Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 12th March 2026**
Time: **6.30 pm**
Venue: **Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath**

Agenda

To: All Members of the Cabinet

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) and Councillor Sarah Warren (Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset)

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers
Press and Public

The agenda is set out overleaf.

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NOTES:

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

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

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

3. **Recording at Meetings**

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

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4. **Public Speaking at Meetings**

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

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

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

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

5. Emergency Evacuation Procedure

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

6. Supplementary information for meetings

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Cabinet - Thursday 12th March 2026

in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

   The Democratic Services Officer will read out the emergency evacuation procedure as set out in the notes.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

   At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

   (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
   (b) The nature of their interest.
   (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** or an **other interest**, (as defined in Part 4.4 Appendix B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

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

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

6. QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

   Questions submitted before the deadline will receive a reply from an appropriate Cabinet member or an undertaking to respond within 5 working days of the meeting. Councillors may ask one supplementary question for each question they submit, up to a maximum of two per Councillor.

7. STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

   Councillors and members of the public may register their intention to make a statement if they notify the subject matter of their statement before the deadline. Statements are limited to 3 minutes each. The speaker may then be asked by Cabinet members to answer factual questions arising out of their statement.

8. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING - 12TH FEBRUARY 2026 (Pages 7 - 20)

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

9. CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

This is a standard agenda item, to cover any reports originally placed on the Weekly List for single Member decision making, which have subsequently been the subject of a Cabinet Member requisition to the full Cabinet, under the Council's procedural rules.

10. MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

This is a standing agenda item (Constitution rule 3.3.14) for matters referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny bodies. The Chair of the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel will have the right to attend and to introduce the Panel's recommendations to Cabinet.

11. SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING (Pages 21 - 34)

To note the list of Cabinet Single Member decisions taken and published since the last Cabinet meeting (no debate).

12. HERITAGE SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2026 - 2031 (Pages 35 - 96)

To consider the update of the Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031.

13. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (Pages 97 - 142)

To consider the new council policy document, the Cultural Development Plan, for review and adoption.

14. CORPORATE ESTATE ASSET MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2026-2031 (Pages 143 - 210)

To consider adopting the Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework (comprising the Corporate Estate Policy and Corporate Estate Strategy and associated Action Plan). These documents set out the approach and priorities for the management of the Council's Corporate Estate over the next five years (2026-2031).

The Democratic Services Officer for this meeting is Marie Todd who can be contacted on 01225 394414.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

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

Thursday 12th February 2026

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 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

61 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

62 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

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

63 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lucy Hodge.

64 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that the Monitoring Officer has granted the following dispensations to enable members present to participate in the debate and to vote on item 17 (Budget and Council Tax 2026/27 and Financial Outlook).

· Cllr Sarah Warren – dispensation granted due to a family member being in receipt of social services.

· General dispensation for all Councillors who pay Council Tax.

A copy of the dispensations is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

65 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

66 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 17 questions from Councillors and 23 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.]

67 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Ed Browning – The Council's £10k cut to the "public convenience service" vs July's unanimous vote to prioritise better public toilets. Mr Browning spoke about the vital service that public conveniences provide for both tourists and residents in Bath. He highlighted the need for more facilities and investment in public convenience provision rather than cuts.
- Rosa Kell – Public Transport Issues and Budget *(A copy of the statement is attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall – Council Budget *(A copy of the statement is attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Cllr Robin Moss - Discovery Cards. Cllr Moss welcomed the decision not to charge for Discovery Cards. He highlighted the importance of these cards to enable residents to access heritage sites in the city. He suggested that the use of the cards could be extended to enable residents to access services such as free parking and offers and that visitors could also access these additional services for a charge.

68 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING - 13TH NOVEMBER 2025

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 13th November 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

69 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

No single member items were requisitioned to Cabinet.

70 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

No matters were referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

71 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

72 RECOMMISSIONING LDAN, CARE HOMES AND HOME CARE SERVICES TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR ADULTS AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE, HIGH-QUALITY PROVISION

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

- The administration is committed to supporting vulnerable residents, especially those with learning disabilities, neurodiversity and autism (LDAN), and older people needing care.
- Significant investment currently funds LDAN services, residential and nursing care, and home care, though many people also self-fund.
- Contracts for these services are expiring, requiring re-commissioning, which is also an opportunity to modernise services and better meet changing needs.
- Population growth and an ageing demographic mean that demand for services will increase.
- New commissioning will focus on inclusion, personalisation, home-based care, technology and early intervention.
- Service specifications will be redesigned through co-design with providers and service users ensuring that services are safe, effective, and aligned with the Council's strategy.

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

• The report demonstrates the benefits of coordinated commissioning, including better value for money, cost effectiveness, and clearer quality standards.
• Vulnerable children are well protected by legislation, but this changes at age 18 when they become adults under different laws.
• While independence is the aspiration, many vulnerable adults will still require care. Re-commissioning aims to replace expensive and unreliable spot purchasing with coordinated plans that improve consistency and quality.
• A key challenge is balancing care versus cost, with standards to be set once proper commissioning criteria are established. The current marketplace is highly fragmented, with many providers, limiting innovation and coordination.
• The existing system restricts the ability to deliver good value, effective, and responsive services tailored to individual needs.
• Quality Care Commission standards will become clearer after re-commissioning, with quality built into contracts and monitored by council officers.
• The proposal will bring greater professional discipline and improve outcomes for vulnerable adults in B&NES.

Cllr Joel Hirst stressed the importance of effective safeguarding.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To agree that the Strategic Commissioning Hub will go out to the market to reprocure Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Services.

(2) To agree that the Strategic Commissioning Hub will go out to the market to reprocure Care Home Services.

(3) To agree that the Strategic Commissioning Hub will go out to the market to reprocure Home Care Services.

(4) To grant delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Care to approve contract awards in respect of the procurement activity cited above.

73 HOUSING ADAPTATIONS FOR FOSTER CARERS

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

- Bath & North East Somerset faces a shortage of foster placements, resulting in some children living in residential care despite care plans indicating they could live with foster families. A proposed capital grant scheme—offering up to £50,000 per household—will help foster carers fund home extensions or adaptations, enabling them to take in more children. Foster carers strongly support the initiative, with 90% reacting positively and over half willing to commit to ten more years of fostering if such support is available.
- The scheme is designed with strict safeguards, including eligibility limited to in-house carers who own their homes, mandatory contractor quotes, and a five-year legal charge with tapered repayment if fostering ends early. The benefits are significant: more children placed in family settings, improved stability and outcomes, better retention of experienced carers, and substantial cost savings compared with residential placements. The financial payback can be as short as 1.5 months in cases where additional placements avoid high residential costs.
- The scheme has a dual value, improving the lives of vulnerable children while delivering clear financial benefits for the Council.

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

- The proposals demonstrate a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children in care and ensuring they have the best life chances as adults.
- There are 81,000 children in care nationally, and the government aims to recruit 10,000 additional foster carers as part of a national reform programme.
- The number of in-house foster carers has declined by nearly 20% since the Covid pandemic, despite their emotional and financial value.
- In-house foster carers provide stability, safety, disability support, and educational support, with some young people staying beyond age 18.
- Families First legislation encourages early intervention to reduce the number of children entering care, and foster care remains the best option for those who do.
- A regional fostering hub for the South West, involving 15 local authorities, was introduced two years ago to create a consistent recruitment approach. Recruitment has improved visibility but remains modest.

- The government plans to embed these fostering hubs nationally, and the council welcomes this recognition of a model they helped pioneer.
- There is a significant cost difference between independent fostering providers (£1,162/week) and in-house foster carers (£464/week), making in-house care 2.5 times less expensive.

Cllr Matt McCabe expressed his thanks to all foster carers for the valuable service they provide.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To agree the proposal to offer housing alterations for foster carers, and note the draft policy Housing Alterations Policy for Bath & North East Somerset Foster Carers.

(2) To agree the delegation of final approval for the policy and associated processes to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

(3) To note the allocation of £500,000 of capital funding for the works which is included in the proposed capital programme as provisionally approved, delegating responsibility for the full approval of the funding to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Director of Finance (S151 Officer), and to delegate decisions on each individual case to the Director of Children's Services.

74 SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE INVESTMENT

Cllr Paul Roper, Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The administration is committed to unlocking local potential and driving forward ambitious development across the area. A key example is the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone, a complex but transformative project intended to deliver long-term economic benefits.
- The project was originally proposed in 2007, but market forces failed to progress it; the current administration has therefore taken responsibility for delivering it directly.
- The council has already secured £30 million in funding from multiple sources to support infrastructure development.
- The Enterprise Zone is expected to create 1,300 new jobs in an area with a historic industrial base that has experienced significant loss of major employers and increased out-commuting.
- Regeneration work in Midsomer Norton and Radstock is progressing, supported by government investment and informed by extensive resident engagement.
- The Enterprise Zone is a cornerstone of the council's economic strategy and has helped secure Somer Valley's inclusion as one of five key regional growth areas, ensuring greater visibility and access to funding.

- The development will support the emerging Local Plan, providing employment opportunities closer to residents' homes and helping strengthen the local economy.
- A desktop assessment estimates a notional investment requirement of up to £53 million to complete the scheme and highlights potential future funding needs over a delivery timescale of more than 10 years.
- The paper does not commit the council to allocating a budget or spending a specific amount at this stage; it simply recognises the possible funding gap that may need addressing in future phases.

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

- The government has required the council to plan for 27,000 new homes and 25,000 jobs over the next 20 years, presenting a significant challenge for the Local Plan.
- Numerous development sites have been proposed by the private sector and the council, and a major consultation on these sites and related policies concluded in November; officers are now reviewing all responses.
- Infrastructure concerns dominated public feedback, with strong sentiment that existing systems cannot support an estimated 50,000 additional residents. The phrase "Infrastructure First" emerged as a key theme.
- The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone is framed as a crucial early step toward addressing infrastructure needs, supporting future economic growth, and creating opportunities for young people who aspire to live and work locally.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To reaffirm the commitment to promoting the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) scheme, notwithstanding the Council's recognition of potential viability concerns with the project.

(2) If the SVEZ scheme proceeds, to acknowledge that up to £53m may need to be secured from various means to ensure the delivery of the project, including potential further investment from the Council, other public funding sources, public loans and developer partnership.

75 QUARTER 3 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 Cabinet with an update on the council's Quarter 3 performance against Corporate Strategy metrics.
- It highlights only indicators that have changed during the quarter.
- Strong performance continues in waste and recycling.
- There has been further positive movement in social care.
- There is a downward trend in households in temporary accommodation.
- The report also sets out ongoing challenges, particularly in areas where the council has less direct control, or where national trends impact performance.
- It is important to continue to refine the Key Performance Indicators to ensure that they match evolving priorities.

Cllr Sarah Warren seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The quarterly performance report provides an important overview of progress against the Council's ambitious environmental and operational goals.
- Communications to residents on climate-positive actions—particularly around household waste and home energy improvements—are proving effective.
- Residential carbon emissions are steadily declining, with average estimated emissions now at 3.3 tonnes per property per year, reflecting ongoing improvements and available services such as *Retrofit West*.
- The Council is preparing to support private landlords in meeting upcoming legislative requirements related to environmental standards.
- Household waste performance is strong, with 96.7% of waste being reused, recycled, composted, or recovered, maintaining a positive upward trend.
- The proportion of household waste recycled or composted slightly exceeds the 60% target, demonstrating sustained progress.
- A small increase in land managed for nature by B&NES Council has been achieved, partly due to more areas being managed through cut-and-collect approaches.
- Funded management plans are being developed for Foxhill (Bath) and Colliers Way (Radstock) to further enhance nature-positive land stewardship.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To note the findings of the performance report.

76 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL TO DECEMBER 2025

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

- The Council is forecasting a £1.659m revenue overspend at the end of December, after using £9.83m in contingencies and £1.721m from the pay and grading reserve.
- This represents an improvement of £764k compared with the Quarter 2 position.
- Children's Services remains the most significant financial pressure, with a predicted £7.4m overspend, driven largely by high residential placement costs.
- A strengthened Transformation Programme is under way in Children's Services, including a placements taskforce, cost assurance work, and long-term sufficiency planning.
- Adult Social Care is also under pressure, with demand for residential care up 10%, but forecasts a more modest £551k overspend.
- The Economic & Cultural Sustainable Development portfolio forecasts a £3.136m overspend, largely due to lower-than-budgeted Roman Baths visitor numbers.
- Despite lower visitor numbers, Heritage Services is still expected to return over £12m profit, supported by increased spend per head.
- Housing Benefit claims for temporary accommodation have risen 53% year-on-year, believed to be linked to increased no-fault evictions ahead of the Renters Rights Bill.

- Positive financial contributions include Parking Services overperformance (+£0.5m), favourable treasury performance (+£1.4m), and £1.2m reduced borrowing requirement due to capital project delays.
- The 2025/26 capital programme is forecast to spend £94.321m against a £149.537m revised budget, with most of the £55m variance due to rephasing rather than cancellation. Examples include slight delays to electric refuse vehicles and the Bath Household Recycling Centre, though both remain on track for delivery.
- General unearmarked reserves remain at £12.6m, within the risk-assessed range.
- Overall, the Council's financial position remains challenging but improving, with ongoing mitigation efforts expected to continue reducing the overspend, though recovering the full £1.6m gap by year-end is uncertain.

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

- Local government continues to face significant national-level challenges, particularly rising demand in Children's and Adult Services for care packages for vulnerable residents.
- Parking income has exceeded expectations, providing a positive contribution to the financial position.
- Prudent treasury management and a strong focus on delivering value to residents underpins the council's financial approach.
- B&NES remains a council with one of the lowest council tax levels in the South West, demonstrating continued financial restraint.
- The council has successfully delivered £9.1 million in savings this year.
- The Children's Services Transformation Programme is highlighted as producing impressive outputs that help mitigate ongoing cost pressures.
- These combined efforts are enabling the council to balance the budget and reassure residents that their council tax is being used responsibly.
- The report reinforces the council's strong and positive record of financial management.

Cllr McCabe highlighted the revenue that is provided by tourism which makes a contribution to keeping Council Tax lower.

Cllr Warren highlighted the fact that B&NES is a lead authority on climate and nature actions.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To note the 2025/26 revenue budget position detailed within the report (as at the end of December 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 (Table 4) 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.

77 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

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

- The administration presents a balanced budget proposal that protects frontline services despite £12.5m in funding cuts expected over the next three years.
- Current financial planning has been made significantly harder by the Government's Fair Funding reforms, which introduced major uncertainty due to a lack of exemplifications and late publication of allocations.
- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement arrived on 17 December, disrupting an already lengthy budget-setting process.
- Fair Funding reforms will leave the council £12.5m worse off annually by 2028/29, broken down as: £2.42m (2026/27), £5.12m (2027/28), and £5.00m (2028/29).
- The funding formulas disadvantage B&NES by judging it to have lower relative need, higher capacity to raise resources locally, and by redistributing business rates growth.
- Despite these pressures, the council has developed a plan to close a £7.24m funding gap for 2026/27 through £2.59m in income generation and £4.65m in cost reductions.
- Significant budget growth is allocated for social care: £5.51m for Adult Services and £4.07m for Children's Services, even after savings, giving a net rise of nearly £6.4m in social care funding.
- The budget includes a proposed 4.99% council tax increase (2.99% general + 2% Adult Social Care precept), equating to £90.97 more per Band D property (£1.75 per week).
- This increase would raise £6.5m, nearly covering the net growth in social care spending.
- B&NES continues to have among the lowest council tax levels in the South West and is recognised for strong productivity, ranked 5th most productive council nationally by the Municipal Journal.
- The capital programme follows the Prudential Code requirements of affordability, prudence, and sustainability, with clear separation between Full Approval (£230m) and Provisional Approval (£280.5m) schemes, totalling over £510m financing.
- Capital decisions are supported by a structured financing mix (grants, borrowing, receipts, third-party contributions) and a £2.9m corporate capital risk contingency.
- Public consultation closed on 19 January, prompting removal of two proposals (Discovery Card charging and reduced recycling centre hours) in response to resident feedback.
- Producing a balanced, prudent, and ambitious budget in a year of severe uncertainty demonstrates strong financial management and continued commitment to residents.

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

- The budget demonstrates the administration's ongoing commitment to investing in vulnerable residents, protecting communities, and maintaining frontline services, even as many councils nationwide face cuts.
- The council's corporate strategy prioritises prevention, with investments such as Culverhay and foster carer support aimed at improving services while reducing long-term costs—for example, reducing transport expenses by keeping vulnerable people closer to home.
- A £320K Community Safety growth request is essential for meeting statutory duties related to crime reduction, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, domestic abuse support, public space protection, and serious violence prevention.
- Of this funding, £164K will be used to recruit staff into the under-resourced Community Safety team to ensure delivery of critical services.
- The funding also includes £35K for preventative domestic abuse work, focusing on reducing repeat incidents, supporting survivors, and providing interventions for individuals at risk of perpetrating abuse.
- Additional investment will strengthen specialist domestic abuse survivor support, expand prevention programmes, and support the youth drug and alcohol project to help vulnerable young people make safer choices.
- The growth item secures £25K for shared data analysis, enabling evidence-based planning and targeted resource deployment with partner organisations.
- Collectively, these investments aim to build safer communities, reduce long-term statutory service demand, and deliver better outcomes for residents

Cllr Warren highlighted the work that is ongoing in relation to net zero and nature positive projects and welcomed the funding for this.

Cllr Hirst stated that this is a sensible and robust budget and welcomed the additional funding from WECA to provide improvements in highway safety and transport projects.

Cllr May noted that the funding for Children's Services is a national challenge and stated that he is proud of the way the Council is supporting vulnerable children in difficult financial circumstances.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To recommend that Council approves:

- The General Fund net revenue budget for 2026/27 of **£193.17m** and the individual service cash limits for 2026/27 as outlined in Annex 1 of the report.
- The savings and income plans outlined in Annex 2(i), funding requirements 2(ii), in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Assessment Report in Annex 3 of the report.
- An increase in general Council Tax of 2.99% in 2026/27 (an increase of £54.51 per Band D property or £1.05 per week).
- An increase of 2.00% to Council Tax for the Adult Social Care Precept in recognition of the current demands and financial pressures on this

service. This is equivalent to an increase of £36.46 on a Band D property or £0.70 per week.

- The movement in reserves outlined in Section 5.6 and the adequacy of Un-earmarked Reserves at £12.58m within a risk assessed range requirement of £12.00m - £13.20m.
- To note the Children's Services management plan update set out in paragraphs 5.2.64 to 5.2.65 of the report.
- The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4 of the report.
- The Capital Programme for 2026/27 of £110.219m including new and emerging capital bids outlined in Annex 5(i), planned sources of funding in 5.8.10, and notes the programme for 2027/28 to 2030/31 and that any wholly funded projects coming forward during the year will be added to the Capital Programme in line with the Budget Management Scheme.
- The delegation of implementation, subject to consultation where appropriate, of the capital programmes set out in Annex 5(i) to Annex 5(vi) to the relevant Director in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocations and amendments outlined in Annex 5(vii) of the report.
- The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6 of the report.
- The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy attached at Annex 7 of the report.
- The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in paragraph 5.8.17 of the report.
- The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8 of the report.
- The Community Contribution Fund extension outlined Section 5.5 of the report.
- The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 shown in the following link:

https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-01/Council_Tax_reduction_scheme_April_1_2026_to_March_31_2027.pdf
and referred to in paragraph 5.3.10 of the report.

- The Fees and Charges schedule for 2026/27 at Annex 11 of the report and support its publication following approval of the budget, with delegation to amend individual costs within the schedule in line with market needs, to the Director of Place Management, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

(2) That the Council include in its Council Tax setting, the precepts set and approved by other bodies including the local precepts of Town Councils, Parish Councils, and Charter Trustees of the City of Bath, and those of the Fire and Police Authorities.

(3) To note the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves outlined in Section 5.7 of the report.

(4) To note the budget consultation responses in Annex 10 of the report, and the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panel feedback in Annex 12 of the report.

(5) To authorise the Council's S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to make any necessary changes to the draft budget proposal for submission to Council, including any changes arising from the final local government settlement announcement. Any changes may also require the S151 Officer's report on the robustness of the proposed budget and the adequacy of the councils' reserves outlined in Section 5.7 of the report to be updated.

78 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2025 (QUARTER 3)

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

- As of 31 December 2025, total external borrowing stands at £285m, well within both the £414m operational boundary and the £442m authorised limit approved by Council.
- The Council maintains a strong credit position, with an average portfolio credit rating of AA, exceeding the minimum requirement of A–.
- All borrowing aligns with the Treasury Management Strategy objectives.
- The Council holds £48.2m in investments with highly rated counterparties, maintaining a secure risk profile
- Investment performance is strong, with average returns of 4.10% (operational) and 4.12% (strategic) — both outperforming benchmark rates in a higher interest rate environment.
- Liquidity remains robust, supported by £38.2m in short-term liquid investments.
- All Treasury Management activity in Quarter 3 fully complied with:
    - The CIPFA Treasury Management Code
    - The Prudential Code
    - The Council's Treasury Management Strategy
      All prudential indicators — borrowing limits, credit ratings, liquidity, maturity structure — remain comfortably within approved boundaries.

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To note the Treasury Management Report to 31st December 2025, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice.

(2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 31st December 2025.

79 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27

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

- The Strategy outlines a cautious borrowing approach, aiming to minimise long-term commitments while interest rates remain high.

- Investment principles follow a clear priority order: 1) Security, 2) Liquidity, 3) Yield, with added ethical and sustainable considerations.
- Prudential indicators within the Strategy set the framework for affordable, sustainable, and prudent borrowing.
- The Strategy supports delivery of the council's capital programme, including regeneration schemes, climate-related commitments, school projects, and social care infrastructure.
- It is aligned with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and reinforces the council's long-term financial resilience.
- The Strategy complies with CIPFA guidance and statutory obligations and establishes a robust governance framework with regular monitoring of treasury activity.

Cllr Joel Hirst seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

(1) To recommend the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27 (Appendix 1 of the report) to Council.

(2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Cabinet Single-Member Decisions and Responses to Recommendations from PDS Panels

published from 4th February until 3rd March 2026

Further details of each decision can be seen on the Council's Single-member Decision Register at http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx?&dm=3

Parking Charge Proposals for 2026/27 - Preliminary Consultation Outcome

Consideration and recommendations of feedback received from the public following a preliminary public consultation on changes to parking charges proposed for 2026–27, that aim to improve road safety, encourage sustainable travel, and ensure our parking services cover their costs.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Communications and Community
Decision published: 18/02/2026
Effective from: 26/02/2026

Decision:
To progress to statutory public consultation via the Traffic Regulation Order process of the following:

(1) Proposal to introduce an additional resident's permit charge based on vehicle size (area) in 2026/27.

(2) Proposal to increase visitor permit charges in 2026/27.

(3) Proposal to increase the all-day parking charge at all Park and Ride sites in Bath.

Wards affected: All Wards
Lead officer: Andrew Dunn

Submission of a request to the Secretary of State to dispose of a residential house let on a statutory tenancy

Secretary of State approval is required for the disposal of a residential ownership which is subject to a statutory tenancy. B&NES are the freehold owners of a two-bed detached house which is surplus to the Corporate Estate and will be seeking approval from the Secretary of State to undertake a disposal.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Decision published: 17/02/2026
Effective from: 25/02/2026

Decision:
To delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Estate & Development to submit an application to the Secretary of State for approval to dispose of the asset.

Wards affected: Newbridge
Lead officer: Richard Holden

Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document Interim Update

To undertake a focussed and interim update of the current Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document 2015 as previously amended in 2019 and 2023. The proposed amendments to the SPD incorporate updates to the education chapter including early years facilities, SEND and home to school transport, a new chapter on primary health facilities, minor updates to the affordable housing chapter to reflect the revised NPPF to reflect changes in national policy and more up to date information; and other minor update changes to reflect indexation in the green infrastructure, tree replacement and training and skills contributions. Following consultation minor changes have been made. The report seeks approval of the interim updates to the SPD for adoption.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development
Decision published: 16/02/2026
Effective from: 24/02/2026

Decision:
(1) To adopt the interim update draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, as amended, following consultation (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report).

(2) To delegate authority to the Head of Planning to make any necessary editorial changes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, prior to the adoption and publication of the interim update Planning Obligations.

Wards affected: All Wards
Lead officer: Richard Daone

Liveable Neighbourhoods: Lower Lansdown Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

To reach a decision on whether the experimental trials in Winifred's Lane, Catharine Place and Gay Street should be made into permanent schemes following 6 months of statutory public consultation.

Decision Maker: Cabinet Member for Communications and Community
Decision published: 30/01/2026
Effective from: 07/02/2026

Decision:
To make the trial schemes permanent.

In making this decision, the Cabinet Members have reviewed the recommended mitigations detailed in paras 3.10-3.12 of the SMD report. However, irrespective of whether or not the potential mitigations are introduced, the Cabinet Members' decision is that the schemes will be made permanent.

The Cabinet Members confirm delegation on progressing any potential mitigations to the Director of Place Management.

The Cabinet Members support making the scheme permanent as soon as possible. This will be reflected within the formal statutory Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) decision-making process, noting that the final sign-off is via a delegated decision made by the Director of Place Management within which the Cabinet Member and ward members will have the opportunity to give formal comment.

The Cabinet members agree when noting and taking account of, as part of this decision, the information provided in Single Member Decision (SMD) E3667 together with the appendices and links in the report relating to:

(1) public consultation responses
(2) key stakeholder engagement including that with The Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and Active Travel England (ATE)
(3) traffic, air quality, and driver behaviour monitoring
(4) the Public Sector Equality duty
(5) duties under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and section 16 Traffic Management Act 2004 to secure the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians).
(6) Recommended potential mitigations (detailed in paras 3.10-3.12) subject to their own individual statutory consultations and final decision on those potential mitigations

That the aim of the scheme, in line with the wider Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, is to support the local neighbourhood, enable more local trips by active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling) and to address excessive traffic on residential roads - often used as shortcuts to and from the A46/M4 north of Bath City Centre - by encouraging through traffic to remain on the main roads.

Key conclusions from the trials informing this decision to make the trials permanent are outlined below.

1. Public Consultation Outcomes

· The results of a six-month public consultation survey held from November 2024 to April 2025, and with the trials in place, were:

· Winifred's Lane: Out of 1,289 responses, 84% were in objection and 16% were in support. Support was higher among residents living in the trial area (26%) than those living outside (9%).

· Catharine Place: Out of 50 responses, 62% were in objection and 34% were in support. Support was similar inside and outside the trial area.

· Gay Street/The Circus: Out of 157 responses, 60% were in objection and 37% were in support. Support was significantly higher among residents living in the trial area (71%) than those living outside it (31%).

· Supporters were more likely to walk or cycle, while objectors predominantly used motor vehicles.

· Objectors were more likely to use motor vehicles and be travelling through the area.

· A wide spectrum of views was submitted. People who supported the trials felt that the restrictions have had a positive impact on roads previously affected by motorists taking short cuts, and that it was quieter and safer to walk and cycle as a result.

· People who objected mainly felt that traffic and congestion had increased elsewhere, especially on Sion Road, where more cars were passing the rear exit from Kingswood School, making the area more congested and less safe. Other key themes in objection were that the restrictions only benefited a few people while they inconvenienced many; and that they increased journey times on other routes making air quality worse.

· Supporters and objectors also highlighted that drivers were ignoring the restrictions and displaying poor driver-behaviour.

· Significant evidence and data on the impact of the trials on traffic, air quality and driver-behaviour was provided by council officers in the SMD report so that public consultation outcomes could be weighed up against the monitoring data and wider policy objectives.

· It is acknowledged that there are some areas of concern that may be mitigated, including congestion on Sion Road due to the displacement of northbound vehicles from Winifred's Lane. This congestion is primarily during term time at school pick-up and drop- off. More information on the potential mitigations proposed are outlined in Section 3.

· Also acknowledged, and evidenced by traffic monitoring, is the non- compliance with the new turning restrictions at Winifred's Lane into Sion Hill (East) and with the new restrictions on motor vehicles exiting Upper Gay Street. As a potential mitigation, it is proposed that ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) enforcement is introduced at these junctions following the necessary statutory consultation requirements. More information is provided in Section 3.

· While the levels of objection are high, the evidence collected (and covered in in more detail in later sections of this decision notice) suggests that in some cases objectors have overstated the potential harm of the scheme in their responses and that, overall, the three trials have been successful in meeting the objectives of a Liveable Neighbourhood. In support of this, the following is noted in summary (and outlined in more detail in the original Single Member Decision reports and following sections):

· There was an overall reduction in traffic volume across all roads in the three trial areas across all five in-trial monitoring periods.

· Traffic has dispersed over a wider area.

· The volume of vehicles using the junctions of Cavendish Road/Winifred's Lane and Gay Street/A4 George Street has reduced.

· Monitoring has not demonstrated a detrimental impact on air quality overall when compared with baseline data.

· There has been an uplift in active travel in Winifred's Lane and Gay Street, and levels remain constant in Catharine Place.

· The reductions of traffic across the trial area and the creation of quieter active travel routes are offering more travel choice to benefit those who do not have vehicles or who choose to walk and cycle.

· During weekday-peak travel periods, increases in average travel times were minimal (up to 20 seconds more compared with baseline). During off-peak travel times, journeys were no more than eight seconds longer.

· Reasonable access to premises on the trial streets is maintained, albeit some residents may have to take a different route.

· For more information on public consultation outcomes see Annex A, B and C: Public Consultation Reports attached to the Single Member Decision Report.

2. Active Travel outcomes

· One of the aims of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme is to help more people make short journeys by walking, wheeling, or cycling.

· Active travel can improve people's lives by contributing to better health and wellbeing. By reducing through traffic on unsuitable residential roads the schemes make active travel more appealing.

· The trials support public health and sustainable transport goals and provide fair road space for those who don't drive or can't afford a vehicle. In these ways they support the council's corporate strategy to improve people's lives and reduce inequalities.

· Looking at the active-travel monitoring data collected during five periods of in-trial monitoring, the following was noted and has informed the decision:

· Active travel data collected during the trial confirms that the through-traffic restrictions have encouraged more people to use the routes for walking and cycling.

· On Winifred's Lane, the average number of people walking and cycling each day was higher than baseline during all five in-trial periods, with 65-75 more people travelling actively on the lane each day (85-185% uplift).

· On Upper Gay Street, cycling was monitored. During baseline, 77 cyclists a day (on average) were recorded. More cyclists were recorded each day (on average) during each of the five in-trial periods (108, 89, 99, 87, 81 respectively).

· It is acknowledged that Catharine Place saw fewer people walking than recorded during baseline monitoring. However, cycling remained constant or slightly up against baseline.

· It is acknowledged that these initial results are good and show the trials have encouraged and enabled active travel. This is a desired outcome aligned with council policy.

· For more information on active travel outcomes see Annex D: Traffic Monitoring Analysis Report attached to the Single Member Decision Report.

3. Traffic monitoring outcomes

· During earlier consultation, residents said they were concerned about motorists avoiding the main roads and instead using residential streets in the area to travel to and from the A46/M4. This included using upper Gay Street and The Circus area via Queen's Square; and Cavendish Road into Winifred's Lane. Winifred's Lane is inappropriate for traffic and a lane where traffic speeds went unhindered due to a northbound one-way system.

· It is noted from the report that the three linked trials have inhibited these direct short cuts, with minimal increases to traffic flow and travel times on the alternative routes. There are manageable exceptions where potential mitigations may help.

· One exception where potential mitigations may help is Sion Road. Traffic monitoring and public feedback indicated increased traffic flows and congestion on Sion Road due to the Winifred's Lane trial during the school run. Sion Road carried around 1,022 vehicles a day, on average, during baseline monitoring. During the trial, average daily traffic flow during term time increased by 87 to 115% (representing around 887 to 1174 more vehicles a day).

· The SMD Report recommends that a revised parking scheme would allow for more visibility around the exit to Kingswood School and more passing spaces to reduce congestion. Other measures will also be considered under the Local Active Travel Scheme, and the council can work with the school to encourage more sustainable and active travel among its community, including staff. Footways on Sion Road lead to the School's rear entrance.

· Poor driver behaviour on Sion Road has been noted. Some users are not driving safely, and we will continue to work with the police to consider enforcement for any offences and provide evidence if necessary. The levels of congestion are not so significant that the highway (by design) is flawed, and most congestion is limited to school drop-off and pick-up times. Motorists are responsible for driving in accordance with license requirements and for adhering to the Highway Code.

· Another exception where potential mitigations may help is non- compliance with some of the new restrictions, including:

· The no-right-turn at the junction of Cavendish Road and Sion Hill (East)

· The mandatory left-hand turn from Upper Gay Street into George Street

· The non-entry signs at the northern end of Winifred's Lane (by cyclists).

· Potential mitigations put forward in the SMD report which include ANPR cameras installed at the Cavendish Road/Sion Hill junction and the Upper Gay Street/George Street junctions will support compliance and inhibit poor driver behaviour. The introduction of ANPR cameras is subject to the necessary statutory consultation procedures and the final decision following that consultation.

· A review of signage at the northern end of Winifred's Lane will reinforce the no-entry for motor vehicles and cyclists, and this can be monitored.

· With reference to the Traffic Monitoring report, the following is noted and has contributed to this decision:
· Winifred's Lane carried an average of 1,303 vehicles a day before the trial. This is a narrow lane with no footway and vehicle speeds went unhindered due to the northbound one-way system. During the trial, traffic here reduced by 99-100%.

· Cavendish Road, which fed vehicles into Winifred's Lane, carried 3,248 vehicles a day during baseline monitoring. This fell by 16-25% during the trial's term time monitoring (up to 729 fewer vehicles) and by up to 41% during the school holiday weeks.

· The Cavendish Road/Winifred's Lane/Sion Hill junction saw fewer vehicles during each of the trial periods compared with baseline counts.

· Catharine Place carried 392 vehicles during baseline, supporting short cuts by drivers through the historic centre of Bath. Traffic here has reduced by 94-99%. Nearby Crescent Lane saw a 32 to 27% reduction, and Russell Street up to 60% reduction. However, Rivers Street saw up to 65 more vehicles a day, on average.

· The restrictions on Gay Street and The Circus saw reductions in vehicles using this busy junction during each of the five in- trial periods.

· Bennett Street (east of The Circus) carried 2,839 vehicles a day during baseline monitoring. It saw the greatest absolute reduction in traffic flows (between 1,484 and 1,755 fewer vehicles a day) which is a 66% reduction. Brock Street saw up to 22% fewer vehicles during five in-trial monitoring period.

· Sion Hill East/Lansdown Crescent carried around 1502 vehicles a day during baseline monitoring and saw 661 to 769 fewer vehicles during the trial's term-time monitoring periods and even fewer during the school holidays

· Changes in travel times were minimal on all roads across the study period, with drivers experiencing an average increase of no more than 20 seconds during peak times and no more than eight seconds during off-peak times.

· It is noted that Julian Road and Morford Street saw more traffic during the trial but that the increases are considered to be within normal variances for the road network. Julian Road is a main road and saw 1-9% more vehicles but also a reduction of vehicles during one of the monitoring periods. Morford Street carried around 4,040 vehicles a day, on average, before the trial. During the three term- time monitoring periods it carried 9-12% more vehicles (369, 400, 505 respectively) and during the school holiday periods it saw 18% more (730) and 4% (170). There were, however, negligible impacts on air quality in these areas with all locations in the trial area well below the Government's and the council's strict limits.

· Prior to the launch of the trial in November 2024, a Transport Planning Review completed by SLR Consulting on behalf of Heart of Lansdown Conservation Group (HOLCG) was submitted to the Council. On review of this report, officers took the decision that there was no reason not to conduct the trial. The HOLCG also submitted another traffic monitoring report during the trial which had been independently commissioned by themselves. An independent review of this report by the Council is published in Annex H. The review concluded that the analysis undertaken on behalf of HOLCG is limited in scope and scale; it cannot be validated or verified; and makes use of methods that are unrepresentative and inappropriate. On this basis, the analysis should not take precedence over the extensive traffic monitoring undertaken by the Council in determining the outcomes of the trial.

· For more information on traffic monitoring outcomes see Annex D: Traffic monitoring analysis attached to the Single Member Decision Report.

4. Air Quality monitoring outcomes

· The air quality monitoring report provides nitrogen dioxide concentrations in terms of annual nitrogen dioxide concentrations (to align with the Government's air quality objective of 40 µg/m3) and quarterly results (which are not directly comparable with the annual average objective).

· 25 sites were monitored. All the quarterly results show that the NO2 concentrations at all locations in the trial area are below 40 µg/m3 in 2024 and 2025.

· It is noted that several sites show improved air quality.

· It is also noted that during the first two months of the trial, five sites saw small increases against baseline as a quarterly average. The fluctuations are in line with regional trends and are not considered concerning in terms of its impact on health.

· There are mixed results on Julian Road and Morford Street with small increases against baseline monitoring in some quarters but also improvements in others. The increased levels are small, and readings are well below legal limits.

· For more information on air quality outcomes see Annex E: Air Quality Report and Annex G Driver Behaviour Analysis, attached to the Single Member Decision Report.

5. Communications and stakeholder engagement outcomes

· It is noted that officers conducted extensive communications and stakeholder engagement, outlined in detail in Annex F to the SMD report.
· This included early engagement and consultation on the introduction of Liveable Neighbourhoods to elicit the types of issues experienced by residents on their streets, and the possible solutions. Engagement was conducted over several years (since 2021) and informed the decision to run the trials in November 2024.

· During the trial, workshops were delivered by Sustrans (now The Walk, Wheel, and Cycle Trust) with Kingswood School pupils, at the Bath Spa University Campus, and with Curo residents living around Julian Road. Council officers held pop-up events on streets in the area to engage people who might not otherwise engage in consultations. It is noted that while the numbers choosing to engage was small, the comments received were valuable and insightful.

· During the trial, officers maintained ongoing dialogue with residents and certain stakeholder groups to address their concerns; and the feedback and the evidence submitted by residents (such as videos) was fully considered and informed mitigation measures.

· Prior to the decision, Cabinet Members and officers met, in person, with resident groups to hear about their experiences of the trials. These groups represented arguments both for and against making the trials permanent.

· For more information on air quality outcomes see Annex F: Stakeholder Engagement Report attached to the Single Member Decision Report.

6. Other issues raised and considered prior to the decision

Queries over Winifred's Lane inclusion in the Movement Strategy.

· More recently the council has been asked whether the inclusion of Winifred's Lane within the Council's Movement Strategy pre-judges the decision on whether the scheme should be made permanent.

· The Movement Strategy for Bath aligns its active travel routes with those identified in the Active Travel Master Plan. Within this plan, Winifred's Lane is designated as a quiet active travel route rather than a strategic route.

· The decision to classify Winifred's Lane as a quiet route is consistent with the broader objectives of the LN programme, which is to keep through traffic on main roads, disperse local traffic more evenly, and create better walking and cycling routes.

· The Active Travel Master Plan was adopted in February 2025, however it is continually reviewed and updated. If a road's status changes, the plan is updated.

· The inclusion of trial scheme should not therefore be regarded as a predetermination on its future permanence.

· Quiet routes enable a wider demographic to embrace active travel, addressing concerns from individuals who may feel apprehensive about cycling alongside vehicles on busy roads. Quiet routes are typically traffic-free paths, quiet roads and lanes, bridleways, and greenways, providing a more pleasant and peaceful experience.

Confirmation on whether Winifred's Lane is required to meet
LTN 1/20 guidance.

· Officers have been engaging with a residents' group on whether the Winifred's Road scheme should meet LTN 1/20 guidelines with regards to gradients. LTN 1/20 (Local Transport Note 1/20) is the UK Department for Transport guidance, published in July 2020, for creating high-quality, safe cycle infrastructure design.

· It should be noted that the scheme is primarily a through-traffic restriction on an existing lane, which has created a quiet route for active travel. It is not an official cycle lane or track.

· LTN 1/20 guidelines acknowledge that it is difficult to alter vertical dimensions on existing routes without major reconstruction (5.9.4) and that cycle routes along existing roads and paths usually must follow the existing gradient (5.9.8).

· Prior to installation, following engagement with residents, the council made several improvements to the original design to better accommodate cyclists in response to concerns about the gradient.

· The council has followed the guidance as far as possible and where it needs to.

· It was recorded during the trial (via traffic monitoring) that some cyclists have ignored the no-entry signs at the top of Winifred's Lane (southbound). These signs apply to cyclists as well as motor vehicles. Cyclists can only head south on Winifred's Lane from the junction with Somerset Lane. As outlined in the SMD report (3.13), a potential mitigation is to review the signage at the northern end of Winifred's Lane to reinforce that cyclists should not enter at this point. They are free, however, to travel northbound along the length of the lane.

Engagement with Active Travel England

· Council officers have also consulted and engaged with the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) and Active Travel England (ATE) to receive technical guidance on this trial, and other Liveable Neighbourhood schemes.

· As part of this engagement, officers attended a Benefits Outcome Panel (BOP) convened by the MCA in February 2025. This is a normal and required process for all City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funded projects.

· At the Panel, it was jointly decided by the MCA and ATE that as the scheme was a trial, it would return to the BOP for endorsement if it was made permanent.

· As this decision is yet to be made, the scheme has not yet returned to the BOP, however at the request of the BOP, officers have participated in a design surgery with an ATE Inspector where Liveable Neighbourhood schemes were discussed.

Linking of the three trials

· The three interventions, while independent of each other, have been designed to work together to improve the Lower Lansdown and The Circus area in line with Liveable Neighbourhood objectives.

· While it's clear from public consultation feedback that the trial in Winifred's Lane is less popular than the trial in Catharine Place and Gay Street, they are considered as a package and the decision to make them permanent relates to all three trials.

· Traffic and air quality monitoring shows that there is less traffic across the LN area, with no detrimental impact on air quality. Potential mitigations as outlined may help to improve congestion on Sion Road as a result of the Winifred's Lane trial.

Consideration of signage design on Gay Street and claims of reduced footfall on Margarets Buildings

· Concerns regarding the impact of traffic restriction signs on Gay Street's heritage setting have been noted. Subject to this decision notice, these signs and their impact on the heritage setting will be reviewed.

· Despite concerns raised by businesses about reduced footfall on Margarets Buildings due to the trials, the independent analysis shows a long-term downward

trend prior to the trial and a short- term uplift after installation. Decision makers do not consider this a concern.

7. Concluding comments

· The decision to approve the scheme is based on clear evidence that the schemes deliver the objectives of the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme: reducing through traffic on unsuitable residential roads and enabling more everyday trips by walking, wheeling, and cycling.

· The trials addressed long-standing issues with motorists cutting through streets not designed for high volumes of traffic, creating quieter and safer conditions for residents. Monitoring shows significant reductions in traffic on the restricted roads, minimal increases in travel times across the wider network, and air quality that remains well below legal limits.

· The data also demonstrates that the scheme has encouraged more active travel, with substantial increases in walking and cycling on key routes such as Winifred's Lane and Upper Gay Street. These outcomes support wider council objectives around improving health, reducing inequalities, and offering fairer access to safe, pleasant streets for people who do not drive or prefer to travel actively.

· While public consultation showed strong views both for and against, many concerns about major congestion and associated safety issues were not supported by monitoring. At the same time, valid issues, particularly around congestion on Sion Road at school times and noncompliance with new restrictions, have been recognised, with potential mitigations proposed which are subject to statutory consultation and a final decision on those potential mitigations.

· The potential mitigations include parking changes on Sion Road to improve visibility and flow, additional enforcement measures to support compliance at the junctions, and continued work with Kingswood School to promote more sustainable travel.

· A letter submitted from the Heart of Lansdown Conservation Group (HOLCG) during the decision-making period has been considered in detail and their points have been addressed as part of the decision-making process, in particular regarding adhering to LTN 1/20 guidance, consulting with Active Travel England, acknowledgement of displacement on Sion Road, driver behaviour/non-compliance and potential mitigations for this; and the inclusion of Winifred's Lane in the Movement Strategy.

· Taken together, the monitoring evidence, statutory duties, equalities considerations, and the programme's wider objectives show that the trials have been successful overall. The benefits outweigh the manageable downsides and align with the council's policy objectives. Due consideration has also been given to the Equalities Impact Assessment on the scheme, included as an appendix to the SMD Report.

Comments from Cllr Joel Hirst, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Strategy:

“The consultation is interesting. There is clearly a gap between perception and what was evidenced by data, and inputs from objectors seem to overstate the potential harm from the scheme. While stakeholders did not always provide equalities data, it seems the opinions of younger residents under 55 are under-represented.”
“Active travel outcomes are encouraging and supportive of the trial’s objectives. It takes time to embed, but the data is clear that active travel has improved and enabled by the interventions.”

“While traffic volumes overall are reduced, and the objectives have been achieved, the scheme could be enhanced with the adoption of the potential recommended mitigations to reduce the impact on Sion Road during school term times which are subject to a separate statutory procedure. Otherwise, in terms of the overall network, traffic flow and travel times have not been materially impacted. Had we seen a significant impact on air quality this would have been a concern, but this has not materially changed.”

“Officers have gone above and beyond on the quality of communication with residents and stakeholders. There is no doubt that views were heard and presented clearly, and we would like to thank officers for their work and diligent approach. We also appreciate the feedback and interest we’ve received from residents which has brought some important issues to our attention during the trial.

“Significant traffic interventions are controversial, and we expect to hear some strong opinions, especially from those who oppose them. We hear the strong sentiment, but there is clear evidence that this LN has met its objectives. This is why evidence and public feedback needs to be considered together.”

“On balance, we believe the trial was successful in delivering the policy objective. We support the officer recommendations to provide additional mitigations to help manage congestion on Sion Road and to prevent non-compliance with the new turning restrictions.”

Comments from Cllr Manda Rigby, Cabinet Member for Communications and Community:

“The scheme can’t be viewed in isolation from the other elements of the programme. We have engaged and listened to a very wide range of views from many parties and from opposite ends of the spectrum, and we have reflected carefully on the points made.”

“In reaching the decision, we have balanced these competing views with consideration for the overall LN policy, the evidence, and the officer reports. This scheme aligns with the aspirations for the scheme, which is to create routes for walking and cycling and to minimise opportunities for motorists to shortcut through residential areas. We saw active travel go up on the trial roads, and we are confident that we’ll see this trend continue as the schemes continue to bed in.”

“It is clear from the monitoring that there has been displacement onto Sion Road, but it’s also clear that the issues with congestion occur at school drop-off and pick-up. It’s good that the school has engaged with us, and we will support them to pursue schemes to encourage staff and families to use alternative modes of transport to get to school.

Given the video evidence we have seen, we are very keen to see those mitigations in place to improve the visibility of drivers exiting the school onto Sion Road.”

“Air quality monitoring showed fluctuations that were in line with regional trends and so not adversely affected by the trials.”

“There was a great effort to engage with all stakeholders, which is important and for which I am grateful. I received many messages from residents myself, which were all read and considered, before being added to officers’ records.

“I have weighed up the many strong opposing views along with the evidence and monitoring data that was submitted. This scheme has been very widely consulted on and has met the criteria for the LN programme overall. Whilst we know the recommendation to make the scheme permanent will not please everyone, the potential mitigations recommended in the SMD report, which will be subject to their own independent statutory consultation and final decision, will address some of the issues raised in objection, including the congestion on Sion Road during school term times and the noncompliance with the new turning restrictions at the junctions.”

Wards affected: Kingsmead; Lansdown
Lead officer: Cathryn Brown

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	**Cabinet**	
MEETING DATE:	**12th March 2026**	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: E 3681
TITLE:	**Heritage Services Business Plan 2026 - 2031**	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A - Heritage Services Business Plan Appendix B - Heritage Services Sustainability Action Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This is the update of the Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031. It covers the five financial years from 2026/27 to 2030/31 and has been prepared following the annual in-depth review of business activity. The revised Plan includes an analysis of the risk involved.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

2.1 Approve the Heritage Services Business Plan 2026 – 2031

3 THE REPORT

The Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031 outlines the Service's strategic vision and mission as we adapt to a challenging economic landscape and continue to deliver key Council corporate priorities.

The Service anticipates continued growth in visitors at the Roman Baths in the 2026/27 financial year. This will lead to increases in income and profit. Heritage Services is projected to deliver a financial surplus of £13.261 million in 2026/27.

This financial success is built on investment in staff and the heritage assets that we care for alongside prudent cost management and entrepreneurial approaches to pricing and revenue generation. There will be two main strands to drive footfall at the

Roman Baths. The first is to focus on attracting more international visitors through marketing and relationship building within the travel trade market. The second is to increased domestic visitation by improving the value of a visit to the Baths when compared to competing attractions. This will include considering new pricing options, introducing new programming and making the depth of experience available at the site more central to our communications.

Heritage Services will match this commercial activity with a continued commitment to delivering social value impact across our activities. These are aligned with core Council strategies including the Economic and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These activities will centre on the continued use of our dedicated learning and community engagement spaces at the Victoria Art Gallery and Clore Learning Centre as hubs for learning and participation in the heart of Bath. We will also continue to invest in and grow our successful volunteer programme.

2026/27 will also see us strengthen our approach to supporter engagement. Primarily this will be through the ongoing implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The relationships with the independent charities that support us will be deepened and we will work in partnership with them to ensure we benefit from philanthropic contributions to our activities.

Operational efficiency will be measured through benchmarking within the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and a review of the governance structure will update the operating arrangements for the Service within the Council. Focus will increasingly be placed on environmental sustainability, and this report is accompanied by the Service's first ever Environmental Action Plan. As always, the Service will focus on the safety, security and conservation of the buildings and collections in our care. This was demonstrated in 2025 when a proportion of the Bath Record Office collection was re-located to more suitable storage. In 2026 we will move the majority of our reserve collections associated with the Roman Baths to a more suitable location also.

The relocation of the Fashion Museum to the Old Post Office remains the Service's flagship capital project. The Museum's departure from Bath's historic Assembly Rooms in 2022 created a rare opportunity to establish a bold, pioneering museum that reflects the significance of one of the world's leading fashion collections. This development exemplifies the Service's priorities—audience engagement, research excellence, collections care, social value, and financial sustainability. In 2026, the project will focus on securing substantial funding, alongside obtaining planning permission and listed building consent.

The Service's current strategy period ends in 2027. Cast in 2022 in the immediate post-covid world much has now changed. As such, the Service will begin to consider its strategy for the period 2028 – 2033 in the 2026/27 financial year. This will take into account the changing context that the Service operates in and look forward to the opening of the Fashion Museum in 2030.

We are proud to be a Service that is part of Bath and North East Somerset Council and everything we do is dedicated to delivering on the purpose, principles, commitments and priorities of the Council. This is evident throughout the content of this plan.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 N/A

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The plan is deliverable within current resource limits. The outer years of the plan will be reviewed year on year to assess any foreseeable resource implication.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The plans for the Service to make meaningful progress to be more Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive are included in the Services' EDI strategy.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The plans for the Service to make meaningful progress towards net 0 are included in the Business Plan

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Business Plan has been reviewed and approved at both the Council's Corporate Management Team and Informal Cabinet. It has also been to the Policy Development Scrutiny panel.

Contact person	Robert Campbell – Head of Culture and Heritage Tel: +44(0)7815 018899
Background papers	Heritage Services Strategy
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Heritage Services Business Plan 2026–2031

Contents

Appendices

1. Summary

The Heritage Services Business Plan 2026-2031 outlines the Service's strategic vision and mission as we adapt to a challenging economic landscape and continue to deliver key Council corporate priorities.

The Service anticipates continued growth in visitors at the Roman Baths in the 2026/27 financial year. This will lead to increases in income and profit. Heritage Services is projected to deliver a financial surplus of £13.261 million in 2026/27.

This financial success is built on investment in staff and the heritage assets that we care for alongside prudent cost management and entrepreneurial approaches to pricing and revenue generation. There will be two main strands to drive footfall at the Roman Baths. The first is to focus on attracting more international visitors through marketing and relationship building within the travel trade market. The second is to increased domestic visitation by improving the value of a visit to the Baths when compared to competing attractions. This will include considering new pricing options, introducing new programming and making the depth of experience available at the site more central to our communications.

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2. Service Vision and Mission

2.1. Bath and North East Somerset Corporate Strategy

Heritage Services is dedicated to the delivery of Council Corporate priorities via the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage of Bath and North East Somerset. Through strategic investments, innovative initiatives, and a commitment to sustainability, we aim to deliver exceptional visitor experiences and contribute to the region's economic and social prosperity.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) has one overriding purpose – to improve people's lives.

The Corporate Strategy has nine priorities for the period 2023-2027. Heritages Services feels that it can contribute significantly to 7 of these through its current and future activities:

- Clean, safe and vibrant neighbourhoods - working with local communities to promote civic pride and preventative approaches
- Support for vulnerable adults and children – securing safe, effective services that meet the needs of our changing population
- Delivering for our children and young people – working with our partners to narrow the early years attainment gap
- Healthy lives and places – working with health and other partners to tackle inequalities, promote healthy places, and support people to live healthier lives
- Good jobs - aiming to increase the median wage in a regenerative economy
- Skills to thrive - an inclusive economy where prosperity is shared
- Cultural life - valuing and developing its contribution to Bath and North East Somerset.

To this end we will be aligning a lot of the work we undertake against key Council strategies. Primarily the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Economic Strategy with the data contained with the Strategic Evidence Base underpinning how we direct many of our activities. With the emergence of the West of England Combined Authority's Growth Strategy we will also begin to align our operations with the outcomes envisaged for the region as a whole. Finally, 2026 will also see the adoption of the Council's Cultural Development Plan in which the work of Heritage Services is paramount.

2.2. Vision

A document outlining the Service's strategy 2022 – 2027 can be found here.

The Service's vision is to: **Learn from the past, understand the present, shape the future**

There are three over-arching aims to achieve between now and 2030:

- Return the Service to pre-COVID profitability;
- Move the Fashion Museum
- Achieve Net Zero.

2.3. Mission

The Service's Mission is to:

- Create memorable, relevant and emotionally charged experiences for local, national and international audiences;
- Conserve the monument, buildings and collections in our care;
- Be supporter centric – building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with people who engage with us;
- Act commercially to generate significant income from our activities and work to contribute to the wider economic prosperity of the region;
- Offer an unparalleled customer experience for everyone;
- Be a leader in sustainable and responsible practice in the Museums, Heritage and Archive sector.

2.4. Strategic Priorities

The Service has six strategic priorities which it will deliver on over the course of the Plan:

1. To provide maximum access to our buildings, monuments and collection to as wide an audience as possible to facilitate learning, understanding and emotional connection;
2. To be a supporter focussed organisation;
3. To maximise income;
4. To operate efficiently and effectively as an organisation;
5. To bring benefit to Bath, the South-West and the UK;
6. To act as an environmentally sustainable and responsible organisation in everything we do.

3. Business Strategy

3.1. Performance Overview

Roman Baths

Visitor numbers at the Roman Baths have been lower than budgeted in 2025/26. The Service set a budget for 10% growth in visitors during this financial year. Across the year there has been minimal growth with overall visitor numbers down 2% financial year-to-date (end of December 2025). This is the continuation of a trend experienced in the second half 24/25 and the Service has proactively responded with initiatives such as enhanced school-holiday experiences and the successful programming over July and August as part of the Summer lates programme.

The lower than budgeted footfall at the Roman Baths has resulted in a lower than budgeted admission income. It should also be noted that admission income is up 6% on 24/25 at the Roman Baths, despite the reduced visitor numbers. This is due to the increases in prices made possible by detailed planning work in 24/25 and the Service is on-track to return it's largest ever surplus to the Council of £11.8million. The Service has responded pro-actively with additional income activities and prudent cost control which has mitigated over £700k of the shortfall in projected income.

Figure 1 below shows footfall relative to budget, pre-pandemic and prior year. At Q3 the forecast for visitors in 2025/26 has reduced from a budget of 1,100,000 to 972,000.

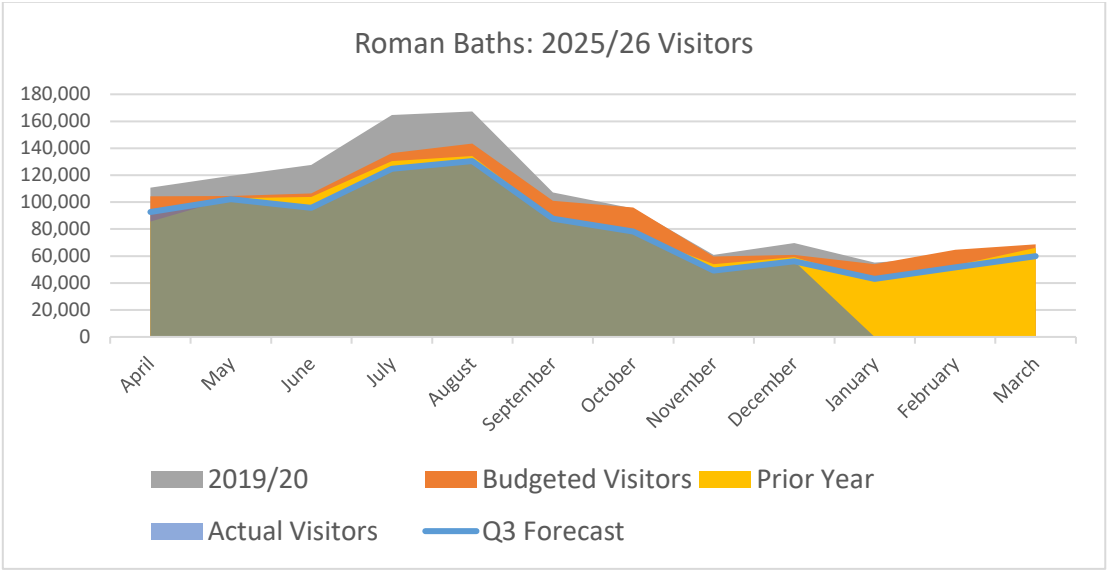


Figure 1: 25/26 Financial Year Roman Baths visitor numbers

The chart below provides a longer-term view of the pandemic's impact and recovery, shown alongside the visitors to Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) funded museums (chosen as comparators due to their high visitor numbers, national significance and large tourist markets and including: the British Museum, Science Museum, V&A, Natural History Museum and Tate).

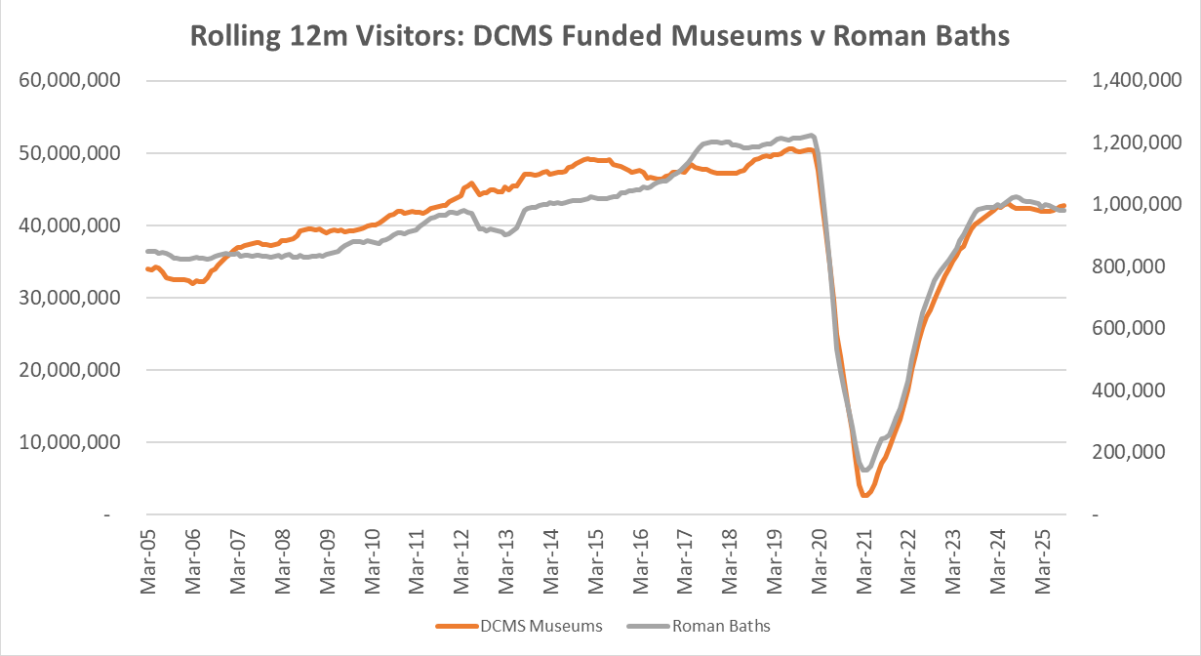


Figure 2: Rolling 12 month DCMS funded museum and Roman Baths visitor numbers

Figure 2 shows that over the 12 months to September 2025, the DCMS funded museums have seen a small (1.5% growth in visitors), whereas the Roman Baths has seen a reduction as set out above. It should be noted that DCMS funded museums are largely free to enter, attracting predominantly domestic audiences, which may help to stabilise their visitor numbers, particularly during a period of prolonged cost of living pressures when paid for attractions such as the Roman Baths can be seen as discretionary spending which can be constrained.1

[1] More broadly, the chart sets some of the longer-term context for the Roman Baths, in the build up to COVID. The Brexit referendum (and weakening of GBP) drove a steady increase of visitors to both sets of attractions. The impact of terror attacks in 2017, saw a switch out of London, this chart shows that switch very clearly in May – Aug 2017. Then COVID, which came just after the Roman Baths' busiest ever year. The fuller impacts of the pandemic have been set out in previous versions of the Plan and are not repeated here.

The DCMS chart in figure 2, demonstrates that the slowdown in Roman Bath's COVID recovery from the middle of 2023 is mirrored across the sector, with sites seeing declining visitor numbers since summer 2024. Across the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) sites there is regional disparity with London, the South-East, East of England and Scotland reporting growth in the calendar year, whereas Wales, Northern Ireland, the North West and South West of England all recording a decline in visitors.

There are a range of factors depressing the inbound tourist market. These include:

- The strengthening of GBP against both USD and EUR, making overseas holidays less affordable for US and European travellers. International inbound travel only grew by 0.6%.
- Global political instability discouraging travel, there have been two active conflicts in Europe.
- Economic and political factors discouraging a recovery of the mainland Chinese market (e.g. pre-covid mandarin speakers at the Roman Baths were 120k per year, in 2025 it was less than half this figure).
- Real and perceived difficulties for long-haul visitors in including the UK as part of their visit to Europe including new visa rules
- There has been a consistent decline in the average length of stay for inbound visitors to the UK. As a result, international tourists can limit their itineraries to major destinations such as London and Edinburgh, leading to a continued concentration of economic benefits in these established "honeypot" locations
- US travellers now account for a much larger share of inbound spend than before the pandemic—rising from 16% in 2019 to 28% in 2024. Given the Roman Baths' global appeal, this highlights the challenges of missing key visitor segments that previously contributed to performance, created by the slower or incomplete return of other international markets compared with 2019.

In terms of domestic audiences, factors influencing visits have included:

- Domestic audiences, who could afford to, have opted for more overseas holidays driven by poor weather across 2023 and 2024. The strengthening of GBP against both USD and EUR, makes it more affordable for British people to travel to these locations. In 2025 domestic outbound travel grew by 7.2%.
- Cost of living has meant that many domestic visitors are choosing to take fewer days out and prioritising free visitor attractions, as noted above.

- The sites that have seen growth this year have programmed to add to their normal offer. This proved successful during the Summer Lates music programme at the Baths and is something which will be expanding in 2026.

Retail sales have mirrored the decline in visitors as the cost of living impacted on visitor's desire to spend. Retail sales have been down 3% during the 25/26 financial year to date compared to 24/25. Sales in the Pump Room has been solid across the financial year to date with spend per diner up over 8%.

Visitor Enjoyment scores at the Roman Baths have exceeded target and, in the most recent mystery visit, the Roman Baths scored 99%, one of the top scores for all participating attractions in 2025. While overall scores remain strong, they are slightly lower than in 2024/25.

This is partly due to our more commercial pricing approach: the average admission price has risen by 8%. Although enjoyment scores confirm that the quality of the experience remains high, the price increase has naturally influenced the value for money rating.

It is worth noting that scores in the final quarter are typically higher, as this period benefits from lower prices and quieter visitor numbers. We therefore expect overall scores to improve by yearend.

	Apr-Nov 2025	Apr-Nov 2024	TARGET
Visitor Enjoyment	8.68	8.80	8.60
Value for Money	7.84	8.00	8.00
Net Promoter Score	+57	+62	+60

Figure 3: Roman Baths Visitor Experience Scores 2025/26 v 2024/25

In 2025, 1,570 people were directly engaged through targeted community activities, up from 1,012 in 2024—a 55% increase. The programme prioritised building and sustaining meaningful relationships and initiatives. The Roman Baths Youth Forum grew with new members, while Minerva Mondays (a monthly wellbeing group) expanded. Key partnerships continued with Bath Carers Centre, local universities, and the Council's Resettlement Team. New collaborations included Blind Veterans UK, now a valued partner returning in 2026. Health and wellbeing initiatives reached a broader audience via social prescribing and ongoing support for internal Council services. Our inclusion in the Wellbeing Courses Working Group reflects strong ties with these teams.

The Service launched Archaeology Adventures, a paid family activity in the Investigation Zone, which has become a core part of our holiday offer. Our Free School Meal initiative broadened access and attracted more schools that might not have otherwise visited, strengthening our educational outreach. We renewed the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, maintaining national recognition for quality and safety. Additionally, we delivered specialist day schools, including *Latin for Beginners* and *The Latin Express.*

World Heritage Centre

The World Heritage Centre is expecting to welcome around 90,000 visitors in 25/26. The Centre recently won Gold for Visitor Information Service of the Year at the Bristol Bath and Somerset Tourism awards.

Victoria Art Gallery

The Victoria Art Gallery celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2025. The Service was able to mark this milestone with the re-opening of the Upper Gallery following an extensive investment in repairs to the historic roof. The Council's investment in these repairs demonstrated the organisational commitment to publicly available culture for all. Visitors to the Upper Gallery have been ahead of budget each month since it's reopening in May, demonstrating the popularity of this space, particularly with local audiences. Overall, the Gallery has welcomed 66,122 visitors in the financial year-to-date (end of December 2025), an increase of 57% on last year, as demonstrated in the chart in figure 4.

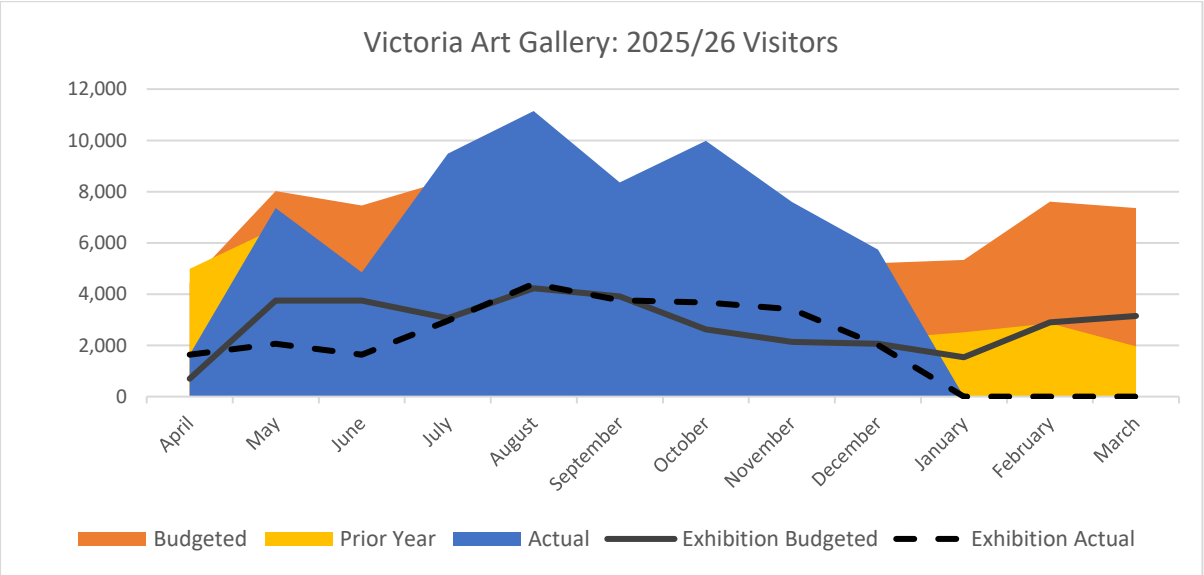


Figure 4: 2025/26 Victoria Art Gallery Visitor Numbers

The Service was also able to open ‘the Modelling Room’. This space, dedicated to learning and engagement activities has the potential to be transformational for the audiences and relevancy of the institution. It was funded almost entirely by third party funds from the Friends of Victoria Art Gallery and an individual donor.

Fashion Museum

Whilst the Fashion Museum is now closed, we have continued to loan objects from the collection to major fashion exhibitions across the world. In 2025 over 550,000 people saw Fashion Collection objects across the UK and around the world. Items from the Council’s internationally significant collection were loaned to several prestigious exhibitions across Europe and the UK. These included:

- **Petit Palais & Palais Galliera, Paris, France**
  Two couture dresses by the House of Worth featured prominently in *Worth, Inventing Haute Couture*. These garments, created around 1903 for Empress Eugénie and Mary Curzon, exemplify the origins of haute couture and were displayed until September 2025.
- **National Galleries of Scotland: Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh**
  A pair of elaborately embroidered gloves once owned by King James I and a 17th-century embroidered waistcoat appeared in *The World of King James VI & I* (April–September 2025).
- **The Garden Museum, London**
  Cecil Beaton’s Garden Party (May–September 2025) included a hat worn by Beaton and a silk dress featuring his hand-painted ivy-leaf design.
- **Polesden Lacey, National Trust, Surrey**
  Dress to Impress (May–November 2025) showcased an 18th-century blue silk waistcoat with military-style gold embroidery from the Bath collection.

These loans demonstrate the breadth of the Fashion Museum Bath’s holdings—from early 17th-century accessories to early 20th-century haute couture—and their continued cultural impact during the museum’s transition to its new home in Bath.

Over 2025 the Fashion Museum Bath project has made excellent progress. The start of the financial year was marked by the announcement that the project was successful in it’s application for development phase funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The Lottery contribution of £768k was joined by a contribution from B&NES of £1,359,231

which allowed the project to progress through RIBA Stage 3. The project passed its NLHF development phase review in November 2025 and an internal review of the RIBA 3 design phase. Part of this work involved a consultation exercise across BANES, with over 4,500 residents consulted on the proposals for the new Museum and associated public realm works.

The project has maintained its strong focus on sustainability, operational efficiency, and robust engagement with communities across BANES. The project remains ambitious in its vision, with a clear path to opening in Winter 2030, subject to continued funding success and effective risk management.

Systems Infrastructure

In the 2025/26 financial year, Heritage Services prioritised strategic investment in core systems to enhance operational efficiency and customer engagement. This included the implementation of Phase 1 of the new ticketing system, Expian, implementing Futura to optimise point of sale and back of house retail processes, and the procurement of Good CRM to strengthen marketing automation and relationship management. These investments will support streamlined workflows, and enhanced visitor communications, aligning with our long-term digital transformation objectives. By modernising these platforms, we will deliver a more personalised experience for customers, improved reporting capabilities, and ensured scalability to meet future service demands across all our sites. These system changes will also realise productivity and resource efficiencies for the Service.

3.2. Future targets

The financial summary and key future targets are set out in appendix 1 and 2 respectively, alongside the prior year actuals and current year forecast. Figure 4 below shows the expected recovery of both income and profit.

	2024/25 (actual)	2025/26 (Q3 f'cast)	2026/27 (proposed)	2027/28 (proposed)	2028/29 (proposed)	2029/30 (proposed)	2030/31 (proposed)
External turnover (£000)	26,008	27,369	29,441	30,498	31,040	31,802	32,735
Net Profit (£000)	**11,648**	**11,754**	**13,261**	**13,515**	**13,525**	**13,508**	**13,517**

Profit as a % of income	44.7%	43.0%	45%	44.3%	43.6%	42.5%	41.3%

Figure 5: Heritage Services income and profit

The Plan projects growth in visitor numbers and visitor-driven income from the current performance outlined above. We anticipate visitor numbers of 1,005,000 at the Roman Baths in 26/27 which will be a 3.4% increase on the projected visitor numbers in 25/26. It is noted that this growth is primarily related to the two Easter weekends in the 26/27 financial year (due to an early Easter in March 2027) and the Service feels it is prudent to model minimal year-on-year growth. In effect, the strategies to encourage visitation outlined in section 3.3.3 will stop the trend of footfall decline seen across the 24/25 and 25/26 financial years.

The actual visitor figures outlined in section 3.1. confirm that the period of rapid growth driven by the COVID recovery has concluded. As noted in the 25/26 iteration of the Business Plan, we have used the current trend to update long-term projections for visitor numbers and therefore income in future years. As noted in section 3.3.3. we will employ a number of strategies to drive additional visitation to the Roman Baths, but we will not have an indication as to their efficacy in slowing or reversing market trends until they are put into place.

The outermost year of the plan has been modelled as flat growth as we are not yet in a position to confirm the impact of the Fashion Museum on the overall cost-base and income projections for the Service. At 5 years out from opening of the new facility this is understandable and it is our expectation that we will be able to confirm this in the next iteration of the Business plan.

The financial targets for the Service absorb the recent increases in pay created as part of the Being our Best Programme and further anticipated pay awards to be agreed by the Council for each year of the plan, as well as other inflation pressures on the cost base. With the future anticipated rises to the living wage, pay is expected to be the biggest cost pressure facing the Service. Another notable cost increase is related to the requirement to store the Council's reserve collections in commercial storage the costs of which have been realised partly in 25/26 and will be fully realised in 26/27.

3.3. Action Against Strategic Priorities

3.3.1. To provide maximum access to our buildings, monuments and collections to as wide an audience as possible to facilitate learning, understanding and emotional connection

The Service will continue to offer free admission to schools where 30% of pupils receive free school meals. The Service will introduce a £1 ticket for those in receipt of Universal Credit and will continue to provide tickets through Tickets for Good. These measures are designed to attract new audiences, who we have not traditionally welcomed to our site, from outside of the local authority area. This activity, the provision of access to culture to those for whom price represents a significant barrier to entry, aligns with the priorities of national funding bodies such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and independent trusts and foundations. It also offers a strong connection to the West of England Combined Authority's cultural plan. The financial impact of these activities will be very limited.

In 2025, the Service continued to advance research at the Roman Baths, with ongoing work on the human skeletal material and the AHRC-funded PhD led by Edward Knowles in partnership with the Universities of Exeter and Reading. This research is deepening our understanding of the site and its collections. Looking ahead, the Service will support the launch of the "Voices of Britain under and after Rome" project in October 2026, following a successful AHRC funding application for £1.4m. As a key partner, the Roman Baths will collaborate with Professor Alex Mullen's team to reassess the curse tablet collection using advanced imaging and interdisciplinary approaches, further enhancing the reinterpretation of the Roman Baths.

In 2026, the community engagement programme will continue to maintain and create sustainable relationships and activities. This includes the refugee programme, Roman Baths Youth Forum, partnerships with the Carers Centre and Headway, as well as other local community groups and charities. There is a desire to expand this to include Bath Mencap and other organisations as part of the site's Audience Development Plan. The Service will be applying to become a Museum of Sanctuary this year. Health and wellbeing activities will be developed further, reaching a wider audience through social prescription, and continuing the support of internal B&NES services such as Public Health and Children's Services.

Although the Fashion Museum is without a physical location during this period of capital development, work is underway to ensure the Collection is accessible to the public. Collection visits, an ambitious loans programme as well as workshops and events will ensure that Fashion Museum Bath is never far from people's minds. *Explore the Collection* is a digital innovation project which will launch in early 2026, part-funded by Arts Council England. The first stage will focus on the Dress of the Year Collection combining collection data with multimedia and rich narrative-based content revealing the extraordinary stories that each object can tell. This project will be delivered with B&NES Library Services and will be co-created with local young people in Bath and North East Somerset.

Our ambitious National Lottery Heritage Fund Activity Plan has been developed with a range of partners including Bath College, Youth Connect South West and London School of Architecture. The plan will ensure we can engage with new and underrepresented audiences across B&NES using our collection as the starting point. In order to deliver this, in 2026 we will be recruiting two new FMB team members – a Learning & Engagement Coordinator for Young People and a Learning and Engagement Social Prescribing Officer (Public Health). We will also be growing our pool of volunteers and freelance artists/designers/creative practitioners to help deliver a dynamic, high-quality programme. Building on the success of our current outreach resource Fashion Unpacked – the 'Trunk' we are working on the next phase of our outreach project 'Trunk Show'; with the second in a series of trunks developed and ready for a programme of community outreach starting in autumn 2026.

A programme of temporary exhibitions will continue to be delivered at the Victoria Art Gallery.

- **Poster Power:** 23 January – 10 May 2026
- **Norman Ackroyd: Through the Years:** 22 May – 6 September 2026
- **Bath Society of Artists 121st Annual Open Exhibition:** 19 September – 7 November 2026
- **The World of the Snowman:** 20th November 2026 – 28th February 2027

We will also review the forward plan for the Gallery in 26/27 allowing us to confirm the strategic position of the Gallery and the Council's civic art collection within the cultural landscape of BANES.

Bath Record Office will continue with its audience development plan so that the archives and local studies collections can reach wider and more diverse audiences. One of the main

areas of activity is the 60th anniversary of the archives service in 2027 to include a week-long exhibition, a series of talks, and a touring display around local libraries. Other activities will include temporary displays in the Guildhall, work placement opportunities for students, loans to other museums and galleries and a more pro-active collecting strategy to ensure the collections' ongoing relevance. The service will also benefit from the NLHF funded Sounds of the South West project which will enable the team to deliver engagement and outreach events based on its digitised audio collections across 2026-2028.

3.3.2. To be a supporter focussed organisation

Having procured and implemented and new Visitor Management System in 2025 further phases of this work will continue with a view to integrating it with the recently procured Customer Relationship Management System. This will give the Service the ability to systematically manage and analyse visitor data, providing valuable insights into their preferences, behaviours, and engagement patterns. Our marketing approach will evolve to tailor our offerings and communications to meet the specific needs and interests of our various audience segments.

We will continue to work closely with the Roman Baths Foundation (following the influx of new trustees), the Fashion Museum Foundation (as the project to develop the new museum gathers pace) and the Friends of Victoria Art Gallery (as the forward plan for the Gallery is developed) to increase the amount and range of support for our sites and collections.

At the end of 2025 over 60,000 BANES residents had received Discovery Cards following the scheme's relaunch in 2022. In the 26/27 financial year the service will explore different approaches to the Discovery Card scheme to ensure it is delivering the most value and impact to those who need it most whilst remaining a prudent financial investment by the Council.

3.3.3. To Maximise Income

Heritage Services will seek to maximise income generating opportunities across its areas of operation.

Roman Baths

- **Additional visitors.** The Service is budgeting for 1.005million visitors in 2026/27, an increase of around 33,000 from the forecast footfall in 2025/26.

- **Ticket Price.** Price increases planned for 2026 will raise the price for both individuals and groups at all points during the year.
- **Price structure changes.** Work will be undertaken on the potential to offer more value-led products that incentivise those who have not previously chosen to visit and/or repeat their visit to the site.
- **Additional product offering.** Following the appointment of a cultural programmes manager in early 2026, a wider range of activations will be delivered to increase the value offer available to visitors and encourage new and repeat visits.
- **Additional Marketing Resource:** We have budgeted to increase the marketing resource available to the Service both in terms of staffing and media buying to drive additional visitation.
- **Travel Trade:** We have changed the responsibilities of an existing role, made possible by changes to the Council's telephony system, to focus more on building relationships with, and marketing to, the travel trade in order to drive more inbound tourists to the Roman Baths.

Victoria Art Gallery

- Deliver a very appealing, family-friendly exhibition, 'The world of the snowman', in winter 2026.
- Use the capabilities of the new Visitor Management System to explore cross site promotion between the Roman Baths and the Gallery to try and drive more visitors from the Baths to the Gallery.

Cross Service

- We will continue to deliver our commercial event programme working internally and with external local festival organisations to deliver revenue through ticketed events. The programme will reflect key local and national events and anniversaries and will include dinners, balls, silent discos, murder mystery evenings and Christmas party nights
- Continue to maximise revenue through catering concession at the Pump Room and Roman Baths and delivering a high-quality experience for all external clients who hire the Council's heritage venues and parks for private events.

3.3.4. To operate efficiently and effectively as an organisation

Following consideration of the relationship between Heritage Services and the Council over 2025, in 2026 we will consider how to improve the efficacy of the Heritage Advisory Board. This may include moving the Board to a shape and function more in-line with a traditional charity board – starting with an independent chair. The outcome envisaged is more constructive challenge to the Service on the specifics of our operations whilst also providing the Council with independent and expert quality assurance of the Service's activities.

The Service will also continue to benchmark its performance within ALVA and the Association of Cultural Enterprises (ACE) to provide assurance to the Council that the Service is delivering value for money. We will also continue with our other Visitor Experience assurance activities including VAQAS, mystery shopper and post visit surveys.

In 2026 the Service will continue to review the way in which we approach our work and realise efficiencies available to us in order to reduce our cost base where possible. This will include a review of our Operations and Facilities teams in-line with 'Being our Best' principals. Alongside this, the Service will engage in the Council's Corporate Landlord project, ensuring that the Council realises its ambition for a central overview of its estate, exploring opportunities for efficiency in the delivery of maintenance and compliance activity, whilst safeguarding the Service's ability to be agile and responsive in the management of its built assets and infrastructure.

The Collections Care and Documentation programme at the Roman Baths in 2026 focuses on improving storage, documentation and access across the collections. Key work includes the Culverhay store move, expanding public access and research use of Feeder Road, and supporting renewed interest in Keynsham archaeology through displays and archive work. As always, the Service will take an approach of continuous improvement to it's collection manager with ongoing work in this area. Public-facing activity continues through display refreshes, new exhibition plans to 2027, the Spa Project, and collaborative initiatives such as the Chew Valley Hoard, alongside hosting student placements.

Conservation work at the Roman Baths in 2026 aims to establish clear baselines for the condition of key monument spaces, including observation and cleaning work in the West and East Baths, and setting priorities for the Temple Precinct. Strategic work includes feasibility planning for a 3D model of the Great Bath, updating the Conservation Action Plan, and

formalising maintenance, access and recording procedures. Conservation practice will be strengthened through staff and contractor training, improved data capture, and a cross-organisational Environmental Monitoring and Archaeological Conservation group. Environmental monitoring, flood preparedness, and conservation planning for the Minerva anniversary also feature, alongside object-based projects such as work on Keynsham material and developing a fundraising and treatment plan for the Tompion clock.

Bath Record Office will continue to develop the paper conservator role by building relationships with local heritage organisations and groups which require conservation support and thus expand this income stream. The conservator will also support other teams within Heritage Services and take on volunteers and student placements. Volunteers will continue to support a variety of collections care activities such as repackaging, cleaning, and digitisation. Alongside this work continues to transfer priority digital records into the Preservica digital preservation system to ensure long-term access.

The Service will continue to implement its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, via the approved action plan. In 2025, all permanent employees received EDI training and the EDI working group terms of reference were reviewed. 2026 will see the implementation of the outcomes agreed as part of a second round of funding for EDI activity made available from Arts Council England via Museum Development South West. Looking ahead to 2026/27, the EDI working group will focus on increasing visibility and communication across the organisation, regularly reviewing and updating training needs, and ensuring measurable progress through clear action planning and reporting. The group will also prioritise creating safe spaces for feedback, broadening representation, and embedding EDI values into all aspects of service delivery and narrative development, ensuring our sites and collections present a fully inclusive view of the past, based on the most up-to-date research.

As in previous plans, an integral part of the strategy going forward will be ongoing investment in the Service workforce. We will continue to build an even stronger performance culture with staff engagement, wellbeing and development at its heart. This will include engaging with the new Council management training resource to develop management capability and consistency across the organisation. The Service will continue to evaluate its staffing complement and structures to ensure that it is able to deliver on the Strategic Priorities outlined in this document.

26/27 will see a review and re-casting of the Service's proposition for the Roman Baths. This will be an important pre-cursor to the wider Strategy re-casting envisaged for 2027. This work will consider the variety of activity that occurs across the Roman Baths and Pump Rooms and endeavour to bring this together under a more unified, cross-service set of organising thoughts that will sharpen the focus and efficacy of the Service's activities at our key property.

3.3.5 To bring benefit to B&NES, the South West and the UK

Heritage Services will use its platform and influence to:

- Represent B&NES on the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Cultural Compact to deliver on the WECA cultural strategy;

- Represent B&NES as an operational board member of Visit West and work with Visit West to deliver the destination management plan for the region;

- Continue to be a voice in the sector through membership of the Executive Board od the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association

- Represent The Roman Baths and Pump Room as a board member for the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions;

- Work with key services across the Council to deliver B&NES's corporate strategy. By working in partnership Heritage Services can play a pivotal role in the city's economic, cultural and social future, creating increased access to some of the world's great cultural assets. It will also deliver regeneration, economic, skills, placemaking, health and wellbeing benefits across the wider region. These benefits will most effectively be realised by the execution of the Community Engagement Strategies for the Roman Baths, Fashion Museum Bath project and work of the Victoria Art Gallery and Bath Record Office Teams.

- Continue to provide opportunities for volunteering throughout the Service. Through these opportunities support and grow our volunteer cohort that support the Service deliver its objectives and enhance community wellbeing. Volunteering offers numerous benefits, including improved physical and mental health, reduced stress, and a sense of purpose. By fostering social connections and skill development,

Heritage Service contributes to the wider Council's prevention objectives, promoting healthier, more resilient communities.

3.3.6 To act as an environmentally sustainable and responsible organisation in everything we do

In the last 12 months, the service has been working on refining and delivering a 3-year environmental action plan which covers 4 key goals. This plan is included as an appendix to this document. To build on works started in 2025, in 2026 the priority workstreams are as follows:

1. **Decarbonising operations**
    a. **Improve Building Efficiency** – optimise heating systems (radiators, heat pumps), feasibility of expanding existing heat pump system to cover more square-meters in the Roman Baths
    b. **Optimise Controls** – upgrade and fine-tune BMS for heating, air conditioning (AC), and other equipment to maximise energy performance across the service
    c. **Upgrade Equipment & Lighting** – continue rolling out efficient lighting upgrades to LEDs where possible, ensure AC unit and asset replacements are energy efficient
    d. **Reduce Operational Energy Use** – pilot project focussing on lowering out-of-hours energy consumption and collaborate with catering to cut energy demand.
    e. **Advance Sustainability** – subject to feasibility and planning, install on-site renewable electricity (solar PV) on the roof of the Clore Learning Centre.

2. **Improve sustainability data accuracy**
    a. **Expand carbon footprint** scope with emissions from digital and capital projects
    b. **Improve accuracy of visitor travel data** through continued partnerships within the sector, and better data from updated visitor management systems

3. **Empower and engage visitors, employees and suppliers**
    a. **Supplier Engagement & Data Collection** – continue to gather annual data from suppliers, with at least 60% of spend to have a carbon footprint in place
    b. **Collaborative Partnerships** – work with other museums and the Council to share resources, host workshops, and drive consistent practise and methodology across the sector.

c. **Retail Products** – apply RAG ratings and implement selection criteria for all retail product purchases. Work with Bath Uni work placement to map and plan for potential trade-offs between products & sustainability criteria
d. **Training & Awareness** – continue to deliver carbon literacy training to all permanent staff. Work with the curatorial team to establish a programme of activity that positively influences visitor behaviour.
e. **Systems & Integration** – continue to work on implementing an integrated Park and Ride ticket for visitors, allowing them to commit to a more sustainable travel option at their point of purchase.

4. **Lead by example in the sector**
   a. **Achieve Recognition for Sustainability** – in 2025 the Victoria Art Gallery became a Gallery Climate Coalition member. In 2026 we will consider additional external accreditations e.g. Green Tourism, or Carbon Literate Organisations
   b. **Collaborate & Lead** – lead peer learning groups with other museums/attractions
   c. **Advocate & Educate** – Speak at external events and communicate environmental impact through collections, tours and storytelling.
   d. **Strengthen Governance & Planning** – Set up reporting structures, publish adaptation plans, and align risks across all heritage sites.
   e. **Ensure Climate Resilience** – review climate risk register quarterly, and build climate adaptation plan to ensure all sites are well adapted to changes in our climate

3.4. Fashion Museum Bath

3.4.1. Project overview

The Service is progressing with the plan to establish a new Fashion Museum in Bath City Centre, in the Grade II listed Old Post Office. The project will:

- Create the only museum in the UK dedicated to fashion heritage
- Reinvigorate the Fashion Museum Collection as a relevant and vital resource for Bath and North East Somerset residents as well as domestic and international audiences.
- Create dynamic social and civic spaces accessible to all.

- Deliver a benchmark standard of environmental and economic sustainability in its delivery and impact.
- Create a transformational museum which is an agent of societal change – locally, regionally and nationally.

The project aligns with the Council's corporate vision to 'improve people's lives and its strategic priority to create a vibrant cultural life in BANES. It is a key component in the Council's future Economic Strategy and its Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Fashion Museum will play a pivotal role in the economic, cultural, and social future of the city, preserving and creating increased access to one of the world's great museum collections as well as delivering regeneration, economic, skills, placemaking, and wellbeing benefits across Bath and North East Somerset and the wider region.

Fashion Museum Bath is an anchor element of the Milsom Quarter Masterplan. It will help 'reimagine the high street' in the city centre encouraging commercial tenants and residents to move there and making the area a great place to live, work and socialise.

The project is also a key component of the West of England Combined Authority's Growth Plan.

The Museum

The Council has acquired the Old Post Office building within the Milsom Quarter of the city. This will be the new home of the Fashion Museum with flexible exhibition spaces to display more of the collection than ever before. Dedicated spaces for learning and engagement, integrated café and retail areas will provide a shared and welcoming social space in the city centre. The Museum will also be an exemplar of sustainable retro-fit. The project will bring back to life a renovated heritage asset, creating a permanent home for this internationally significant collection.

In 2025 further design work was undertaken and RIBA III detailed design completed. We anticipate the museum to open in 2030 with construction beginning on site in 2027. An economic impact appraisal has been conducted with a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) which falls into the 'high' value for money category as set out in the MHCLG Appraisal Guide 2023[2].

[2] h□ps://www.gov.uk/government/publica□ons/dluhc-appraisal-guide/dluhc-appraisal-guide

Social Value

The aim is for the Museum is for inclusive cultural engagement – with programming and activities targeted at communities across BANES. Fashion Museum Bath has developed an Activity Plan which aligns with core Council policy. This sets the audience engagement priorities and will provide cultural, educational, health and wellbeing, skills and career development opportunities for residents, particularly those experiencing socio-economic or health inequalities, with supporting digital activity to engage audiences and build community.

The target audiences for the Fashion Museum Bath Community Engagement Programme are:

- People living with health issues in BANES
- Families with young children, in particular those facing socio-economic inequalities and poverty
- Vulnerable young people in care, those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- BANES secondary school students and teachers

The project will impact the local community by:

- Being a welcoming and inclusive space for community participation and co-creation with a strong programme of events and activities that will generate a sense of belonging and civic pride.
- Welcome thousands of schoolchildren per year by providing a new cultural destination for school visits in Bath.
- Partner with Bath Spa University, Bath College and other educational institutions to develop skills and training programmes for improving pathways into the fashion industry and wider creative industries.
- Offering new apprenticeship opportunities which support upskilling and reskilling.
- Providing a range of volunteer opportunities that will suit a broad audience.
- Introducing new audiences to cultural experiences through the universally fascinating topic of fashion.
- Offering creative activities that support health and wellbeing.
- Provide free entry to B&NES residents and schools so there is universal access to these benefits.

3.4.2. Interim storage

Whilst a new permanent home is created the collection is housed at Dents glovemakers, one of the UK's leading heritage fashion brands. The costs associated with this storage are built into the Plan.

3.4.3. Project costing and overview

A provisional capital budget was added to the capital programme for the financial years 2025/26 to 2029/30 for Fashion Museum Renovation. The funding plan for the project is as follows:

- The Old Post Office site was acquired in 2021/22. This was funded via a repayable capital grant from the West of England Combined Authority Revolving Infrastructure Fund which is planned to be repaid from capital receipts from disposal of Corporate property assets.

- The total provisional capital budget is envisaged to be drawn from service supported borrowing funded from net admissions income, Corporate Supported Borrowing representing Council support and a fund-raising target including future grant applications.

- The Council will make a proportion of this funding available so that RIBA IV design work can continue in 26/27.

- A fundraising campaign will contribute to the remaining project costs. This will include grant applications and third-party contributions.

- A planning application was submitted in January 2026 with determination expected in May 2026.

- RIBA IV (technical design) will commence in August 2026.

4. Risk

The Services' strong recovery from the COVID 19 pandemic has plateaued, in line with the rest of the sector, over the last 12 months. Through entrepreneurial approaches to pricing, development of additional revenue streams and prudent cost management, the Service has continued to increase profitability and is forecasting to deliver growth in surplus from a broadly flat visitor base.

Non-English use of the audio-guide remains 38% below 2019 level, with Mandarin and Japanese 54% and 58% down respectively. This highlights the extent to which the recovery of the Asian market is less established and therefore carries more risk. The strengthening of Sterling against key currencies for inbound tourism presents a risk to the delivery of inbound tourism. The risk associated with the GBP:EUR exchange rate is twofold, as well as dampening demand for inbound tourism it makes overseas holidays more affordable for a domestic market. This, coupled with the inflationary economic pressures, presents a risk to the supply of domestic tourists in 2025; specifically, that those who can afford to may chose to holiday abroad and those remaining in the UK may not be able to afford leisure spending at the same level.

The Plan assumes that there will be no new adverse impact caused by security, economic or environmental events, but it should be noted that terrorism continues to pose a risk. Potential further international uncertainty driven by geopolitical incidents also casts a shadow over the future years.

Any impact on the USA market will have an adverse impact on the Roman Baths as this is our largest overseas market. This feels particularly important in the 26/27 financial year as it is the 250th anniversary of the declaration of independence which may encourage more Americans to holiday domestically. Any economic decline, or reduction in disposable income for middle-class Americans will obviously further impact propensity to travel. Additionally the FIFA Men's World Cup in the US in the summer of 2027 will increase the price of transatlantic flights during this period.

It should be noted that the surplus for 26/27 of £13.269m is a stretching target. It requires the current decline in visitor numbers to be arrested and reversed. To achieve this, the Service will need to see a positive response to the strategies outlined in 3.3.3. as well as

growth in the inbound market from international tourists which is dependent on factors outside of the Service's control.

Heritage Services' net income is a key factor in the Council's Budget. The risks outlined on visitor numbers and consequently on income have been factored into the Council's 2026/27 budget setting process, with regards to both its budgeted contingencies and adequacy of its reserves. Actual visitor numbers in 25/26 have been used to rebase the future projections for the Service at a level which reflects the updated emerging picture, and in turn will be reflected in the Council's budget planning for future years.

There are inherent risks to Fashion Museum Bath. At this stage the risks associated with this project are commensurate with a project of this scale and ambition and no more than this. Strict project governance and a quantified risk register will manage risk.

Progress has been made on the pathway to net zero with the Service's Sustainability Manager having a demonstrable impact. However, the ability to achieve net 0 by 2030 is in question as is the level of financial commitment required to off-set the Service's remaining emissions footprint. Work will continue to understand this over 26/27.

Appendix 1: Financial Summary

Business Plan Summary

	Prior Year Actuals		2025/26	2026/27	Plan Years			
	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	Forecast £'000	Budget £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000	2030/31 £'000
Admissions	(19,889)	(21,127)	(22,437)	(24,266)	(24,993)	(25,756)	(26,536)	(27,433)
Retail Sales	(2,717)	(2,746)	(2,695)	(2,839)	(3,100)	(3,111)	(3,123)	(3,134)
Room Hire	(656)	(628)	(659)	(703)	(731)	(752)	(695)	(703)
Catering	(427)	(397)	(436)	(475)	(490)	(505)	(520)	(536)
Other Income	(863)	(1,013)	(1,062)	(1,135)	(1,171)	(904)	(917)	(918)
Grants/Contributions	(97)	(97)	(63)	(28)	(12)	(12)	(12)	(12)
Total Income	**(24,649)**	**(26,008)**	**(27,351)**	**(29,446)**	**(30,498)**	**(31,040)**	**(31,802)**	**(32,735)**
Employee Costs	6,243	6,885	7,814	7,898	8,259	8,586	8,927	9,280
Premises Costs	1,696	1,597	1,698	1,837	1,868	1,969	2,077	2,192
Transport Costs	41	36	42	50	51	53	54	56
Supplies & Services	3,269	3,497	3,470	3,735	3,900	4,045	4,047	4,046
Maintenance	355	485	608	667	674	677	693	702
Investment	416	322	431	442	500	470	490	510
Total Expenditure	**12,020**	**12,822**	**14,063**	**14,631**	**15,254**	**15,801**	**16,290**	**16,788**
Internal Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Recharge codes	1,511	1,538	1,521	1,555	1,723	1,709	1,999	2,424
Internal Recharges	**1,511**	**1,538**	**1,521**	**1,555**	**1,723**	**1,709**	**1,999**	**2,424**
Contribution to Reserves	6	0	6	0	6	6	6	6
(Surplus) / Deficit	**(11,112)**	**(11,648)**	**(11,760)**	**(13,261)**	**(13,514)**	**(13,524)**	**(13,507)**	**(13,516)**
Operating Margin	45.1%	44.8%	43.0%	45.0%	44.3%	43.6%	42.5%	41.3%
Wage %	25.3%	26.5%	28.6%	26.8%	27.1%	27.7%	28.1%	28.3%

Appendix 2: KPI Targets

	2024/25 (actuals)	2025/26 (forecast)	2026/27 (proposed)	2027/28 (proposed)	2028/29 (proposed)	2029/30 (proposed)	2030/31 (proposed)
Roman Baths visitors (000s)	993	972	1,005	1,005	1,020	1,035	1,051
Victoria Art Gallery visitors (000s)	49	85	91	92	93	95	97
World Heritage Centre visitors (000s)	100	90	100	100	107	110	112
Roman Baths income per visitor (£)*	24.13	26.38	27.20	28.16	28.51	28.85	29.30
Education visitors at Roman Baths	13,895	15,796	16,200	16,500	16,500	16,500	16,500
Discovery Cards Issued (000s)	12,000	5000	5,500	6000	26,000**	17,000**	12,000
Social media followers	170,356	265,317	278,582	292,511	307,136	324,259	340,500
Discovery Card holder visits (000s)	19,000	19,000	19,250	19,500	19,750	20,000	20,000
Net profit per Council Tax household (£)[3]	127	134	151	154	154	154	154

[3] Based on 87,647 Council Tax Households as of Jan 2026

Appendix 3: Sustainability Action Plan

See Separate PDF

Heritage Services
Sustainability Action Plan

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Contents

A Message from our Managing Director

Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES) was one of the first councils to declare a climate emergency in 2019, followed by an ecological emergency in 2020. The Council are committed to building a sustainable future for Bath and North East Somerset that is net zero and nature positive.

The Council's current priorities in tackling the climate emergency are to: decarbonise buildings, decarbonise transport, increase renewable energy generation, and cut council operational emissions to net zero[1].

Heritage Services is an essential part of B&NES; responsible for stewarding the public facing heritage assets in the council's care. The Council established Heritage Services as an independent business unit in 2005 allowing the service greater financial freedom and agility delivering, in return, an agreed surplus for the council. In 2045/25 this was £11.6M. Heritage Services is unique amongst UK local authorities in operating at no cost to the local taxpayer; the service is singular, within the council, in self-funding all cost increases. The profit from commercial operations contributes directly to the surplus Heritage Services returns to the council to support core services.

This action plan sets out how Heritage Services plan to cut our greenhouse gas emissions in the next 3 years, whilst establishing a pathway to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Preserving the monuments, buildings and collections in our care is essential for creating memorable, relevant and emotionally charged experiences for all. These assets embody the history and identity of local communities. As the effects of climate change are becoming increasingly prevalent on a local and global scale, we must take bold strategic action to minimise our impacts on the climate so that future generations can continue to engage with and enjoy the monuments, buildings and collections we care for. Engaging with people on this topic can positively impact their well-being, much like the social connection sought by people coming to The Roman Baths for over two millennia.

This 3-year Sustainability Action Plan, from FY25/26 – FY27/28 inclusive, sets out how Heritage Services will tackle the climate emergency, become more resilient to the effects of climate change, and contribute to the climate & ecological priorities set out by B&NES. The cornerstones guiding our sustainability goals & focus are:

PLACE • PEOPLE • HERITAGE

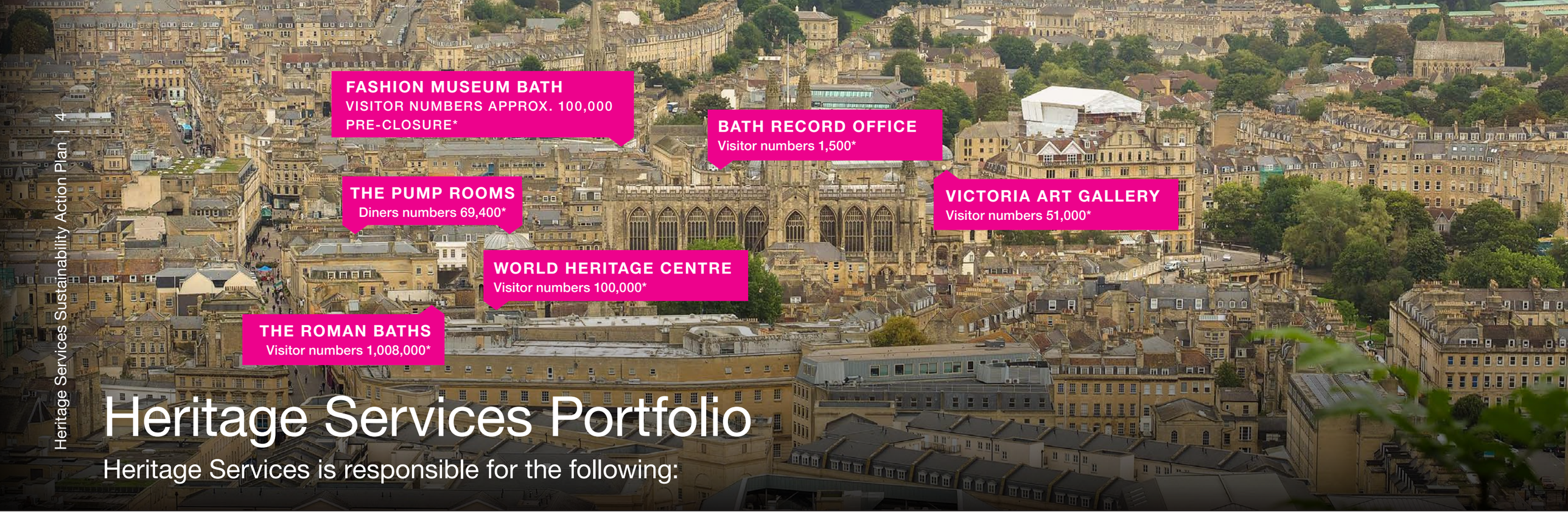
Anchoring all goals & targets to these 3 interconnected pillars ensures that we respect and preserve Bath & North East Somerset's culture and history whilst meeting the needs of current and future stakeholders.

Robert Campbell,
Managing Director, Culture and Heritage Services

Our Heritage Services sustainability objectives are as follows:

DECARBONISE OUR OPERATIONS • IMPROVE SUSTAINABILITY DATA ACCURACY • EMPOWER AND ENGAGE OUR VISITORS, EMPLOYEES AND SUPPLIERS • LEAD BY EXAMPLE

1. 2024 B&NES Climate Emergency Progress Report. The Council priorities may change as their strategy develops in the coming years.



Heritage Services Portfolio

Heritage Services is responsible for the following:

THE ROMAN BATHS

The Roman Baths is an award-winning museum and ancient monument with a designated on-site collection, located in the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage City of Bath. It has the hottest geothermal spring in the UK, some of the finest Roman remains in Northern Europe and has a continuous flow of millions of people bringing their experiences and cultures to shape its story through the ages.

THE PUMP ROOMS

The Pump Rooms were first built in 1706. To cope with increasing demands, a new Pump Room was begun in 1789 and finished in 1799. It was built in the classical style and was a meeting place for the Georgian elite where people were able to take refreshment and also drink the mineral-rich spa water. This is the primary food and beverage venue operated by the Service. We partner with Searcys to provide the offer here.

FASHION MUSEUM BATH

Fashion Museum Bath is currently undergoing a transformation to create a groundbreaking museum that will bring fashion to life for local and global audiences, reshaping Bath for the future. Although currently closed, its object loans to other institutions were seen by over 1.3m people globally in 2024.

BATH'S HISTORIC VENUES

Alongside these buildings Heritage Services also operates the Bath Historic Venues brand. This team oversee the commercial venue hire offer across the above sites, the Guildhall and B&NES' parks.

VICTORIA ART GALLERY

Victoria Art Gallery was named to celebrate Queen Victoria's 60 years on the throne; the public gallery includes over 1,500 decorative arts treasures from the 17th century to the present day with works by Thomas Gainsborough, Thomas Jones Barker and Walter Sickert.

THE BATH RECORD OFFICE

The Bath Record Office Archives and Local Studies collects, preserves, promotes and provides access to archives and local studies collections relating to Bath & North East Somerset and its communities.

WORLD HERITAGE CENTRE

World Heritage Centre hosts interactive exhibits and displays designed to inspire, excite and inform visitors about the city's attributes of outstanding universal value. The City of Bath is exceptional in having two UNESCO inscriptions. In 1987 it was inscribed for its Hot Springs, Roman archaeology, Georgian buildings and natural landscape setting. In 2021 a second inscription was received as one of the Great Spa Towns of Europe – fashionable spa towns laid out around natural springs which are used for health and wellbeing.

CLORE LEARNING CENTRE

Clore Learning Centre was a former Victorian spa laundry building, sitting beneath street level in between The Roman Baths and The World Heritage Centre. With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in 2022 it was sensitively renovated to allow schools and community groups to learn about history and heritage in a hands-on and accessible way.

*All numbers are from 2023/24

Current Impact

Our annual carbon footprint covers all visitor attraction sites, the Pump Room restaurant, offices and leased storage facilities under the care of Heritage Services. Calculating the emission intensity per visitor and employee allows us to see the carbon costs associated with the economic benefit brought to the area, which will in time help to shape our approach to carbon off-setting any residual emissions.

Current Impact

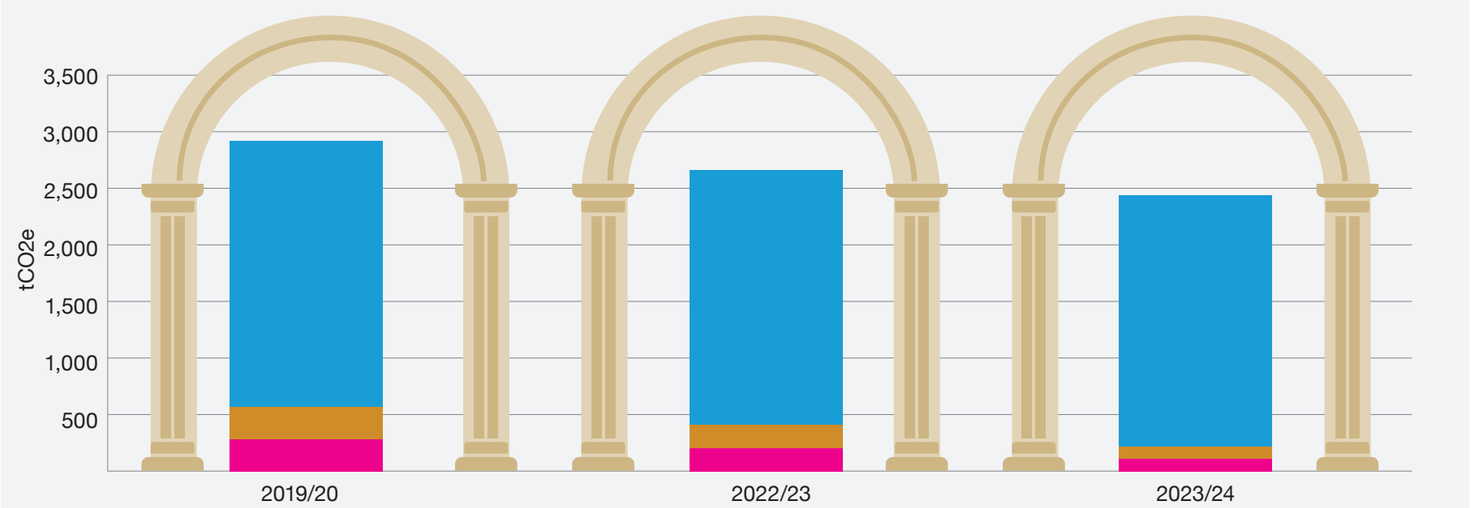
Our Carbon Footprint

The year which we are tracking targets against, our baseline year, is 2019/20.

As with many in the sector, the COVID-19 years between 2020-2022 were not truly representative of our business operations, and therefore omitted from analysis. Since our baseline year, we have made progress in reducing our total carbon footprint.

This is primarily due to the installation of heat exchange pumps in 2022 at the Roman Baths, and national grid decarbonisation. Currently, as with many organisations and with the complexities of Scope 3, 90% of our Scope 3 emissions are calculated using spend data, which is not conducive to effective decision making and subject to a high margin of error. We have plans to improve the quality and accuracy of our scope 3 data over time and how we do this is set out further down in this action-plan.

HERITAGE SERVICES ANNUAL EMISSIONS



Emissions calculated in accordance with the Green-House-Gas Protocol Methodology, using the latest emission factors available from DEFRA. All data sources are provided in Annex II.

EMISSION SCOPE (tCO2e)	2019/20	2022/23	2023/24
Scope 1	293.7	242.0	77.5
Scope 2	345.3	201.5	221.7
Scope 3	2,416.3	2,421.3	2,217
Total (tCO2e)	3,055.4	2,864.8	2,516.1
Intensity: kgCO2e / Visitor	2.6	3.4	2.5
Intensity: tCO2e / FTE	19.7	19.0	17.1

Scope 1:
Direct emissions from owned and controlled sources of on-site gas and fugitive emissions.

Scope 2:
Indirect emissions from the purchase of grid energy.

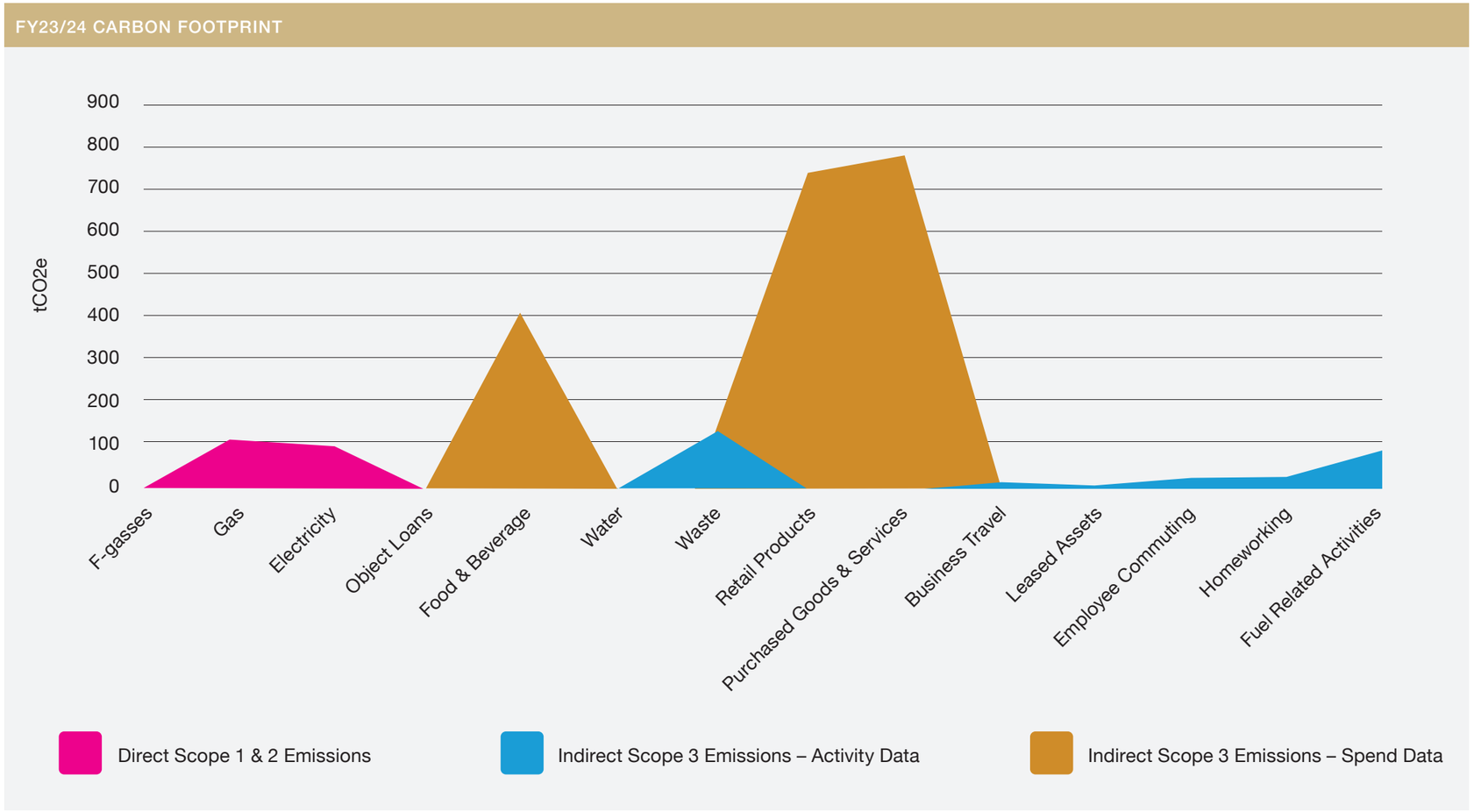
Scope 3:
Indirect emissions from organisational activities outside of our direct control, but within our sphere of influence.

Current Impact

Annual Emissions Tracking

Our sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions

Graph showing our sources of GHG emissions for latest reporting year of 23/24. We recognise that there are key sources of GHG emissions missing, such as digital and capital projects. We have specific targets set out below related to improving our data accuracy and broadening the scope of our understanding on some of these additional sources.



EMISSION SOURCE	tCO2e
Fugitive Emissions	0.5
Gas	77.0
Electricity	221.7
Object Travel	1.7
F&B (£)	405.0
Water	3.1
Waste	134.7
Retail (£)	739.4
PG&S (£)	727.4
Business Travel	15.6
Upstream Leased Assets	49.3
Employee Commuting	23.0
Homeworking	24.1
WTT | T&D	93.6
FY23/24 total tCO2e	**2,516**

Table showing figures for the latest carbon footprint report, FY23/24. £ denotes categories calculated using spend-based proxy.

Current Impact

Annual Emissions Tracking

Visitor Travel Emissions

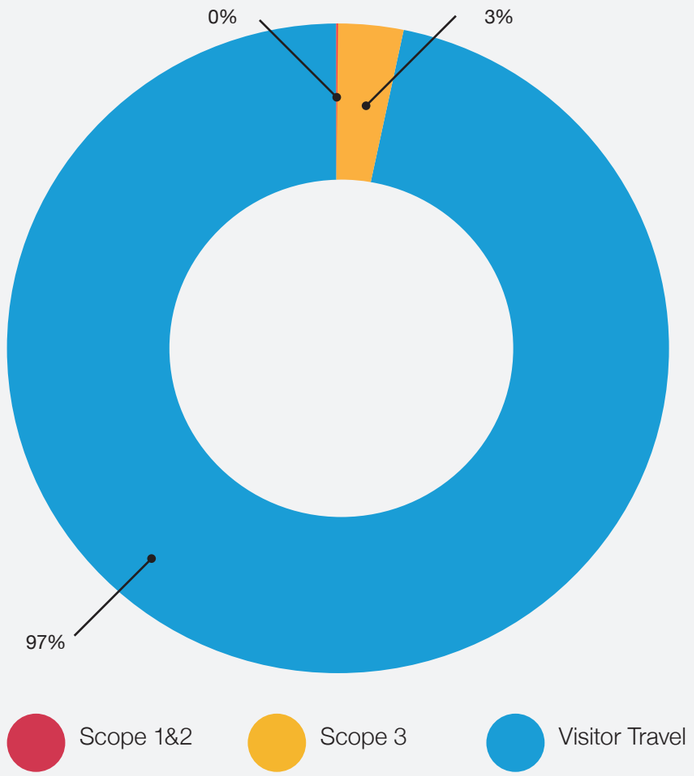
The emissions associated with visitor travel are not formally included in our carbon boundary – yet.

The very small data sample from our post-visit survey and the number of variables and uncertainty make for insubstantial analysis and reporting. We are, therefore, not confident in using this to inform any decision making. To address this issue, we are reviewing the data we have available to us from our own systems, and working with industry peers to formulate a common methodology for apportioning emissions based on mode of transport, dwell time, local and regional statistics.

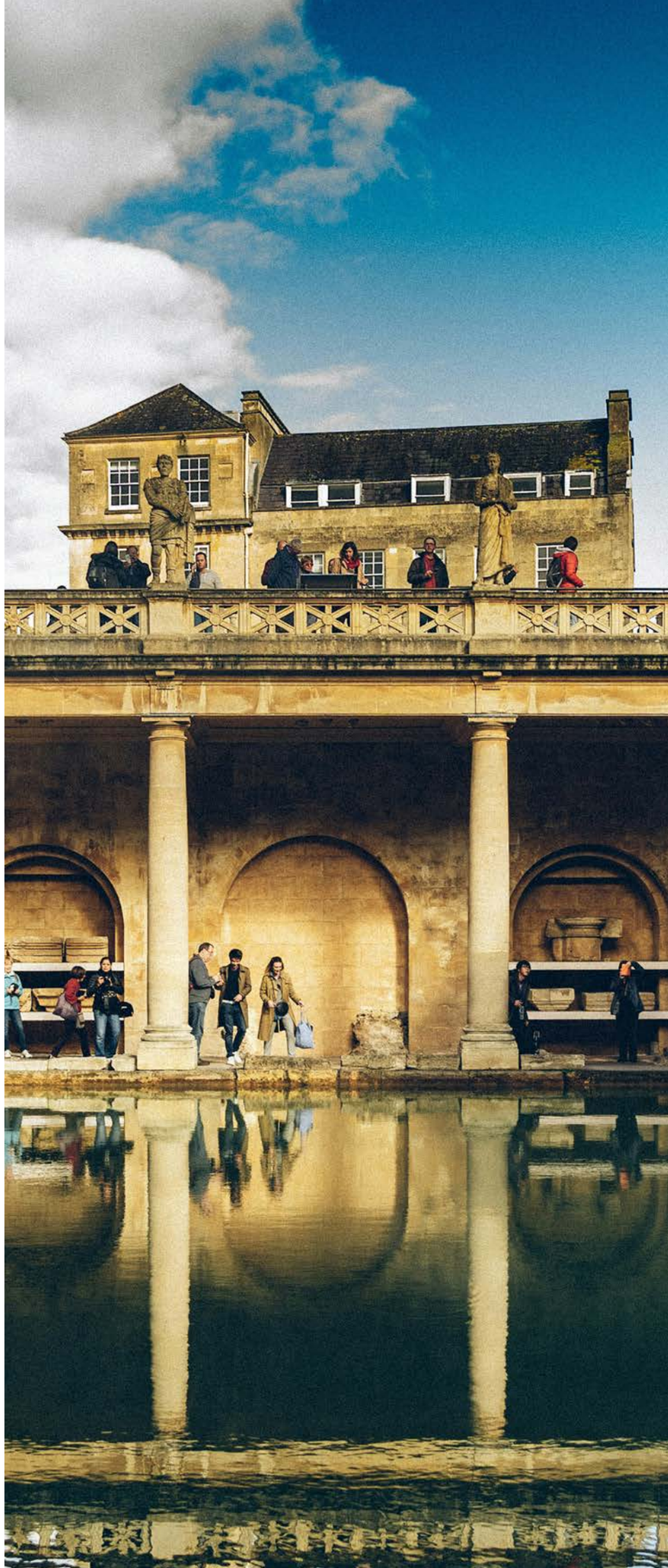
In time, as we improve our data on visitor travel, we will be able to quantify visitor carbon emission costs against economic impact. In the meantime, we will work to enable and influence our visitors to make low emission choices and bring our total carbon footprint down.

	2019/20	2022/23	2023/24
Visitor Travel (tCO2e)	44,559.6	71,331.4	97,915.0

EMISSIONS FROM VISITOR TRAVEL



Graph showing emissions associated with visitor travel. Apportioned international travel is included in our calculations, and data sources can be found in Annex II.



Our goals are centred around 3 key pillars:

People • Place • Heritage

We have set out interim goals that will enable us to close the gap between ambition and action as we progress towards net zero.

Underpinning the overarching goals laid out below are the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS). Created under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, these goals act as a universal blueprint for all organisations, destinations and countries to achieve peace and prosperity for people and the planet.

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Place

The goals and targets under the Place pillar set out where we will be by March 2028 and will ensure that our wider influence is underpinned by sustainable building infrastructure and impact monitoring mechanisms.

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Goal: Decarbonise our Operations

Reducing our operational emissions is a key enabling action. By this we mean taking actions that create conditions for more sustainable practices to be maintained and removing any barriers to implementation.

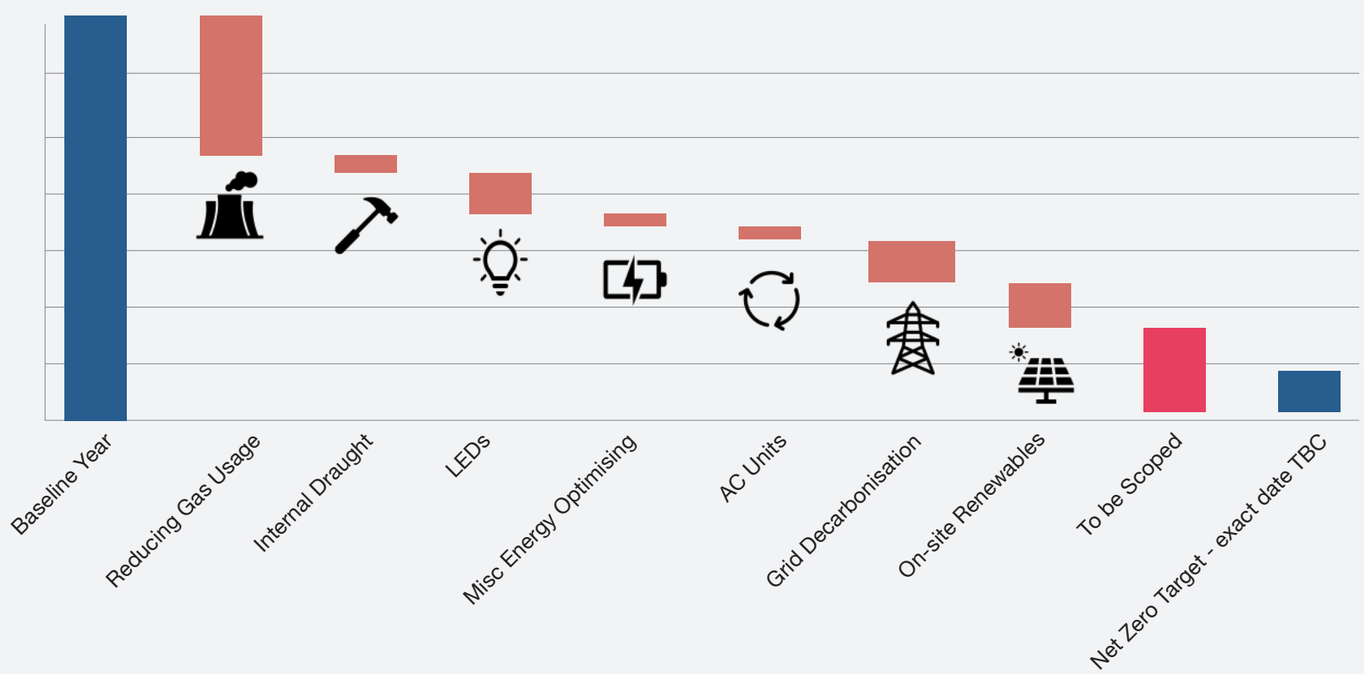
KPI'S:

- 52% reduction in Scope 1 & 2 emissions compared to baseline year
- Zero waste to landfill
- Increased proportion of recyclable waste

Between now and FY27/28, we will work with our key contractors to ensure efficient use of energy and resources, improve our recycling rate, optimise our existing systems and explore on-site renewable energy generation. Specific actions can be found in the table at the end of this document.

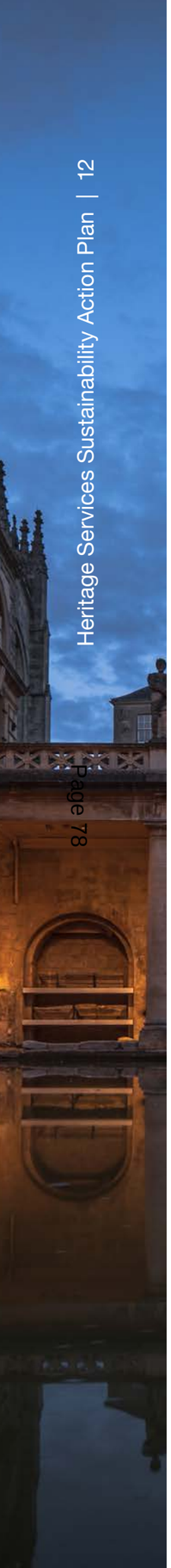
The term "Net Zero" focuses on **reducing** green-house-gas emissions as much as possible, with room to off-set any residual emissions. We have a clear plan to reduce our operational emissions by 52% over the next 3 years. We have wider external infrastructure challenges to overcome in order to be certain of the total sum of carbon emissions we will be able eliminate from our operations. By the end of this action plan covers, we will have our net zero target date set.

ACHIEVING NET ZERO OPERATIONS



Graph showing planned decarbonisation actions, to accelerate our net zero transition. Total emissions reductions per activity are based on current emission factors, with a target to reduce 52% of Scope 1 & 2 emissions by FY27/28. Graph is for illustrative purposes only, with exact emission reductions unknown until the action is complete.

Goal 7, Target 2: increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Goal 9, Target 4: upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes. Goal 11, Target 4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. Goal 12, Target 5: substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse



FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Food and Beverage at the Pump Room

Heritage Services has a contract with Searcys to provide food and beverage services and event catering at the Roman Baths and Pump Rooms. Searcys have been proactively working to reduce their environmental impact at the Pump Room through their own Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Strategy, *Second Nature*. 2024 initiatives include[3]:

- Introducing two venue-based Sustainability Champions who have been ISEP (Institute of Environment and Sustainability Professionals) trained and attend quarterly sustainability best practice sharing sessions with the wider Searcys community
- Undertaking a sustainability assessment and proactively targeting improvements including reviewing our packaging solutions, measuring and reducing food waste and increasing our range of local suppliers
- Working collaboratively with suppliers to ensure ongoing improvements in animal welfare, environmental impact and ethical sourcing.

ENERGY REDUCTION:

Working in collaboration with Heritage Services, Searcys are targeting a move to 100% electric equipment when grid capability allows. Until that time, we are taking positive action through the implementation of:

- Energy and water efficiency checklist
- Energy saving posters
- ‘Step Up’ training which covers 5 modules including Sustainability & Energy at Work
- Steaming not boiling and using lids to reduce energy and water consumption
- Checking for leaking taps and monitoring behaviours
- Switching off computers, printers, phone chargers overnight or not in use.

FOOD WASTE IN FOCUS:

Searcys proactively measure food waste to assist in targeting reductions through behavioural change and positive actions. Food waste is separated into three categories – production, plate and spoilage waste. The cost of food waste is then measured against the cost of total purchases. Across 2024 food waste was 4.14% of total purchases. Searcy’s have an ultimate goal for food waste to be less than 3% of purchases.

Current actions Searcys have implemented include;

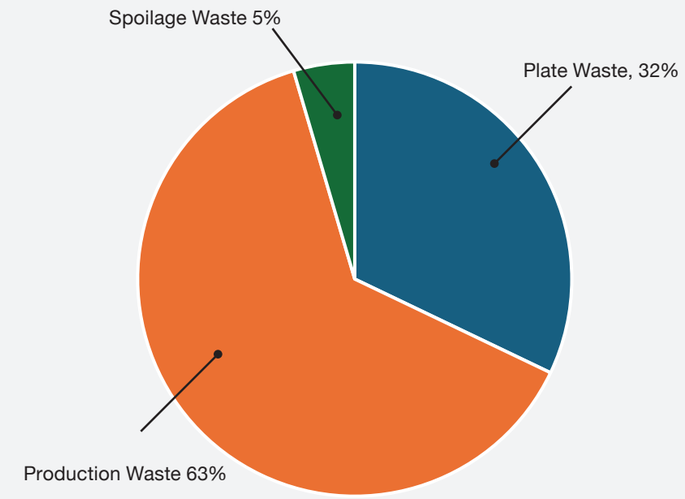
- Effective stock control measures to minimise spoilage
- Production sheets aligned to booking requirements
- An ongoing review of standing orders to ensure they reflect business needs week to week
- Maximising use of all ingredients i.e. not peeling vegetables unnecessarily
- Batch cooking. Pre-booking has allowed us to prepare more effectively for volumes anticipated.
- Looking for patterns and trends in plate waste to identify where portion size is over-generous.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS INCLUDE:

- Incorporating coffee waste into food waste for recycling
- Introducing clear bags to visually aid our team to see the volume and type of waste being created
- Dedicated bins for separation in the servery and kitchen.

Searcys are actively seeking local partners for redistribution of edible food waste from the Pump Room Restaurant.

THE PUMP ROOM FOOD WASTE BY TYPE 2024



Graph showing Searcys food waste in 2024. More information can be found in Searcys ESG Strategy

3 https://searcys.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Searcys_Second-Nature-202319.pdf

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Goal: Improve our sustainability data accuracy

Accurate data monitoring is crucial for place-based decision making that helps contribute to future climate-change resilience.

KPI'S:

- Biennial update of employee commuting & homeworking data
- Supplier specific data covering 30% of retail spend
- Supplier specific data covering 30% of PG&S spend
- Begin digital carbon footprint measurement
- Improved visitor travel data accuracy

Data improvement is an on-going process, there will always be room for improvement and we don't want to wait for perfect data to start making changes to reduce our Scope 1 & 2 emissions. Our Scope 3 emissions are, like many, harder to quantify and rely on suppliers providing us with their emissions data.

For us this is a great opportunity to make a positive impact within our sphere of influence. We have committed and already started supporting our suppliers with getting to grips with their first carbon footprints, meaning they can make informed decisions to increase their resource efficiency, reduce carbon and indirectly reduce costs too.

4 Goal 12, Target 12.b: support the development and implementation of tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. Goal 13, Target 2: integrate climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

People

To achieve our environmental goals by March 2028, we must ensure stakeholders are well-informed about the effects of climate change. We have significant influence over the communities we serve – residents, visitors, employees, and suppliers.

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Goal: Empower and engage our visitors, employees and suppliers

By empowering people to make informed decisions, and having the right infrastructure in place, we can continue providing rich cultural experiences for decades to come and increase the social value[5] that visitor spending brings to Bath and North East Somerset.

KPI'S:

- Retail suppliers covering 30% of spend to have net zero target in place
- Suppliers covering 30% of spend in Purchased Goods & Services category to have net zero target in place
- 100% of Full Time Employees to be certified carbon literate
- All teams to have environmental action plan objectives included in individual forward job plan objectives
- Reduction in emissions intensity per kg of Pump Room food & beverages
- 100% in sustainability question within mystery visitor reports

The actions to deliver this goal are based on communicating and engaging with our key stakeholders. We have already started to deliver this through supporting some of our suppliers with sustainability training and guidance on data. In order to deliver our decarbonisation actions and improve the way we communicate our environmental impact to visitors our employees must feel confident on the subject matter of climate change, so we will be offering all employees the opportunity to undertake carbon literacy training with a target for 100% of FTE (full-time equivalent) employees to be certified by FY2027/28.

We already communicate to our visitors through Audioguides and guided tours, but we plan to improve this by widening the scope, embedding more sustainability topics into communications, and building strategic partnerships that help to minimise environmental impacts.

5 B&NES Social Value Policy: Social Value refers to the outcomes that will provide benefit to the residents of the Council area, either directly and individually or through businesses and community organisations

6 Goal 8, Target 9: devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products. Goal 12, Target 6: Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. Goal 13, Target 2: integrate climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning.

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Heritage

The heritage assets we preserve for future generations are recognised as having outstanding importance for people across the globe. Their historical significance has been confirmed at a national level and they contribute to the City's unique offering and double UNESCO inscription.

FY27/28 Sustainability Goals

Goal: Lead by Example

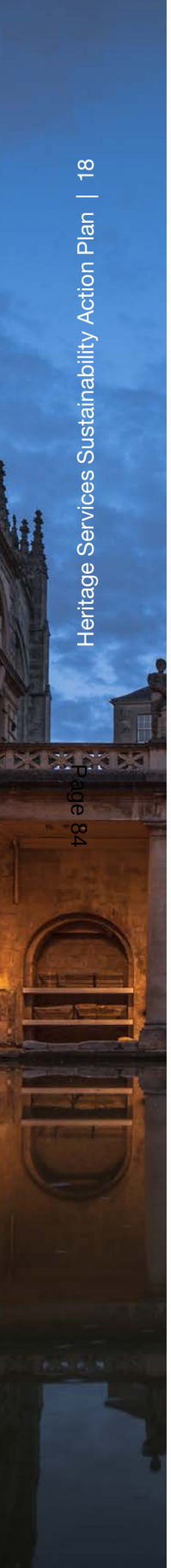
In the face of a climate emergency, everything we do as a service must protect this special place. By March 2028 we will draw from partnerships, industry standards, government guidance, and stakeholder feedback to develop our approach in adapting and being more resilient to future climate risks.

KPI'S:

- Obtain external accreditation & recognition for organisational sustainability
- Number of climate-related risks identified and adapted to
- Visitor, employee and industry-peer engagement metrics — Employee training, visitor questions, website sustainability section engagement, sustainability marketing campaigns, and sector partnerships
- Number of joint partnerships and projects undertaken

To lead by example we must take bold actions, and share our learnings. As such a unique site, with 1 million litres of water running through each day, we face challenges in adapting to climate related risks. We will share progress as we develop our approach and better understand how heritage assets and listed buildings can become more resilient to climate change. Facilitated sharing is beneficial when developing new solutions. We have already started to engage with external partners to unpick some of the key problems in our sector - sustainable tourism, climate risk adaptation, retrofitting historic buildings - and will continue to develop and share what we collectively think is best practise on some of these industry-wide concerns.

7 Goal 11, Target 4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage



Adapting to Climate-related Risks

To anticipate, adapt and be more resilient to future climate-related risks, we need to map our risks. We will use our agency as a leading visitor attraction to share findings and help the heritage sector to prepare for the future.

The latest science is clear – our climate has already changed, and we are heading towards unchartered territory. In 2024, global warming exceeded the limit of 1.5^{0}C above pre-industrial levels for the first time since records began[8]. We are already seeing an increase from climate-related pressures, a primary example being flooding from the River Avon backing up into the Great Drain and having an adverse impact on the Roman Baths complex. Other climate-related risks can manifest in a number of ways, whether storm damage or urban heat island effects, the predicted future climate projections pose a threat to heritage buildings and people's cultural experiences. We must learn from the past and prepare for the future. However, the impacts of potential natural hazards compounded with the uncertainty of future climate change scenarios makes it difficult to identify and measure risks accurately. By leveraging research, innovation and creativity we plan to map, mitigate and adapt to climate risks so that heritage assets can be passed through time and not damaged in transition.

MITIGATION:

Actions taken to reduce the impact of climate change on our planet. We are mitigating these impacts through reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

ADAPTATION:

Actions taken to adjust to the physical effects of climate change. We are adapting to changing climates by putting in place measures to protect the Roman Baths against increased rainfall and flood risks.

RESILIENCE:

The ability and capacity to foresee and manage adverse climate-related risks.
We are working on ensuring we can respond and be resilient in the face of unknown climate-related risks[9].

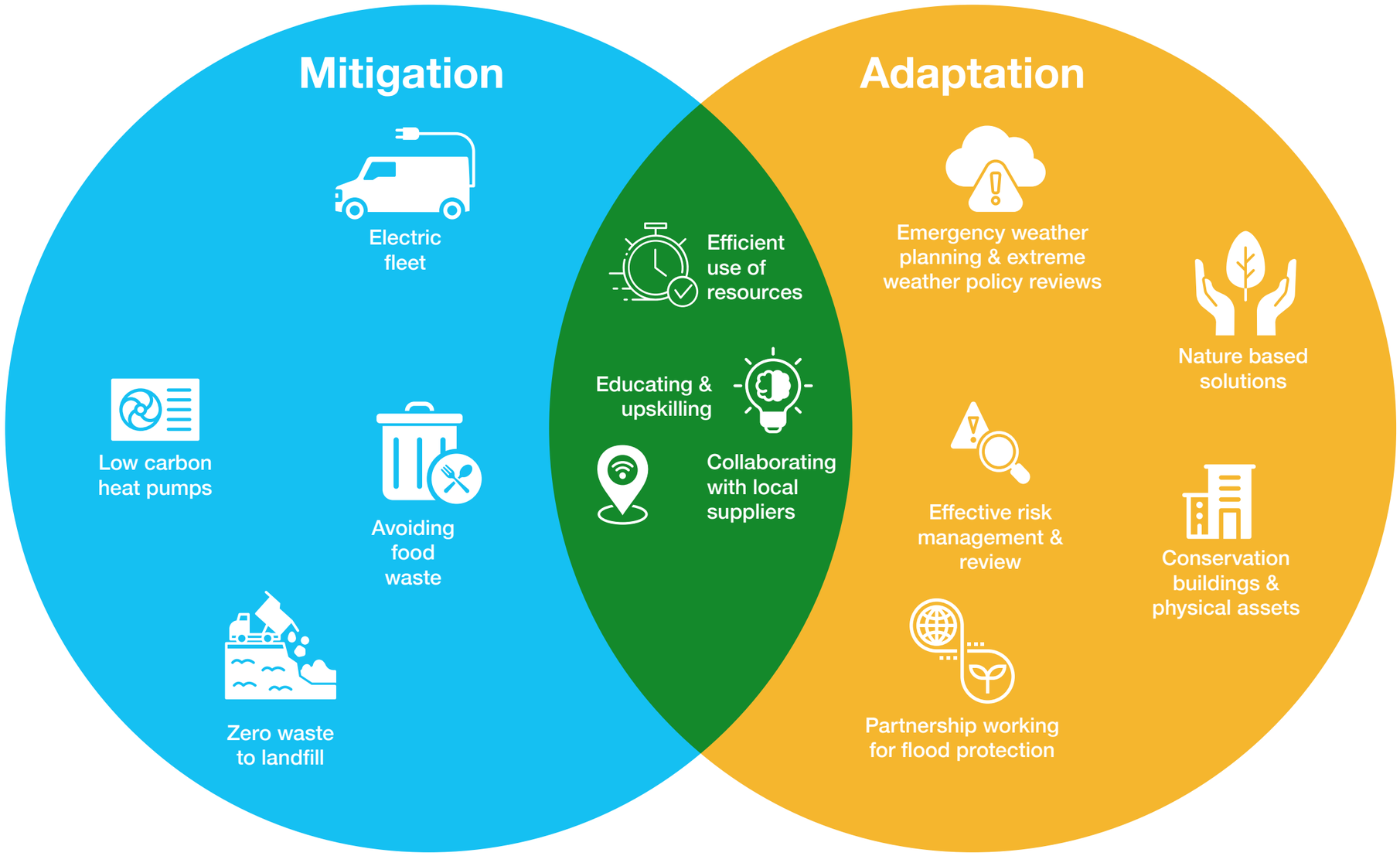
The latest independent assessment of UK Climate Risks sets out 61 specific risks to local governments. We will be working closely with the Council, and external organisations, to better understand these risks and what actions we need to take to manage and adapt to them. Insights from the Met Office, and The West of England Mayoral Combined Authority state the climate hazards most relevant to us in B&NES are:[10]

- Fluvial / Pluvial Flooding
- Overheating
- Drought
- High winds (storms)

8 Based on 6 international data sets used by the World Meteorological Organisations. The 2015 United Nations Paris Agreement set a global goal to limit Global Temperatures to 1.5 ° C in order to lessen the effects of climate change.
9 All definitions come from the IPCC https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/
10 https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/WoE-MCA-Climate-Adaptation-Report-Apr25.pdf

Adapting to Climate-related Risks

Work in this area is still underway, and whilst many of the risks we identified are picked up in our routine maintenance and conservation schedules, there are some gaps and areas for concern – most notably the Thermal Spring. In 2026, we plan to improve our understanding of the climate impacts on the thermal spring with improved monitoring and evaluation. Our risk register is reviewed and updated quarterly.



Adapting to Climate-related Risks

Climate Risk Summary Roman Baths

As climate change continues to affect weather patterns and environmental conditions, the Roman Baths is taking proactive steps to understand and manage the risks it faces.

This summary outlines the key climate-related risks identified and the actions being taken to protect our heritage, visitors, staff, and collections for generations to come.

In FY26/27 we will repeat this process for all other Heritage Services sites.

1. Heavy Rainfall & Flooding

Risks:
Damage to historic buildings, monuments, and collections; health and safety concerns for visitors and staff; potential financial losses from closures

Actions underway:
– Roof drainage improvements
– Flood management plans
– Regular conservation and environmental monitoring
– Emergency procedures for visitor safety

2. Overheating

Risks:
Damage to collections from heat and UV exposure; discomfort for staff and visitors; potential drop in visitor numbers

Actions:
– UV filters and blinds where relevant
– Staff provided with shade and sun protection
– Monitoring systems track environmental changes

3. Drought

Risks:
Unknown impacts on the thermal spring; increased fire risk to wooden structures

Actions:
– Research and collaboration with external experts (e.g., UNESCO) underway
– Discussions underway to better understand and prepare for long-term effects

4. High Winds & Storms

Risks:
Structural damage from debris; safety risks on terraces

Actions:
– Regular roof inspections and surveys
– Terrace closures during severe weather
– Reactive maintenance protocols in place

5. Infrastructure Disruption

Risks:
Power outages and transport issues affecting operations

Actions:
– Emergency procedures for electricity failures
– Review of extreme weather policies planned

How We're Responding

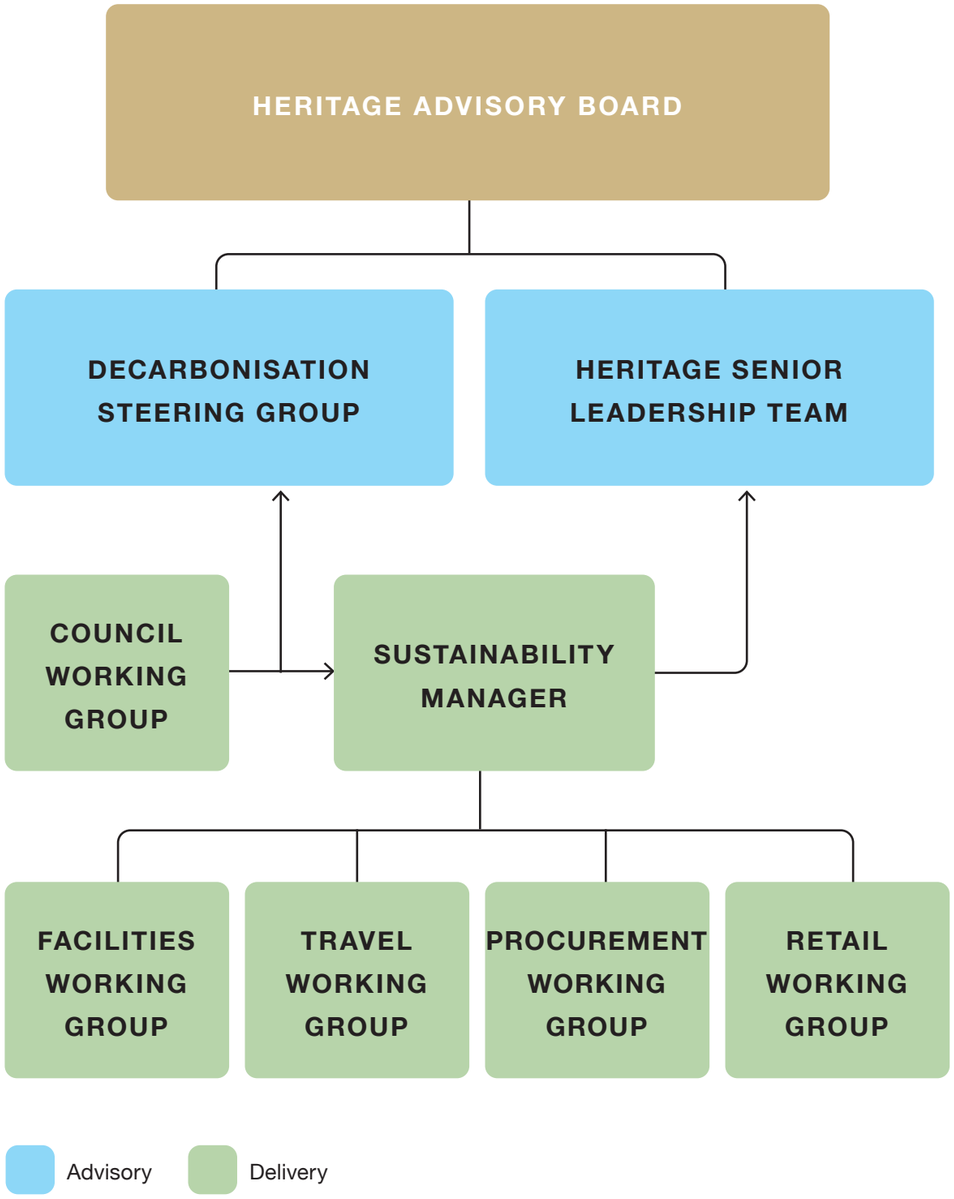
Short-Term:
Maintenance, monitoring, and emergency procedures are in place and regularly reviewed

Long-Term:
Investment in infrastructure, conservation, and climate resilience is being planned based on ongoing assessments and expert advice

Sustainability Governance

Our targets and actions are regularly reviewed by the Heritage Service Senior Leadership Team. Progress against targets is also included in the annual business plan which is reviewed yearly as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Targets are also reported on and overseen by the independent Heritage Services Advisory Board. Although the Heritage Services has set their own sustainability commitments, the Service is aligned with the Council's overall approach to tackling the climate & nature emergencies. The head of Sustainable Economy, also under the Sustainable Communities Directorate, is included in the Decarbonisation Steering Group, and we work closely with the Council's Climate and Environment Team.



Examples in Practice

Decarbonisation in Action

Public bathhouses were a hallmark of Roman towns and cities, serving not only as places for bathing but also as vibrant social hubs. These complexes featured rooms with varying temperatures: the caldarium (hot), the tepidarium (warm), and the frigidarium (cold). Managing heat effectively was essential to the bathing experience.

The Roman Baths in Bath, known to the Romans as Aquae Sulis, were unique because they were built around Britain's only natural hot springs. The Sacred Spring, at the heart of the bathing complex, dedicated to the goddess Sulis Minerva, provided a constant supply of hot water. Reaching temperatures of up to 46°C (114.8°F), the spring-fed water kept the baths warm even during the coldest winters.

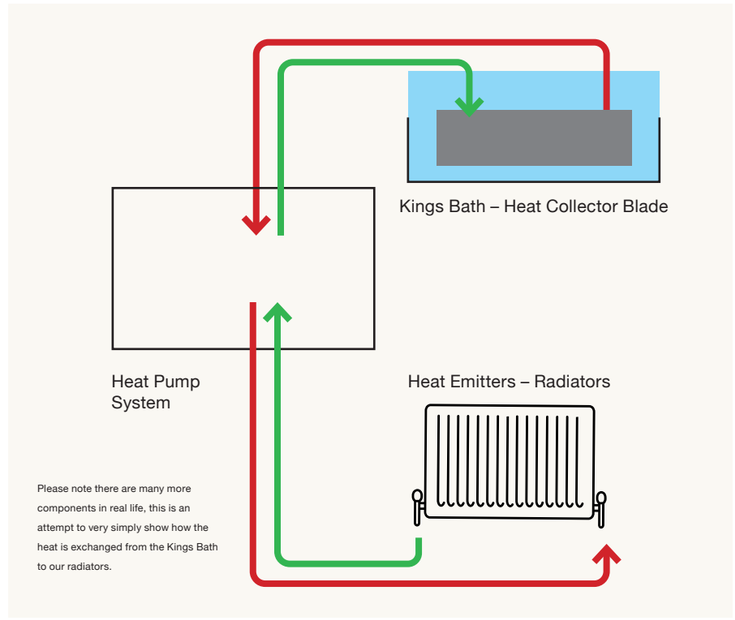
Beyond offering warmth, the baths were central to Roman social and cultural life. People from all walks of life gathered to bathe, relax, and socialise. The Romans recognised the power of the hot springs and made them the centrepiece of one of the most impressive architectural complexes in Roman Britain.

Today, the same naturally heated waters continue to flow through the historic site and the energy is captured and used in our heating system. In 2022, we installed a heat pump system which includes a series of pumps, compressors, expanders and exchangers to extract heat from one place and re-use it elsewhere. In our case, we are extracting heat from the Kings Bath and using it to heat the World Heritage Centre and The Roman Baths.

A heat pump system is very complex, we are 'pumping' heat as a flow – from one fluid to another. We start with a source of heat, in this case the Kings Bath. Underwater blades in the Kings Bath collect heat from the naturally warm spring water that is circulating at 46°C, it then gets transferred to a Heat Pump. The Heat Pump uses compression and expansion of a gas to create a 'hot' zone and a 'cold' zone – The Cold zone extracts heat from the Blade water and then the energy is passed to the Hot zone to heat the water that then circulates around radiators, heating the buildings.

Heat Pumps are efficient – they generally output a lot more heat than they consume in electricity. In the Heat Pumps we have here, 1 unit of electricity makes 3 units of heat.

In 2024, the heat pumps produced **99% of the heat demands of the World Heritage Centre**, and around **20% of the demand at The Roman Baths**. This has **saved around 38 tonnes of CO2e** compared to using the equivalent in gas, which is equal to 4 return flights from London to Sydney[11].



11 According to the latest emission factors from DEFRA for Natural Gas (2024). LDN – SYD Return = 34,032 kms. Average passenger long-haul flight = 0.26128 kgCO2e = 8.9 tCO2e 38 / 8.9 = 4.2 return flights. DEFRA 2024 Emission Factors.

Examples in Practice

Supplier Spotlight – St Ewe Eggs

St Ewes Eggs have a commitment to source only RSPCA Free range assured eggs and commenced a partnership with St Ewe's in Cornwall.

St Ewe works exclusively with RSPCA-assured farms as a minimum standard. This means eggs laid by hens that have guaranteed:

1. Environmental enrichment both inside and outside.

2. Shade and shelter, including trees and bushes which protect the birds from bad weather and predators. This helps the birds feel safer and range more freely, as well as provides natural foraging opportunities.

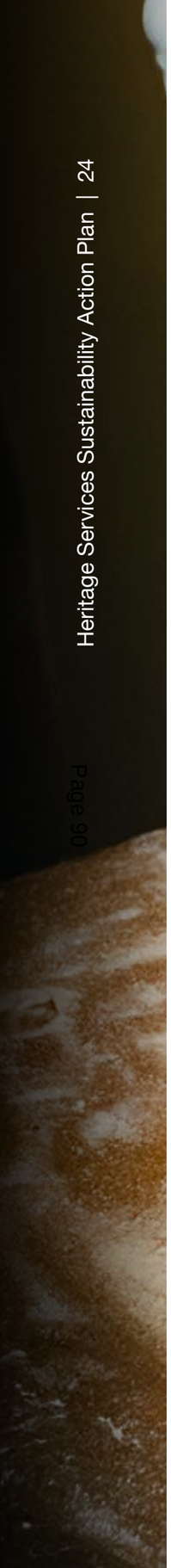
3. Access to dust pits giving them the opportunity to dustbathe and keep their feathers healthy and clean, an essential requirement for hens.

Across 2024, The Pump Room purchased 10,000 RSPCA Assured eggs, this relates to 91% compliance to our ambition. In Q1 2025, we are currently tracking at 97%.

St Ewe's have recently announced their B-Corp certification, supporting their sustainability initiatives taken to date which include:

- Installing solar panels on the roof of their packing facility, as well as sourcing all grid electricity from renewables sources. Around 50% of their packing centre electricity is from their solar array
- Working to ensure all soy in their feed is from responsible sources by 2026 in line with the UK Soy Manifesto
- Building a 3-year restorative plan to reach net positive biodiversity including soil health, water resilience, carbon emissions and animal and farmer welfare. Their target is to have all farms audited with a plan in place by 2027
- All packaging is between 70-100% recycled content, and is 100% recyclable, produced using solar and wind energy
- Launched electric vehicle deliveries to local customers in Cornwall, looking to expand further

St Ewe is currently working on farm agroforestry projects enabling some of their hens to be raised amongst woodlands and orchards, which is beneficial for soil, water, hens and biodiversity. They already have several farms working in this way including one farm in Devon where the flock is raised amongst an established woodland. This was created over 20 years ago to promote good soil, create resilience for the farm against climate change and extreme weather and to enable a biodiverse habitat for the hens to range in, for the wider benefit of the landscape. The result is happy hens who feel safe to range in the tree covers and enjoy the natural larder, enrichment, and hedgerows.



Examples in Practice

Supplier Spotlight – Wildfarmed Flour

Wildfarmed are on a mission to change soil health and biodiversity through a commitment to growing flour with farmers who follow their ‘Soil Standards’.

These were developed in response to a lack of industry definition regarding ‘regenerative’. Wildfarmed standards stipulate that all of their growers must engage in the following:

- Include species rich cover crops or diverse pasture mixes to keep their soil covered at all times
- Cereals to be grown alongside companion crops – this could be bi or poly-cropping
- Integrating animals wherever possible
- No pesticides on growing crop
- Nutrition to be applied based on plant need through sap testing

In July 2024, Searcys moved to incorporating Wildfarmed flour in their scones, signature Sourdough and through ranges such as La Tua pasta. Since July, they have sold 67,556 scones, equating to the use of 1,330kg of Wildfarmed flour in lieu of standard flour. Using Wildfarmed flour results in 2.5kg less CO2e emissions compared to standard flour, resulting in 3,326.89kg CO2e saved in making the swap[12]. This is the equivalent to 7.5 return flights between Bristol and Barcelona[13].

‘3.6 million tonnes of carbon could be saved by 2030 if every operator across the UK hospitality and brewing sector switched to regenerative flour and barley, according to new data from not-for-profit Zero Carbon Forum and the UK’s leading regenerative farming and food business, Wildfarmed. That’s the same as cancelling more than 5.5 million one-way flights between London and New York.’
www.zerocarbonforum.com

12 According to a cradle to grave lifecycle assessment undertaken by Wildfarmed, in comparison to standard flour (-1.5kg CO2e/kg vs +1kg CO2e/kg, including removals and avoidance). Further information available on request with Searcys & Wildfarmed directly.
13 BRS – BCN Return = 2,360 kms. Average passenger short-haul flight = 0.18592 kgCO2e = 438 kgCO2e (DEFRA 2024 Emission Factors) 3,326.89 / 438 = 7.5 return flights

Annex I

Sustainability Actions

Table of sustainability actions

Heritage Goal	Service Action	Indicator (s)	Which Council priority is the action aligned with?	Sustainable Development Goal and aligned target
Decarbonise operations	All office lighting to be LED	Reduction in electricity kWh consumed	Decarbonise buildings & Net Zero operations	Goal 9, Target 4
	Optimise usage of existing Building Management System	Reduction in electricity kWh consumed		Goal 9, Target 4
	Reduce electricity consumption with replacement and upgrades of older and high consuming units	Reduction in electricity kWh consumed		Goal 7, Target 2
	Explore opportunities for on-site renewable electricity generation	Reduction in general waste kg produced		Goal 7, Target 2
	Work with waste contractors to ensure no waste to landfill	Increase in mixed recycling / general waste ratio kg produced	Net Zero operations	Goal 12, Target 5
	Improve the employee & visitor led recycling bin set up	Increase in mixed recycling / general waste ratio kg produced		Goal 12, Target 5
Improve our sustainability data accuracy	Improve electricity metering set up across all sites	Resources available, supplier engagement and improved Scope 3 data accuracy	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 13, Target 2
	Support suppliers with relevant sustainability resources and guidance	Improved Scope 3 data, additional categories		Goal 13, Target 2
	Map and begin quantifying digital emission sources	Improved Scope 3 data, additional categories		Goal 13, Target 2
	Collaborate with other attractions nationwide to arrive at a standardised methodology for apportioning visitor travel emissions	Improved Scope 3 data, additional categories	Decarbonise transport	Goal 12, Target 12.b
	Collate better data on visitor origin from booking system data	Improved Scope 3 data, additional categories		Goal 12, Target 12.b

Annex I

Sustainability Actions

Table of sustainability actions

Heritage Goal	Service Action	Indicator (s)	Which Council priority is the action aligned with?	Sustainable Development Goal and aligned target
Empower and engage our visitors, employees and suppliers	Set up regular supplier engagement workshops to support with data collection	Number of suppliers engaged with, improved scope 3 data	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 12, Target 6
	Create strategic partnerships that reward low-carbon visitor travel	Number of partnerships created, lower visitor travel emissions	Decarbonise transport	Goal 13, Target 2
	Undertake an audit of all retail product materials and packaging and assign internal Red / Amber / Green sustainability rating	Number of products rated against the internal criteria	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 12, Target 6
	Deliver Carbon Literacy training to all employees	Number of employees certified carbon literate	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 13, Target 2
	Work with catering partners to ensure visitors at the Pump Room restaurant have access to sourcing information and impacts	Dish provenance, visitor engagement, and external communications	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 8, Target 9
	Establish a programme of communication and activity that positively influences visitors behaviour. E.g. engage visitors on climate issues through our learning and participation programme	Visitor engagement with sustainability communications & initiatives	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 8, Target 9
	Develop a sustainability policy and action plan for our venue hire	Improved Scope 3 data, additional categories	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 13, Target 2
	Communicate the story of human impact on the environment through our collections and thermal Spring	Visitor engagement with sustainability communications & initiatives	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 13, Target 2
	Begin work on implementing the Doughnut Economic model to business operations	Improved Scope 3 data, better understanding of Bath's visitor economy through improved data accuracy	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 8, Target 9

Annex I

Sustainability Actions

Table of sustainability actions

Heritage Goal	Service Action	Indicator (s)	Which Council priority is the action aligned with?	Sustainable Development Goal and aligned target
Lead by example	Improve our sustainability data, monitoring and reporting related to climate-related risks and adaptation	Number of climate-related risks identified and adapted to	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 11, Target 4
	Use our agency as a leading visitor attraction to share data and best practices to aid industry benchmarking	Shared case-studies, external events attendance and hosting		Goal 11, Target 4
	Establish meaningful partnerships with other organisations	Number of partnerships created, improved data		Goal 11, Target 4
	Finalise work on drainage and flooding issues on the Roman Baths roof	Project completion	Decarbonise buildings	Goal 11, Target 4
	Undertake work to understand how to stop the great drain from flooding under heavy rainfalls	Monitoring and evaluation of environmental impacts on the great drain and thermal spring	Decarbonise Council own operations	Goal 11, Target 4
	Finalise and publish our Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan	External facing climate adaptation plan, internal climate risk assessment embedded within current risk management framework		Goal 11, Target 4
	Continue to deliver Fashion Museum Bath as an exemplar of environmental sustainability	Project completion	Decarbonise buildings	Goal 13, Target 2

Annex II

Emissions Data & Methodology

Table showing emission calculation data sources, accuracy and plans to improve over time:

Accurate activity data	Spend / other proxy data	Estimated activity data

Emission Source	Data Used	Method & Emission Multipliers	Improvements from 25/26
Gas	Meter & billing data	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Fugitive Emissions	Contractor service & maintenance records	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Electricity	Meter & billing data	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Object Travel	Internal object loan records	Vehicle types estimated, DEFRA Emission Factors	Capture better information on vehicle types
F&B	Searcys spend data	Searcys own carbon calculation. Specialised SaaS platform which uses Exiobase. EcoInvent and CEDA Emission Factors	Searcys own supplier specific emissions & data improvement. Searcys aim to get a more precise carbon calculation according to item volume.
Water	Meter & billing data	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Waste	Estimated from capacity & pick up frequency (SEPA Density Conversion factors)	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	Accurate weight data from new suppliers in place
Retail	Internal spend data	GHG Protocol, UK Government S.I.C. Codes with inflation applied	Work on-going to gather supplier emissions intensity
Purchased Goods & Services	Internal spend data	GHG Protocol, UK Government S.I.C. Codes with inflation applied	Work on-going to gather supplier emissions intensity
Business Travel	Internal booking system, spend data, and expense claims	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Upstream Leased Assets	Spend data (Dents leased storage facility) and mileage (retail van)	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors, SIC Codes	N/A
Employee Commuting	Internal survey 43% response rate	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	Work on-going to improve response rate
Homeworking	Internal survey 43% response rate	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	Work on-going to improve response rate
WTT | T&D	All relative to individual fuel and electricity related categories	GHG Protocol, DEFRA Emission Factors	N/A
Visitor Travel	Audioguide language data, post-visit survey & national averages from Visit Britain	Apportioning calculation applied based on average reasons for visiting Bath & dwell time. Modes of transport estimated based on distance to Bath.	Plans to collate better visitor origin data from new visitor management system. Plans to streamline apportioning methodology in the sector / region.

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	**Cabinet**	
MEETING DATE:	**12th March 2026**	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: E 3688
TITLE:	**Cultural Development Plan**	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix A - Cultural Development Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report presents the new council policy document – the Cultural Development Plan for review and adoption by cabinet.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

2.1 Approve the Cultural Development Plan 2025 – 2027

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The current administration had a number of commitments to culture in the election manifesto. Culture is also one of the 9 priorities in the Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) Corporate Strategy: Valuing and developing the contribution of culture to Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).

3.2 The Administration and Senior Officers allocated the Cultural Policy brief to the Head of Heritage Services in 2024 with a new job title of Head of Culture and Heritage.

3.3 The Head of Culture and Heritage has worked with stakeholders both within and outside of the Council to create a Cultural Development Plan to direct the organisation's approach to this area of place-shaping.

3.4 The Cultural Development Plan is included as Appendix A

3.5 Adopting the Cultural Development Plan as a central pillar of the Council's place-shaping strategy will deliver long-term benefits for BANES. The plan positions culture as a driver of regeneration, economic growth, and social cohesion, ensuring that investment in heritage and creativity underpins planning and infrastructure decisions. It aligns with corporate priorities on health, wellbeing, and inclusive communities, while strengthening the district's identity and visitor economy. Endorsing this approach will enable the Council to leverage cultural assets to attract investment, foster innovation, and create vibrant, sustainable places that reflect our shared ambitions for the area.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 N/A

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The plan is deliverable within current resource limits.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

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

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are central to the success of the Cultural Development Plan.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The approach to Sustainability as part of the Plan are detailed within the Plan itself.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A

10 CONSULTATION

The first step in this was a peer challenge from the Local Government Association in 2024 which offered a constructively critical look at the Council's approach to culture.

Following a series of engagement exercises with sector representative over early 2025 the Head of Service drafted a cultural development plan in May 2025. This was then used to consult with individuals and organisations within the cultural sector in BANES.

The plan was then updated in-light of this consultation and an action plan created to cover the period 2025 – 2027.

The plan has been further reviewed by the Council's Place Shaping Group and Executive Leadership Team. It has also been considered by the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

Contact person	Robert Campbell – Head of Culture and Heritage Tel: +44(0)7815 018899
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

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Cultural Development Plan for Bath and North East Somerset Council 2025 - 2027

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural Development Plan for Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) aims to create a vibrant cultural landscape across the area.

Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) will work over the next two years, to create an environment where culture thrives, supports the local economy and improves the health and wellbeing of audiences. This Development Plan outlines the key priorities and actions to be undertaken over the next few years.

B&NES will support, facilitate and enable partnership activity and act as a convener, offering the opportunity for the sector to come together to share progress challenges and opportunities.

The action plan associated with this strategy covers the period 2025 – 2027 and the aim is to spend this period setting the stage for a longer-term approach to culture that is built with sector support. The 2 year period will focus on:

- Aligning Council generated cultural activities with B&NES corporate priorities and integrating cultural activities into existing and future Council work streams
- Working with the sector to understand what they need to make culture thrive in BANES and helping them to make this happen

The Council's largest investment in culture over this period (and until 2030) will be in the development and delivery of the Fashion Museum Bath. This will embody the aims and objectives of this cultural development plan.

This Development Plan aims to balance the needs of residents, and the opportunity for culture to improve people's lives, with the desire to support the vibrant visitor economy in BANES. It also recognises the need to understand and consider the different needs between urban and rural communities, urban centre and suburbs, heritage and contemporary culture and the different appetites across audience groups.

Fundamentally B&NES would like to use Culture to address some of the most pressing issues found here. These include the challenge of maintaining community cohesion in a polarised and changing environment and tackling the educational attainment gap between rich and poor.

The components are here to create a vibrant cultural landscape and B&NES feels that it can add the most value by understanding and facilitating the potential of the current and future cultural sector in the authority for the benefit of those who live, work and visit here.

CULTURE

We use ‘culture’ to mean: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, heritage buildings, music, theatre, the visual arts, festivals, location filming, important landscapes and natural spaces and large sporting events.

This is based on the Arts Council England (ACE) definition of culture. ACE don’t include festivals/events in their definition but mixed discipline community centric activity across the council make this an important strand of cultural activity in BANES

Heritage Buildings and location filming are also not included by ACE but are clearly important aspects of the cultural offer within BANES

In relation to place-making in BANES, and in Bath especially, sport is an important activity. The impact of Bath Rugby on the City, the local relevancy of Bath City FC and large events, such as Bath Half Marathon, warrant the addition of communal sporting activity in our definition.

The inclusion of the above additions also makes an alignment with the Visit West Destination Management Plan.

We also recognise that landscapes and natural spaces are also vitally important to the cultural offer in BANES:

- The green setting of the city is one of the outstanding universal values for which Bath is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- As an authority with many rural areas the connection to nature and the traditions associated with working and living in rural areas are hugely relevant
- Audiences who are in the market for cultural experiences are often also looking for experiences and green and blue spaces – combining these provides deeper outcomes for audiences

VISION:

Use culture to create social cohesion across Bath and North East Somerset helping to bind communities together

MISSION

Create a vibrant and inclusive cultural offering across BANES that contributes to the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of its residents and visitors.

We recognise the transformative power of culture to improve economic, health and wellbeing outcomes and see it as vital component in delivering B&NES’ vision to ‘improve people’s lives’

CONTEXT

Bath and North East Somerset

Bath and North East Somerset covers 136 sq miles with a population of 193,400 across 84,000 council tax households. It is a mix urban and rural communities with the largest population centre in the double inscribed UNESCO World Heritage City of Bath. Bath has a population of 94,000 which is swelled by around 40,000 students each year.

The Council

B&NES established a cultural strategy in 2011, covering the period up to 2026. This strategy was reviewed and updated in 2015. However, the infrastructure needed to implement the strategy faced challenges, including the dissolution of the B&NES Arts Development Team in February 2019. In May 2023, the Liberal Democrat manifesto included strong commitments to culture, leading to the creation of a new economic development and culture portfolio. In 2024 the council's Heritage Services was given formal responsibility to develop a new cultural strategy with the Service renamed as 'Culture and Heritage Services' and the Head of Service being nominated as the lead officer for Culture in the council.

Tackling the climate and nature emergency' is one of the council's core policies and we see culture as a key component of connecting and energising people behind this outcome.

Culture is one of the 9 priorities in the B&NES Corporate Strategy: Valuing and developing the contribution of culture to Bath and North East Somerset.

The council delivers a range of cultural activity which is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

Local Culture

BANES already has a well-established and recognised cultural and creative sector which delivers for both visitors and residents. It includes iconic heritage destinations in Bath, established festivals and events across the district and anchor institutions willing to play their part. There is a thriving creative industries scene which is home to over 1,155 creative industry businesses with a total creative economy value of £230m GVA. Locations across BANES are regularly used of TV and film location.

Over the past 4 years tv and film productions have generated an average of **130** filming days per year bringing in **£150,000** average revenue to the Council and **£2,700,000.00** direct spend into the local economy (Filming in England matrix). Each year, there are on average 150 events taking place on Council owned land and highways and this ranges from large scale events in our Heritage Parks, street markets, to community events in our Towns and Parishes. The scale ranges from headline concerts in Royal Victoria Park, to the Spring Fayre in Bath city centre, to community events like the Midsomer Norton Wassail.

Bath is well served by cultural provision. There are several independent Museums including the Holburne Museum, American Museum, Bath Abbey and Gardens and

those of Bath Preservation Trust. The National Trust own large areas of the green space around the city and is looking to redevelop the Assembly Rooms as a major new attraction in Bath. There are several small museums including the Museum of Bath at Work. There are also surprising connections in Bath including Emperor Haille Selassie who made Fairfield House his home during his exile from Ethiopia in the late 1930s. There is a vibrant festival scene including Bath Festivals, Curious Minds, Mozart Fest, Bath Carnival and Bathscape Walking Festival. There are several significant venues including the Theatre Royal, Komedia, The Forum and The Egg as well as two independent cinemas and a large Odeon.

Bath is the only double inscribed World Heritage Site in the UK and this underpins the cultural offer in the city and beyond. The hugely vibrant Visitor Economy in Bath is founded on the intrinsic qualities of the city for which it is inscribed as a World Heritage Site. The importance and management of these Outstanding Universal Values is detailed in the recently revised World Heritage Site Management plan.

The wider district cultural offer includes Radstock museum, Somerset & Dorset Railway, and Keynsham Abbey ruins There are several music and arts festivals and markets supported by the town councils and volunteers in Radstock, Midsomer Norton and Keynsham that attract large numbers e.g. Keynsham has the largest free music festival in Europe. Midsomer Norton attracted 3000 people to its recent free-to-access music and arts festival at the town's outdoor amphitheatre, and has welcomed over 10,000 visitors to its community cinema. Radstock is home to two new cultural spaces: Old Printworks Arts, a creative workspace, and Trinity Hub, a community hub and events space. The Somer Valley Walking Festival has become established in recent years led by the Somer Valley Rediscovered team that is reconnecting people to greenspaces in the historic Somerset Coalfield. Keynsham has over 200 local societies and groups mainly run by volunteers demonstrating there is high social capital in our area.

The rural landscapes of the district includes parts of two National Landscapes- the Cotswolds and Mendip Hills there are numerous cultural heritage attractions and activities. One of the largest events is Valley Fest a music and food event attracting 10,000 people. Many events are organised by local groups and societies and include art trails, open gardens and walks and tours of historic sites and villages.

Led by the council, partnership programmes such as Bathscape, Somer Valley Rediscovered and Chew Valley Reconnected all offer opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the cultural aspects of those areas, whether that be helping to restore features and learn or explore. Benefits include health and wellbeing for those who participate aswell as contributing to the rural economy as an element of green/cultural tourism.

Regional Context:

BANES does not exist in isolation and its situation within the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) area is a huge strength and opportunity. There is a thriving cultural and creative landscape across the MCA and the devolution agenda championed by central government provides the opportunity for BANES to be part of

a strong cultural ecosystem that extends across the region. The MCA has a Cultural Compact and Cultural Plan.

B&NES is an active participant in Visit West, the Local Visitor Economy Partnership. The Visit West region covers Bath, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. The Destination Management Plan is found here.

There is a wide cultural offer across the region that is complementary rather than competitive in offer. North Somerset has recently hosted a prominent activation, 'Sea Monster, as part of the Unboxed programme and has received £18m of Levelling up funding that will, in part, enhance their cultural offer. Bristol has a well developed cultural scene with some nationally significant independent operators such as SS Great Britain and the Old Vic alongside a longstanding council provision of museums and other cultural activity. South Gloucestershire has less of an established cultural economy but with the addition of the Wave, Aerospace Bristol, the major development at Brabazon (including a new arena) and the relocation of Bristol Zoo, it is becoming a destination in its own right.

BANES' proximity to London is a huge boost to it's cultural and visitor economy. The rail and road connections to the capital mean that BANES audience reach can extend to London. Bath receives many day-visitors and short-break visitors from London.

INSIGHTS

In the 10 years since the review of the previous Council Cultural Strategy there have been fundamental changes in the landscape in which the cultural sector operates.

Social media has heightened awareness of injustice, inequity, inequality, conflict, crisis, and systemic oppression, leading to audiences demanding organisations take an active stance, especially on social justice, climate and environmental issues.

The cultural sector was hit hard by COVID-19, with venues closing early and reopening late during lockdowns, resulting in financial difficulties. Many venues and festivals sought emergency funding, and some are still affected while dealing with the UK's cost-of-living crisis. COVID changed audience behaviour towards last-minute bookings and expecting hybrid or digital events.

Organisations have tested new approaches, creating opportunities to 'build back better.' B&NES values the sector's contribution to the economy, community, tourism, and wellbeing but acknowledges current challenges. Many organisations operate at full capacity with limited funds, reducing their ability to strategise.

There are two, key, overarching strategic pieces of work that inform the council's policy making:

Economic Strategy

Culture is referenced under the resilient business strand of the Strategy and the visitor economy features under stronger places.

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)
There is alignment between culture and each of the JHWS's four priorities. In relation to the first priority, *ensuring that children and young people are healthy and ready for learning and education*, all children and young people should have the opportunity to engage in cultural experiences and develop their cultural awareness. We know that cultural experiences can play a pivotal role in supporting social and emotional wellbeing, academic learning, and reducing inequalities in educational attainment.

Through nurturing a creative economy, the Cultural Strategy also has an important role in *improving skills, good work and employment*, the second JHWS priority.

Culture can help to build *compassionate and healthy communities*, the third JHWS priority, through for example being accessible and inclusive to all, and supporting outcomes such as reduced social isolation, self-confidence, and belonging.

Culture also has an important role to play in placemaking and *creating health promoting places*, the fourth JHWS priority, with cultural placemaking emphasising the role of culture, creativity, heritage assets, and innovative practice in making places more liveable.

The JHWS has a strong prevention focus. The strategy aligns with the Cultural strategy in several areas: it makes the explicit link between good work and employment - as such, it is an extension of the economic strategy

The wider policy environment is outlined in Appendix 2.

Key Issues in BANES:

- The Economy
  Economic growth in BANES has not kept pace with England and West of England. Growth in BANES is the lowest of all the local authorities in the West of England as well as amongst our statistical neighbours.

  The Creative Economy in Bath and North East Somerset is a diverse and productive part of our overall economy, with a range of mainly smaller businesses and institutions across the district. A key component of nurturing the Creative Economy in BANES identified by the Economic Strategy and Local Plan is the supply of creative workspaces across the district to keep up with demand across the range of creative industries requiring space. However, research commissioned by BANES has identified that the current supply of property is insufficient, with industrial floorspace in low supply, causing high levels of demand and competition. This competition is notable between creative workspaces and other higher yield and more viable uses such as housing, and particularly purpose-built student housing (PBSA). Moreover, notable community creative spaces have been lost, such as Creativity Works in Radstock in 2024 (an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation), and other workspace and studio space provision is unstable and often precarious due to sites pending redevelopment, or short-term lease tenancy.

- Children and young People
  The attainment gap between Free School Meal (FSM) and non-FSM pupils is consistently larger across all key stages in BANES than the gap seen nationally. In addition, KS2 attainment in the FSM cohort in B&NES is lower than their FSM cohort nationally, and was the lowest nationally in 2022/23 and 4th lowest in 2023/24. There is strong corporate and political support to address these entrenched inequalities. Poor educational attainment is linked to outcomes later on in life, such as lower income, and worse health compared to those who have better educational attainment.

- Deprivation Driving Health and wellbeing needs
  Overall, our residents live a good quality of life. Most of us are in good health and enjoy a good standard of living. Still, inequalities exist. Residents who live in areas with greater levels of deprivation or experience other forms of disadvantage are more likely to suffer from long-term illness, live in poor housing conditions and are unable to afford the healthier foods. In 2019/20, 9% of children and young people in BANES were estimated to be living in relative poverty (before housing costs) and in 2020 11.2% of the BANES population was considered fuel-poor (low-income, low energy efficiency methodology). The difference in life expectancy between our most deprived and least deprived areas is 10 years for women and 6.5 years for men. In addition, BANES has higher rates of poor health and wellbeing for some indicators, including higher hospital admissions for self-harm and mental health needs in young people, and higher than average (27%) residents experiencing loneliness often, always, or some of the time.

Bearing this in mind, the key target audiences for culture in BANES include:

Pupils with SEND	There were 2,230 children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) maintained by B&NES Council in January 2024.
Children and young people on free school meals To note: National data often refers to “disadvantaged” pupils which includes CYP on free school meals and those that are care-experienced” (see below).	At key stage 2: The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is large, with an attainment gap of 35% in B&NES compared to 22% nationally (2024). At key stage 2: Disadvantaged pupils doing less well in B&NES than nationally e.g. 33% reaching expected standard at KS2 compared to 46% nationally. B&NES disadvantaged cohort attainment ranks 5th lowest in England (2024). Number of children receiving FSM in 2025-4906

	Number of families receiving FSM in 2025 – 3088 (will be an additional approx. 600 families from September '25 (as LA will revert to opt out rather than opt in approach).
Children and young people that are care-experienced	As at 2024 there were 234 children in care in Bath and North East Somerset and 104 care leavers. Of these, 57 are unaccompanied asylum-seeking Children aged under and over 18.
Families living in poverty (absolute and relative poverty); a broader group than those on free school meals Absolute poverty = lacking access to basic resources such as food and shelter. Relative poverty = where an individual's income is significantly lower than the average income in their society, even if they can meet basic needs (after cost of housing).	The free school meals threshold excludes many families living in poverty. Families are only eligible for free school meals if their net annual income is more than £7,400. 1 in 11 (9%) children and young people in B&NES are estimated to be living in relative poverty (before housing costs), amounting to some 3,000 children and young people aged 0 to 15 (20% after housing costs). 1 in 5 CYP (approx. 1,500) are estimated to be living in absolute poverty. As of 18 October 2022, there were 9,358 people in B&NES receiving council tax support. Of these, 2449 (26%) were earning an income.
Economically inactive (potential to support skills development, confidence etc. through volunteering)	B&NES has the highest rates of 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the South West. 28% (6,700) of people who are economically inactive in B&NES want a job. This is much higher than the South West (19.5%) and Great Britain (18.4%).
Adults with mental and physical health conditions Opportunities for social prescribing into culture and heritage activities	The number of people with long-term mental and physical health conditions is rising. Banes has higher than average anxiety prevalence.
Adults with learning disabilities	B&NES has supported living accommodation for people with learning

	disabilities (link with Claire if further info needed).
Carers	20,000 people are estimated to be carers in B&NES. This figure is likely to increase as the population ages and more people care for elderly relatives. Unpaid carers report many difficulties including fatigue, worry and financial barriers.
Neighbourhoods	Twerton, Radstock and Keynsham South are wards with high levels of childhood poverty and unemployment, with Twerton in the top 5 wards in B&NES for high rates of long-term unemployment as well. Other areas with high rates of long-term unemployment include Midsomer Norton North, Paulton and Walcot.

BUILDING BLOCKS

There are a number of key activities that B&NES will take forward and will form part of the Council's approach to culture:

1. **The Fashion Museum**
    - The Council's largest investment in culture will be via its support for the Fashion Museum Project. This significant capital project will deliver on all the Strategic Priorities and Themes noted in this strategy.
    - The Fashion Museum will open at the Old Post Office realising the power of fashion to more people than ever and extending the reach and reputation of the internationally respected collection which was gifted to the city in 1955 and is exhibited worldwide. The museum will uncover the past, present, and future of fashion and its positive role in civic life, whilst being fully accessible for free for local people. We will champion designers, makers, manufacturers, and wearers and celebrate the diversity and complexity of fashion. We want to reach the widest possible audience by creating a dynamic, relevant, and meaningful encounter with fashion through a programme which will inspire, embolden, and empower and provide a window to the future of the fashion industry.
2. **Attainment Gap**
    - B&NES is taking a whole system approach to reducing the educational attainment gap. A core factors contributing to the attainment gap includes inequitable cultural capital and this is evidenced in BANES by

the different levels of engagement with cultural opportunities by children, young people from different socio-economic backgrounds. This is exacerbated by the large rural communities and challenges with public transport alongside the concentration of cultural activity in Bath.

- As such it is vital that the B&NES Cultural Strategy helps to address the educational attainment gap by increasing social capital, aspiration and social mobility in children and young people from disadvantaged families; for example, by supporting skills and knowledge development, enhancing opportunities for expressing identity and feeling belonging, and reducing barriers to participating in the cultural and heritage offer.
- A range of action will support this work and will be tracked via the 'Be Well BANES' Steering Group and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

3. **Council Plans for Place**

Culture is an important factor in boosting the vibrancy of towns and cities, and a healthy number of the Council's cultural activities are delivered through its existing regeneration and green infrastructure programmes, which are predominantly grant-funded by external bodies and delivered in partnership with community organisations and other bodies. There is a strong existing programme of cultural activity in Bath's Milsom Quarter and Bath Central Riverside, complementing arts-led regeneration schemes throughout the district, in Twerton, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock. This includes the creation of meanwhile use community spaces, outdoor event spaces, public art installations, street dressing and murals, as well as providing funding and administrative support for community festivals and other cultural programming.

B&NES will seek to embed Culture into:

- The Local Plan
- The Regeneration Action Plan for Keynsham Town Centre
- The Masterplanning exercise for Midsummer Norton
- The Pride in Place funding recently announced for Twerton and Whiteway
- The Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan

B&NES will also seek to work in partnership with parish councils and community stakeholders to co-create projects which ensure that there is exceptional, community-led cultural provision across BANES

We will also deliver the Libraries for Life Strategy and the Greener Place Plan both of which have strong cultural component.

4. **Implementing a strategy to increase creative workspace in B&NES**

    - There is potential to harness greater economic, social and community benefits from greater clustering[1] of the creative industries within B&NES.
    - This Creative Workspaces Strategy commits to addressing this gap and growing market failure through a cohesive policy approach that aims to retain existing space, and boosting the supply of appropriate, affordable creative workspaces through the following action plan interventions:
        - Support the clustering of creative workspace;
        - Working through partnership with key organisations and the private sector to locate new opportunities;
        - Trialling meanwhile-use and pilot projects to boost short-term supply and test site viability;
        - Using council assets that are under-utilised to provide further supply of workspace;
        - Focussing support on the Somer Valley area, and;
        - Protecting industrial sites and employment land allocations that support workspace

5. **Working with the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority**

    - B&NES will continue to engage with Visit West and the MCA to further the aims of the cultural sector within BANES.
    - The recent announcement by central government of additional creative industries funding for the MCA region is an example of an opportunity for the cultural sector in BANES to benefit from its location in the MCA region

6. **The Bath Social Impact Network: Culture**

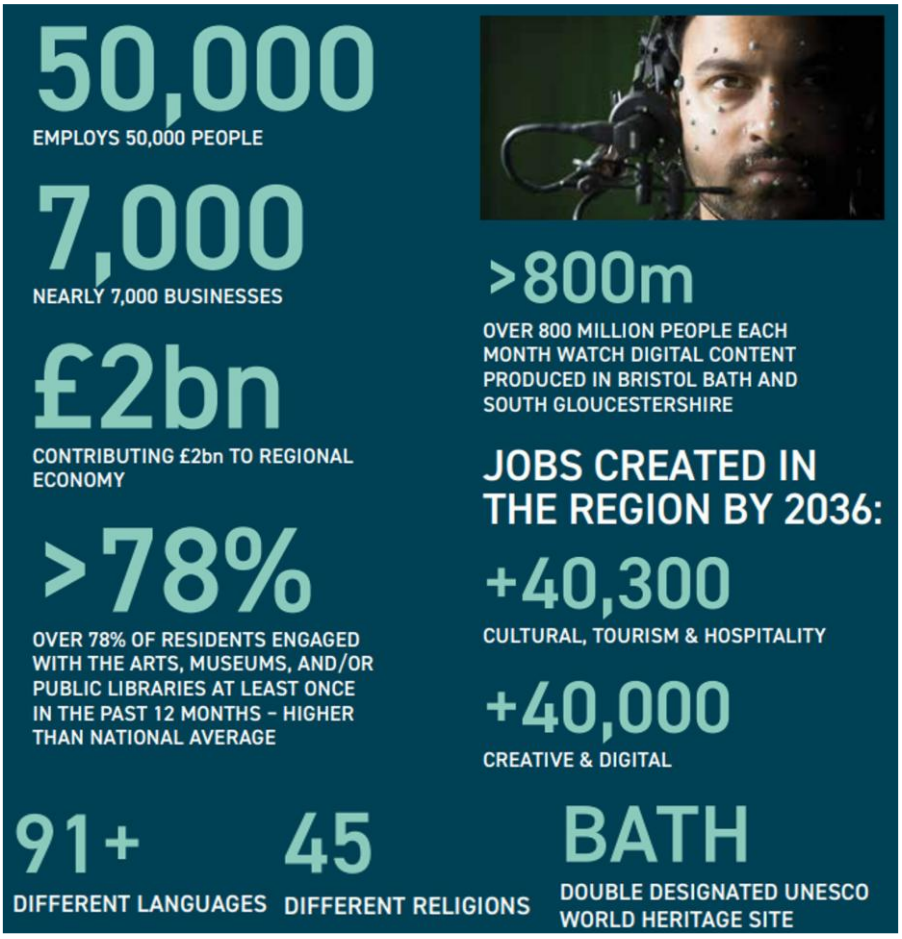
    - The council has committed to partnering with Bath Spa University to help establish a cultural network for BANES. The network will be a way for the sector to hear from the Council and the Council to listen to the sector. It will be a vital tool in establishing a cultural strategy and will be a key mechanism to consult with the sector. The network will also be an important mechanism to develop long-term relationships with funders including ACE and the MCA Cultural Compact as well as becoming a vehicle to coordinate and bring together funding bids to bring funding from external bodies into BANES. It can also be a way to commission relevant research and data gathering exercises

[1] Clustering: formally and informally-linked networks of creative organisations operating in a focused geographical area

The Sector

The West of England Growth Strategy recognises the importance of culture and creativity to the growth and prosperity of the region. As the plan states: We're a region where culture, leisure and nature serve as rocket boosters to our economy: attracting people, investment and creating a unique environment.

The West of England Cultural Plan was produced by the West of England Combined Authority and launched in 2022. This Plan notes the regional context, particularly the value of the creative industries in the South West having grown by 27% since 2010. Further, the Plan recognises that the region is known for being a 'powerhouse for innovation and invention'. The Cultural Plan notes the following strengths in the regional cultural ecosystem:



CULTURAL AUDIT

In late 2024 and early 2025 an audit of 'hard (venues and attractions) and soft (individuals and groups without a fixed venue)' cultural infrastructure across B&NES was undertaken. This was funded by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority under their Culture West programme.

The initial audit surveyed 100 respondents and produced an interactive map as well as some recommendations for change. The audit is included as in Appendix 3 of this plan. Recommendations included:

- **Tourism**: Respondents recognise that inbound tourism is crucial for B&NES budget. Balancing this with support for local creatives and cultural activities for residents is essential.
- Recommendation:
    - Provide targeted support for projects, venues, or events offering free or low-cost options for locals
    - If a tourist tax is introduced, ensure a portion supports inclusive cultural activities for residents.
- **Venues:** A lack of access to hire spaces and affordable venues was raised by respondents.
- Recommendation:
    - Particularly where new homes are being built, are policies could be put in place to protect existing public spaces, venues and events
- **Commissioning**: Only 15% of respondents said they had delivered commissioned work for B&NES or a civic partner organisation. The majority said the work was valued under £10k
- Recommendation:
    - B&NES to work to support uptake in commissioning via toolkits and active creation and promotion of opportunities
- **Events:** The frustrations of promoting and delivering events within BANES was raised. A more coherent voice on this from the sector, with specific common challenges identified, would enable B&NES to consider how policies and processes can be improved to support grassroots and hyper-local cultural events to take place.
- Recommendation:
    - To meet with artists, producers and community organisers to jointly identify the key challenges, and bring this voice to decision-making around town centre management.
- **Children, Young People and Families**: Increase the offer for children, young people and families who tend to travel less far for their cultural activity. There

could be a gap between levels of provision for children 0-18 and the proportion of the population in that age bracket.

- Recommendation:
  - Look in more detail at organisations that selected ‘all ages’ to establish whether their offer is likely to appeal to those under 18
- **Freelancers and micro organisations:** 51% of respondents who invested time in completing the questionnaire were freelancers / sole traders or micro organisations. Many of these mentioned the ongoing challenge of raising funds, feeling supported, feeling connected and securing job opportunities in BANES.
- Recommendation:
  - Considering how best to support these people and organisations. Options include networking, workspace, easy access grants, training and qualifications and business development support.
- **Volunteers:** There seems to be lots of opportunities for volunteers to play an important role in cultural activity across BANES.
- Recommendation:
  - Consider convening organisations that engage with volunteers to learn more about the roles they play and how the most can be made of, and for, these cohort.
- **Investment:** Identified as a potential growth area for the sector in BANES, but acknowledging the challenge of the current financial climate and the challenge of increasing investment from private giving, trusts and foundations and businesses in an equitable way.
- Recommendation:
  - That the Cultural Development Plan considers the role increasing private investment can play in supporting the sector and any levers at B&NES’ disposal to encourage equitable distribution of private investment
- **A cohesive network:** Respondents spoke about the lack of cohesion and network, lack of ‘joined-up thinking’ or place to find out what is going on.
- Recommendation:
  - To explore directly with the sector what form this could take and how existing networks can be complemented and built upon.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Taking the strategic context into account there are some clear objectives that the Cultural Strategy will be required to achieve.

It is under these outcomes that the action plan in Appendix 4 has been created.

Some case studies are noted below. These are drawn from the huge range of cultural activity that occurs across BANES. The ones selected here have been chosen only to demonstrate the breadth of activity that occurs already across the Authority area.

1. **Health and Wellbeing**

   Leveraging cultural activities to improve the lives of all people across B&NES, with a focus on target communities such as young people and those from deprived areas, and addressing issues such as inclusion, inequalities and cultural capital.

   Why?

   The health and wellbeing of residents is enshrined as a key council priority exemplified by the Joint Health and Wellbeing strategy. As such, the Council is already working to tackle some of the most significant health related issues in the Authority. Culture and creativity have an undeniable positive impact on an individual's health and wellbeing - both directly and through the wider determinants of health - and are an important aspect of the Council's approach to the Health and Wellbeing of residents. Evidence supports the use of cultural strategies to improve family cultural capital, a significant factor in the educational attainment gap between children and young people. Access to cultural opportunities and experiences has also been linked to improved mental health and wellbeing.

   There is some recent research that support these assertations here alongside the work undertaken and collated by the DCMS here.

   What are the challenges and opportunities?

   Whilst overall health and wellbeing is good in BANES there are significant socio-economic inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes and life-expectancy, as well as significant needs that come with an ageing population and increasing mental health needs. These issues are well understood and there are a number of existing strategies into which culture can be integrated to help affect change where it is most needed. Culture can be a key driver of for happiness, socialisation, life experiences and learning for everyone.

   What is the change we'd like to see?

   By 2027, we will be moving to a place where culture and creativity will significantly enhance the health and wellbeing of all B&NES residents. This will be achieved by ensuring that culture is accessible and inclusive for all our communities, everyone feels that the diverse range of cultural and heritage

offers belong to them, and we create more spaces and places where culture happens, including by taking cultural offers to where people are. Key activities to promote will include social prescribing into cultural offers, pro-active engagement of under-represented groups and those experiencing inequalities (including through education settings and third sector partners), and promoting volunteering and community led projects. Action planning related to existing Public Health strategies will have clear cultural inclusions, and external cultural organisations will have a clear understanding of the health and wellbeing needs that their cultural projects can support.

How are we going to bring about this change?

We will work across the council to identify opportunities for culture to support public health outcomes for residents. Council teams delivering cultural activities will need to clearly identify which health and wellbeing needs they are targeting, why and for which population groups, and how they will measure and report on the efficacy of their work. The plans to develop the new Fashion Museum Bath will have a clear health and wellbeing theme, including addressing issues of inclusion and equity, with a significant proportion of the activity plan focussed on this area.

Key Actions

- Deliver cultural activities to communities most affected by the attainment gap, focusing on skills, aspiration, and outcomes. Do this using existing Services such as Heritage, Libraries, Regeneration and Green Transformation.
- Provide free school visits to schools with 30% or more students eligible for free school meals at Heritage Services Properties.
- Embed an outreach officer in the Fashion Museum project to engage children and young people at risk of low educational attainment.
- Map cultural provision for children and young people (ages 13–18) and develop an action plan to remove barriers to engagement.
- Implement the Libraries for Life Strategy.
- Engage with the emerging Social Prescribing Framework.

Case Study

Voices for life

Voices for Life is a children's music and wellbeing charity based in Bath that focuses on supporting children through singing workshops. It operates across Bath, North East Somerset, and surrounding areas. Over the last five years the charity has reached over 31,000 children delivering transformation musical and wellbeing experiences. Their impact reporting shows that those pupils who engaged in the workshops saw a dramatic improvement in self confidence and the ability to build positive relationships. It is this sort of cultural activity that can be used to help address the attainment gap in BANES as well as supporting the wellbeing of young people more widely.

“The high-quality workshops and incredible performance opportunities provide all our children, including those experiencing disadvantage or pupils with SEND, the opportunity to feel included, grow in confidence and see themselves in ways that the would otherwise not be able to. We have clear examples of the impact of this work on individual children and how their increased self-esteem and self- belief impacts beyond this experience back in the classroom” – Donna Tandy, CEO Palladian Academy, 2024

“Creative, emotionally resonant interventions can play a vital role in re-engaging pupils at risk of exclusion, supporting emotional development, and fostering a sense of belonging – all of which are foundational to improving long-term educational outcomes” – C. Lampert, Headteacher, St Marys Primary School Writhlington.

2. **Place-shaping**

Embedding B&NES' distinct identity as a centre of culture, creativity, heritage, and beauty in council policy making. Integrating culture into the Council's infrastructure planning to ensure it delivers on the wider Cultural Strategy's outcomes and objectives. There is also a broader societal issue at play in relation to the loss of physical spaces where we might come together, and the radicalisation of some of the digital spaces that have replaced them. The Council is the best places organisation to create, facilitate and maintain spaces where solidarity might thrive in an attempt to combat the loosening of social cohesion seen across the country.

Why?

B&NES recognises that culture and heritage can transform a place – making it somewhere people want to live work and visit. The council is now taking a place shaping approach bringing together various services in the council to create sustainable places and communities. Work is being led by the Place

and Regeneration Service in Sustainable Economy with Programme Managers for specific place teams for – Bath, Keynsham & Saltford and Somer Valley. The Place teams will engage with the councils plans to deliver ambitious housing targets (14,800 additional by 2042) and range of transport projects. All these major pieces of work that could have positive impacts on the cultural landscape across BANES.

What are the challenges and opportunities?

Geography and infrastructure pose a challenge – there is a paucity of creative workspace and public transport that requires improvements to meet need of residents, visitors and those working in the cultural sector. It is also much easier to capture audiences for culture in Bath than it is in the more rural places across the district. The sector often finds it hard to make culture happen in their places – frustrated by a perceived culture within the council that can't be flexible enough to make changes required. However, with significant plans to affect change across the authority (as described in key council documents such as the Corporate Strategy, Economic Strategy, Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Green Infrastructure Plan, Housing Plan, Regeneration prospectus, Journey to Net Zero amongst others), the council can use the existing resources at its disposal to integrate culture into its vision for the future.

What is the change we'd like to see?

By 2027 culture will be well integrated into the new Local Plan. There will be a council 'view' of the different places across BANES with a clear articulation of the place for culture within key council strategies. Those wishing to make culture happen in their place will find it easy to engage with the council and get the outcomes they want.

How are we going to bring about this change?

Officers across the council will work to ensure that culture is integrated into their strategies and plans creating or transforming places to improve the quality of life for residents, support growth, and foster vibrant, sustainable communities. Culture will be integrated into the council's approach to place shaping . Those teams responsible for facilitating cultural activity will engage with the sector to work through how their processes and approaches could evolve to make it as easy as possible for cultural activity to occur. We will continue to develop our plans for the Fashion Museum Bath to act as a catalyst for regeneration of the Milsom Quarter.

Key Actions

- The Council will shift its approach to support and enable cultural activity by others. This includes reviewing delivery arrangements, collaborating with cultural providers, and removing barriers such as fees and administrative hurdles.
- Integrate culture into strategic council plans, including the Local Plan

- Develop and endorse a Cultural Infrastructure Plan for key locations in B&NES
- Standardise monitoring and evaluation of cultural initiatives.
- Partner with parish councils and community stakeholders to co-create exceptional cultural projects.

Case Study:

Somer Vallery Re-Discovered

The Somer Valley Rediscovered (SVR) project is using culture as a powerful driver of place-shaping, strengthening local identity and deepening people's connection to the landscape. By blending nature recovery with cultural expression, SVR creates shared experiences that root communities in their environment. Over 100 events—most notably the revived Wassail celebration—bring residents together through folk traditions, craft, performance, and storytelling. These activities reinforce intergenerational bonds and celebrate the distinct heritage of the Somer Valley, transforming greenspaces into cultural gathering points rather than passive backdrops.

SVR's volunteering programme further embeds stewardship as part of the area's cultural fabric, while green social prescribing activities support wellbeing and social inclusion, making nature-based culture accessible to more people. The project's audio trails enrich everyday journeys with local history and folklore, turning the landscape into a living cultural narrative. Together, these initiatives cultivate pride, belonging, and a stronger, more connected sense of place.

3. **Creative Economy**

Ensuring that the Creative Industries feel supported in BANES and that people of all ages can develop their creative skills with pathways into employment.

Why?

In 2023, BANES was home to 1,155 creative industry businesses, with a total creative economy value to the district of £230m GVA per annum - a comparably higher GVA per job relative to other sectors. This sectoral value is anticipated to increase to £271m GVA p.a. by 2030. Creative industries play to our area's strengths in terms of graduates from both our local universities, our residents' skills profiles, and through the fact that most of our creative economy is represented by micro businesses which reflects the profile of BANES as a location for SMEs.

What are the challenges and opportunities?

The conditions exist in BANES for the creative industries to thrive. With two universities and a quality further education provider in Bath College, there are already partners working to improve skills and pathways into employment. There are a good number of existing creative businesses and proximity to Bristol provides an ecosystem that creative activity in BANES can thrive on. Most recently the MCA has been identified for additional central government funding to support the creative industries.

However, the BANES area is experiencing a supply deficit in creative workspace - particularly for artists' studio spaces - that constrains a range of sub-sectors across our creative industries.

The ability to find affordable housing is also a challenge to a sector that is traditionally less well paid than some others. Without improvements to the overall supply of affordable housing, and/or improved transport connectivity across the region, the creative industries may struggle to evolve in BANES.

What is the change we'd like to see?

By 2027 there is a clear approach from the Council to improve the supply of creative workspace. The Council are also supporting skills programmes that provide a pipeline into the creative industries with a focus on young people from deprived communities.

How are we going to bring about this change?

We will create and action a creative workspace strategy, engage with the MCA to ensure BANES received funding to support the creative industries and continue to pursue our ambitious skills programmes. There will be a focus on engaging young people from deprived communities. We will integrate creative industries skills programming into our activity plan for the new Fashion Museum.

Key Actions

- Adopt and implement the Creative Workspace Strategy to increase supply of affordable, appropriate workspaces.
- Work with the MCA to secure and distribute creative industries funding to B&NES-based organisations.
- Partner with Bath Spa University to establish a cultural network for B&NES. This network will facilitate dialogue between the sector and the Council, support funding bids, and coordinate research and data collection to inform strategy

Case Study:

Theatre Royal – Venue 4

Venue 4 expands Theatre Royal Bath's community offer by providing an intimate, fully equipped 40–50 seat rehearsal and performance space designed to open access to those traditionally excluded from the city's cultural infrastructure. Emerging from three years of community consultation, the venue directly addresses the shortage of affordable, well-resourced creative space in Bath, particularly for local artists, young people, and communities under-represented in the cultural sector. With flexible facilities, subsidised charity rates, and producer support, Venue 4 enables participation ranging from guided workshops to devised performance and early-stage R&D. It will serve Engage programme participants, Bath Spa University graduates, and community partners including Achieve Together, BEMSCA, and Twerton and Whiteway networks. By offering a supportive, professional environment in which marginalised or low-income creatives can build confidence, skills and visibility, Venue 4 redistributes cultural opportunity and strengthens community cohesion while contributing to Bath's wider cultural identity.

Old Print Works Radstock

Old Printworks Arts hosts a programme of activities that creates community and supports skills development and career building for creative people. The programme of adult community learning is designed to support people facing challenges to accessing these types of resources, due to isolation, mental health challenges, low income or career gaps and other types of stigmatisation. Old Print Works is operated by Little Lost Robot CIC which is a not for profit collective of artists making work and teaching creative skills They create community and support learning and practicing employability skills and career development for creative people.

4. **Visitor Economy**

   Creating cultural experiences that attract visitors locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Continuing to ensure that Bath is a primary location for filming and the screen tourism that can follow it.

   Why?

   The City of Bath already attracts millions of visitors each year. It is a world class cultural centre boosted by a strong tourist economy driven by the attributes that have seen the city twice inscribed by UNESCO on the World Heritage list. Bath acts as a honeypot which can then support visitor economy businesses across the district. There is a strong Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) in Visit West with a clear Destination Management Plan to help bring visitors into BANES. There is also a vibrant set of outdoor events across BANES, facilitated and enabled by the council.

   Bath is famous as a destination for film and television. This has a demonstrable impact on the visitor economy as the popularity of screen tourism continues to grow. In 2025 Visit Britain research highlights 9 out of 10 potential visitors to the UK have been positively influenced by film or TV. Visit West's 2023 survey reported that 21% of visitor's said that television had played a part in motivating their visit. This translates to over a million visitors a year being motivated in part to visit Bath by what they've seen of the city on television. The same survey notes that 28% of day visitors associated the area with Bridgerton. The TV series has spawned a whole new industry of

Bridgerton tours and experiences in the city. Bridgerton series 1 was viewed in 82 million+ households worldwide and generated an estimated £8.4m for the local economy in the financial year 2023-2024, £3.4m from filming and £5m from Bridgerton tourism. Other key productions include Wonka, Persuasion, McDonald and Dodds, The Outlaws, A Good Girl's Guide to Murder and First Dates

What are the challenges and opportunities?

The symbiosis that links the cultural landscape and visitor economy in Bath means that there is an existing brand and market for the cultural sector to capitalise on. The council's owns and operates one of the most significant visitor economy businesses in the UK - the Roman Baths. This means that B&NES is uniquely invested in needing to support and grow visitors to the city. Bath also has a high student population who can be encouraged to make the most of the cultural offer across BANES as well as the cultural sector benefiting from the Visiting Friends and Relatives effect. However, there are seasonal peaks and troughs in visitor numbers to the city that it would be advantageous to smooth out. It is also desirable to increase the number of visitors staying longer and spending more across the whole of BANES.

Working in partnership with stakeholders the council support in the region of 150 events taking place per annum which deliver economic benefit from spend and jobs in the area.

B&NES runs the Bath Film Office which encourages and facilitates location filming in the city.

What is the change we'd like to see?

By 2027 there should be a clear cultural calendar for BANES that responds to the visitor market opportunities – either to draw visitors into BANES at times when historically they are less likely to visit or to capitalise on the busier times to the financial sustainability of the visitor economy. The council will help facilitate this calendar and work with sector to help make culture happen to the benefit of the sector, residents and visitors.

The Council will actively state that its policy is to encourage location filming and outdoor events in the City with the express benefit of immediate and down-stream economic activity.

How are we going to bring about this change?

B&NES will work with Bath Spa University to establish a cultural network that can offer advice and guidance on visitor trends. Cultural activity undertaken by the Council will need to actively consider its role in supporting the visitor economy and how it will measure and demonstrate this impact.

Key Actions

- Continue investment in the Roman Baths to preserve heritage, support Council finances, and underpin Bath's visitor economy.
- Advance the Fashion Museum Bath project as a flagship cultural initiative.
- Clarify the visitor economy's importance to Council financial viability and regional economic growth.
- Establish a cultural calendar in partnership with Visit West and other stakeholders.
- Support B&NES as a filming destination and quantify its economic benefits.

Case Study:

National Trust - Assembly Rooms

Conservation and construction work is currently underway at Bath Assembly Rooms to transform the building for a new Georgian visitor experience and to re-establish it as a place for 21st-century assembly for the people of Bath and beyond. The project is a major investment into the cultural scene of the city, designed to encourage visitors to extend their stay. The new visitor offer being created adds to the Georgian story of Bath, complementing the existing Georgian stories already told in the city. 'Reconnecting the Rooms' a National Lottery Funded Project aims to bring people together in new ways, bringing back the original ethos of Bath Assembly Rooms – a place to serve all people, where all people are welcome. Working with a wide range of partners the project aims to reduce loneliness, improve connection to the city's heritage, and create skills development opportunities. This work extends outwards to the communities of Radstock, Twerton and Snow Hill.

Valley Fest

Valley Fest, held at Chew Valley Lake, significantly boosts the local West Country economy by attracting visitors, increasing hospitality revenue, and showcasing local food producers. The goal is to promote ethical food and farming whilst providing a fantastic musical soundtrack. As a popular event, it creates jobs, supports regional suppliers, and acts as a major economic catalyst for the community. It has a strong emphasis on local food and drink meaning that regional farmers, chefs, and artisans benefit directly from the festival's supply chains, keeping revenue within the local economy.

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

There will be some cross cutting themes that will help shape the Cultural Development Plan

These will be woven throughout the action plans that support the identified Strategic Objectives and may have actions associated with them individually. They will provide a further way of measuring the success of the Cultural Development Plan.

- **Inclusivity**
  Why is this a theme?

  All parts of the cultural community in BANES must feel that the cultural plan is relevant to them. Demonstrable efforts will be made to ensure a wide range of cultural activities that are accessible to all. Measures will be developed to target groups that have been identified as traditionally under-served by the culture sector, e.g. young people and those from deprived areas. Audiences should also have a voice in cultural policy making.

  What is the change we'd like to see?
  In 2027 residents across BANES will feel that there is cultural activity happening that is both relevant and accessible to them and engage with these activities without experiencing barriers. Engagement from traditionally under-served communities will increase through collaborative engagement work with the third sector and other community organisations, e.g. faith groups, youth clubs. All communities will see themselves represented in the cultural sector and young people will perceive that a career in the creative industries could be for them irrespective of their background.

  How are we going to bring about that change?
  The council will aim to extend Discovery Card uptake into all communities across BANES with a focus on areas of deprivation.

  We will create more spaces and places where culture happens, including by taking cultural offers into communities and community settings, and using cultural locations as destinations for other interventions that broaden their appeal (e.g. baby clinics in cultural venues).

  The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training developed by Culture & Heritage Services will be rolled out to all Council staff undertaking cultural activity.

  The Council will actively seek to engage traditionally underserved communities by collecting data on the audiences engaged by its own cultural activity and will establish a survey for cultural organisations to engage with that will also collect audience data. More coordinated work with health and voluntary and community partners will also assist in this endeavour.

The Council will support the Citizen's Assembly for Culture planned for autumn 2025 and consider how resident voices and active engagement can be brought into cultural policy making and strategy going forward.

- **Environment sustainability**

  Why is this a theme?

  In-line with the council's declaration of climate and ecological emergencies the cultural strategy should help the cultural sector in BANES to be more environmentally sustainable and climate resilient as well as helping audiences to engage with these topics in a positive and impactful way. The council has adopted the Economic Doughnut Model in underpinning its approach to improving people lives and in preparing for the future. It will evaluate decisions and actions in order that they seek to meet or address social and economic foundations or needs, without exceeding environmental capacity, moving BANES towards a more resilient, greener and fairer economy.

  What is the change we'd like to see?

  By 2027, environmental responsibility will be automatically considered by partners when developing projects, as a primary consideration rather than an afterthought. We will communicate our stance on environmental responsibility to our audiences, providing clear explanations of our actions and the motivations behind them. Culture will be used as a tool to engage audiences in discussions about sustainable practices and to foster innovative solutions.

  How are we going to bring about that change?

  The Sustainability Manager currently employed by Culture and Heritage Services will extend her remit to cover the Council's wider approach to culture and will work with the Climate and Environment Service to ensure appropriate advice and support is provided and in assessing impacts of cultural activity with regards meeting the councils targets for net zero and nature positive by 2030.and attractions are climate resilient B&NES will continue to maintain and improve the parks and green spaces under its care meaning they can continue to play an important role in the cultural life of our places.

- **Financial sustainability**

  Why is this a theme?

  A key concern of the sector is the lack of funding to support new and emerging work and practitioners as well as the ongoing viability of established institutions and groups. The cultural development plan must be focussed on ways in which the council can support the financial sustainability of the sector – this could be direct grants but can also extend to waiving fees and charges, marketing support and support for fundraising activities

What is the change we'd like to see?

By 2027 it will be clear to external parties how to work with council to secure third party funding for their activities. There will be a clear and transparent way for cultural organisations to discuss council support for their activities through the alleviation of fees and charges. It will be as easy as possible to work with the council to deliver cultural activity reducing the resources required to make culture happen.

How are we going to bring about that change?

The council to work with partners to develop a cohort of projects suitable for joint applications to public funders, trusts, and foundations. By working together and focusing on strategic priorities, we can strengthen applications and improve success rates. By working to create a cultural network this partnership will become easier. B&NES will build relationships with funders to highlight the excellent cultural activity which happens across the area..

- **Quality, Experimentation and Creativity**
  Why is this a theme?

  It's important that the cultural sector continues to achieve a quality output but also one where new and exciting work and opportunities are championed

  What is the change we'd like to see?
  There is a vibrant cultural calendar in BANES of both long established events and activities but also a continuing stream of work new to the area. Across a range of cultural disciplines there is award winning activity that attracts funding, new audiences and media coverage.

  How are we going to bring about that change?

  We will continue to monitor the cultural activities and organisations in BANES by repeating the audit of cultural infrastructure at regular intervals. The Council will work to support not just those organisation and individuals it has historically but actively look to work with new and emerging talent.

Appendix 1 - Existing Council Cultural Activity

B&NES does not have a defined culture team or cultural service. Cultural activities is currently dispersed across a number of different Services:

- Heritage Services (Sustainable Communities Directorate)
    - Operate the Roman Baths, Clore Learning Centre, Victoria Art Gallery, Bath Record Office and World Heritage Centre and are looking to deliver a major capital project Fashion Museum and Collections Store
    - The Head of Heritage Services sit on the Board of Visit West, the WECA Cultural Compact and the B&NES specific 'Bath's Cultural and Creative Ambition Group' that reports into the Council's Future Ambition Board.
    - Heritage Services had a turn-over of £18m in 23/24 and realised a net profit of £8.2m which was returned to the Council. The Service has 150 FTE staff. This compliment increases in-line with seasonal demand.
    - The Heritage Services 5 year Business Plan can be found here
    - Heritage Services administers the Discovery Card scheme which provides free access to the Roman Baths and Victoria Art Gallery for local residents alongside a range of discounts across the cultural, leisure and hospitality industry.

- Regeneration (Sustainable Communities)
    - Delivers grant funded (for the most part) re-generation activities across the authority including public realm improvements, pop-up cultural venues and activities and the facilitation of festivals and cultural infrastructure

- Green Infrastructure (GI) (Sustainable Communities)
    - A key outcome of the Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery Team's programme of strategic GI projects is to 'Create and maintain valued healthy landscapes: Design and deliver high quality GI that improves local sense of place and protects and enhances landscape character and the natural, cultural and heritage services that they provide.' (West of England Joint GI Strategy)
    - One aspect of the UNESCO inscription associated with the Bath World Heritage site is the city's green setting. – The Bathscape partnership project, established in 2018 with Heritage Lottery Funding has been engaging people in exploring, learning and restoring this landscape. Engagement includes 1744 walkers at 4 annual walking festivals, 103 people trained and 2566 people participating in events to explore the landscape.
    - Somer Valley Rediscovered current 5 year project focuses on the historic landscape of the Somersetshire Coalfield restoring and enhancing connectivity between the settlements, green and blue infrastructure and access to nature.

- Community & Compliance (Place Management, Sustainable Communities)
  Events Office

    - Supported 99 events and festivals across 476 event days in the last year, ranging from large-scale commercial events eg Michael Bublé concert to small community events eg Firs Field
    - Generates an income to the Local Authority through the hire of Council owned land, and for internal B&NES teams *(eg Parking Services, Traffic Management, Licensing etc).*
    - Delivery of Council-led events are managed by the Events Office team and they also work in partnership with stakeholders eg Bath BID, Bath British Legion, Mayors Office, to deliver partnership events. Events included Summer Sundays, King Charles III Proclamation Day, Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee, Tour of Britain and Tour Series. Remembrance Sunday events are delivered by the Events Office in partnership with Bath British Legion and the Mayor's Office.
    - The Events Office hosts a bi-monthly Cultural Events Group to identify gaps and to coordinate a year-round calendar of events.

      Bath Christmas Market

    - The Bath Christmas Market team deliver and market the Bath Christmas Market event on behalf of the Local Authority. The event generates an income for related Council teams including Parking Services and Licensing. For details on the event Thursday 23rd November to Sunday 10th December 2023 see Christmas Markets

      Bath Film Office

    - The city of Bath, its heritage buildings and its surrounding heritage green spaces are an attractive destination for filming and they are the backdrop to many domestic and international films and television productions*, including Bridgerton, McDonald and Dodds and The Outlaws.*
    - Working closely with Visit West, the Film Office generated 90 plus pieces of national and international media coverage in one month, promoting the cultural profile of the area.
    - Generates an income to the Local Authority via internal teams including Heritage Buildings, Property Services, Parking Services and Highways. There is an economic benefit to the area from production crew spend and film tourism.

- Parks (Sustainable Communities)
    - There are a number of authority runs parks across the district. Some of these, such as Parade Gardens, Royal Victoria Park and Sydney Gardens are key pieces of green infrastructure within Bath relevant to the UNESCO inscription and the heritage of the City.

- Library Services (Business Change and Customer Services, Resources Directorate)
    - The Library Service operate 3 core libraries – Bath Central Library, Keynsham Library Information and Advice Services and Midsomer Norton Library Information and Advice Services, – as well as a Mobile Library Service. Two of the libraries offer access to council services, and the service as a whole is part of the Customer Service Team
    - The Library Service works in partnership with 11 Community Run Libraries.
    - The Library Service is one of 7 authorities in a consortium, Libraries West, which brings all lendable books and other items into a single catalogue, providing over 2.5 million items for customers to borrow. The Customer Services Business Manager sits on the Libraries West Board.
    - The Library Service has 31,000 members and had an annual footfall of 333,000 in the core libraries in 2022-23. Customers borrow an average 34,000 physical and 13,000 digital items each month.
    - The Libraries host an ongoing programme of cultural activities in addition to books, to support, educate and entertain. The Mobile Library provides weekly outreach events. Our social media engagement supports and promotes our events, resource, Library themes and organisational initiatives
    - The Library Service provides a wide range of other resources such as free computer access and wi-fi to support customers. The spaces themselves are a resource, providing safe warm places, sensory spaces, children's engagement activities, study areas and a venue for other partners to use to support customers.
    - The Library Service is guided by the Service Strategy, national Universal Library Offers and our developing strategy - Libraries for Life.

- Music Services

  B&NES works in partnership with other Council's to deliver Music Services to residents. This work is summarised here.

Appendix 2 – Policy Context

- Economic Strategy
  - Pillar: Stronger Place
    Objective: Enabling all people and places to share in prosperity
    Priority:
    Drive a sustainable and innovative visitor economy

  - Pillar: Resilience Business
    Objective: Building a diverse, creative and sustainable business base
    Priority:
    Nurturing emerging sectors and specialisms including culture and creative

  - Pillar: Creativity and Innovation
    Objective: Establishing Bath and North East Somerset as a centre for scientific and health academic excellence, inclusive innovation and creativity.
    Priorities:
    Maximise local benefits of B&NES leading innovation assets;
    Promote B&NES as an innovation testbed;
    Ensure all sectors and business are supported to innovate;
    Create spaces for creativity to thrive across B&NES.

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

  Bath and North East Somerset remains a broadly healthy place to live with a high quality of life, many people throughout our district suffer from mental health difficulties, are out of work, and are experiencing isolation. This is contributed to by a range over interacting factors across health, environment and socioeconomic building blocks – the latter having the most influence on our physical and emotional health, and include things such as our financial situation, education, community, family and social support, employment, transport and leisure. The aim of supporting more accessible, affordable and engaging places to work and be creative throughout the district is an important aim in achieving the priorities of the B&NES Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The following priorities and delivery actions provide further policy support for a more accessible and inclusive creative economy:

  Priority 2: Improve skills, good work and employment
  2.1 Work with education providers and other partners to provide robust and inclusive pathways into work and including for disadvantaged young people.

  2.3 Support the development of and access to an inclusive labour market, focusing on engaging our populations most at risk of inequalities in accessing and maintaining good work.

Priority 3: Strengthen compassionate and health communities
3.1 Continue to develop the infrastructure that encourages and enables individuals, organisations and networks to work together in an inclusive way, with the shared aim of supporting people in need and building strong local communities.

3.2 Enable and encourage proactive engagement in health promoting activity at all ages for good quality of life.

Priority 4: Create health promoting places
4.1 Utilise the Local Plan as an opportunity to shape, promote and deliver healthy and sustainable places and reduce inequalities.
We've started achieving this aim of supporting more disadvantaged residents to access creative spaces and community projects and develop their creative skills and businesses through the Old Printworks, Radstock, Little Lost Robot, and Creative Twerton projects. These have brought under-used spaces across our district back into use for creative purposes through B&NES support.

- Green infrastructure strategy
    - Notes the benefits that investment in green infrastructure can bring to enhance landscape character and built heritage as well as helping to invigorate the local economy and natural tourism and enhancing a sense of place. The intersection of GI and Culture is an important, place specific aspect of any future cultural strategy.
- Regeneration strategies:
    - Bath Public Realm & Movement Strategy https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/major-projects/public-realm-and-movement/public-realm-movemen
    - Milsom Quarter Masterplan – complete https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/milsom-quarter/masterplan-overview
    - Bath Central Riverside Masterplan – underway
    - Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan – complete https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/radstock-town-centre-regeneration-action-plan
    - Midsomer Norton Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan – underway
    - Keynsham Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan – underway
    - Old Brewery Quarter Town Centre Masterplan, Midsomer Norton – underway
- Heritage Services Strategy
    - Written in 2022 this document outlines the Service priorities to 2027. The Service operates the largest tourist attraction in the West of England and is leading the large capital project to build a new Fashion Museum in Bath

There are a number of key regional strategies that any B&NES led cultural strategy will need to recognise:

- WECA Cultural plan and regional growth plan
- Visit West Destination Management Plan
- North Somerset Cultural Action Plan
- Bristol Cultural Strategy

The West of England Region is made stronger by the sum of it's parts and cultural consumers and practitioners do not see the Local Authority boundaries.

Appendix 3 – Consultation Summary

Cultural Consultation & Strategy Development

Prepared by: Robert Campbell, Head of Culture & Heritage

Date: 18 August 2025

Strategic Overview

The cultural consultation process has engaged a wide range of stakeholders across Bath & North East Somerset (BANES), including town councils, libraries, museums, community organisations, and internal council teams. The aim is to develop a two-year Cultural Development Plan that is inclusive, place-based, and action-oriented, with a view to informing a longer-term cultural strategy from 2027.

The strategy seeks to embed cultural activity into regeneration, health and wellbeing, education, and community development, while also addressing barriers to participation and delivery.

Consultees

June – August the following consultation has occurred:

Internal		**External**	
Name	**Team**	**Name**	**Organisation**
Claire Morris Sarah Deacon	Libraries	Mike May	Keynsham Music Festival
Sarah Jackson Frances Kelsey Fiona Powell Jess Taylor	Green Transformation	Dawn Drury (Town Clerk) Katherine Sears (Dep Town Clerk)	Keynsham Town Council
Lynda Deane Linda Todd	Place Management	Cheryl Scott (Cllr) Lee Jakeman (Locum Town Clerk)	Midsomer Norton Town Council
Amanda Hart Lindsey Braidley Nathalie Levy Meliha Hussain	Heritage Services: Roman Baths and Victoria Art Gallery	Steve Collins Hazel Franklin	Midsomer Norton Carnival
Whole Fashion Museum Bath officer team	Heritage Services: Fashion Museum	George Clutten	Radstock Town Council
Cleo Newcombe-Jones Helen Griffiths Wendy Maden	Regeneration	Ruby Sant	Old Print Works Radstock

Tyron Tucker Beth Whalley			
Amy McCulloch Claire Mock-Munoz De Luna	Public Health Team	Tom Boden	National Trust
Cllrs	Climate Emergency and Sustainability PDS Panel	60 individuals and organisations from across BANES cultural sector	Bath Social Impact Network, Bath Arts Collective network, What Next Network
		Geraldine Hill-Male	Chew Valley Arts
		Kathryn Davis	Visit West

Consultees reviewed the draft Cultural Development Plan and Cultural Audit and then discussed these documents with Robert Campbell.

Key Themes & Insights

1. Infrastructure & Venue Needs

A recurring theme was the lack of suitable cultural infrastructure and venues. For example, in Keynsham stakeholders expressed a strong desire for a multi-purpose venue capable of hosting performances, exhibitions, and conferences. The absence of a museum in Keynsham was also noted, despite the presence of a rich archaeological collection. In the Somer Vallery the lack of cultural infrastructure was also raised, this included the industrial spaces that could be used to support cultural activity, such as the Midsomer Norton Carnival and the creative professionals developing work for use in the UKs festival industry. In Bath there was strong advocacy for more affordable creative space with some noting the impending enforced closure of Bath Artists Studios.

Consultation highlighted requests for council-owned spaces to be repurposed for cultural use, especially in North East Somerset.

2. Youth & Community Engagement

Youth engagement emerged as a priority with consultees discussing the relationship between attainment gap, access to cultural capital and social cohesion. The Butterfly Project in Keynsham was praised for reducing antisocial behaviour and inspiring young people through partnerships with Arcadia and the B&NES Willow Project. The Town Council's Youth Council successfully secured £148,000 in Section 106 funding to upgrade a local playground, demonstrating the power of youth-led initiatives.

Libraries were recognised for their role in preventing social isolation and engaging young adults through manga exhibitions, free tech access, and warm spaces. The Fashion Museum was highlighted as an opportunity to drive cultural engagement amongst young people aged 12 – 25 especially.

3. Barriers to Cultural Delivery

Stakeholders consistently cited financial and logistical barriers to delivering cultural events. High park hire fees, road closure costs, and hostile vehicle mitigation (HVM) requirements were seen as prohibitive. The need for deployable infrastructure and streamlined administrative processes was emphasized from both B&NES officers and the cultural sector. The consultation explored the feasibility of council-owned HVM equipment and the potential for waiving fees for community groups.

4. Libraries as Cultural Hubs

Libraries were positioned as key cultural hubs. The Libraries team showcased their evolving role in outreach, literacy, and social support. Initiatives like baby bounce and rhyme, manga month, and Citizens Advice partnerships were highlighted. The Libraries for Life strategy aligns with the cultural development plan and includes priorities such as improving partner awareness and expanding community outreach.

5. Fashion Museum as Strategic Anchor

The Fashion Museum was identified as a flagship project exemplifying the strategy's goals. Officers and cultural sector consultees discussed its potential to support local creatives, engage students, and address social isolation and cohesion. The museum's activity plan is already aligned with B&NES teams addressing the key social issues in the Authority.

6. Bath Centricity

All those interviewed outside of Bath emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Council focussed on culture across the breadth of the Authority.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation were recognised as critical but underdeveloped. B&NES officers proposed forming a working group to standardise data collection and impact measurement across council services. The goal is to aggregate demographic and qualitative data to inform strategic decisions and funding applications.

Appendix 4 – Cultural Development Plan: Action Plan

In order to make the most impact of the next 2 years the Council will focus on those areas noted as 'Key Actions' below.

Strategic Objective:

1. Health and Wellbeing

Key Actions:

- Use culture to address the attainment gap
    - Council cultural services to deliver cultural activity to target communities most impacted by the attainment gap – both in relation to general cultural engagement but also using culture to drive skills, aspiration and tangible outcomes in this area. Activity to include:
        - Heritage Services schools visits are free BANES schools and those with 30% or more free school meals
        - Embed an outreach officer in the Fashion Museum project to work with children and young people including those at risk of low education attainment
        - Use the Fashion Museum Project to deliver skills programming for target communities
        - Investigate and map the cultural provision available to children and young people across BANES with a particular focus on the 13-18 age bracket. Create an action plan which identifies and removes barriers to engagement with the Council's cultural offer
        - Deliver the Libraries for Life Strategy

- Council cultural activity drive health and wellbeing outcomes, and in particular to target communities. Activity to include:
    - Engagement with the emerging Social Prescribing Framework
    - Heritage Services Community Engagement Programme
    - Delivery of the Libraries for Life strategy

2. Place-shaping

Key Actions:

- Review of Council processes in relation to the delivery of cultural activity across BANES

- Review of fees and charges levied by B&NES in relation to delivery of cultural activity in BANES

- Culture to be integrated into the development and/or delivery of the key strategic work of the Council
    - Local Plan
    - Movement Plan

    - Asset Challenge Framework (re: the use of Council property for cultural usage)
    - Libraries for Life Strategy
    - Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy: Attainment Gap
    - Greener Place Plan
    - The Regeneration Action Plan for Keynsham Town Centre
    - The Masterplanning exercise for Midsummer Norton
    - The Pride in Place funding recently announced for Twerton
    - The Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan

- Work across the Council and the Cultural Sector to develop a longer term vision and action plan for culture that can cover the period 2027 - 2031

Secondary actions:

- Continue to audit the Council generated cultural activity to better understand what is ongoing, the investment and the return.

- Work with colleagues to standardise monitoring and evaluation of Council cultural activity whilst also piloting the approach to measuring cultural value recently trialled by Bristol City Council

- The cultural audit is continued to ensure better coverage and understanding of the cultural sector in BANES. Also to include a view on which cultural organisations based in BANES support the wider cultural sector across the region and further afield

- An emerging cultural infrastructure plan is created and endorsed by the Council:
    - Bath
        - Fashion Museum Bath
        - Assembly Rooms
        - Venue 4

    - Somer Valley:
        - Trinity Church
        - Old Print Works
        - Midsomer Norton Town Hall
        - B&NES Heritage Collections Store

    - Keynsham:
        - Multi-purpose venue in Keynsham North

    - Elsewhere:
        - Landscape recovery in the Lower Chew Valley

3. Creative Economy

Key Actions:

- Improve the supply of creative workspace through the adoption of the Creative workspace strategy

- WECA
    - Work with WECA on their business case to DCMS to release creative industries funding
    - Champion the distribution of these funds to BANES based organisations
    - Continue to distribute regional opportunities via Council Networks

Secondary Actions:

- Council Services delivering cultural activity to operate a 'local first' approach to cultural commissioning to support the creative economy

- Work with both Universities to establish how their work can support the creative economy in BANES

4. Visitor Economy

Key Actions:

- The Council will continue to invest in the offer at the Roman Baths in order to: discharge its responsibilities of guardianship of one of the worlds most significant cultural sites; deliver the financial return required to support the Council budget; and underpin the wider visitor economy in Bath

- The Council will continue to develop the Fashion Museum Bath project

- Clarify the importance of the visitor economy to the Council's financial viability and to wider economy of BANES. Work to establish an approach to sustainably developing the visitor economy in BANES of which the cultural component is a vital part

Secondary Action:

- Work with partners to establish a cultural calendar (either Council 'owned' or via 3rd party such as Visit West) that offer a definitive listing of cultural activity across BANES

- The Council will support BANES as a Filming destination by exploring what opportunities there are to grow filming in locations across BANES. Also to consider how the benefits of filming can be quantified so as to better support investment in this area and champion it's contribution to the economy

In general, the cross cutting themes will be considered as the key actions noted above are enacted to ensure they are inherent in the outcomes achieved. There are, however, a number of activities that the Council will endeavour to progress up to 2027:

5. Inclusion

- Target the uptake of the Discovery Card amongst target communities
- The specific Equality Diversity and Inclusion training developed by Heritage Services to be rolled out to all Council Teams currently delivering cultural activity
- Use the Bath Social Impact Network to explore ways in which the Council can support the sector to be as equitable, diverse and inclusive as possible
- Establish sustainable mechanisms for how the resident voice can be included in shaping the Council's cultural offer

6. Environmental Sustainability

- The specific Carbon Literacy training developed by Heritage Services to be rolled out to all Council Teams currently delivering cultural activity
- Use the Bath Social Impact Network to explore ways in which the Council can support the sector to be more sustainable
- Work with colleagues to consider ways to link cultural activity with the Council's overall plans both to reduce the impact of human activity on climate and nature as well as mitigating the future effects of climate change on our cultural sector and heritage attractions especially

7. Financial Sustainability

- Explore marketing opportunities for cultural sector using B&NES infrastructure such as Discovery Card Newsletter
- Establish criteria by which B&NES will offer endorsement of cultural individuals and organisations in support of their own funding bids
- Undertake a review of events equipment that could be purchased by the Council and leased/provided free of charge to cultural organisations to reduce the overall cost of cultural delivery for both the sector and the Council
- Continue to build relationships with cultural organisations across BANES to better understand the opportunities there may be for the Council to ensure their long-term viability
- B&NES to work with both Universities to better link, promote and engage the BANES cultural sector with the large student populations in Bath

8. Quality, Experimentation and Creativity

- B&NES to continue to engage with the Bath Social Impact Network as the forum for the Council to engage with the cultural sectors across BANES
- B&NES to consider how Council expertise can be matched with cultural organisations requiring capacity building and professional support as part of the Council's commitment to allow staff to volunteer in paid hours and for staff professional development

- Further to this, B&NES to consider how the importance of volunteering to the cultural landscape in BANES can be understood and this activity supported and encouraged by the Council

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Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	**Cabinet**	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	**12 March 2026**	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: E 3692
TITLE:	**Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework 2026-2031**	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: **Appendix 1 – Asset Management Framework** **Appendix 2 - EqIA**		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 To agree the adoption of the Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework (comprising the Corporate Estate Policy and Corporate Estate Strategy and associated Action Plan). These documents set out the approach and priorities for the management of the Council's Corporate Estate over the next five years (2026-2031).

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to:

2.1 Approve the Asset Management Framework 2026-2031 suite of documents, including the Asset Management Policy, Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Action Plan, attached at Appendix 1. Delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Estate and Director of Capital & Housing to implement the Framework and Action Plan in accordance with the Councils Constitution and Scheme of Delegations to Officers of the Council, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development, as defined.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The Corporate Estate's primary function is to enable the delivery of council services by providing safe, modern, inclusive, and efficient workplaces and public-facing facilities where staff and partners can serve residents well. This remains our priority.

3.2 We will protect service delivery first, while using the estate to support wider corporate objectives, priorities and outcomes provided this does not compromise statutory and priority services.

3.3 The Asset Management Framework is the Council's plan for how we look after and use our operational buildings and land over the next five years. It guides everyday decisions about maintenance, upgrades, sharing space, and repurposing or releasing sites that we no longer need.

3.4 Our estate is a powerful tool to improve people's lives: supporting the provision of and better access to services, safer public buildings, reduced running costs, and faster progress towards net-zero and nature recovery. It also helps us support new homes, good jobs, and vibrant town centres.

3.5 Operating as a Corporate Landlord is a new approach for the Council, centralising and standardising our management of the estate and requires a strategic framework to articulate how we will operate over the coming years.

3.6 B&NES's Corporate Strategy, 2023-2027, sets a single purpose, to improve people's lives, and is anchored by two core policies: tackling the climate and nature emergency and giving people a bigger say.

3.7 The Corporate Strategy is delivered through three principles: preparing for the future, delivering for residents, and focusing on prevention which are translated into nine priorities.

3.8 Our Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework articulates how the management and use of Council assets will support the delivery of our corporate priorities.

3.9 Our Asset Management Policy outlines our guiding principles in supporting delivery of the Councils priorities.

3.10 Our Asset Management Strategy outlines how we are going to deliver against these policy principles, including the Action Plan.

3.11 The Corporate Estate Asset Management Policy establishes five policy pillars through which we will manage our corporate land and buildings (the Corporate Estate). The Asset Management Policy will remain in place for the next five years but be reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant to the Corporate Strategy and Sustainable Communities Directorate Plan.

3.12 The five policy pillars are set out at Appendix 1. To deliver the pillars there are certain actions and behaviours that teams will need to adopt to enable the best outcomes for our land and buildings. The behaviours include the Corporate Estate acting as a trusted adviser and service teams engaging with the Corporate Estate to facilitate policy delivery. There will be occasions where some of the activities

under the policy pillars appear to be in conflict. The key challenge for the Council in the use of its Corporate Estate assets, is ensuring that we maintain an appropriate balance between all of these elements as decisions around land and buildings are made.

3.13 The Council operates a Corporate Landlord model: all land and buildings in the Corporate Estate, and associated revenue budgets, are held and managed centrally as a corporate resource. Council service areas are able to focus on service delivery, while the Corporate Landlord manages the estate.

3.14 The terms Corporate Landlord and Corporate Estate can be used interchangeably. The Corporate Estate is the service, managing the Councils assets, through a Corporate Landlord operating model.

3.15 Decisions made on how Council land and buildings are used are assessed through an Asset Challenge framework. This framework is a systematic process that ensures transparency and consistency to decisions to retain, invest, repurpose, share, or dispose of our assets. Decisions are evidenced against service needs, safety/compliance, utilisation/cost, carbon and nature impact, place/access, and options appraisal.

3.16 As we have established the Councils Asset Management Policy defines five pillars that frame the actions and behaviours required to achieve the objectives for the Corporate Estate. To monitor performance a series of benchmark indices are being adopted and a set of KPIs defined. An Annual Report will be produced to demonstrate how the Corporate Estate is performing against the defined KPIs. The first Annual Report will be published in 2027.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Statutory considerations relating to the activities defined in the Asset Management Framework suite of documents will be addressed through decision making approval routes for those activities. That is via delegations as set out at para. 2.2, i.e. delegated to the Head of Corporate Estate and/or in consultation with the Cabinet Member, or via Single Member/Cabinet or Council decisions.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 No additional funding is required to implement the Asset Management Framework. Approvals to spend against current or future approved budgets will follow current or future governance routes over the period of the strategy, 2026-2031.

5.2 Property resource implications relating to the activities defined in the Asset Management Framework suite of documents will be addressed through decision making approval routes for those property related activities. That is via delegations to the Head of Corporate Estate and/or in consultation with the Cabinet Member, or via Single Member/Cabinet or Council decisions.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessments related to actions consequent on the Asset Management Framework and recommendations will be undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 The Council must pay due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) pursuant to s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Council must have due regard to the need to:

a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under this Act.

b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (as defined in the Act) and the persons who do not share it.

c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and is attached at Appendix 2. This decision is not considered to affect the conclusions of that EqIA.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 The Asset Management Framework cross cuts service areas and impacts ambitions set out in the Corporate Strategy and associated strategies, that inform the Asset Management Strategy. These associated strategies include the Climate Emergency Strategy and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. The Asset Management Strategy is an enabler of the Councils strategic direction.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 None

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development and the Director Capital & Housing Delivery.

10.2 The Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework has undergone broad engagement with s151, service Directors, Heads of Service, and via Corporate PDS panel.

Contact person	Richard Holden, Head of Corporate Estate & Development
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Corporate Estate

Asset Management Framework

2026-2031

Foreword

'Our corporate estate is a strategic asset—central to high-quality public services and to our wider ambitions for place, economy and culture. This suite of documents, the Asset Management Framework, is the Council's plan for how we will look after and use our operational buildings and land over the next five years. Together, these documents, and the Corporate Landlord, will strengthen governance, align investment and disposals to corporate priorities, and integrate asset decisions across our operational estate and with partners.

By managing the estate as one portfolio, we will deploy assets where they create the most public value - supporting frontline services, improving user experience, enabling sustainable growth, and delivering value for money. The Strategy gives our services, and their partners, the clarity needed to plan with confidence.

We will monitor progress against baseline metrics and KPIs defined in the Strategy document, and revisit this regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose.'

Cllr Paul Roper

Cabinet Member for Economic & Cultural Sustainable Development

Context

Our land and buildings are one of the Council's most tangible levers for change. Managed as a single corporate resource, the estate can enable better services, accelerate decarbonisation, unlock inclusive growth, support our cultural offer, and help deliver healthier, more resilient places.

This Framework sets the strategic direction for how we will steward the Corporate Estate over the coming years - providing the umbrella under which the Asset Management Policy, Asset Management Strategy, and Asset Management Action Plan sit.

Scope and Purpose

Scope

This framework relates to the Corporate Estate, our operational land and buildings only. The Commercial Estate, held for investment yield, has a separate strategy; interdependencies are managed through the Corporate Landlord commissioning and governance model.

Purpose

The Asset Management Framework (AMF) sets the Council's strategic direction for using its Corporate Estate to support and deliver corporate outcomes. It defines principles, governance, methods and measures.

Purpose of our Corporate Estate

The Corporate Estate's primary function is to enable the delivery of council services by providing safe, modern, inclusive, and efficient workplaces and public-facing facilities where staff and partners can serve residents well. This remains our priority.

We will protect service delivery first, while using the estate to support wider corporate objectives, priorities and outcomes provided this does not compromise statutory and priority services.

What is the Asset Management Framework?

The Asset Management Framework is the Council's plan for how we look after and use our operational buildings and land over the next five years. It guides everyday decisions about maintenance, upgrades, sharing space, and—when the time is right—repurposing or releasing sites that we no longer need.

The framework is deliberately practical: we will focus on safe, fit-for-purpose, net zero carbon assets; clear governance and evidence-based choices; and a rolling asset challenge that ensures we keep only what we need and repurpose or release the rest to support wider Council priorities.

How the Framework Fits Together

The Asset Management Framework is the umbrella term for three documents:

1. Asset Management Policy:

a. Enduring **principles** for managing property as a corporate resource;

b. Ensuring the estate is the **right size** and fit-for-purpose;

c. Ensuring the estate is **efficient** and **sustainable**;

d. An **enabler** used to stimulate regeneration and housing;

e. Support for joint working and co-location.

2. Asset Management Strategy:

a. Our approach to operating the **Corporate Landlord** model;

b. The **Asset Challenge** methodology;

c. Investment and rationalisation;

d. Compliance, lifecycle, and decarbonisation;

e. Data and KPIs.

3. Asset Management Action Plan:

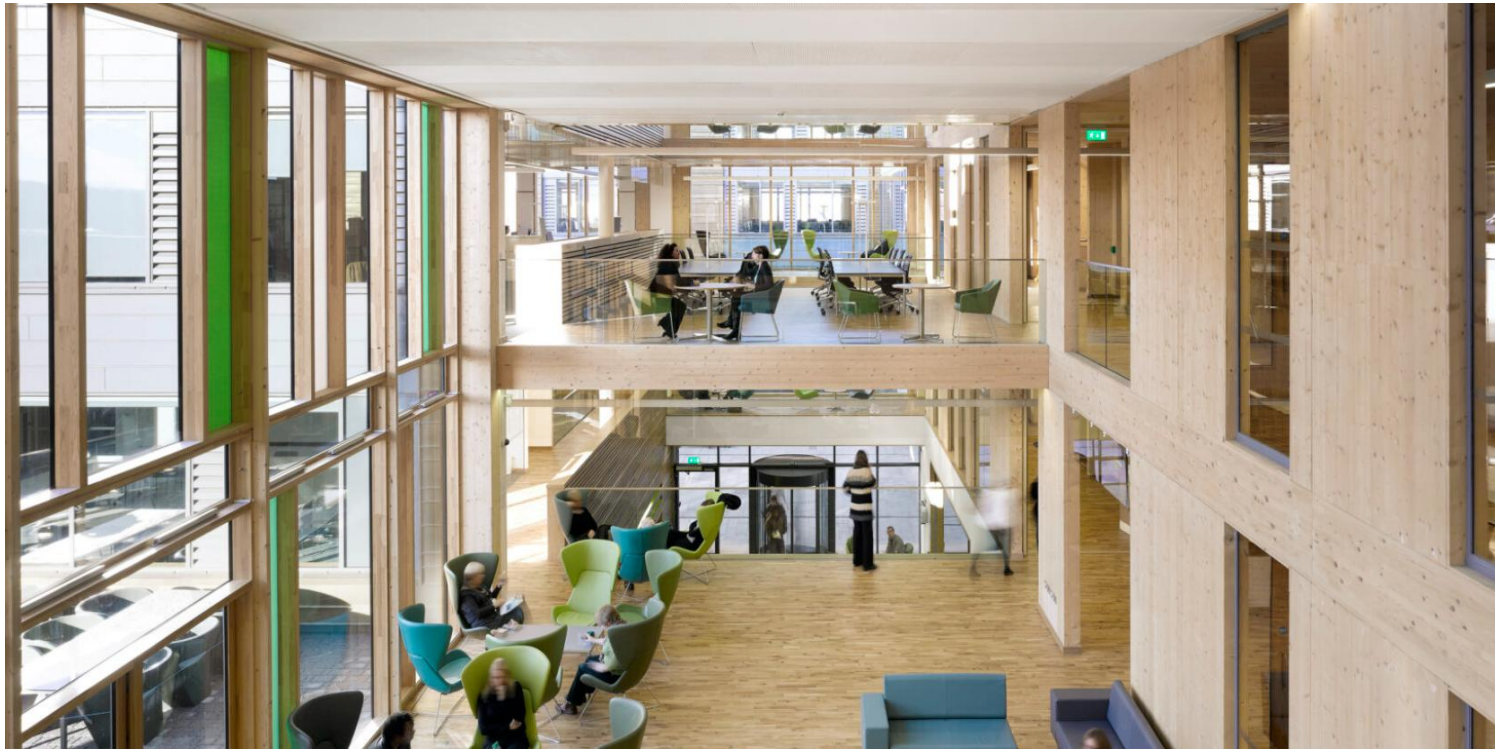
a. The deliverable pipeline, budgets, milestones and benefits for the year;

b. Aligned to the MTFP and Capital & Investment Strategy.

Why are we doing it now?

Our estate is a powerful tool to improve people's lives: supporting the provision of and better access to services, safer public buildings, reduced running costs, and faster progress towards net-zero and nature recovery. It also helps us support new homes, good jobs, and vibrant town centres.

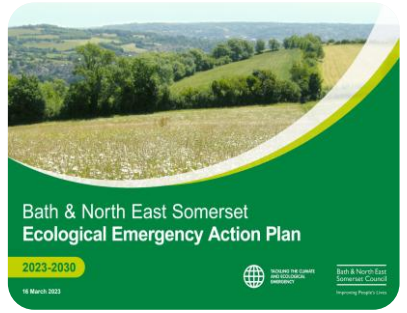
Operating as a Corporate Landlord is a new approach to for the Council, centralising and standardising our management of the estate and requires a strategic framework to articulate how we will operate over the coming years.

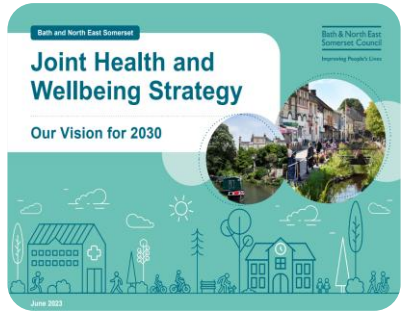


Strategic Alignment

This Framework articulates how the estate will be used to support and enable wider Council objectives across:

- Economic Strategy 2024–2034;
- Heritage Services Plan 2022-2027;
- Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan 2019-2030;
- Ecological Emergency Action Plan 2023-2030;
- Housing Plan 2025–2030;
- Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy.





What will be different?

Safer, more accessible buildings - tighter standards for compliance and inclusive access.

Services under one roof - more co-location hubs with partners.

Greener operation - cut energy use, decarbonise heating, add solar where suitable, protect biodiversity.

Better use of space – right-size offices and provide flexible community spaces

Clear communication – to services, for organisational assurance, through scrutiny and in the form of an Annual Report.

Key Outcomes by 2031*

- ✓ A safe, compliant, rightsized estate supporting modern, inclusive service delivery
- ✓ Office/admin floorspace reduction with co-location hubs in priority localities
- ✓ Maintenance backlog reduced from an estimated baseline through targeted investment and disposals
- ✓ Net-zero carbon (2030) operations trajectory: energy intensity reduced; retained assets aligned with EPC regulations by 2030; heat decarbonised; and electricity matched by renewables (see KPIs)
- ✓ Transparent disposals delivering annual capital receipts and reduced revenue costs, and the CAT programme offering greater community and social value
- ✓ A single system of record (Concerto) and KPI dashboards; provide organisational assurance and supports scrutiny.

* Subject to business cases and budgets

Corporate Estate

Asset Management Policy

2026-2031

Introduction

Bath & North East Somerset Council owns a Corporate (operational) Estate of 900+ land and building assets (excluding social housing), valued at £328m (31 March 2025). These assets have been acquired, gifted or inherited.

We have adopted a framework approach outlining how we will manage our corporate estate over the next five years (2026-2031) which is structured in three parts:

- An **Asset Management Policy (AMP)**. This document. This sets out the long-term principles and objectives we are seeking to achieve.
- An **Asset Management Strategy (AMS)** - This sets out how we will deliver our policy objectives.
- An **Asset Management Action Plan (AMAP)**. This is our annual business plan and details a live schedule of activities aligned to delivering our strategic objectives.

The Framework is a suite of living documents; parts may be updated at different times. Readers should always refer to the latest versions and read them together to ensure the correct context.

Supporting Corporate Objectives

B&NES's Corporate Strategy, 2023-2027, sets a single purpose, *to improve people's lives,* and is anchored by two core policies: tackling the climate and nature emergency and giving people a bigger say.

The Corporate Strategy provides an extended outcomes framework to guide decisions, performance and spend and provides the link between our priorities and the supporting policies and strategies to deliver them.

The **Corporate Strategy** is delivered through three principles: **preparing for the future**, **delivering for residents**, and **focusing on prevention** which are translated into nine priorities:

Our Corporate Estate **Asset Management Framework** articulates how the management and use of Council assets will **support the delivery of our corporate priorities.**

Our **Asset Management Policy** outlines our **guiding principles** in supporting delivery of the Councils priorities.

Our **Asset Management Strategy** outlines **how we are going to deliver** against these policy principles.

Strategic Delivery

The council will use its corporate estate as a strategic enabler to deliver wider priorities and objectives and to support our services and their teams.

Corporate Strategy

1. Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies.
2. Giving People a Bigger Say.
3. Focusing on Prevention.
4. Delivering for Local Residents.
5. Preparing for the Future.

Ecological Emergency Action Plan

1. Increase the extent of land and waterways managed positively for nature.
2. Increase the abundance and distribution of key species across B&NES
3. Enable more people to access and engage with nature

Climate Emergency Strategy

1. Decarbonising buildings
2. Decarbonising transport
3. Increasing Local Renewable Energy Generation
4. Becoming a Net Zero Council

Place Prospectus

1. Working together with communities.
2. Creating better places.
3. Delivering a carbon neutral and nature positive economy.
4. Delivery of key regeneration projects.
5. Vacant Unit Action Project

Land Use Planning

1. Responding to the climate and ecological emergencies.
2. Facilitating the goal of net zero carbon by 2030.
3. Approach to protecting and enhancing nature.
4. Maximising the delivery of housing needs – especially affordable.
5. Create opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Heritage Services Strategy

1. Return the service to pre-pandemic levels.
2. Move the fashion museum.
3. Achieve net zero by 2030.
4. Provide maximum access to our buildings, monuments and collections.
5. Bring benefit to Bath, the South West and the UK.

Housing Plan

1. Increasing Delivery of affordable, low cost and supported housing.
2. Development of B&NES Homes Programme.
3. Housing Regulation.
4. Development of disabled adaptation and equipment services.
5. Housing options for rough sleepers and homelessness.

Economic Strategy

1. Supporting a greener economy.
2. Supporting residents to thrive in work.
3. Building a diverse and resilient business base.
4. Becoming a centre for inclusive innovation.
5. Ensuring residents have access to good affordable housing.
6. Enabling all people and places to share in prosperity

Corporate Estate Asset Management Policy

The Corporate Estate **Asset Management Policy** establishes **five policy pillars** through which we will manage our Corporate land and buildings (the Corporate Estate). The Asset Management Policy will remain in place for the next five years but be reviewed annually to ensure it is still relevant to the Corporate Strategy and Sustainable Communities Directorate Plan.

To deliver the five policy pillars there are certain actions and behaviours that we need to adopt relating to our land and buildings. These are set out in the following pages under each of the pillars; though not in any order of priority. It is also accepted that there will be occasions where some of these elements may appear to be in conflict. The key challenge for the Council in the use of its Corporate Estate assets, is ensuring that we maintain an appropriate balance between all of these elements as decisions around land and buildings are made.

1 Responsible

To plan and manage property as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of Bath & North East Somerset.

2 Suitable

To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and to plan for the future.

3 Sustainable

To manage and maintain property effectively, efficiently and sustainably; suppor -ting the Commercial Estate and the rationalisation of Corporate assets to meet our needs.

4 Enabling

To use land and buildings to stimulate economic regeneration, housing and growth; supporting local business needs and encouraging new businesses to the district and supporting communities.

5 Coordinated

To promote joint working and co-location, including with our public sector partners, where it will provide benefit for service delivery and in securing efficiencies.

AM Policy 1 - Responsible

To plan and manage property and land as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of Bath & North East Somerset we will…

- Have clear **governance** decision-making and **asset challenge** on all property decisions
- **Centralise services** property **budgets** under the Corporate Estate to prioritise investment in the right places
- Treat our assets as an integrated resource to deliver for services and the community as well as to meet climate and ecological emergencies.
- Ensure an effective balance between corporate and service priorities
- Work to ensure that property information is accurate, current and comprehensive
- Forward plan for our Corporate assets to align with '*Bath with NES 2030*' One Shared Vision.

AM Policy 2 - Suitable

To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and to plan for the future we will...

- Work to ensure that property is **suitable and sufficient** for service delivery
- Work to ensure where possible that property is flexible and is planned to respond to future need
- Work to ensure that property is **secure, safe to use and statutorily compliant**
- Work with our service areas to **understand** their **longer-term requirements**, to plan for the future
- Work with community organisations to optimise the use of assets where most beneficial
- Work to ensure that diversity, equality and inclusion are considered in the development of our plans for assets, engaging and consulting with services
- Work with **community groups** to ensure Community Asset Transfers are delivered to **enhance social value**, secure our assets for the future of our communities and protect budgets.

AM Policy 3 - Sustainable

To manage and maintain property effectively, efficiently and sustainably; supporting the Commercial Estate and the rationalisation of Corporate assets to meet our needs, we will...

- Ensure property is suitably **managed and maintained** within budget constraints
- Challenge the current use of assets and identify co-location opportunities, to include public sector partners, resulting in **rationalisation** and disposal of our land and buildings as appropriate
- Seek **efficiencies** in occupancy and utilisation and continue to introduce new ways of working
- Challenge the cost of property activities to drive **performance improvement**
- Seek to assist the **Commercial Estate** to optimise financial return through **commissioned activity**
- Ensure that property is as sustainable as possible in design, construction, operation and maintenance
- Aim to reduce energy and water consumption, and CO2 emissions through decarbonisation, using renewable energy where appropriate
- Minimise waste wherever possible.

AM Policy 4 - Enabling

To use land and buildings to stimulate economic regeneration, housing and growth; supporting local business needs and encouraging new businesses to the district and supporting communities, we will…

- Use flagship regeneration sites to **stimulate and support economic development**, job creation and inward investment

- Use key sites to support the Councils strategic and policy aims to delivery much needed **affordable housing,** support the **arts, culture and creative industries** and stimulate partner innovation activity.

- Support the **Commercial Estate income generation** through the commissioned capital works programme

- Promote a high-quality, sustainable, occupier environment through development, and a place identity

- Identify a corporate **supply of land and assets**, suitable for housing and employment needs, and to stimulate biodiversity to create a healthier environment and spaces for our communities.

AM Policy 5 - Coordinated

To promote joint working and co-location, including with our public sector partners, where it will provide benefit for service delivery and in securing efficiencies, we will...

- Work to support the **integration of Council services** including health, adult and children's social care within district through the best use of corporate assets
- Work with our public sector partners and agencies to **promote co-location** and joint service delivery
- Support where possible the shared transport aspirations of the Council and West of England Combined Authority (MCA)

Corporate Estate

Asset Management Strategy

2026-2031

Introduction

Bath & North East Somerset Council owns a Corporate (operational) Estate of 900+ land and building assets (excluding social housing), valued at £328m (31 March 2025). These assets have been acquired, gifted or inherited.

We have adopted a framework approach outlining how we will manage our corporate estate over the next five years (2026-2031) which is structured in three parts:

- An **Asset Management Policy (AMP)**. This document. This sets out the long-term principles and objectives we are seeking to achieve.
- An **Asset Management Strategy (AMS)** - This sets out how we will deliver our policy objectives.
- An **Asset Management Action Plan (AMAP)**. This is our annual business plan and details a live schedule of activities aligned to delivering our strategic objectives.

The Framework is a suite of living documents; parts may be updated at different times. Readers should always refer to the latest versions and read them together to ensure the correct context.

Mission

Our corporate estate will support the delivery of the Council's priorities and ambitions as a single, safe and net zero carbon public estate that is right-sized, compliant and fit for modern services.

Future Impact

*Our **vision** is to have a joined-up public estate that is safe, accessible and net zero carbon; the right buildings in the right places; better shared spaces with our partners; and a rolling, evidence-based review process so we repurpose or release what we don't need and reinvest in the services and neighbourhoods that do. Success means:*

Safe, accessible.

Every operational building is compliant and accessible; users notice improved environments, better access and planned repairs.

Decisions you can see and trust.

A single system of records and KPI dashboards provides organisational assurance and supports scrutiny, making choices transparent, evidence-led and repeatable.

Backlog down, investment up.

Continued asset challenge and targeted disposals enable planned lifecycle works and decarbonisation, materially reducing the maintenance backlog.

Right-sized estate, smarter access.

We maximise the efficiency of office/admin floorspace and deliver co-located hubs with partners, so residents access multiple services under one roof.

Lower carbon, lower bills.

Energy intensity is reduced, where exemptions do not apply all non-domestic assets achieve an EPC B or better by 2030, ≥60% of heat is decarbonised and ≥50% of electricity is matched by renewables—cutting emissions and running costs.

Places that work harder for people.

Repurposed and released sites unlock affordable homes, biodiverse/ecology rich managed land, vibrant centres and greener spaces; Community Asset Transfers safeguard valued facilities and grow social value.

Asset Management Strategy

Our Asset Management Strategy articulates how our corporate estate policies will be delivered over the plan period, how we will measure success and the impact our policies will have by 2031. It provides an overview of our land and property assets, how we will manage our estate under a Corporate Landlord and how we will use a transparent and consistent process of Asset Challenge to ensure we have a viable estate that delivers for staff and residents and supports the council's corporate priorities and ambitions.

The Asset Management Strategy will be reviewed and amended on a 5-year cycle to ensure it remains aligned to the council's Corporate Strategy and supporting strategies.

The Council has adopted five policy pillars; these are our strategic objectives for the corporate estate. The strategy will outline how the policy objectives will be delivered.

1 Responsible

To plan and manage property as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of Bath & North East Somerset.

2 Suitable

To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and to plan for the future.

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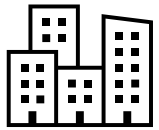
5 Coordinated

To promote joint working and co-location, including with our public sector partners, where it will provide benefit for service delivery and in securing efficiencies.

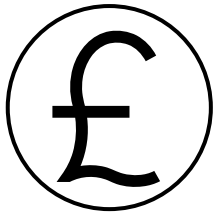
About our Estate

Corporate Estate Overview

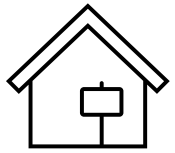
(February 2026)



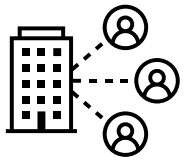
900+ Corporate Estate assets



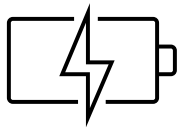
£328m (Mar 25) Book value of the Corporate Estate



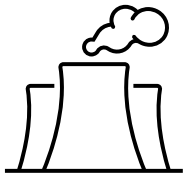
Circa £3m Annual capital receipts forecast (Disposals pipeline)



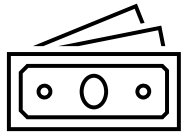
Averaging 47% weekly occupancy rate at Civic Centre (highest 66%)



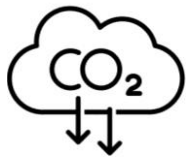
7.5m kWh Electricity units used in 2025



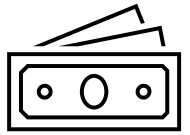
4.9m kWh Gas units used in 2025



Energy cost in 2025 (Gas and Electric Combined) £2.9m

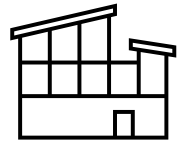


52% Reduction in total CO2 emissions since 2016 (60% reduction in electricity and 27% reduction in gas related emissions)



£4.7m (26/27) Annual revenue budget

£1.1m Annual maintenance budget (reactive repairs)



£3.6m (26/27) Annual capital budget (planned maintenance)

Our Corporate Land and Buildings

The Council manages a corporate estate of 900+ land and property assets valued at £328m (31 March 2025). Our portfolio spans offices, day centres, care homes, car parks, public conveniences, leisure facilities, depots, schools, community-leased assets and income-generating properties, with performance tracked against their strategic purpose and viable alternatives.

We hold assets only where they deliver services, community outcomes or income as well as legacy holdings from donations, local government reorganisation and historic acquisitions. Through a rolling Asset Challenge, we assess utilisation, running and maintenance costs, condition and geographic fit to decide whether to retain, repurpose or dispose. Surplus assets are progressed for disposal to generate capital receipts and enable reinvestment, supporting the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Operating as a Corporate Landlord, we have centralised compliance, maintenance and day-to-day operations whilst capital investment is prioritised using condition survey evidence and service priorities, with clear governance to target spend where it has greatest impact.

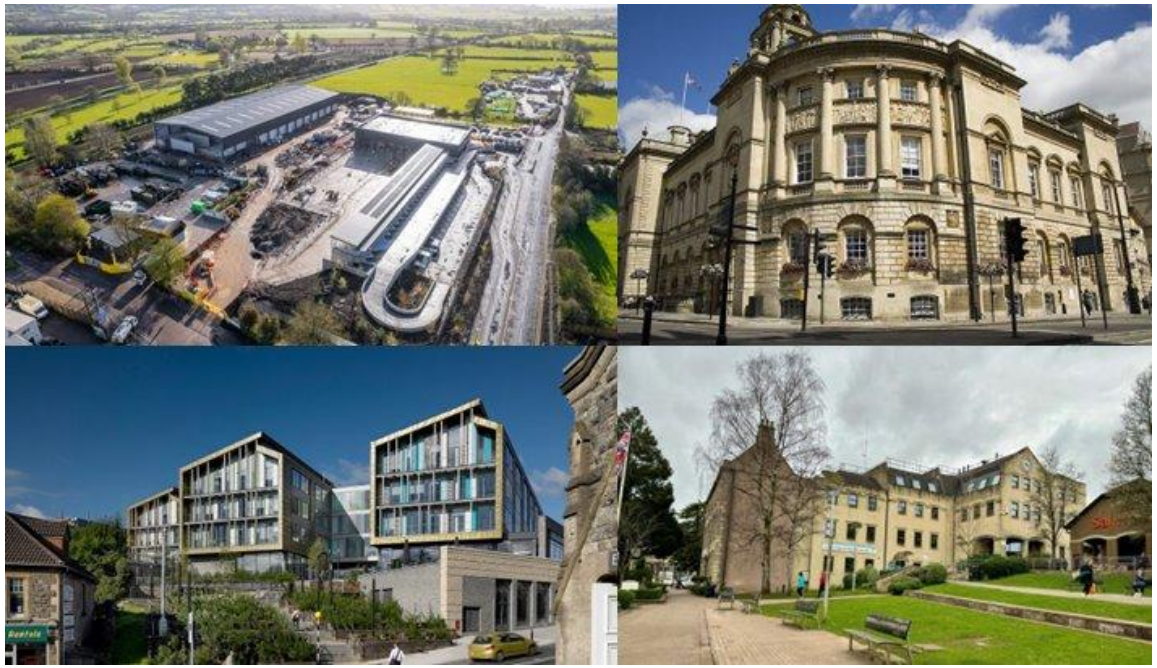
The following table provides an overview of the diversity of our corporate estate:

Asset Type
Land and Open Spaces
Parks
Heritage and Cultural Sites
Education Sites
Leisure Sites
Car Parks
Surplus Land and Buildings
Allotments and Agriculture
Social Care Sites
Commercial Spaces
Youth Centres
Operational Offices
Cemeteries and Crematorium
Other (inc. Community hubs, Children's Centres, Public Conveniences, Waste Sites, Depots

Purpose of Our Corporate Estate

The Corporate Estate's primary function is to enable the delivery of council services by providing safe, modern, inclusive, and efficient workplaces and public-facing facilities where staff and partners can serve residents well. This remains our priority.

We will protect service delivery first, while using the estate to support wider corporate objectives, priorities and outcomes provided this does not compromise statutory and priority services.



Capital and Revenue Budgets

Like many, Bath & North East Somerset Council has experienced significant funding reductions, and we need to make careful choices in where we prioritise the money we spend.

This is especially true in relation to the Councils Corporate and Commercial property assets. With a **Corporate Estate in excess of 900+ assets** and a Commercial Estate gross revenue target of £16 million (2024/25), we need to ensure that every pound of commissioned spend is implemented in the right way.

Corporate Estate

The Corporate Estate delivers repairs & maintenance and capital projects. In **FY 26/27** the operational **revenue budget is £4.7m**. Corporate Estate capital works are delivered through the Corporate Capital Planned Maintenance (**CCPM**) **programme** with a **£3.6m budget FY 26/27 and £2.8m budget for FY 27/28.**

In FY 26/27 the **Corporate Landlord** centralisation consolidates service-tenant property budgets; in **FY 26/27** these budgets will transfer to the Corporate Estate revenue budget.

Through our **development programme**, flagship development sites at Bath Quays and Somer Valley (budgets totalling **£54.5m** for the period **2025-2031**) support economic growth, job creation and inward investment. Key sites within the City centre are being reviewed to maximise the benefits of additionality for Bath as a world class city.

Commercial Estate

The Commercial Estate commissions the Corporate Estate to deliver repairs & maintenance and a capital works programme.

This commissioning approach provides condition and compliance assurance to the corporate centre and enables void assets to be income generating.

Maintaining Our Assets

We budget to spend around £4.7m (FY 26/27) annually maintaining our corporate estate (R&M budget circa £1.1m, CCPM budget circa £3.6m).

Given the finite resources and funds available, we will prioritise investment, guided by our **statutory commitments** and a rolling programme of **condition surveys** to inform a **planned preventative maintenance** programme.

This planned, long-horizon approach will improve decision-making, reduce reactive spend, and maximise spend efficiency.

Our four key aims for asset maintenance are:

1. To ensure our buildings are compliant, safe and secure for the people who use them
2. To allocate funding to projects that will achieve the maximum positive impact
3. To achieve an efficient balance between planned and reactive maintenance work
4. To maximise efficiencies in the way we procure and deliver repairs and maintenance.

Strategic Alignment

Supporting Corporate Priorities

Corporate Strategy Key Policies

The right homes in the right places: Publish an annual Land Release Schedule, support the conversion of assets to housing, use disposals/JVs, and pilot meanwhile homes to grow affordable supply.

Clean, safe & vibrant neighbourhoods: Target investment to high-impact civic assets, exit poor performers, and upgrade accessibility and public realm in local centres.

Support for vulnerable adults & children: Expand co-located NHS/VCSE services, apply inclusive design and dignity standards, and offer community access hours where appropriate.

Delivering for children & young people: Provide schools statutory compliance, support the creation of fit-for-purpose youth hubs, and maintain safe, healthy environments that lift participation and attainment.

Healthy lives & places: Adopt health-promoting building standards and safeguard space for social prescribing and community wellbeing activities.

Good jobs: Curate a balanced workspace mix (grow-on, maker, labs), embed apprenticeship/retrofit pathways via FM and capital programmes, and open procurement to local suppliers.

Skills to thrive: Repurpose under-used rooms for training and employment support, using live estate projects as practical skills pipelines (retrofit, maintenance, heritage craft).

Cultural life: Prioritise planned maintenance and reversible retrofits to heritage assets, coordinate Fashion Museum/Victoria Art Gallery improvements, and expand community programming.

Supporting Corporate Objectives

The council will use its estate as a strategic enabler to deliver wider priorities and objectives and to support our services and their teams.

- The estate will provide opportunities that support housing delivery, economic growth, and community wellbeing; releasing land/assets for new homes and creating opportunities for affordable and sustainable housing.
- It will offer flexible and inclusive spaces for health, education, and community services.
- It will enable access to cultural and heritage assets and promote vibrant public spaces.
- The estate will support local jobs and skills by supporting the delivery of workspaces and arts, culture and creative spaces.
- It will help achieve climate and ecological goals through low-carbon design, energy efficiency, and land management.
- The estate will be managed to ensure safety, accessibility, and resilience, while contributing to regeneration and place-making.
- It will act as a catalyst for collaboration with partners and communities, ensuring that assets deliver social, economic, and environmental value.

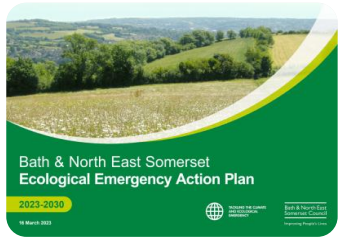
Our Estate as an Enabler

The following are examples of the ways the estate can be used as an enabler to support the delivery of wider Council priorities and objectives:

Climate Emergency

Fabric-first retrofits; heat decarbonisation (heat pumps/networks); PV & storage; grid capacity planning; Carbon Gate at property gateways

Ecological Emergency



Biodiversity-positive management; meadows, pollinator corridors; canopy targets; access to green space

Health and Wellbeing

Co located hubs; inclusive design standards; community space ratios; social prescribing venues

Housing

Support the release of assets to deliver housing; retrofit of temporary/specialist accommodation

Economic Development

Curate workspace; meanwhile use of voids; unlock town-centre regeneration; local supplier/skills targets

Heritage

Support the service to deliver planned maintenance and decarbonisation; reversible retrofits; coordinated museum moves and fit outs

Operating as a Corporate Landlord

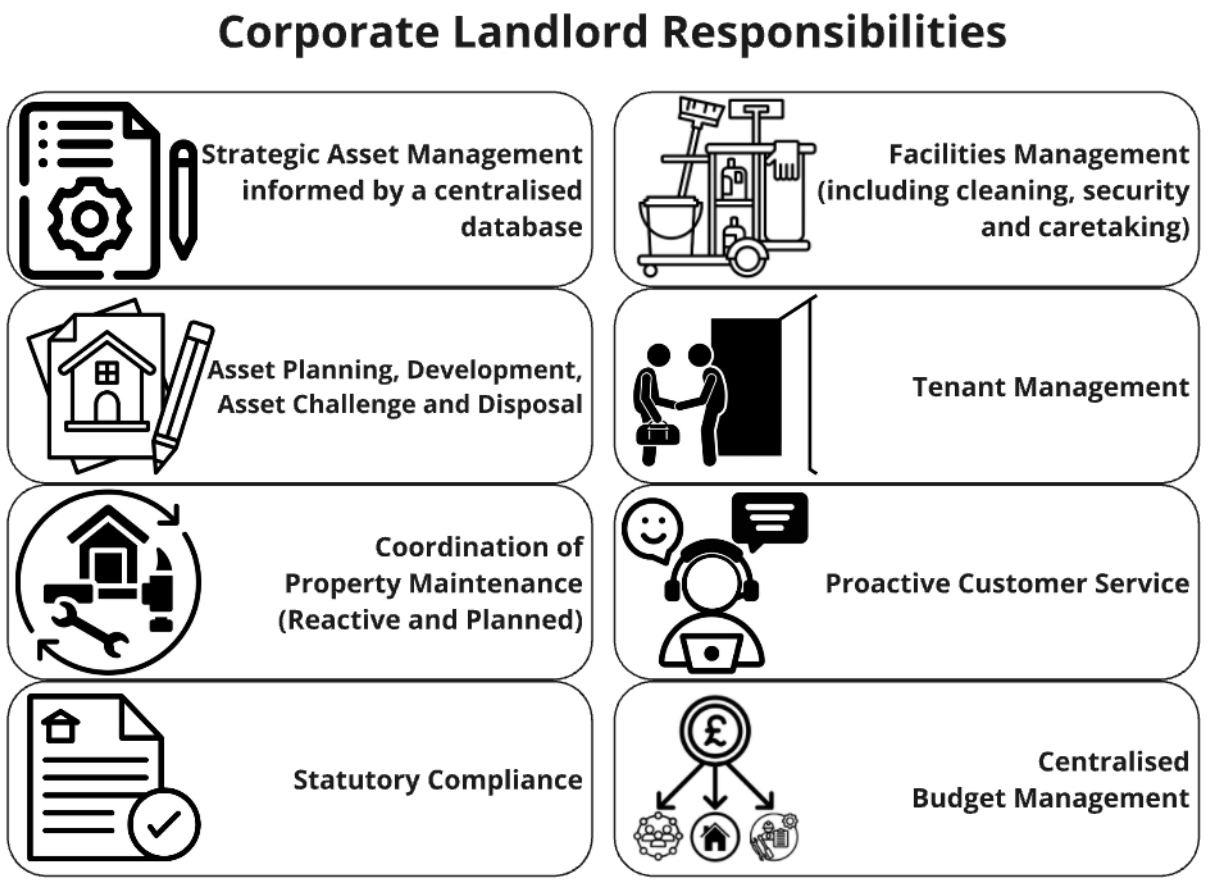
Our Corporate Landlord

Bath & North East Somerset Council
CORPORATE LANDLORD

We operate a Corporate Landlord model: all land and buildings in the Corporate Estate are held and managed centrally as corporate resources. Service areas act as tenants focused on service delivery, while the Corporate Landlord plans, maintains, acquires, develops and disposes of assets across the portfolio.

Land and building decisions are taken against council-wide priorities, ensuring the right accommodation at the right cost, with clearer accountability, better utilisation and a more efficient, right-sized estate.

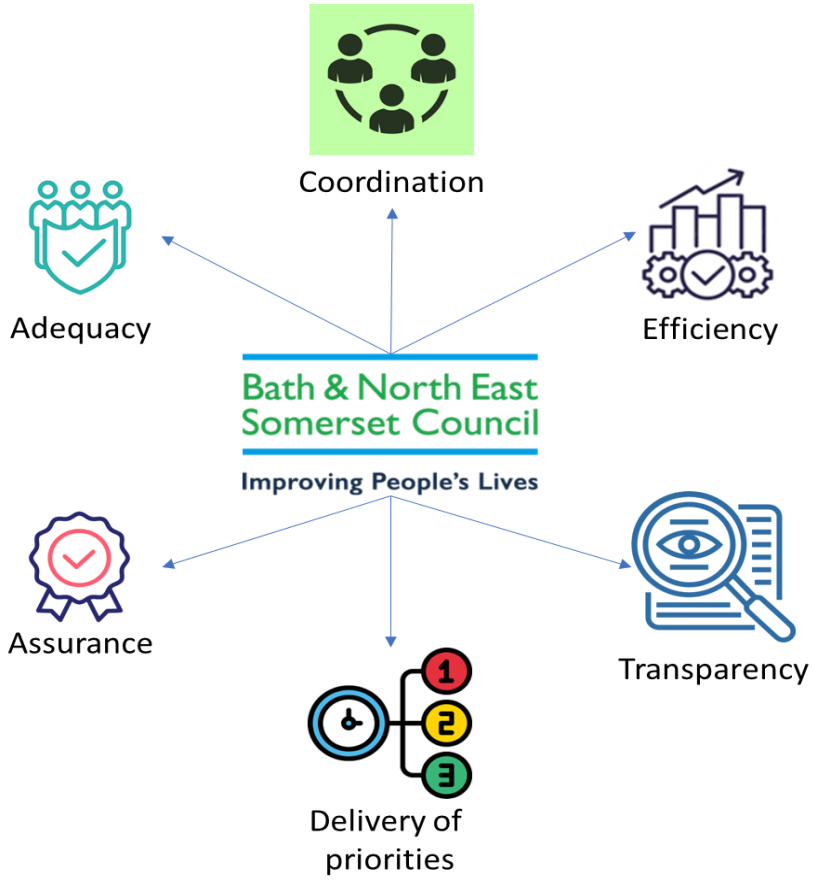
The terms Corporate Landlord and Corporate Estate can be used interchangeably. The Corporate Estate is the service, managing the Councils assets, through a Corporate Landlord operating model.



Corporate Landlord principles

The Corporate Estate, through the Corporate Landlord model, is grounded in 6 key principles:

- ✓It **coordinates** activity through a central team ensuring budgets and resources are used appropriately and consistently.
- ✓It ensures the estate is **efficient** by working to reduce maintenance costs, energy usage and optimising the use of space.
- ✓It provides **transparency** in decision making and in relation to the running costs, compliance, and maintenance liabilities of the estate.
- ✓It supports the wider objectives and **priorities** of the Council by using a standardised approach to asset challenge .
- ✓It provides **assurance** to the council and building users that the assets they occupy are safe and compliant.
- ✓It ensures **adequacy** in our estate. That buildings are optimally used and that we do not hold surplus stock.



Challenging Our Assets

Bath & North East Somerset Council
CORPORATE LANDLORD

Decisions made on how our land and buildings are used are assessed through the Asset Challenge framework. This framework is a systematic process that ensures transparency and consistency to decisions to retain, invest, repurpose, share, or dispose of our assets. Decisions are evidenced against service needs, safety/compliance, utilisation/cost, carbon and nature impact, place/access, and options appraisal.

The aim of Asset Challenge is to ensure we only hold those assets that are required and to reduce costs through a process of identifying assets that should be retained for use and/or invested in and identifying those that are surplus to requirements and therefore can be disposed of.

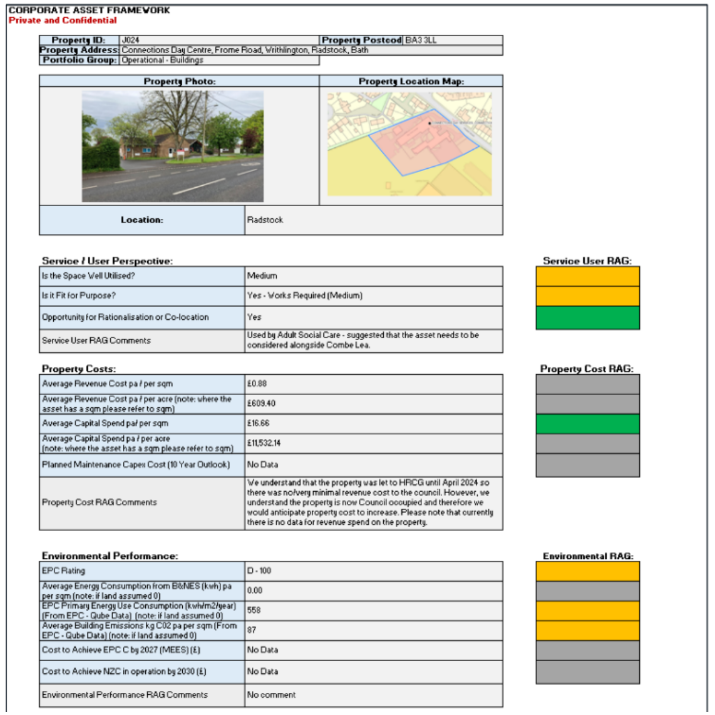
Challenging Our Assets

Bath & North East Somerset Council
CORPORATE LANDLORD

Through Asset Challenge, each asset is assessed using a step-by-step process and tested against a common set of criteria. The process looks at:

- The strategic purpose for holding the asset and an assessment of how it is used.
- The opportunities and risks associated with the asset including maintenance liabilities.
- The assets performance including operating and holdings costs, environmental or energy performance, use, capacity and location.
- An assessment of the alternative available options including the potential to deliver alternative corporate priorities.
- Potential options are then consulted on with relevant stakeholders including current and potential users.

Once an asset has been assessed against these criteria, a recommendation is presented for a decision through the relevant Council governance group.



CORPORATE ASSET FRAMEWORK
Private and Confidential

Property ID:	J024	**Property Postcod**	BA3 3LL
Property Address	Connections Day Centre, Frome Road, Writhlington, Radstock, Bath		
Portfolio Group:	Operational - Buildings		

Property Photo:	Property Location Map:
Location:	Radstock

Service / User Perspective:

Is the Space Well Utilised?	Medium
Is it Fit for Purpose?	Yes - Works Required (Medium)
Opportunity for Rationalisation or Co-location	Yes
Service User RAG Comments	Used by Adult Social Care - suggested that the asset needs to be considered alongside Combe Lea.

Service User RAG:

Property Costs:

Average Revenue Cost pa / per sqm	£0.88
Average Revenue Cost pa / per acre (note: where the asset has a sqm please refer to sqm)	£609.40
Average Capital Spend pa/ per sqm	£16.66
Average Capital Spend pa / per acre (note: where the asset has a sqm please refer to sqm)	£11,532.14
Planned Maintenance Capex Cost (10 Year Outlook)	No Data
Property Cost RAG Comments	We understand that the property was let to HRCG until April 2024 so there was no/very minimal revenue cost to the council. However, we understand the property is now Council occupied and therefore we would anticipate property cost to increase. Please note that currently there is no data for revenue spend on the property.

Property Cost RAG:

Environmental Performance:

EPC Rating	D - 100
Average Energy Consumption from B&NES (kwh) pa per sqm (note: if land assumed 0)	0.00
EPC Primary Energy Use Consumption (kwh/m2/year) (From EPC - Qube Data) (note: if land assumed 0)	558
Average Building Emissions kg CO2 pa per sqm (From EPC - Qube Data) (note: if land assumed 0)	87
Cost to Achieve EPC C by 2027 (MEES) (£)	No Data
Cost to Achieve NZC in operation by 2030 (£)	No Data
Environmental Performance RAG Comments	No comment

Environmental RAG:

Risk:

Building Condition	No Data
Weighted Average Useful Life	48
Statutory Compliance	No Data
Is the Building Listed?	No
Flood Zone	Flood Zone 1
Responsibility for Repair (B&NES)	Council
Covenant Strength	N/A
Tenant Turnover (last 5 years)	1
Is the Property Vacant/Part Vacant?	No
Risk RAG Comments	No comment

Risk RAG:

Corporate Potential:

Delivering for local residents (community priorities)	Current	Yes
	Potential	Yes
Focussing on prevention (decisions informed by evidence)	Current	Yes
	Potential	Yes
Preparing for the future (equality and respect)	Current	No
	Potential	No
Climate Transformation Interest	Yes	
Nature Transformation Interest	No	
Corporate Potential RAG Comment	No comment	

Corporate Potential RAG:

Real Estate Opportunity:

Market Appetite	High
Planning Potential	High
Value Potential	High
Ability to Secure Vacant Possession	High
Reputational Sensitivities	High
Other KPIs (not subject to RAG assessment)	
Adjacent Council Ownership	No
Adjacent Development	No Data
Regeneration Area	No
Regeneration Interest (High/Medium/Low)	Low
Real Estate Opportunity RAG Comments	No comment

Real Estate Opportunity RAG:

Delivering the Corporate Asset Management Policy

Our Plan on a Page

Our Asset Management Policy establishes five pillars that frame the actions and behaviours required to achieve the objectives for our corporate estate. The following is a high-level summary of how we will deliver our policy objectives:

Responsible

- Strengthen governance and asset challenge
- Prioritise spend where it delivers the greatest public value
- Improve asset intelligence and forward planning

Suitable

- Suitable, flexible accommodation that supports modern service delivery
- Assure safety, security and statutory compliance across operational buildings
- Plan with services and communities to optimise use and maximise social value

Sustainable

- Prioritise planned maintenance and lifecycle investment
- Optimise utilisation and occupancy through asset challenge
- Reduce carbon, energy, water and waste by embedding sustainable design and delivering decarbonisation

Enabling

- Use priority sites to enable regeneration and inclusive growth
- Unlock housing delivery (including affordable homes) through land release, asset repurposing and disposals
- Maintain a forward pipeline of land and opportunities

Coordinated

- Pursue co-location and shared solutions with public sector partners where this improves service access and estate efficiency
- Support integrated service delivery through joined up accommodation and hub-based provision
- Align public estate activity with regional priorities

Responsible

Objective: To plan and manage property as a corporate resource for the benefit of the people of Bath & North East Somerset.

We will...

- Run the operational estate through a single Corporate Landlord model.
- Centralise operational property budgets and prioritise spend corporately.
- Apply a consistent asset challenge to all decisions.
- Maintain a single system of record with complete, current data.
- Use standard business cases for all material estate change.
- Report performance quarterly and publish an annual estate report.

By 2031...

...the operational estate will be managed as a single corporate portfolio through an embedded Corporate Landlord model, with clear governance and consistent standards. Decisions will be transparent and evidence-led, supported by complete, current data in a single system of record.

Measures of Success

- **Data & governance:** Data completeness ≥95%; all material decisions include an Asset Challenge pack; quarterly dashboards and an annual report.
- **Assurance inputs:** ≥95% of assets with a condition survey ≤5 years old.
- **Cost control: Cost to Operate (£/m^2)** trending down year-on-year.
- **Single record:** System of record maintained; ownership and quality checks met each quarter.

Suitable

Objective: To provide the right property, fit for purpose, in the right place, to meet current service needs and to plan for the future.

We will…

- Agree service accommodation needs and keep them under review.
- Set and apply suitability and space standards.
- Maintain full statutory compliance and building safety.
- Embed inclusive access standards in all projects and priorities.
- Plan buildings to support modern, flexible service delivery.
- Optimise community use where it supports outcomes.

By 2031…

…we will operate from the right buildings in the right locations, aligned to service strategies and future demand. Our estate will be safe, compliant and inclusive, improving the experience for residents, staff and partners.

Measures of Success

- **Use of space: Occupancy %**, **Utilisation %**, and **Space Efficiency (m^2/FTE)** meeting target bands by asset class.
- **Safety & compliance: Statutory compliance in-date ≥98%** (with critical certificates highlighted).
- **Accessibility:** % assets meeting inclusive access standards at project gateway.

Sustainable

Objective: To manage and maintain property effectively, efficiently and sustainably; supporting rationalising through disposal and acquisition to meet our needs.

We will...

- Deliver planned maintenance based on condition and lifecycle evidence.
- Reduce backlog through targeted investment and exiting poor performers.
- Improve utilisation and right-size offices and operational space.
- Cut energy, water and carbon through a fabric-first retrofit approach.
- Decarbonise heat and expand renewables where feasible.
- Shift spend toward planned work and reduce reactive repairs.
- Apply whole-life cost and carbon at project gateways.

By 2031...

...we will prioritise planned investment over reactive spend, reducing backlog and improving asset condition and reliability. The estate will be lower cost and lower carbon, with rationalisation and reinvestment focused on the assets that matter most.

Measures of Success

- **Reliability & planning: PPM completion ≥95%**; planned:reactive ratio improving against baseline.
- **Liability reduction: Backlog maintenance (£/m^2)** decreasing against baseline.
- **Energy & carbon: Energy intensity (kWh/m^2)** and **tCO_2e** down; EPC profile improving toward **EPC B by 2030 where applicable**.

Enabling

Objective: To use land and buildings to stimulate economic regeneration, housing and growth; supporting local business needs and encouraging new businesses to the district.

We will...

- Identify operational sites suitable for repurpose or release.
- Maintain and deliver a clear land release/repurposing pipeline.
- Use meanwhile use to activate void space where appropriate.
- Prioritise investment in civic buildings that strengthen centres.
- Support housing delivery through asset-to-homes and site release options.
- Embed biodiversity-positive management across operational land.

What will be different...

...we will use the operational estate more strategically, repurposing or releasing assets to support housing delivery, regeneration and place outcomes where this does not compromise service delivery. Vacant and under-used space will be managed proactively, ensuring assets create public value while longer-term decisions are implemented.

Measures of Success

- **Portfolio actions: Sites released/repurposed** (count) delivered to plan; **capital receipts** achieved vs target.
- **Service outcomes: Homes enabled** (where relevant) and community facilities safeguarded/created (count & CATs).
- **Environment:** % operational land under **'biodiversity net gain' management** increasing.

Coordinated

Objective: To promote joint working and co-location, including with our public sector partners, where it will provide benefit for.

We will...

- Expand co-located hubs where they improve access and efficiency.
- Enable integrated health, care and community delivery in shared space.
- Standardise partner agreements and clarify responsibilities and costs.
- Plan co-location opportunities through a shared pipeline and asset challenge.
- Track space released and savings delivered from co-location.
- Locate hubs to support transport access and active travel.

By 2031...

...we will deliver a more integrated public estate, expanding co-location and multi-service hubs with partners. This will improve access and enable more joined-up delivery, while reducing duplication and securing efficiencies through shared space.

Measures of Success

- **Hubs & partners: Co-located hubs delivered (count)**; **partner occupancy %** of shared space.
- **Value for money: Recurring savings/cost avoidance** from co-location evidenced.
- **Access:** Improved **service access coverage** (e.g., population within target travel time to hubs).

Performance and Governance

5 Year Action Plan priorities

2026

- ✓ Embed Corporate Landlord across services
- ✓ Centralise estate budgets (excl. Heritage)
- ✓ Consolidate roll out of CAFM to services and contractors
- ✓ Initiate framework procurement prioritisation
- ✓ Undertake initial feasibility phase of Bath Property Development workstream
- ✓ Secure key milestones for flagship regeneration sites at Bath Quays and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.

2027

- ✓ Tighten lifecycle and compliance procurement frameworks.
- ✓ Close land transfers at Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
- ✓ Secure allotment land transfer in Bath
- ✓ Define and initiate public toilet asset enhancement in Bath in accordance with 2026 strategy

2028

- ✓ Lift PPM performance and reduce reactive ratio
- ✓ Publish mid-cycle trend analysis and refresh targets

2029

- ✓ Embed inclusive design in all refurbishments
- ✓ Evidence space released and recurring savings from colocation/hubs

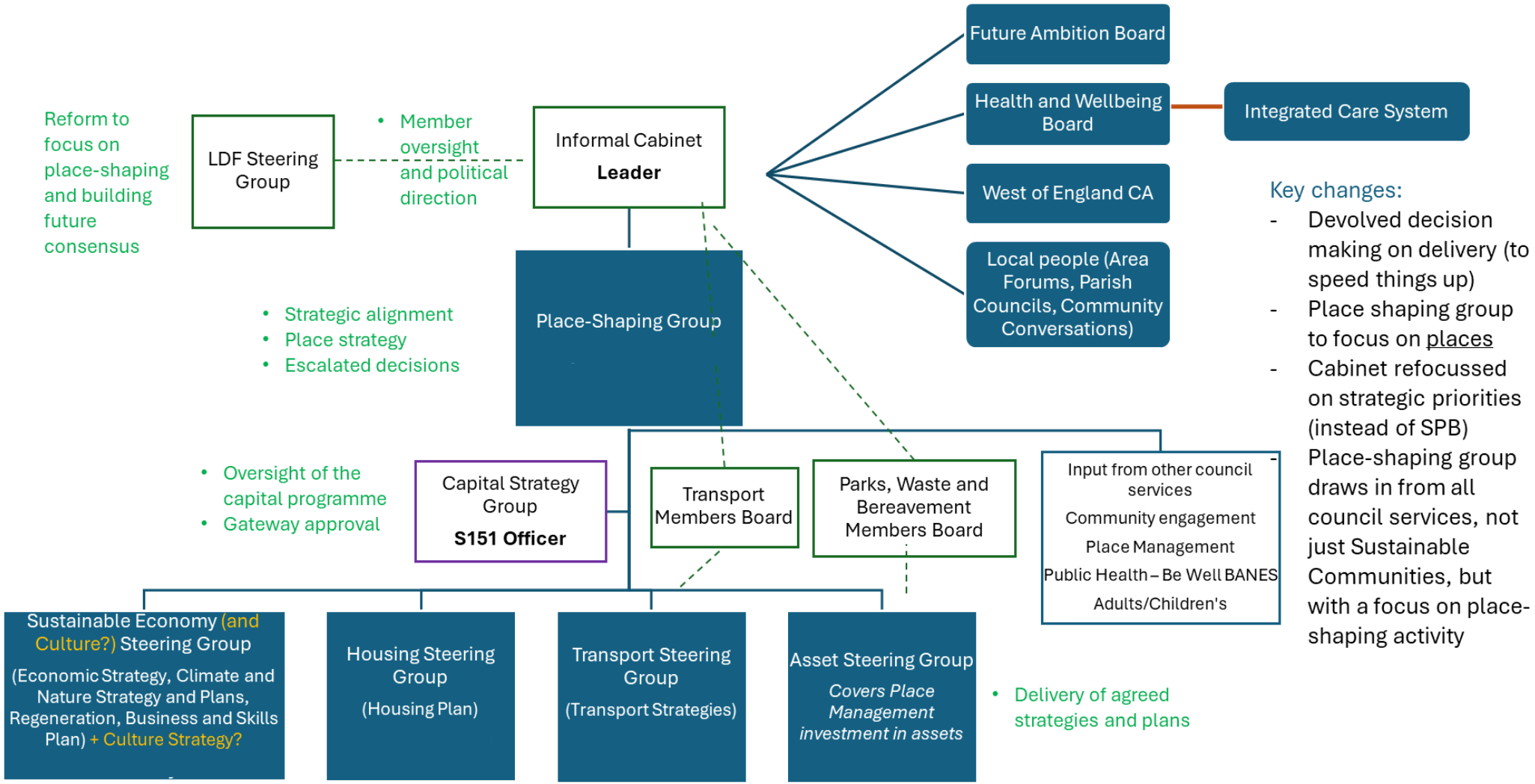
2030

- ✓ Commence work on draft strategy 2031-36
- ✓ Publish the five-year outcomes report
- ✓ Achieve EPC B where applicable and record exemptions

Annual

- ✓ Implement statutory compliance activity calendar
- ✓ Deliver against prioritised CCPM programme
- ✓ Accelerate annual prioritised asset disposal programme
- ✓ Deliver decarbonisation and retrofit programme activity
- ✓ Execute annual planned maintenance.
- ✓ Rolling programme of estates asset Condition Surveys
- ✓ Engage with Council services following annual business planning
- ✓ Implement wider corporate estate capital programme activity
- ✓ Rolling Asset Challenge to inform estate rationalisation
- ✓ Implement CAT programme

Governance



Key changes:

- Devolved decision making on delivery (to speed things up)
- Place shaping group to focus on <u>places</u>
- Cabinet refocussed on strategic priorities (instead of SPB)
- Place-shaping group draws in from all council services, not just Sustainable Communities, but with a focus on place-shaping activity

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Bath & North East Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Version 4)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework
Name of directorate and service	Corporate Estate & Development
Name and role of officers completing the EqIA	Richard Holden, Head of Corporate Estate
Date of assessment	16.02.26

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on people and different groups within our community. The main aim is to identify any adverse impacts (i.e. discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and to identify areas where equality can be better promoted). Equality impact Assessments (EqIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so mark N/A any that are not applicable**. It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website following relevant service lead approval.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g. • How the service/policy is delivered and by whom • If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations • Intended outcomes	The Asset Management Framework (AMF) is a suite of documents that will be used to manage the Corporate Estate over the next 5 years. Delivery of the Asset Management Strategy will require cross service consultation in most of the delivery actions. The intended outcomes are: ✓ A safe, compliant, rightsized estate supporting modern, inclusive service delivery ✓ Office/admin floorspace reduction with co-location hubs in priority localities ✓ Maintenance backlog reduced from an estimated baseline through targeted investment and disposals ✓ Net-zero operations trajectory: energy intensity reduced; retained assets aligned with EPC regulations by 2030; heat decarbonised; and electricity matched by renewables ✓ Transparent disposals delivering annual capital receipts and reduced revenue costs, and the CAT programme offering greater community and social value ✓ A single system of record (Concerto) and KPI dashboards; provide organisational assurance and supports scrutiny.

1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example: • Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? • Is it a national requirement?). • How much room for review is there?	The Asset Management Framework is the Council's plan for how we look after and use our operational buildings and land over the next five years. It guides everyday decisions about maintenance, upgrades, sharing space, and repurposing or releasing sites that we no longer need.
1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?	The AMF articulates how the management and use of Council assets will support the delivery of our corporate priorities. The Asset Management Policy outlines our guiding principles in supporting delivery of the Councils priorities. The Asset Management Strategy outlines how we are going to deliver against these policy principles.

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	**Data, research and information that you can refer to**
2.1 What equality focussed training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?	All Corporate Estate staff have access to the Councils Learning Zone, including online modules for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Our estates assets need to be accessible and reasonable adjustments made for staff and the public in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
2.2 What is the equality profile of service users?	The AMF cross cuts all Directorate services within the Council.

2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?	An Annual Report will be produced to monitor the performance of the AMF KPIs against baseline data sets. The first Annual Report will be published in 2027.
2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?	The Cabinet report E3692 has been prepared in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development and the Director Capital & Housing Delivery. The Corporate Estate Asset Management Framework has undergone broad engagement with s151, service Directors, Heads of Service, and via Corporate PDS panel. Feedback from HoS and Corporate PDS have been accommodated where feasible.
2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equality considerations within this?	The AMF suite of documents will undergo regular review; they are live documents responding to the priorities of the Council. EqIA considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.

3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups

Key questions	**Examples of what the service has done to promote equality**	**Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this**
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.2 Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES Women's Career Development or Men's Mental Health Staff Networks.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework. Are there more men/women who could be impacted by activities? Consider that women are more likely to provide care for children and elderly and may be impacted by a change to work location.

3.3 Pregnancy and maternity	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Pixash provides designated areas for expressing and storage of breast milk. The Guildhall currently doesn't have this.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.4 Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Gender neutral toilets are available in the Guildhall. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES LGBTQ Staff Network.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.5 Disability – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration of physical, sensory and mental health needs/differences)	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. All buildings are accessible for employees with mobility aids.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.

	Hearing loops are available in some buildings. A person centred approach will ensure that all disabled employees reasonable adjustment requests are considered. Current reasonable adjustment provision/resources will be implemented within location moves. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES Access and Inclusion Staff Network.	
3.6 Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.7 Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES Ethnic Minority Staff Network.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.

3.8 Sexual orientation – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, questioning people	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES LGBTQ Staff Network.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.9 Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.10 Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Pixash provides a multi-use room for prayer. B&NES advocate for a person centred and flexible working approach to enable employees to discuss their faith-based needs. Employees have an open invitation to join the B&NES Faith Staff Network.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.

3.11 Socio-economically disadvantaged* – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances **(this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).**	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Employees living in rural areas may find it harder to access public transport, depending on the nature of the Asset Challenge.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.
3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove disadvantage and consider special provision).	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.

3.14 Care Experienced *** This working definition is currently under review and therefore subject to change: In B&NES, you are 'care-experienced' if you spent any time in your childhood in Local Authority care, living away from your parent(s) for example, you were adopted, lived in residential, foster care, kinship care, or a special guardianship arrangement.	Equality considerations will be assessed on an asset-by-asset basis as delegated decisions are taken through Asset Challenge, and as estates based decisions are brought forward through the Councils governance framework. Employees who have experienced trauma may find it more difficult to manage change. Managers will keep all employees informed about moves and will use a person-centred approach to ensure that individual needs are considered and managed.	To be assessed on an asset by asset basis as options are assessed and decisions made in accordance with officer delegations and/or via the Councils governance framework.

*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay 'due regard' to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

***The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council
Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
TBC during delivery of the AMF and Asset Challenge.	TBC during delivery of the AMF and Asset Challenge.	TBC during delivery of the AMF and Asset Challenge.	TBC during delivery of the AMF and Asset Challenge.	TBC during delivery of the AMF and Asset Challenge.

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equality Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Simon Martin, Director of Capital and Housing Delivery

Date: **3 March 2026**

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