

CABINET MEETING 14th November 2012

REGISTERED SPEAKERS

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

- Clarice Corfield (read by Mary Lambert)
Re: Drilling for coal bed methane in Keynsham
- Laura Corfield (Transition Keynsham)
Re: Coal bed methane extraction and fracking in the Keynsham Area
- Ben Eve (Saltford environment group)
Re: Fracking issue
- Pamela Galloway (Save Our 6/7 Buses Campaign)
Re: 6/7 Buses
- George Bailey (Radstock Action Group) (read by Colin Currie)
Re: Economic Development in Radstock
- Colin Currie (Chair, Radstock Action Group)
Re: Economic Forum
- Trudie Mitchell (Chair, Compton Dando Parish Council)
Re: 20mph in villages in Compton Dando
- Cllr Brian Webber
Re: Council Tax

Re: Agenda Item 13 (Green Infrastructure Strategy)

- Virginia Williamson (Convenor, Transition Bath Food Group)

Re: Agenda Item 20 (Victoria Hall Update)

- Councillor Eleanor Jackson

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>What is the timetable for rolling out the 20mph limit in areas outside Bath, when is Paulton to be included and will the cost of implementing the extended limit in Paulton be paid for out of the general Highways budget rather than the s106 funds from the Polestar development, which can then be used for traffic improvements elsewhere in the village?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>Paulton already has a 20mph Zone and any desired changes to speed limits will be incorporated into traffic management proposals being developed for Paulton using the S106 Planning Obligation funds available from the Polestar site and other developments in the area.</i></p> <p><i>The timetable for rolling out the 20mph speed limits is set out on the Council website http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/streets-and-highway-maintenance/road-safety/traffic-schemes/creating-neighbourhoods-where-p</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>Will he agree that it would be unfair for Paulton to pay for its own signage when other schemes will be paid from the highways Budget?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>The scheme is already being done at the expense of the Council</i></p>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>Is the Cabinet member able to explain why the decision to sell 2 Longacre to developers Emery. was made the day before the drawing up of the Community Asset Register, which would have allowed the FOLAH group to put in a Community Right to Buy bid?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>Discussions with the developer had been taking place over a period of several months, culminating in Heads of Terms being formally agreed for the disposal of 2 Longacre, prior to the interest being expressed by FOLAH. FOLAH were aware of the discussions with the developer some time before the submission of their interest to the Council.</i></p>		

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
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The Cabinet Member has stated that five meetings have been held with Wiltshire Council under the present administration. Can the Cabinet Member please detail who attended these meetings, what topics were discussed at each meeting and whether any conclusions emerged from these meetings in relation to HGVs in Bath?

Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
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I attach a table showing the dates of meetings with Wiltshire since the last election and the topics discussed.

Date/Location	Brief details	Attended by
11/3/11 Bath	Proposed details of weight restriction outlined together with background information. Following this meeting (17/3/11) B&NES cabinet report E222 was sent to Wiltshire officers	Transportation Planning Manager, Transportation Planning Team Leader & Senior Transport Planner
21/9/11 Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire	Our officers attended Bradford on Avon Area Board and gave a presentation on the proposed weight restriction and answered questions.	Transportation Planning Manager & Senior Transport Planner
8/2/11 Westbury, Wiltshire	Our officers attended Westbury Area Board and gave presentation on the proposed weight restriction and answered questions.	Senior Transport Planner
9/12/11 Keynsham	Discussed HGV monitoring to measure the effects of the proposed scheme.	Transportation Planning Manager & Senior Transport Planner
24/1/12 Bath	Discussed HGV monitoring (other issues?) B&NES agreed to delay scheme implementation for 3 months to enable Wiltshire Council to undertake sufficient 'before' monitoring.	Cabinet Member for Transport & Group Manager
14/6/12 Bath	Meeting arranged prior to appeal to discuss the proposed measures. Map of potential diversion routes discussed at some length and quality of O&D survey.	Group Manager and Transportation Planning Manager

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for your response. Can you now tell me whether and when similar meetings were held with Somerset County Council and with the Highways Authority?

Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
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Yes similar meetings took place with both Somerset County Council and HA on the

following dates:

Date/Location	Brief details	Attended by
30/3/11 Keynsham	SCC concerned about: problem definition; benefits of proposed scheme; effect on Buckland Dinham in Somerset; specifying success criteria and signage. SCC followed up the meeting with a letter summarising their concerns.	Senior Transport Planner x 2
31/3/11	HA concerned about gap in strategic network, signage, HA operational vehicles, proposed U turn ban and emergency road closures. However, no objection raised in principle to the proposed scheme. This position changed in letter from HA dated 29/11/11	Transportation Team Leader & Senior Transport Planner
16/4/12	SCC & HA (Wiltshire in attendance): Meeting arranged prior to appeal to discuss the proposed measures. Map of potential diversion routes discussed at some length and quality of O&D survey.	Group Manager & Transportation Planning Manager

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>Given the decision of the DfT to uphold Wiltshire and Somerset Councils' appeal against the proposed A36 weight limit, what action does the Council now intend to take to remove HGVs from Bath which have no destination or origin within the city?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Roger Symonds
<p><i>I am of course very disappointed with the DfT decision and the Council is arranging urgent discussions to seek the agreement of adjoining Highway Authorities so we can work together to address the acknowledged problem of HGVs which have no business in the city of Bath. On the positive side the DfT have agreed to facilitate discussions between the authorities, so I am looking forward to positive progress being made.</i></p>		

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please detail what discussions he has had with FirstBus and other local bus operators regarding bus services to Bath University, in particular in</p>		

relation to overcrowding, lengthy queues at bus stops, and lack of sufficient capacity at peak times, and detail what action has been agreed to address these problems?

Answer from:

Councillor Roger Symonds

The principal bus services to the University of Bath are operated by First and Wessex with no financial support from the Council. The operators have a clear commercial interest in meeting demand and I would expect them to make the most of the opportunities to do so. It should be noted that any bus operator is free to operate a service to the University, subject to obtaining permission to operate onto the campus.

The University holds regular liaison meetings with First and Wessex and the Council's Senior Public Transport Officer attends those meetings. At the most recent meeting on 25 October 2012, capacity issues were raised and discussed at some length. Wessex confirmed that they would operate an additional duplicate bus between the City Centre and the University during the morning peak hours. First confirmed they will operate duplicate buses as and when they have spare vehicles available.

In addition, discussions have been going on between Council officers and Wessex about capacity on contracted bus services 20A and 20C, which provide an orbital service to the University. To alleviate the problems, Wessex agreed to operate two additional journeys at no additional cost to the Council from 5 November 2012. An additional bus runs during school and university terms from Rush Hill at 0830 to the University. Also, a later bus runs on Mondays to Fridays from the University at 1948 to Rush Hill.

The situation will be kept under review and the University will be holding a follow-up meeting with the bus operators on 10 December 2012.

M 06

Question from:

Councillor Geoff Ward

As the Council has started in its consultation on the proposed Article 4 Direction in Bath, this policy aims to spread HMOs more evenly throughout the city. As such, which parts of Bath does the Council anticipate will see an increase in the number of HMOs once the Article 4 Direction is implemented?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

The Council has recently started public consultation on the 'Houses in Multiple Occupation in Bath Draft Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD). The SPD supplements saved policy HG.12 from the Local Plan and sets out the Council's approach to the distribution of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The SPD aims to encourage a sustainable community in Bath, by encouraging an appropriately balanced housing mix across the city in order to support a variety of households in all areas. It seeks to achieve this aim by preventing further over concentration of HMOs in neighbourhoods within the city by setting out criteria for assessing planning applications required by the introduction of the Article 4 Direction for the change of use from 'Family Home' to 'HMO'.

Through the draft SPD a threshold of the proportion of HMOs which is considered acceptable within neighbourhoods (or a 'home patch') is proposed. In areas exceeding the threshold planning permission for change of use to a HMO is likely to be refused. In this way the SPD will help to restrict further growth in the numbers of HMOs in areas of

existing high concentration e.g. Oldfield Park and areas along the London Road. The implementation of the SPD could lead to the displacement of growth of HMOs to other parts of the city. However, the proportion of HMOs in any part of the city will not exceed the proportion thresholds set out in the SPD. Whilst those parts of the city that might see an increase in the number of HMOs are not yet known, it is anticipated there might be increased interest in establishing HMOs in neighbourhoods close to key public transport corridors serving the Universities. Changes in HMO numbers across the city and therefore, any displacement effects will be continually monitored and the maps used to assess the proportion of dwellings that are HMOs will be updated twice yearly.

M 07	Question from:	Councillors Paul Myers / Chris Watt
<p>The South Road Car Park in Midsomer Norton is allocated in the Core Strategy as a site for a large food store. This will precipitate the further regeneration of Midsomer Norton Town Centre as noted in the Core Strategy and further concluded by the recent study commissioned by the Midsomer Norton Economic Regeneration Partnership. This study concluded that this site is viable for a large food store.</p> <p>For this element of the Core Strategy to be delivered the site needs to be brought forward. Part of this may include land assembly (the old gas works is not owned by the Council) as this may improve value.</p> <p>Will the Council Leader agree to ensure the South Road car park is brought to market as soon as is possible with or without the assembly of the old gas works site?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>The Council are actively considering the disposal of South Road car park for food retail use in line with the Core Strategy and the ERDP</i></p>		

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Duncan Hounsell / Chris Warren
<p>Cllr Crossley, on 25th October, we had a large well attended public meeting at Saltford Hall on the issue of re-opening Saltford Railway Station. In addition to residents, both our Saltford B&NES Cllrs were present, Cllr Roger Symonds was on the panel, and you were in the audience. There was a range of views expressed and there is a need for detailed information on the facts and issues regarding the proposal.</p> <p>Would you agree to the B&NES Council preparing an information sheet on the proposal with a consultation for the residents of Saltford in order that everyone is better informed and the full range of views can be listened to?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>The Cabinet at its meeting last June agreed to fund an appraisal of the potential to re-</i></p>		

open Saltford Station in the context of a 15 year franchise for Great Western Trains. There is a strong campaign in support of re-opening the station and I attended the public meeting on the 25th October to hear local views. I agree that there were strong feelings expressed at the meeting for and against re-opening the station. During the discussion there was concern expressed that the station would add pressure to parking in adjoining streets. A key issue in developing a business case for the station will be to understand the demand for car parking and how much of this demand can be accommodated immediately next to the station minimising impacts on local streets. The work our consultants are undertaking will allow an assessment to be undertaken of parking required for the station. We will undertake a consultation on the proposal once we understand what the size and cost of providing car parking for the station might be. We expect to receive the Consultant's report early next year.

P 02	Question from:	Colin Currie
Re Economic Forum -- Press release is headed £500,000 for Radstock but includes £100,000 for Radstock and Westfield economic forum. Please clarify.		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>The Radstock and Westfield Economic Action Plan has been developed by a local group of businesses including the Town Traders, Radstock and Westfield Town Councillors, as well as Councillors Eleanor Jackson, Cherry Beath and Simon Allen, under the auspices of the Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum. It focuses on skills and business support activities which will benefit the local economy. As stated in the press release, an allocation of £100,000 is proposed to support the work of the Forum to carry out its action plan as quickly as possible.</i></p>		

P 03	Question from:	Colin Currie
Press release specifies £160,000 for Victoria Hall, Since £250,000 has already been announced, is this funding additional?		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>The original cost estimate for bringing Victoria Hall back into use was £250k. This was based on upgrading of existing systems and installations. Following further extensive surveys it is clear that this is not an option as many of the existing systems need replacing or significantly upgrading. The preferred scheme recommended by the report results in an estimated cost of £875k. This is to be funded by £160k from the Radstock Regeneration Fund and £715k from Capital Contingency to be replenished by Capital receipts and other funding.</i></p>		

P 04	Question from:	Colin Currie
<p>Press release specifies £100,000 for economic forum, who is on it, how are the members selected, how will decisions to be made, and how are they to be accountable?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Cherry Beath
<p><i>The Radstock and Westfield Economic Forum has brought together local businesses, including the Radstock Traders, with Norton Radstock College, local Town Councillors, local ward Councillors and the Cabinet member for Sustainable Development to develop an action plan to support skills development and provide business support in the area. Based on a detailed analysis of the local economy, actions will be delivered on key sector development, enterprise support and skills and employability.</i></p>		

P 05	Question from:	Colin Currie
<p>If the library is to be incorporated into the Victoria Hall, will the money from the sale of the redundant building be used in support of the hall?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p><i>The proceeds from the sale would contribute to the general receipts pot which may be used to fund part of the scheme. The report on the agenda contains further relevant details.</i></p>		