

## CABINET MEETING 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012

The following Statements and Questions had been registered by the time of publication.

### REGISTERED SPEAKERS

There were 24 notices of intention to make a statement at the meeting. Where the intention is to speak about an item on the Agenda, the speaker will be offered the option to speak near the beginning of the meeting or just before the Agenda item.

#### **Statements about issues NOT on the Agenda**

- Cllr Brian Simmons  
Re: Petition re Parking, St John's Court Keynsham
- Rev Hugh Mackay  
Re: Haycombe Crematorium
- Graham Duke (Pastor, Stepping Stones Church)  
Re: Haycombe Crematorium
- Cllr Eleanor Jackson  
Re: The "democratic deficit" in regard to the handling of petitions to Cabinet and Council
- Julie Trollope (Chairman, Bathwick Estate Residents' Association)  
Re: Cycle Route Bathwick Street to Powlett Road
- Cynthia McNally (Resident)  
Re: Cycle Route Bathwick Street to Powlett Road
- Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group)  
Re: Radstock Roads

#### **Re: Agenda Item 12 (BTP Bus Shelter Style)**

- ~~Joanna Robinson (Bath Preservation Trust)~~ (withdrew)

#### **Re: Agenda Item 13 (HMO Options for Bath)**

- David Cox (Policy Officer, National Landlords Association)
- Cllr June Player
- Mark Rose (Planning Consultant for University of Bath)
- David Howells (President, University of Bath Students Union)
- Naomi Mackrill (Vice-President, Community and Diversity, University of Bath Students Union)
- Matt Benka (Vice-President, Education, University of Bath Students Union)
- Chris Clements (Vice-President, Sport, University of Bath Students Union)

- Amy Stringer (Vice-President, Activities and Participation, University of Bath Students Union)
- Peter Davies (student, University of Bath)
- Phil Irvine (University of Bath)
- Simon O'Kane (Post-Graduate student, University of Bath)
- Anthony Masters (University of Bath)
- David Cameron (University of Bath)

**Re: Agenda Item 14 (Community Neighbourhood Planning Protocol)**

- Mark O'Sullivan (Federation of Bath Residents' Association)
- Joanna Robinson (Bath Preservation Trust)

**Re: Agenda Item 15 (Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting SPD)**

- Joanna Robinson (Bath Preservation Trust)

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS**

<b>M 01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Colin Barrett
<p>Could the Cabinet Member please provide the following answers relating to the statement by the spokesman for B&amp;NES that the decision to remove the cross from the main window at the crematorium had been taken after consultation with local clergy and funeral directors as well as taking into account feed-back from customers:</p> <p>a) Which funeral directors were consulted and how many responded?</p> <p>b) How many local clergy were consulted and how many responded?</p> <p>c) How many customers supporters the removal of the cross?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>a) An annual meeting was held on 14 December 2011 at Haycombe to discuss wide ranging issues which including the planned refurbishment of the Crematorium Chapel. The purpose of this meeting was to consult with and receive feedback from local Funeral Directors about the services provided at Haycombe. All the Funeral Directors that use Haycombe were invited (a total of 42) and representatives from 15 Funeral Directors attended. The issue of the window cross was discussed and the consensus from the group was that it should be replaced with an alternative which could be removed if requested. The minutes of the meeting were sent out to those who attended and were made available to others who did not attend on the night. No further comments about the window cross issue were received.</i></p> <p><i>b) The Council has corresponded with the Diocese of Bath and Wells as well as the Bishop of Bath and Wells, which confirmed that the Chapel is not a consecrated building. This correspondence prompted a visit to Haycombe from the Rural Dean of Bath, who stated afterwards that he found the meeting to be most helpful in understanding the Council's approach regarding this issue.</i></p>		

c) Please see my response below to question P01 from Mr MacKay.  
Funeral Directors deal directly with families on a daily basis and I believe that they have an understanding of the wishes of the bereaved. When they organise a funeral they have to take into account the type of service required (whether religious or non-religious) and so it is with this stakeholder group that the Council focussed its consultation.

**Supplementary Question:**

Will the Cabinet member say when the Equality Team were first consulted over the removal of the cross and when all parties were informed?

**Answer from:**

Councillor David Dixon

*There was consultation some time ago with the previous Bereavement Manager but there is no written record of this. More recently, the Equalities Team were consulted on 19 December 2011 and provided written advice on 20 December 2011. An email was sent to all Councillors on 7 February 2012 prior to a press release when the information became in the public domain.*

**M 02**

**Question from:**

Councillor Tim Warren

I am pleased to see that the Council will be including Sunday Park & Ride Services in its new Park and Ride contact. This is very welcome and is something the Conservative Group supported in the consultation into the contact.

With Smartcard ticketing to be introduced on buses across the West of England area in the coming year, there is an opportunity now to also improve the ticketing system on our Park and Rides. Currently commuters are only able to purchase a maximum of a 'ten journey' ticket, whilst it can work out cheaper for a car load of people with more than two adults to drive into the centre of Bath to park for several hours than to use the Park and Ride.

Would the Cabinet Member therefore consider working with First to include a new discounted monthly or season Smartcard ticket and a cheaper 'family ticket' on the Park & Rides when the new contact comes into force in order to reduce congestion at weekends and encourage more commuters and families to use the Park and Rides?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Roger Symonds

*The net subsidy contract for the Park & Ride gives the incentive to the operator to grow patronage having given the Council a significant premium for the right to run the service. It will be for the operator to decide what the pricing of family, group, and season tickets will best grow this patronage and of course to give them an appropriate return. All their buses will have new smartcard readers on board. There is nothing in the contract to prevent the new operator from developing a family ticket to make P&R cheaper than parking in the centre of the City. We will continue to manage the charges in our car parks to encourage residents and visitors to use the most appropriate means to visit the city.*

<b>Supplementary Question:</b>	
<p>The response provided does not answer my question about family tickets, so I will repeat the question: Would the Cabinet Member therefore consider working with First to include a new discounted monthly or season Smartcard ticket and a cheaper 'family ticket' on the Park &amp; Rides when the new contact comes into force in order to reduce congestion at weekends and encourage more commuters and families to use the Park and Rides?</p>	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>Yes, I will speak with First about these issues</i></p>	

<b>M 03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>I am concerned that elements of Planning Policy T1 in the Local Plan stifles entrepreneurship and business development in rural areas. One recent planning application from a qualified physiotherapist to operate her business from home has been objected to by our Highways Department because "it is not near enough to public transport to be sustainable" as indicated by Planning Policy T1. The application has since been withdrawn.</p> <p>When might a review of this policy be undertaken so the economic vibrancy is not prevented in our rural communities?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Tim Ball
<p><i>Planning Policy relating to transport and movement set out in the Local Plan accords with national policy in that it seeks to direct development to locations which reduce the need to travel by car and seeks to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport to the car. Policy T1 in the Local Plan is one of the key policies in outlining and securing this approach. The Local Plan also seeks to encourage a buoyant rural economy by allowing appropriate small scale economic development within the rural areas e.g. through policy ET.9 which prioritise the re-use of redundant rural buildings for business uses. These policy objectives need to be considered and balanced in the process of determining individual planning applications.</i></p> <p><i>It would not be appropriate to refer to the individual circumstances of the case that has been mentioned. It should be remembered that planning applications should be determined in accordance with Council policy unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. Issues including economic benefits can be included by an applicant as material considerations in the determination of an application and can be weighed against the Councils policy.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, the planning policy approach set out in the Local Plan is currently anticipated to be reviewed through the Placemaking Plan. This review will need to ensure that the Council's policy continues to accord with national policy, in particular the approach that will be set out in the government's National Planning Policy Framework which the government still intends to approve and publish during spring this year.</i></p>		

<b>M 04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>Following the decision at the Full Council budget meeting to reinstate funding for the mobile library, support has been voiced from across the Council for the mobile library to expand upon and improve the service it offers to residents.</p> <p>Expanding the usefulness of the mobile library could help increase the number of users, increasing its viability, and creating a genuine Council Connect out-reach service. When the Cabinet considers the outcome of the recent Libraries consultation, will it take this opportunity consider options for expanding the services provided by the mobile library, such as providing more advice on a range of council services (e.g. Planning, housing services, care services etc), making Officers from other Council departments available for advice sessions on the mobile library, providing information on the Council's partner organisations (e.g. bus companies/timetables, Somer housing, policing etc)?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>There has been a number of assessments of this option in the past and the limitation has always been the space available on the vehicles. Currently the mobile libraries carry a range of information leaflets and provide display space for communities to advertise local events. They occasionally attend village fairs etc. where they promote council services and conduct children's activities.</i></p> <p><i>The service also works in partnership with the CAB, who park their mobile information vehicle alongside the mobile at The Firs, Combe Down where the mobile stays for a whole day. CAB are interested to expand this to other locations if successful. In the past the Police liaison vehicle has also followed a mobile around, but ceased to do so following poor uptake.</i></p> <p><i>Regarding providing advice on a range of council services, this is within the Customer Services agenda. Their Service Transformation Work has always had a mobile outreach element in it, in particular consolidating all the mobile information vehicles that are currently operating within Bath &amp; North East Somerset, including the mobile libraries. This is a major project that needs to be looked at holistically over a number of services, it is yet to be prioritised.</i></p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>With reference to the response provided by the Cabinet member, will he assure me that his priority is to keep mobile library funding on the list?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>That will be a matter for Budget Council to decide.</i></p>		

<b>M 05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Tim Warren
<p>Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on progress with the planned new</p>		

weight limit for the A36 Beckford Road and provide an expected timescale for its implementation?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Roger Symonds

*I have recently met with representatives of Wiltshire County Council who raised concerns over this proposal and its impact on their communities. They asked that we delay its implementation so they could undertake monitoring to measure the number of HGVs which might divert as a result. While we think the number will be relatively small I have agreed to delay its implementation by 3 months to accommodate their timescale. I expect that we will put the experimental order in place in the summer.*

**Supplementary Question:**

How much consultation has been conducted with Wiltshire council on this issue?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Roger Symonds

*We have been in constant contact with Wilts over this issue and we conducted a consultation exercise in Bradford-on-Avon. We have agreed that Wilts should monitor the effects on road traffic by means of a before and after monitoring exercise.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

**P 01**

**Question from:**

Hugh Mackay

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me exactly how many people have objected or made an official complaint about the cross on the Crematorium window before the refurbishment was made known?

**Answer from:**

Councillor David Dixon

*No records are available which show the number of people who have objected to or made an official complaint about the cross on the Crematorium window before the refurbishment was made public knowledge. This is because at the time of bereavement our customers are disinclined to make formal, written complaints of any kind and the obvious remedy of removing the window cross is very difficult to resolve, unless as part of a bigger refurbishment project.*

*In the past Bereavement Services staff and Funeral Directors have received comments from customers about the presence of the cross and in response to these comments a blind was erected in 2008, so that the cross can be covered should a customer request it. This is not an ideal solution as when pulled down, the blind obscures the lovely and beautiful view across the Englishcombe valley. Hence, the Council wishes to take the opportunity to replace the window with a plain window and explore ways of re-using the 'window cross' in such a way that it can be displayed for those that request it.*