

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday 24th February 2026

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

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Alex Beaumont and Paul Roper

### **53 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

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

### **54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Monitoring Officer issued a general dispensation for all Councillors who pay Council Tax, are Parish Councillors or School Governors and therefore had an interest in these items, to enable them to take part in the debate and vote on agenda item 8 - Budget & Council Tax 2026/27.

In addition, specific dispensations were granted for the below Councillors who have a family member in receipt of Council SEND support, social care support or are working for B&NES;

Sarah Warren  
Saskia Heijltjes  
Sarah Moore  
Steve Hedges

### **55 MINUTES - 20TH NOVEMBER 2025**

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Moore, seconded by Councillor Tim Ball, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **56 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair made the usual announcements regarding phones, mic units and webcasting. She reminded Councillors that Annex 13 of the Budget report was circulated and is available on the website, as are the amendments received.

She then invited the new Chief Executive, Sophie Broadfield, to address the meeting following her recent appointment.

## **57 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **58 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Chair made reference to the Public Q&A document that had been circulated.

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Dominic Taylor made a statement calling into question the Council's support to Ukraine, a copy of which has been added to the online record and the Minute book.

Jem Hovil made a statement calling for a Residents' Parking Zone (RPZ) for the Firs, Combe Down, a copy of which has been added to the online record and the Minute book. In response to a question from Councillor Kevin Guy about whether Jem and fellow residents would like to meet with the Cabinet Member to discuss this, Jem confirmed that he would.

Mark Shelford presented a petition of 113 signatures from residents of Milton Avenue and Chaucer Road requesting that the recently installed cycle hangar on Chaucer Road be relocated to a safer location away from the uphill crossroads junction with Milton Avenue. A copy of Mark's statement has been added to the online record and the Minute book. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked Mark if he considered the same principles he'd raised in his request applied to the one outside the library in Radstock, to which Mark replied that he couldn't comment on that. In response to a question from Councillor June Player about whether the residents had been told that the hangar can be moved, Mark replied that it had been agreed and so he was requesting the process could be expedited. Councillor Tim Warren asked Mark what consultation had taken place, to which he replied that no direct consultation, in terms of letters or email to residents had been sent, nor had the Bear Flats Residents Association been contacted about the location. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if Mark was aware that a Traffic Regulation Order was needed for the location of hangars, to which Mark confirmed that he was.

Ed Browning made a statement about funding for public toilets following the motion unanimously agreed at Council in July 2025. Ed was disappointed to see a potential funding cut in the budget and called for proactive steps to put into place those measures outlined in the motion. Councillor Robin Moss asked if anyone had contacted Ed to identify the gaps on provision since he had raised issues in his statement to Council in July, to which Ed replied they had not.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their statements, which will be forwarded to the relevant Cabinet Member.

## 59 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2026/27 AND FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The Council considered a report presenting the revenue and capital budgets together with proposals for increases in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept for 2026/2.

An amendment was moved by the Labour Group (attached to the online record) calling for an exemption for public conveniences contracts, and all charity and voluntary sector contractors, from the list of “top 25 contracts” targeted for savings and a business case for a Discovery card. This was lost on a vote.

An amendment was moved by the Green Group (attached to the online record) calling for additional software to accurately model changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. This was lost on a vote.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss and **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with rule 3.1.15 (Suspension of rules), rule 3.1.34 be suspended to allow the length of speeches for the Budget debate to be varied (NB: unless otherwise stated, all mover speeches 5 minutes, all others 3 minutes).

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor Kevin Guy, it was

**RESOLVED** that

1. The 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.
- 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.
- 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 5.2.65 to 5.2.66 of the report.
- The Efficiency Strategy attached at Annex 4.

- 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).
  - The Capital & Investment Strategy attached at Annex 6.
  - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy attached at Annex 7.
  - The Capital Prudential Indicators outlined in 5.8.17.
  - The Annual Pay Policy Statement at Annex 8.
  - The Community Contribution Fund extension outlined Section 5.5.
  - The Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 shown in the following link, and referred to in 5.3.10:  
  
[https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-01/Council\\_Tax\\_reduction\\_scheme\\_April\\_1\\_2026\\_to\\_March\\_31\\_2027.pdf](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-01/Council_Tax_reduction_scheme_April_1_2026_to_March_31_2027.pdf)
  - The Fees and Charges schedule for 2026/27 at Annex 11 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. The Council approves the technical resolutions that are derived from the budget report, and all the figures in that report, including the precepts for towns, parishes and other precepting bodies as set out in Annex 13.
  3. The Council notes 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; and
  4. The Council notes the budget consultation responses in Annex 10, and the Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panel feedback in Annex 12.

*[Notes;*

1. *An amendment from the Labour Group was moved by Councillor Robin Moss and seconded by Councillor Lesley Mansell, as set out above. This was lost on a named vote;*

*Councillors in favour (7): - Councillors David Biddleston, Shaun Hughes, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Ann Morgan, Robin Moss, June Player.*

*Councillors against (37) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, Manda Rigby, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Sarah Warren, Joanna Wright*

*Councillors abstaining (7): - Councillors Sarah Evans, Alan Hale, Gavin Heathcote, Grant Johnson, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Tim Warren*

2. *An amendment from the Green Group was moved by Councillor Saskia Heijltjes and seconded by Councillor Joanna Wright, as set out above. This was lost on a named vote;*

*Councillors in favour (5): - Councillors Colin Blackburn, Saskia Heijltjes, Shaun Hughes, Sam Ross and Joanna Wright*

*Councillors against (46) - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Sarah Evans, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.*

*Councillors abstaining (4): - Councillors David Biddleston, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss.*

3. *The above successful resolution was carried on a named vote;*

*Councillors in favour (46): - Councillors Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Stuart Bridge, Paul Crossley, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Matt McCabe, Simon McCombe, Sarah Moore, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania; June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Andy Wait, Karen Walker, Chris Warren, Sarah Warren, Tim Warren.*

*Councillors against (6): - Councillors David Biddleston, Sarah Evans, Eleanor Jackson, Lesley Mansell, Robin Moss, Tim Warren.*

*Councillors abstaining (3): - Councillors Saskia Heijltjes, Sam Ross, Joanna Wright]*

## **60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2026/27**

The Council considered its Treasury Management Strategy statement for 2026/27, fulfilling its legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code which requires this.

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

**RESOLVED** to

1. Approve the actions proposed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/27 (**Appendix 1**); and
2. Note the Treasury Management Indicators detailed in **Appendix 1**.

**61 PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW**

The Council considered a report regarding proportionality, following a change in political group membership.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, seconded by Councillor Karen Walker, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to

1. note the required revised totals in the proportionality table; and
2. note that actual place changes to achieve the new totals will be considered by the political groups concerned and notified in due course.

**62 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The Chair made reference to the Councillor Q&A document that had been circulated.

The meeting ended at 8.52 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**

**COUNCIL MEETING 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC**

Public (item 7)

- |                   |                                                              |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dominic Taylor | Support for Ukraine ( <i>statement received</i> )            |
| 2. Jem Hovil      | An RPZ for the Firs Combe Down ( <i>statement received</i> ) |
| 3. Mark Shelford  | Cycle hangar, Chaucer Road ( <i>statement received</i> )     |
| 4. Ed Browning    | Public toilets                                               |

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC**

<b>P</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Kathy Beadle</b>
How many EHC needs assessments (EHCNA) were received in BANES and how many were rejected/refused at any stage in 2025? Please include the number of EHCNAs rejected in the first instance, even if they were later overturned.			
<b>Answer from:</b>			<b>Cllr Paul May</b>
531 requests came into the service in 2025 422 resulted in a yes to assess decision There were 450 decisions to issue plans (some will have been requested in 2024) Of those assessed in 2025, 95% resulted in a plan. We issued 338 plans in 2025.			
<b>P</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Kathy Beadle</b>
Reducing the waiting times and increasing crossing times for pedestrians at signalised crossings at the remaining 19 of the total 41 sites that are potentially suitable for Pre Timed Max would help older people, people with mobility issues and young children greater time to cross. What is the cost to deliver this at the 19 sites in B&NES?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			<b>Cllr Lucy Hodge</b>
The estimated revenue cost to investigate and, where appropriate, implement Pre Timed Max at these sites is approximately £20,000.			

## **Council support for Ukrainian government**

*Statement to be delivered by Dominic Taylor to the Bath and North East Somerset Council meeting on 24th February, 2026*

On the 25th March, 2022, in light of the horrific conflict in the Ukraine that had begun a month prior, the council honourably resolved to 'express their full support and solidarity with Ukrainian people' (point 6 of minute 135 <sup>1</sup>). However this is not what happened. The council instead publicly expressed their full support and solidarity with the Ukrainian government:

- the Ukrainian flag has flown continuously over the town hall ever since;
- a sign in the market, accompanied by the Ukrainian flag, informs visitors exactly how many miles they are from Kiev;
- Russian language commentaries are no longer available in tourist attractions, even though Russian is spoken by a quarter of a billion people including many Ukrainians, but are available in Ukrainian, which is spoken by less than 40 million people;
- Ukrainian war propaganda was hosted in the public library, clearly expressing a desire for victory rather than for peace.

As you are no doubt aware, the regime that you are supporting came to power in 2014 following Euromaidan, or the Euromaidan coup as it is also known, in which democratically elected president Viktor Yanukovich was removed from power. In 2015, The Guardian described the new regime in the following terms: 'Welcome to Ukraine, the most corrupt nation in Europe' <sup>2</sup>. In 2018, Reuters wrote about 'Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem' <sup>3</sup>. In 2021, before the Russian invasion, NE Global declared 'Ukrainian president's rule becomes increasingly corrupt, authoritarian' <sup>4</sup>. And indeed it did: in 2022, the regime imposed martial law, prohibited military age men from leaving the country <sup>5</sup> and has not held an election ever since. In 2024, the BBC reported on conscription squads forcibly abducting young men into the Ukrainian army <sup>6</sup>. Looking beyond corporate media, one finds compelling allegations of money laundering, sabotage of gas pipelines, harbouring bioweapons labs and involvement in forced organ harvesting. This is the regime with which you have publicly identified for the past four years without ever giving meaningful justification in spite of having been challenged on multiple occasions.

As you are also aware, on the 25th March, 2022, the council noted that it receives £10,500 per Ukrainian refugee (point 3 of minute 135 <sup>1</sup>); this is compared to the paltry £600 in taxes from local residents (£120 million / 200,000 <sup>7</sup>). You therefore have a financial incentive to perpetuate a conflict that has already claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people <sup>8</sup>, many of them Ukrainian people with whom you have expressed solidarity. However, it is never a legitimate function of a local council to take sides in an international conflict, especially when financial considerations may sway sound judgement, nor to do anything that perpetuates violence and bloodshed. I therefore demand that you do what you committed to do four years ago: show your 'solidarity with Ukrainian people' by ceasing all actions that aggravate the conflict and that support the regime currently oppressing them.

---

<sup>1</sup><https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/g6183/Printed%20minutes%2025th-Mar-2022%2011.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/feb/04/welcome-to-the-most-corrupt-nation-in-europe-ukraine>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.reuters.com/article/opinion/commentary-ukraines-neo-nazi-problem-idUSKBN1GV2TC/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.neglobal.eu/ukrainian-presidents-rule-becomes-increasingly-corrupt-authoritarian/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/focus/20230607-ukraine-s-mobilisation-tests-its-social-fabric>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz994d6vqe5o>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-25-Statement-of-Accounts-FINAL-For-Website-Accessible.pdf>

<sup>8</sup><https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c62n922dnw7o>

This page is intentionally left blank

**RPZ for The Firs, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5ED**

The Firs is a small but proud one-way street of 21 terraced houses running by the Firs Field. We are actively developing our community but have zero control over our own parking, and desperately need the agency an RPZ will bring. (Dual-use bays throughout to provide non-permit holders with 1 or 2 hours parking, 8am-6pm, Monday-Friday or similar.)

**The problem is protracted and many-sided:**

- We have no driveways and are completely dependent on on-street parking, unlike neighbouring streets.
- We have senior citizens, the less able-bodied, those with young children, professionals leaving early and coming home late (health care workers included), tradesmen etc.
- Those who want to enjoy the Firs Field struggle to find an accessible spot.
- The same can be said of those visiting the surgery, school, shops and other amenities.
- We are a main, one-way exit point for the village, a prime spot for those spending the day here.
- The Firs is a convenient Park & Ride for the city, with the bus running past the top.
- We function as long-stay parking for Combe Down Garage, including when cars fail MOTs.
- Abandoned vehicles can sit here for a month before we can begin to take action.
- As a one-way street, when there is no available parking it is impossible to know where to go or requires multiple laps of a one-way system, adding to the frustration.
- This situation impacts residents daily and directly, creating very real tensions.

**We have made our case to the Council for well over 8 years.** However, changes in the Council, compounded by the pandemic and difficulties navigating the system, have created frustrating delays.

**We are requesting an RPZ for BA2 5ED rather than a wider scheme.** We understand the preference for a village-wide approach, but there are different needs in different parts. A wider effort will only compound problems and continue the impasse.

**We have been told that single street schemes cannot be considered.** However, they do exist, including Macaulay Buildings. They may not have connected streets, but we, too, are an island of sorts and a pinch-point. (There may be a way of linking The Firs to an existing RPZ.)

**We recently refreshed our survey of households with 100% of respondents now in favour.** That is a clear indicator of increasing and deepening concerns. (And that despite the costs attached, or, positively, the revenue for the Council).

**In short, this mini-scheme will have a massive positive impact.** Both for us and those using the Firs Field and other amenities, with minimal negative impact on others. We foresee mainly positive knock-on effects – including reduced emissions and vehicle numbers due to the pricing incentives.

*Please consider and fast-track our request!*

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Good evening Chair, Councillors, Officers and members of the supporting Public**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

As many of you know, I am a cyclist. I stand here this evening not to oppose cycling infrastructure — I support active travel — but to ask that it is delivered safely and with proper consultation.

I am presenting a petition signed by 113 residents of Milton Avenue and Chaucer Road on Bear Flat requesting that the cycle hangar positioned at the junction of Chaucer Road and Milton Avenue be relocated. The petition is supported by the Bear Flat Association, who were not aware of the proposed location prior to installation.

The principle of cycle hangars is sound. The siting of this one is not.

Placed directly at a crossroads junction, it has already contributed to one accident involving a cyclist, a collision with a delivery van, and more than 100 reported near misses. The hangar itself shows signs of impact. This is a constrained residential junction with reduced sightlines, used daily by drivers, pedestrians, cyclists — and crucially, children walking to Beechen Cliff School. The safety risk is real and ongoing.

Officers have confirmed that relocation is being progressed and that safer alternative sites further along Chaucer Road have been identified. That is welcome, and I would urge that relocation proceeds without delay.

However, it is entirely reasonable to reflect on how we reached this position.

Residents were not directly consulted on the specific siting. The Bear Flat Association was unaware of the proposed location. The first they knew was when it arrived in location. Through a Freedom of Information request, I established that no formal safety case had been undertaken prior to installation, and Avon and Somerset Highways Safety Team were not consulted — I asked directly.

Smarter consultation and a proper safety assessment at the outset would almost certainly have avoided the cost, the risk and the community concern that you now dealing with.

This is about delivering infrastructure competently and safely.

Finally, I would like to thank the residents of Milton Avenue and Chaucer Road for their persistence, Peter Stacey for coordinating the petition, and the Bear Flat Association for their support. We stand ready to work constructively with the Council to secure a safer .

Thank you.

This page is intentionally left blank

**COUNCIL MEETING 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS**

Page 15

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Cllr Joanna Wright</b>
<p>The main Budget report <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90214/E3662%20-%20Budget%20and%20Council%20Tax%202026-27%20and%20Financial%20Outlook.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90214/E3662%20-%20Budget%20and%20Council%20Tax%202026-27%20and%20Financial%20Outlook.pdf</a> at 5.1.3. states that only £7.22m of the Corporate Contingency has been released (and £2.62 is held in the 26/27 Budget). Yet the 25/26 Revenue Monitoring Report Q3 <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90200/E3652%20-%20Revenue%20and%20Capital%20Budget%20Monitoring%20Cash%20Limits%20and%20Virements%20-%20April%20to%20December%202025.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90200/E3652%20-%20Revenue%20and%20Capital%20Budget%20Monitoring%20Cash%20Limits%20and%20Virements%20-%20April%20to%20December%202025.pdf</a> (Appendix 1 to Agenda item 16) report shows, <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90201/E3652%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Revenue%20Monitoring%20Commentary.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s90201/E3652%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20Revenue%20Monitoring%20Commentary.pdf</a> third row down on page 2, that all £9.830m has been released.</p> <p>Please can this be explained?</p>			
		<b>Answer from:</b>	<b>Cllr Mark Elliott</b>
<p>The two reports are reporting on two different things. The budget report sets out the plan for how we intend to spend our money next year (2026/27). The monitoring report sets out how we are doing against the planned budget for the current financial year (2025/26).</p> <p>In 2025/26 we set aside £9.83m as contingency – i.e. money held at the corporate centre rather than in individual departmental budgets, that we could release when, as we expected they might, departmental budgets came under financial pressure during the year. This was a very high level of contingency because we believed there was a great deal of risk and uncertainty that departments would not be able to stay within budget. The monitoring report shows that is exactly what has happened, and we have released all of that contingency during 2025/26 to help alleviate pressure on departmental budgets. (Primarily Children’s Services and to a lesser extent Heritage Services).</p>			

The budget report presents figures as adjustments to the previous year's budget. So, if nothing changed, we would again have a £9.83m contingency in 2026/27. We are more confident in the ability of the departments to be able to operate within their set budgets in 2026/27, so we are reducing the contingency in next year's budget to £2.62m. This is much more in line with historically usual levels of contingency set in B&NES council's budget. So, the negative £7.22m shown in the budget report is not about this year's contingency, which is fully drawn down. It is showing that the contingency for next year is going to be £7.22m lower than the contingency this year.

If any more clarity is required, I am happy to provide it.

<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Cllr Joanna Wright</b>
----------	-----------	-----------------------	---------------------------

There seem to be some discrepancies across the various papers. One example is the sub total line for Communications and Community: The 25/26 Revenue Monitoring Report Q3 (bottom of page 4 of 5) shows this section is forecast to be £403k overspent with a forecast total spend of £5.614m. However, this forecast overspend is not shown in the Comms and Comms portfolio sub total for 26/27 Budget (Annex 1 Portfolio Cash Limits p2) which has a base budget of £5.183m. There is a second problem, that budget line also shows savings of £339k and a total 26/27 budget of £5.201 (RHS column). But the 26/27 savings in the Budget Savings report, Annex 2(i), are shown as £39k not £339k. These two discrepancies are £403k and £300k totalling £703k.

Please can this be explained?

<b>Answer from:</b>	<b>Cllr Mark Elliott</b>
---------------------	--------------------------

As with question M1, there is some confusion in the question between the monitoring report, which reports on actual spending in *this* financial year, and the budget report for 2026/27 which sets out the budget (i.e. what we are expecting to spend) for the *next* financial year. So yes, the monitoring report shows that the Communities and Communications Portfolio is likely to be overspent by £403k by the end of *this* financial year (against a budget of £5.21m for this financial year.) The budget report shows that we have set an overall budget of £5.18m the Communities and Communications Portfolio for *next* financial year. (It should be noted that comparing portfolios year on year is not *necessarily* comparing like-for-like, as individual services might move between portfolios from one financial year to the next. As with Home to School Transport in question M1.)

The second point – the discrepancy between the £339k saving in annex 1 and the £39k saving in annex 2i against the Communities and Communications portfolio – is because annex 2i incorrectly shows the £300k saving from “transforming customer services” as being in the

Resources portfolio, when it should be reported in the Communities and Communications portfolio. This obviously has no difference on the overall budget for savings, or on the nature of the proposed saving, it just moves that £300k saving from one portfolio to another. This has been corrected in the final reports for council.

This page is intentionally left blank