and convenient. We have had meetings with the RUH specifically exploring what a dedicated Park and Ride service run by the council could look like.

We continue to work closely with the West of England Mayor Combined Authority, which is responsible overall for other local bus services, to explore improved connections to key destinations such as the RUH.

In addition, the Mayoral Combined Authority is currently undertaking a major Bus Reform review, which could lead to significant changes in how services are planned and delivered, creating opportunities to address these accessibility issues via other bus offers.

We will continue to collaborate with WEMCA, the RUH Trust and neighbouring authorities to support better access to the hospital in line with our wider transport and environmental priorities.

Supplementary 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.

M	09	Question from:	Cllr Lesley Mansell
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A Child First Policy for B&NES:

Given that the 'Child First' principle is currently embedded across various strategies but not yet formalised as a standalone policy, will the Cabinet commit to: –

(a) developing and publishing a dedicated 'Child First' Policy document by 2026?

(b) Will Cabinet commit to publishing within this a clear and detailed outline of:

- Actionable commitments,
- Measurable outcomes, and
- Defined partnership responsibilities

across Youth Justice, Education, Health, and Social Care services, including councillor engagement, to ensure consistent implementation?

Answer from:	Cllr Paul May
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Children's Services commit to coordinating the development of this policy for consideration and adoption by Cabinet. This will require co-production with key partner agencies and children, young people and families. This will be developed by July 2026 for consideration.

Supplementary Question

Will Councillors be actively engaged in the co-production process and, if so, how?

Response

Work to develop a 'Child First' policy will follow usual governance towards implementation. This will include presentation at Cabinet and

Scrutiny Committee. This governance will ensure councillor involvement in its development.

M	10	Question from:	Cllr Lesley Mansell
<p>Further, will Cabinet confirm how it intends to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Council's stated aim to reduce disproportionality identified in both the Equality Impact Assessment of the Youth Justice Plan and the OFSTED report, particularly for children and young people with protected characteristics? • Uphold the Council's commitment to the Participation Promise for children and families, ensuring their voices are embedded in service design, delivery, and evaluation? 			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul May
<p><i>Tackling disproportionality is a key priority. We are committed to working to improve equality for the children and families living in B&NES and part of this involves working with key partner agencies, such as schools and police colleagues to reduce the impact of racial inequality across our area. B&NES like many local authorities experience the over representation of children and young people in our youth justice service, in school suspensions and the care system.</i></p> <p><i>In Children's Services we are developing our participation promise. Alongside our commissioned arrangements to support children in care and care experienced young people, our Service Improvement lead is responsible for participation to ensure we integrate co-production, co-design and consultation in key areas of practice. For example, in developing the Families First Programme of reforms, we are working with parents and children to understand what works well and where we can improve our service. We will work together to ensure a child/family centred approach that addresses both the vision and requirements of these reforms to effectively meet need at the earliest point of intervention with families when they need help and support.</i></p> <p><u>Supplementary Question</u></p> <p>What specific metrics or indicators will be used to measure progress in reducing disproportionality across the Youth Justice System, School Exclusions and the Care System?</p>			

Response

In education, we monitor the rates of permanent exclusions and suspensions to identify patterns of disproportionality among children and young people in our schools in B&NES. This includes race, ethnicity, SEND and Free School Meals. The Virtual School monitors this data and works with schools and school leaders to deliver training and intervention to tackle disproportionality when patterns and trends emerge.

The Youth Justice Partnership Board monitors ethnic disproportionality figures on a bi-annual basis in April and October. The data reviewed is shown across a 4-year period, broken down by year, to help us see longer terms patterns and measure progress. The data includes:

- Overall proportions of children by ethnicity receiving cautions and convictions*
- Overall proportions of children by ethnicity receiving diversions such as Community Resolution and Outcome 22.*
- Proportion of serious and non-serious offences by ethnicity*
- Intervention Outcomes by ethnicity*

The following actions have been taken to reduce disproportionality in youth justice outcomes and work is continuing to develop and enhance our approach.

- Staff Training and Development: All staff are familiar with the HMIP Effective Practice Guide, with ongoing training for new recruits. In 2023, staff completed Cultural Competence and Unconscious Bias Training, and in 2024, SARI delivered workshops on discussing identity and addressing discriminatory attitudes with children. Staff are encouraged to attend SARI Reflective Practice Workshops.*
- Participation and Representation: A good practice guide, co-produced with children and young people from minority ethnic backgrounds, sets out clear staff expectations. Representative images are displayed in the office where we meet children to foster inclusivity.*
- Assessment and Feedback: Templates, such as the PSR Quality Assurance, now include diversity and identity considerations. All service users and their families are invited to provide feedback, with forms specifically asking about identity, diversity, and support received.*
- Management and Oversight: The YJS vision statement, now included in key documents, highlights commitment to equity. Supervision and case audits consistently address diversity, with focused audits in April 2025 leading to improvements in recognising experiences of racism and discrimination. A new assessment tool includes sections on experiences of discrimination.*
- Monitoring and Reporting: An Ethnic Disproportionality Report is produced bi-annually, evidencing ongoing issues but also high completion rates for all ethnicities. The Out of Court Resolution and first-time entrants' reports are scrutinised for fairness in diversion*

opportunities.

- *Partnership Working: The YJS collaborates with education and police partners. There is active involvement in groups tackling disproportionality and school exclusions, and participation in scrutiny panels reviewing out of court decisions for fairness. Actions from case audits have led to process improvements, such as the creation of informative leaflets for children and families.*

The Youth Justice Partnership Board also monitors disproportionality in relation to Special Education Needs through an annual Education Report and quarterly KPI's. The KPI's monitor the number of children with identified SEN and whether they have a formal plan in place. The KPI's also monitor proportions of children who are in suitable education, training or employment. The annual Education Report reviews data such as permanent exclusions, number of children in Alternative Provision or being Home Educated and children who are NEET.

The approach to reducing the over representation of children in the justice system with SEN has been to ensure that children in the justice system with unidentified needs are recognised; that children with SEN identified are appropriately supported and that staff feel well equipped, through training and building links with the Virtual School and SEN team, to support children with additional needs.

The children in care cohort is overrepresented due to the children who are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This represents positive action in our local authority as part of the National Transfer Scheme.

M	11	Question from:	Cllr Liz Hardman
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Housing for Bath Residents:

- The emerging local plan document, out to consultation until 14 November 2025, reports that Bath needs 4,868 affordable homes and a total of 7,429 new homes. This is taken from the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment and assumes that future population trends match past ones.
- It reports that around 25% of the Bath resident population are students, which equates to around 23,500 of the 94,000 population (2021 census).
- It says North East Somerset (the rest of the district) needs 19,415 homes, of which 7,429 need to be affordable, and that this is based on higher-than-historic population growth.
- The previous Local Housing Needs Assessment reported a total need in Bath of 3,685 dwellings, and “the Rest of B&NES” would

need 7,785 dwellings. That was roughly a one-third/two-thirds split (Bath/not-Bath).

- Under the new proposals, there are 3 options:
 - Option 1 sees 26% of B&NES' 26,266 homes being built in Bath (6,795)
 - Option 2 sees 17.8% of B&NES' 27,256 homes being built in Bath (4,845), and
 - Option 3 sees 22% of B&NES' 30,818 homes being built in Bath (6,795).

Given B&NES knows that Bath residents need almost 5,000 affordable homes, and another 2,500 dwellings on top of that,

(a) why do none of the three options meet Bath residents' needs? and

(b) how are they going to ensure that those most in need – people who require affordable homes – will be prioritised?

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

The three District-wide spatial strategy options outlined in the question are three of five scenarios taken from the sustainability appraisal which are set out in order to understand and test the different sustainability impacts. They are not presented in the Local Plan Options document and do not represent the chosen strategy in the Draft Local Plan. It is acknowledged that meeting the evidence-based housing needs arising in Bath at the city will be very challenging due to the unique constraints that apply to the city and are established in national policy with which our Local Plan has to conform. We are testing options for further development in Bath, as well as growth of the city and remain in conversation with government and other relevant agencies around the challenges of growing the city.

Through the planning system we are able to seek a proportion of housing provided on qualifying sites is affordable housing (alongside market housing) and one of the important objectives of the Local Plan will be to seek to maximise that proportion. We do also need to be able to demonstrate that, in a market led system, the proportion of affordable housing we seek does not undermine the viability of development. There is the opportunity to provide a greater proportion of affordable housing on land released from the Green Belt for development, via government established 'golden rules' i.e. 15% above the proportion that would normally apply, up to a cap of 50%.

Additionally, we have committed the Council, via the Housing Mission Delivery Board and the cross-party Housing Accord, to work innovatively and collaboratively with our key partners to develop a 'purpose led' approach to Housing locally. We want to show that there is a different way to approach to delivery, particularly in Bath. We are pleased that almost all of the other political leaders locally have agreed to support this approach over the longer term.

M	12	Question from: Cllr Chris Dando
<p>Roads and the Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emerging Local Plan consultation paper refers to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) only once. • We're expecting around £30m a year CRSTS work over each of the next five years; an estimated total of £150 million already in plan. • More CRSTS funding is expected under CRSTS2. <p>Can the Cabinet member share (a) <u>where</u> future CRSTS and / or other roads spending will be, (b) <u>which</u> proposed Local Plan housing sites this is connected to and give a rough indication of (c) <u>what current or future employment sites</u> these connect to?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllrs Matt McCabe and Lucy Hodge
<p><i>Given neither the TCR funding allocations nor the B&NES Local Plan sites have been finalised, it is not currently possible to comment on the locations of where the funding, housing or employment sites will be that benefit from this investment package, but we understand that there will be a strong requirement to invest the funding in the growth zones within the WECA Growth Strategy, which for B&NES are the Somer Valley and the Central Bristol and Central Bath Growth Zones (including the A4 corridor between Bath and Bristol).</i></p>		
M	13	Question from: Cllr Robin Moss
<p>Environmental Commitments and the Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B&NES is committed to reducing vehicle mileage by 25% per person, decreasing petrol and diesel vehicles to just 10% of those on the road and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. • It was the first local authority in England to adopt an energy-based net zero housing policy as part of its Local Plan, and first in the 		

West of England to adopt a biodiversity net gain policy.

If most of the jobs in B&NES are in Bath, but only 4,293 out of 27,000 new homes will be built here, what measures are planned to make sure B&NES' house-building plans don't harm the environment and public health by forcing people to drive to work on congested roads?

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

It is acknowledged that Bath is the main economic centre within the district. Through the Local Plan we are testing options to provide a greater number of new homes in the city or through growth of Bath than the 4,293 quoted in the question. We also remain in dialogue with government regarding the challenges of growing the city given the constraints that apply to it and are established in national policy e.g. World Heritage Site and Cotswolds National Landscape. In addition, the strategy will seek to focus growth on those locations which are best connected to job opportunities in Bath and Bristol, as well as services and facilities, by sustainable means of transport i.e. public transport, walking, cycling and wheeling. Transport strategies and measures will also focus on improving infrastructure for sustainable travel and will be aligned with the areas where development will be focused. As such the planning and transport strategy seeks to reduce reliance on car travel and increase the opportunities to travel by more sustainable means, thereby minimising transport related carbon impact. The transport vision for the district, setting out our aspirational network for sustainable travel enhancements to achieve our growth, connectivity and net zero goals, is being developed alongside the transport evidence base for the Local Plan, and our communities have the chance to feed into this aspirational network vision through the current Local Plan Options consultation. This vision-led approach is essential in identifying the infrastructure and investment needed to reduce reliance on the private car.

It should also be noted that the WECA regional Growth Strategy is important in underpinning the Local Plan, specifically in relation to the key growth sites that are being identified. The Local Plan spatial strategy will be looking to focus key housing growth in locations identified as Growth Zones in the regional Growth Strategy for economic uses and jobs. This will help to increase the opportunity to live and work in close proximity thereby reducing travel distances and will help secure and target the regional infrastructure investment needed to ensure development is sustainable, including through Transport for Cities and Regions funding.

M	14	Question from:	Cllr Dr Eleanor Jackson
<p>B&NES Residents’ Pay and the Local Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On signing a Housing Accord with the WECA Metro Mayor, Labour’s Group Leader and the leaders/spokespeople for almost all B&NES’ political groups, the Leader of B&NES said this summer that we need to “urgently address the broken market and deliver more, truly affordable homes in our area. The housing crisis demands bold, long-term thinking.”• B&NES’ economy suffers from disturbing long-term under-performance: as the Economic Strategy (2024-34) shows, we have one of the worst productivity levels in the country, in spite of higher employment levels.• B&NES’ average pay is below national average, and housing – to rent or own – is out of normal residents’ reach by any calculation. Residents in social housing also struggle. (25% in some NES wards) .• As the government has made very clear, its housing strategy is designed to enable local authorities like B&NES to “put the key to a decent home into the hands of every single family that needs it”.• For more than ten years graduates with the skills to re vitalise our economy leave the area because they cannot afford suitable accommodation here. This is unsustainable and also ought to be addressed. <p>Can the Cabinet member set out the administration’s strategy for <i>making sure</i> their Local Plan is going to put a house key in the hand of every existing B&NES resident who needs a home, rather than give them to new, high-value-home commuters attracted to a new station at Saltford, our excellent secondary state schools, or people with bigger budgets from other parts of the region and country who are drawn to Bath?</p> <p>Economic strategy - https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/B%26NES-Economic-Strategy-2024-2034.pdf</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>One of the council’s key priorities is facilitating delivery of the ‘right homes in the right places’. Through its housing and planning strategies and plans the council is focussing on increasing the delivery of more affordable housing for B&NES residents. The Local Plan is seeking to respond positively to the government’s requirement that the council plans for an additional around 1,500 homes per annum, a proportion of</i></p>			

which will be affordable housing. This will be challenging, and it should be noted that evidence in the Local Housing Needs Assessment shows that this level of development is above that which would be needed to meet projected population growth. As such in planning for the government's housing figure it is likely that some of the additional homes will meet the needs of those moving into Bath and North East Somerset. Through the planning system and the Local Plan we cannot require that all housing will be occupied by existing B&NES residents, but we will ask developers to consider marketing to local people first. However, through the Local Plan we will be seeking to maximise the proportion of affordable housing delivered that will be prioritised for those B&NES residents in need of a home on the Homeseach Register. There is also the opportunity to deliver a greater proportion of affordable housing on land released from the Green Belt than would be the case on other land in the district, through applying national policy 'golden rules' i.e. 15% increase up to a cap of 50%.

Additionally, we have committed the Council, via the Housing Mission Delivery Board and the cross-party Housing Accord, to work innovatively and collaboratively with our key partners to develop a 'purpose led' approach to Housing locally. We want to prove that there is an alternative to the market led, or profit led, approach to delivery. We are pleased that almost all the other political leaders locally have agreed to support this approach over the longer term.

Supplementary Question

How are we going to get a just and fair balance between jobs and houses, especially if the alternative is a long commute to Bath or Bristol and how can we get the houses that already have planning consent built?

Response

The Council is taking action through the planning system and its economic development functions to facilitate and encourage provision of new jobs and protect existing jobs helping to ensure a better balance between jobs and homes. Through the Local Plan we will not only be allocating sites and planning for housing, we will also be allocating sites to facilitate delivery of employment uses aligned to the location of existing and new homes. The Council's Economic Strategy identifies key areas of action to encourage economic growth and transitioning to a more prosperous, fairer, and sustainable economy. We are also working closely with WECA on their Local Growth Strategy. The Local Growth Strategy identifies key growth zones across the West of England, including the Somer Valley and the central Bristol and Bath growth zone (incorporating the corridor in between). Through the Growth Strategy and working with WECA the focus of investment will be on these growth zones to stimulate economic growth and the provision of additional jobs. We are ensuring the Local Plan aligns with both the council's Economic Strategy and the WECA Local Growth Strategy and that the site allocations and planning policy approach facilitate its delivery. Local Plan site allocations will support delivery of additional employment premises within these growth zones, as well as other parts of the district. The Council's Economic Development will also be working with businesses and agents to encourage the provision of new employment space and jobs.

Evidence work informing the Local Plan has already assessed and identified the scale and type of employment uses we should be seeking to plan for and looking at sites capable of delivering new employment space across the district. In addition to providing new employment space, it is important that we retain existing employment sites, and we will be progressing policies that strengthen this protection. Through this work the Local Plan is seeking to ensure a better balance between jobs and homes.

With regards to existing planning consents for new homes we hold discussions with developers and their agents to monitor progress on development sites and to understand the barriers to delivery. The government is also considering introducing various measures in the planning system aimed at encouraging developers to build the homes with planning consent. These measures include potential penalties for developers that do not implement planning permissions in a timely fashion. Additionally, as set out in the response to the original question we have committed the Council, via the Housing Mission Delivery Board and the cross-party Housing Accord, to work innovatively and collaboratively with our key partners to develop a 'purpose led' approach to Housing locally.

M	15	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
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Bath World Heritage Status:

1. What discussions if any have taken place with UNESCO concerning Bath's world heritage status, particularly around the need to provide and build affordable housing for residents?
2. What assessment has taken place examining the benefits and disbenefits associated with Bath's world heritage status, and the potential loss of this designation?

Answer from:	Cllr Matt McCabe
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Response Q1: The Council liaises with Historic England's regional and international teams on issues regarding planning policy, development etc that could impact the WHS. The International team in turn liaises directly with the DCMS who represents the government regarding WHS issues. DCMS are responsible for communications with UNESCO and ICOMOS, their advisor on cultural world heritage sites. DCMS are in contact with UNESCO regarding all aspects of development affecting WHS in the UK, including Bath, and issue formal notifications as required by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2025).

Response Q2: No formal assessment or analysis of the benefits or otherwise of Bath WHS, although the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO published The National Value of UNESCO Designations to the United Kingdom (2020). BathNES are involved with the current review of this analysis. As with all WHS globally, Bath plays its part in promoting world heritage for all humanity. WHS status is an opportunity to excel and placing a requirement and obligation to achieve high quality design and outcomes. It facilitates collaboration and discourse with other WHSs in the UK and across the globe to learn and benefit from one another and build a sense of shared heritage. Collaboration and discourse are invaluable in sharing resources to gain a better understanding of the potential impacts of climate change. Historic England analyses from 2022 show the UK's heritage sector, not least WHS, generates significant economic benefits, including a £44.9 billion contribution to Gross Value Added (GVA) and over 523,000 jobs. It also provides a wider economic boost through tourism and supply chains, and a notable boost to national wellbeing, estimated at £29 billion annually from daily encounters with heritage. Bath WHS attracts c.6m visitors from across the globe with obvious economic benefits that arise from this. However, negative impacts of over-tourism is a highly topical issue for many WHS including Bath. For instance, the impact on the public realm.

In terms of the retention or loss of the Bath WHS inscriptions, this is ultimately the responsibility of the government as the signatory of the World Heritage Convention (1972). The Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE) is a serial inscription comprising 11 historic spa towns across 7 European countries, which includes Bath. If the City of Bath inscription was lost, the GSTE would also be lost and all the other towns included in this inscription would also be lost. Therefore, the responsibility is both profound and shared.

M	16	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
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Planning Consents Granted:

Please can you provide figures for the number of housing planning consents granted in the last three calendar years, and any available statistics of the number of houses that have either been built or are being built as a result of these consents. Please also provide a figure for the number of consents which have been granted but which do not yet have any construction associated with them.

Over the last 10 years are there any statistics for the number of planning consents granted for housing which have expired?

It would be useful if these figures could not only be raw data but also percentages of overall housing planning consents.

Answer from:		Cllr Matt McCabe	
<p><i>The following figures have been informed by internal annual monitoring data on planning permissions.</i></p> <p><i>Between 1st March 2022 and 31st March 2025, 394 housing planning consents have been granted. Of these consents:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>120 (30.5%) consents have been completed resulting in a net gain of 444 dwellings.</i><i>87 (22%) are under construction, which will result in a net increase of 561 dwellings once completed.</i><i>187 (47.5%) commitments have no construction associated with them yet and would result in 1550 net dwellings once started and completed.</i> <p><i>Over the last 10 years, 299 housing planning consents (16.8% of housing planning consents granted since 1st March 2015) have expired before associated construction begun. The net dwelling increase associated with these consents would have been 784 dwellings.</i></p>			
M	17	Question from:	Cllr David Biddleston
<p>Adoption of Estates, Service Charges and Maintenance Charges for Private Residential Estates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">How many estates (200 homes or more) have been created in BaNES and how many adopted by the council in the last 15 years?Do BaNES hold records of the number of private residential housing estates where residents are being charged a service charge for the maintenance of roads, pavements, and green spaces?What records are held about the number of instances where local residents are complaining about the financial cost of management service charges and or whether there are concerns about the quality of service being provided for substantial financial outlay?			
Answer from:		Cllr Matt McCabe	
<p>1) <i>There is no record kept pre 2020 of estate adoptions, they have been processed and added to the adopted highway record. Since</i></p>			

2020 there have been 25 estate adoptions, the records do not identify the size of the development. Each site would need to be individually interrogated to establish the housing number.

2) As a private matter between the landowners and the management company the Council does not keep records on this matter.

3) As a private matter between the landowner and the management company the Council would not be included in this correspondence. Where we are aware of some disputes, we do not record them.

M	18	Question from:	Cllr David Biddleston
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Working with UNESCO to meet our obligations in Bath:

- What discussions have been held with UNESCO (as has happened in other UNESCO sites across the world) for the Local Plan to provide affordable social housing in Bath itself?
- How can this council meet its obligation to house working families within their home city?

Answer from:	Cllr Matt McCabe
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Response Q1: The Council liaises with Historic England's regional and international teams on issues regarding planning policy, development etc that could impact the WHS. The International team in turn liaises directly with the DCMS who represents the government regarding WHS issues. DCMS are responsible for communications with UNESCO and ICOMOS, their advisor on cultural world heritage sites. DCMS are in contact with UNESCO regarding all aspects of development affecting WHS in the UK, including Bath, and issue formal notifications as required by the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2025).

Response Q2: Bath's WHS status is not a barrier to development or change in general terms. Bath has witnessed considerable development in the last two decades or so with still more to come, although available sites are now limited due to the quantum of development that has occurred. WHS status has helped shape the nature and quality of the development. Therefore, the Council has been and continues to attempt to attempt to meet its obligation for housing provision in Bath, as with all other settlements in B&NES.

M	19	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
How are B&NES Council working with WECA to improve the use of the public transport services that currently exist, including commercial and subsidised services, and how will they be working with elected councillors across the Authority on this issue?			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>Bath and North East Somerset Council is working collaboratively with the West of England Combined Authority, which is the transport authority for the region, on the development of both the Bus Plan and the Bus Reform programme. These initiatives aim to improve the reliability, accessibility, and integration of public transport across the region.</i></p> <p><i>The Combined Authority also has a dedicated budget for marketing and communications as part of its bus grant funding and has introduced measures such as Kids Go Free to encourage greater use of existing services.</i></p> <p><i>Engagement with local councillors, stakeholders, and communities will form an important part of this work to ensure that local priorities and experiences help shape future improvements to bus services.</i></p>			
M	20	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
With the Bus Services Bill passing into law on 27 October, will B&NES Council identify services deemed socially necessary to protect them from cancellation, and will they consider setting up their own bus company to finally put passengers before profit?			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<i>Bath and North East Somerset Council recognise how important local bus services are to our communities, particularly those providing</i>			

essential access to work, education, and healthcare. The Council continues to work closely with the West of England Combined Authority, which is the transport authority for the region, through the development of the regional Bus Plan and ongoing Bus Reform work.

Bath and North East Somerset Council will, of course, encourage the Combined Authority to identify socially necessary services as part of this process. However, it is important to note that the Bus Services Act does not provide any additional funding to ensure that such services can be supported by local government.

Through the Bus Plan and Bus Reform work, opportunities are being explored to strengthen how services are planned and delivered across the region, including better support for socially necessary routes and improved outcomes for passengers.

M	21	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
How is sustainability defined in areas that have lost bus services, and how will these areas be considered in the Local Plan for future housing?			
Answer from:			Cllrs Sarah Warren and Matt McCabe
<p><i>The Local Plan focuses future development in locations with better connectivity, including villages that retain a moderate or reasonable bus service, as this supports sustainable travel and access to key services. In identifying potential sites, we have been guided by the Department for Transport's connectivity tool, which considers not only the availability of transport services but also proximity to essential facilities. While the emphasis is on directing growth to areas that are already well-connected, the Plan also seeks to locate development where accessibility can be improved over time. As noted in the Rural Areas section of the Options document, the Draft Local Plan will need to take account of future decisions on grant-aided or funded services, such as the 522 bus service, which may influence the sustainability of certain settlements.</i></p>			

M	22	<p>Question from:</p> <p>Cllr Shaun Hughes</p>
<p>We have a ridiculous ongoing situation created by B&NES acting as landlord regarding parking to the rear of two long-established businesses in Midsomer Norton.</p> <p>For decades, these businesses have used parking spaces at the rear as part of their normal operations — spaces which are of no practical use to anyone else. Around a year ago, the businesses contacted B&NES for assistance with illegal parking that was blocking essential access.</p> <p>The outcome has been entirely counterproductive. Instead of resolving the issue, B&NES has restricted parking, offered to sell the businesses access to their own long-standing bays, and introduced enforcement measures that now threaten them with fines for using those spaces. The result is a no-man's-land — unusable and damaging to local trade.</p> <p>This comes at a time when our high street economy is already under strain, and we are fighting hard to maintain active businesses and avoid more empty shopfronts. Actions such as this reinforce that the Council are failing to meet their commitment to support local enterprises by creating opportunities that are fair, green, creative and ensure economies can remain connected. Where, in this, is the Council's commitment to supporting local enterprise?</p> <p>This situation is yet another example of the Council's failure to lead by example as a responsible landlord. Sadly, this is not an isolated case, and the reputation of B&NES in property management continues to decline.</p> <p>I have an outbox full of ignored emails and unreturned calls at Senior Management level within B&NES Property Services. I therefore request that the Council urgently review its practices as a landlord, perhaps through an independent internal investigation or peer review, to restore some accountability and confidence in its property management.</p> <p>Will this Cabinet commit to launching a review into whether the current property management service is fit for purpose? I therefore request that the Council urgently review its practices as a landlord, perhaps through an independent internal investigation or peer review, to restore some accountability and confidence in its property management.</p>		

Answer from:	Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>The council is committed to supporting businesses in Midsomer Norton. We have delivered £3.7m investment in town centre regeneration in the last five years and our new masterplan sets out a clear and shared vision for the future of the town centre, which will drive further investment.</i></p> <p><i>The land in question is a service yard to the units at the Hollies where there is no formal permission or agreement to allow parking. While we acknowledge that some traders have used these spaces in the past, this was always on an informal basis. The council introduced parking restrictions only after receiving numerous complaints about cars parked in this space causing an obstruction.</i></p> <p><i>Council officers have entered into discussions with a tenant trading from the Hollies to secure formal permission for parking on the site. Unfortunately, we have not been able to reach an agreement.</i></p> <p><i>While the council is willing to discuss granting a lease to the service yard, our financial duty to secure best consideration means we must do this at a fair market rate. The land is adjacent to a large public car park where charges apply, and we have not been able to establish a clear rationale to exempt the service yard. Tenants have been offered a licence to park on this land for a reasonable monthly fee, but this was declined and there has been no contact since.</i></p> <p><i>The situation has been reviewed by a senior officer, and we are presently unable to find a reasonable way to grant traders use of this land without some form of financial arrangement. We recognise that this review process has taken significantly longer than anticipated and will take steps to address this for the future.</i></p> <p><i>The council remains willing to discuss alternative solutions.</i></p>	

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Cllr Dom Tristram, Radstock Town Council
<p>Are BANES Civil Enforcement Officers advised to do 5-minute observations for parking contraventions? If so, can you confirm that it is not a legal requirement of the authority to undertake a fixed observation time against these restrictions and if it would it be possible to review this so that officers are using less time observing?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Joel Hirst
<p><i>The Council key priorities include supporting our communities to be safe. This includes having a robust approach to enforcement of parking.</i></p> <p><i>In some cases, exemptions exist for certain contraventions, which necessitates observing the vehicle for a period to determine if a contravention is taking place or if an exemption applies. While the use of an observation period of at least 5 minutes is not a formal council policy, it remains industry best practice. This time frame is considered reasonable to witness activities that may need to be continuous for the exemption to apply, such as loading and unloading where permitted.</i></p> <p><i>A continuous observation also generates higher quality evidence regarding whether a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) should be served. Generally, the longer the observation period, the more certain the outcome in terms of justifying the service of the PCN, and the more robust the evidence will be. Additionally, a more extended observation period may provide a greater chance of witnessing an exempt activity, resulting in no PCN being served. Conversely, if the officer observes evidence indicating that the exemption does not apply, they may then proceed immediately with issuing a PCN.</i></p> <p><i>The council continuously works hard to manage its resources wisely and use its Civil Enforcement Officers in the most efficient way possible whilst also balancing being fair and even handed to residents. The civil enforcement officer roll is a difficult job, and they merit the community's strong support in helping to keep our communities safe.</i></p>			

P	02	Question from:	Cllr Dom Tristram, Radstock Town Council
A feasibility study to implement a Workplace Parking Levy is underway in Bristol. How will BANES Council take this process forward, and how will the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny panel be involved?			
Answer from:			Cllr Joel Hirst
<p><i>Providing residents with improved travel choices is a key political priority of this administration.</i></p> <p><i>We are currently consulting on the Movement Strategy which includes Workplace Parking Levy as a potential intervention</i></p> <p><i>We acknowledge the feasibility study underway in Bristol regarding the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy. As part of our Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Future Vision work, we will be investigating the potential for similar measures within our area, subject to funding availability, and public consultation etc.</i></p> <p><i>This process will include consideration of how such initiatives align with our Movement Strategy, Climate Emergency and Sustainability goals, as well as the impact on residents and businesses. The Climate Emergency and Sustainability PDS Panel will be engaged appropriately as the work progresses at the appropriate time.</i></p>			
P	03	Question from:	Cllr Dom Tristram, Radstock Town Council
Over many years a S106 agreement was in place to deliver a sustainable bridge across the Avon from the Keynsham Chocolate Quarter. This bridge is an important link connecting B&NES to South Gloucestershire and Bristol. When will this bridge be delivered?			
Answer from:			Cllr Lucy Hodge
<p><i>Planning approval for the new footbridge across the River Avon at Somerdale in Keynsham was granted in summer 2025. Grant funded technical design work is currently underway and is due to be completed by March 2026.</i></p>			

S106 funding secured is significantly less than the total funding required to deliver the bridge scheme.

Funding to deliver the bridge scheme has not yet been secured, however, by having a detailed design and planning consent Bath & North East Somerset Council is able to progress future funding bids and grant applications.

P 04

Question from:

Anne Coghlan

In terms of WECA governance, when the WECA Deputy Mayor post rotates around constituent authorities annually, the Leader of Council of the relevant constituent authority does not automatically have to be the one selected to take up the role of WECA Deputy Mayor. How will B&NES be choosing the relevant WECA Deputy Mayor rotating role?

Answer from:

Cllr Kevin Guy

According to the WECA Constitution, the Deputy Mayor must be one of the WECA Committee Members – it is for each Council's administration to decide who to nominate for the Committee, but usually the Council Leaders are the nominees. As I am already the B&NES Member on the WECA Committee, I am the only B&NES member eligible for the Deputy Mayor role. Mayor Godwin chose to rotate the Deputy role and to start with B&NES.

P 05

Question from:

Anne Coghlan

If a member of the public is elected to the role of councillor at B&NES, the amount of stipend offered is slightly above the threshold for receiving a carer's allowance. Can the Member take a reduction in stipend to ensure that the Carer's Allowance is maintained?

Answer from:

Cllr Mark Elliott

The Member Allowances Scheme permits this at paragraph 7;

7. Renunciation: A Councillor may, by notice in writing given to the Solicitor to the Council, elect to forego any part of her/his entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

P	06	Question from:	Anne Coghlan
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How much money has BANES paid to AECOM in relation to the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme since 2019?

Answer from:	Cllrs Mark Elliott and Joel Hirst
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The AECOM costs from 2019 to date (end of October 2025), covering a 6-year period for the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme (LNs) in B&NES are £1.3m (£1,382,012.63). This spend has included, but is not limited to, development and delivery of the Full Business Case (FBC) for the LN schemes, including the development of preliminary designs as well as the detailed designs for the 11 schemes carried forwards from the FBC. The costs also cover support with community engagement and public consultation across the programme. The LN programme is funded by the Department of Transport through the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

P	07	Question from:	Neil Howard
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As residents in B&NES pay relevant council taxes for local services, how does the Council ensure that community groups are included into these services, rather than seen as a way to outsource and offset costs elsewhere?

Answer from:	Cllr Manda Rigby
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The Community Wellbeing Hub works with over thirty partners whose services are directly commissioned by the Council specifically to deliver services.

Those third sector partners often then directly liaise with a variety of communities that they come into contact with on a daily basis.

Very often local community groups are the most effective form of intervention at a grassroots level. The Council is very keen on co-production and encourages it partners to engage with local residents to develop more effective solutions.

P	08	Question from:	Neil Howard
<p>Could you please clarify whether the "van with a plan" is Clean Air Zone compliant? Was the van part of the council's fleet previously, or was it purchased specifically for the purpose of the local plan engagement?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllrs Joel Hirst and Matt McCabe
<p><i>The council key political priorities include protecting our environment and nature and we welcome being challenged on this issue.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Plan engagement van was hired over a 4-week period from an external company. The rationale behind the van was:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• to support a more innovative and inclusive approach to consultation, where we could visit 56 locations across B&NES over 4 weeks, and be accessible to as many people as possible where they live/and or work</i> <i>• to reduce operation pressures on officers in terms of carrying and transporting equipment and to reduce reliance on private vehicles by officers</i> <i>• to reduce the distance that officers and the public need to travel (i.e. officers did not have to come to/from offices each day to pick-up engagement material before arriving at venues and could arrive by public transport in many cases, and communities impacted by development option proposals were in easy reach of a drop-in event on foot or by public transport reducing the need to travel by private car)</i> <p><i>The van is not Clean Air Zone compliant; it was a vintage vehicle that is over 30 years old. We have paid for charges on the few occasions that the van entered the Clean Air Zone, and where charges applied in car parks/on-street. In the most part the van was parked on private land by prior arrangement.</i></p> <p><i>We are not currently required to calculate the carbon footprint of consultation activity, however, this was carefully considered in the design of the consultation and the van route was designed to be geographically clustered to reduce the need to travel as well as considering the most accessible locations for the officer team and the many hundreds of attendees to access the consultation in-</i></p>			

<i>person nearby to their homes and places of work.</i>		
P	09	Question from: Neil Howard
<p>How were emissions from the vehicle considered when the engagement plans were developed? What are the estimated emissions for the van and its travel compared to the emissions from printing engagement materials?</p> <p>What will happen to the van at the end of the consultation phase for the local plan?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The council key political priorities include protecting our environment and nature and we welcome being challenged on this issue.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Plan engagement van was hired over a 4-week period from an external company. The rationale behind the van was:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>to support a more innovative and inclusive approach to consultation, where we could visit 56 locations across B&NES over 4 weeks, and be accessible to as many people as possible where they live/and or work</i> <i>to reduce operation pressures on officers in terms of carrying and transporting equipment and to reduce reliance on private vehicles by officers</i> <i>to reduce the distance that officers and the public need to travel (i.e. officers did not have to come to/from offices each day to pick-up engagement material before arriving at venues and could arrive by public transport in many cases, and communities impacted by development option proposals were in easy reach of a drop-in event on foot or by public transport reducing the need to travel by private car).</i> <p><i>The van is not Clean Air Zone compliant; it was a vintage vehicle that is over 30 years old. We have paid for charges on the few occasions that the van entered the Clean Air Zone, and where charges applied in car parks/on-street. In the most part the van was parked on private land by prior arrangement.</i></p> <p><i>We are not currently required to calculate the carbon footprint of consultation activity, however, this was carefully considered in the design of the consultation and the van route was designed to be geographically clustered to reduce the need to travel as well as considering the most accessible locations for the officer team and the many hundreds of attendees to access the consultation in-</i></p>		

<i>person nearby to their homes and places of work.</i>		
P	10	Question from: Grace Wiltshire
WESTcargo bike hire is an important route for improving sustainable active travel choices, but these cargo bikes are too big for anyone under 5'2. How is B&NES going to ensure inclusivity on such bikes?		
Answer from:		Cllr Joel Hirst
<p><i>The Council political priorities include developing better travel choice for residents and the WESTcargo scheme helps improved choices. The question should be directed to WECA as the lead authority for this contract using Future Transport Zone funding.</i></p> <p><i>We understand, that when considering the ecargo bikes that were offered as part of the tendering process, the bikes chosen were confirmed as among the most suitable for a variety of heights. There will always be limitations on how one single bike model will be viable for the very tallest AND the very shortest people, and operators have to provide something which is a best fit for a shared usage scheme.</i></p> <p><i>BANES have a range of sizes in e-bikes and some additional ecargo bikes in their loan bike fleet available from Take charge bikes for people to try on a short-term basis.</i></p> <p><i>The Council are always considering future opportunities for accessibility, including how this area might better serve children or disabled people in the future as well.</i></p>		
P	11	Question from: Grace Wiltshire
Travelwest and Better By Bike are WECA-wide initiatives to promote sustainable transport and active travel. Several hyperlinks to BANES resources on the Travelwest and Better By Bike websites are not working or information for BANES is non-existent. How much has BANES contributed to Travelwest and the Better By Bike initiatives in 23/24 and 24/25? How does this compare to the contributions of Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire?		

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>Officers are checking the website and will get any faulty links corrected. We have obtained the figures requested for Better By Bike but we have not received the data for TravelWest and we will publish that information after the meeting. Cost per authority 2023/24:</i></p> <p><i>Hosting and maintenance - website (Lunar Web) Monthly hosting website maintenance, support & development (April '23 - March '24) for:</i></p> <p><i>- betterbybike.info - cycleplanner.betterbybike.info</i></p> <p><i>Bristol 40% £4,713.60</i></p> <p><i>BANES 15% £1,767.60</i></p> <p><i>NS 19% £2,238.96</i></p> <p><i>SG 26% £3,063.84</i></p> <p><i>TOTAL £11,784</i></p> <p><i>Cost per authority 2024/25:</i></p> <p><i>Hosting and maintenance - website (Lunar Web) Monthly hosting website maintenance, support & development (April '24 - March '25) for:</i></p> <p><i>- betterbybike.info - cycleplanner.betterbybike.info</i></p> <p><i>Bristol 40% £5,376</i></p> <p><i>BANES 15% £2,016</i></p> <p><i>NS 19% £2,553.60</i></p> <p><i>SG 26% £3,494.40</i></p> <p><i>TOTAL £13,440</i></p>	

P	12	Question from:	Benazir Jatoi
The Council agreed to fly the UN Peace flag on the Guildhall following the Peace motion. To date, it has been flown once. When will it next be flown?			
Answer from:			Cllr Kevin Guy
<p><i>The UN flag was flown at the Guildhall in Bath during the week of 20–27 September 2024, including on the UN-designated International Day of Peace, 21 September.</i></p> <p><i>However, due to safety concerns with the access ladders—identified ahead of planned roof works—the council was unable to change the flags at the Guildhall in 2025. As a result, the UN flag was instead flown in Parade Gardens from 19–29 September 2025.</i></p>			
P	13	Question from:	Benazir Jatoi
The delivery of housing for students is an important part of B&NES Local Plan. Please can you provide the demographics used for student numbers for the next 20 years?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The council commissioned expert consultancy Opinion Research Services to undertake a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) to inform the Local Plan. This included assessing demographic projections related to student numbers for the Local Plan period up to 2043. The LHNA is available on the Council's Local Plan web-platform and the relevant pages on student numbers is on pages 48 to 51: https://bathnesplaces.co.uk/localplan/files/Local%20Housing%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf</i></p> <p><i>Whilst the LHNA provides useful analysis of the overall student housing need arising from the projected growth of student population, it is also important to consider and ensure alignment with the future growth aspirations of the University of Bath and</i></p>			

Bath Spa University. Both universities are updating their future growth strategies, which will impact on student numbers, and required accommodation. The council continues to work with both universities to understand their projected growth plans and therefore, to ascertain the likely future growth in the number of students. This information will inform the Draft Local Plan due to be consulted on in late spring/early summer next year and will be published alongside it.

P 14

Question from:

Benazir Jatoi

With the ongoing cost of living crisis deepening, how will the Council be supporting those on low-income/free school meals to get a reduction in RPZ charges?

Answer from:

Cllr Joel Hirst

Caring for our residents and our most vulnerable is a key political priority for this administration. We are very mindful of the cost-of-living crisis and as a council we are doing our best within our resources to minimise impacts of council policies on the cost-of-living crisis for residents.

After our homes, buying and running a car can be one of the most significant financial choices people need to make.

The council aims, even with the recently proposed higher costs for a permit, to enable the RPZ schemes to be cost-neutral so that only those using vehicles pay for the RPZ schemes.

The cost of a permit equates only to a small percentage of the annual costs of running a motor vehicle.

In 2022, the council introduced the option for residents to purchase a 1 and 3 month permit to help make them more flexible and affordable.

We are continuing, through work including the Movement Strategy consultation, to identify and implement better travel choices for residents so that we can improve high-quality alternatives to car trips be it buses, walking or cycling to meet the needs of all.

P	15	Question from:	Kathy Beadle
When care-experienced young people turn 18, appropriate housing is often needed for them. What research has the Council undertaken to ensure that the amount needed and appropriateness of this housing is in place for care experienced residents?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The Council has not commissioned research into the specific housing needs of care experienced residents. However, the Council is deeply committed to addressing the needs of care experienced people and households. Since the motion was passed at Council in March 2024 to consider care experience a protected characteristic, the council has had a working group delivering on an action plan to embed this change to policy and practice across all council activity.</i></p> <p><i>As a result, several specific housing measures have been implemented, such as granting care experienced applicants up to age 25 increased priority on the Council's Housing waiting list, fully adhering to updated care experienced homelessness guidance, and prioritising three out of eight new homes for care experienced households in a recent B&NES Homes development with more to follow.</i></p>			
P	16	Question from:	Kathy Beadle
What is the route map for care experienced residents to have appropriate housing?			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The varying circumstances and complexities of individual households means that it is not practical to provide a single and succinct route map for housing for care experienced residents. However, on an individual basis a range of housing would be considered, including supported housing, social housing and market housing, typically the private rented sector.</i></p>			

P	17	Question from:	Kathy Beadle
Following a review of the WECA Settlement (in relation to the Investment Fund, Sustainable Transport Settlement and CRSTS) - how is the Leader of Council and Deputy Leader of Council working to ensure that the settlement delay on funding across the region is delivered to support transport and housing?			
Answer from:			Cllr Kevin Guy
<p><i>We have recently jointly agreed a new West of England Growth Strategy, which sets out our shared ambition for the region and will inform future investment priorities across economic development, housing, transport and environment. Alongside this, at Committee in October, we agreed the high-level Investment Strategy that will support the delivery of these ambitions. The next step will be to agree the individual investment programmes that will take this work forward.</i></p> <p><i>The West of England Combined Authority is not yet eligible for an integrated single settlement from the government. However, the region continues to receive government funding to support delivery of our shared strategic priorities. This includes the allocation of £752m in June 2025 as our regional Strategic Transport Settlement. We are working closely with the Mayor and the Combined Authority on the investment programme for this new settlement, as well as to drive delivery of our existing CRSTS programme to improve transport infrastructure and promote active travel across BANES.</i></p>			

STATEMENT FROM CLLR DINE ROMERO – 13TH NOVEMBER 2025

Thank you Chair for allowing me to make this short statement

I am the chair of the Joint Adoption West Scrutiny Panel (JAWSP), we are made up for several lay members who are adopters, and councillors from the appropriate scrutiny panels or committees at our partner local authorities.

The panel was set up to provide, obviously, scrutiny, of the processes and to consider issues such as addressing the sufficiency gap. To be clear, we do not scrutinise actual adoptions, nor people involved in individual adoptions.

The JAWSP were asked to give our views on the best way forward, i.e. whether to continue with Adoption West as it is, or to consider alternative ways of providing this service across our collective local authorities.

The joint scrutiny panel believe that there is little to gained from fundamentally changing the delivery model, and hope that by not changing the model AW will be able to focus on the challenges such as harder to place children, including black and ethnic minority children, children with disabilities, older children and sibling groups. As well improving other parts of the service such as life stories.

I hope you agree with me that Adoption West should be allowed to focus on building on the positive work of the last 6 years, rather than seeking to test an untried delivery model.

Lastly, I would like to ask if the cabinet has any view on the areas of work they would like the scrutiny panel to consider working on, in addition to those already highlighted?

Finally, finally I apologise as I may need to leave before the debate, but I am expected at Bath Welcomes Refugees 10-year anniversary.

I am sure you would like me to pass on your congratulations to this organisation and thank them for the work they have done and continue to do in supporting people fleeing war and atrocities who start new lives here in Bath and North East Somerset.

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