

CABINET MEETING 16th January 2013

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.

This Cabinet meeting is being filmed. Although this meeting will not be broadcast, the images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council. Anybody speaking that does not wish to be filmed should make themselves known to the camera operator.

Statements about issues NOT on the Agenda

- Cllr David Martin

Re: Petition - AQ78 Combe Down to Claverton Down footpath

Re: Agenda Item 14 (Radstock to Frome Railway – Feasibility Study)

- George Bailey
- Cllr Eleanor Jackson

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Colin Barrett
Can the Cabinet Member please explain how recycling rates in Bath and North East Somerset are calculated and how much is sent to land fill?		
	Answer from:	Councillor David Dixon
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All waste that we manage is weighed.</i> • <i>We have details of where all of our waste goes (published in our end user register each year – see below)</i> • <i>We submit statutory returns to DEFRA via <u>WasteDataFlow</u> (http://www.wastedataflow.org/ - a national central government database). This details how much we collect from where and where we've sent it.</i> • <i>There are clear definitions of how to calculate waste recycled within the statutory guidance for completing this database (the database does this automatically).</i> • <i>We submit these returns quarterly and they are then audited by the Environment Agency prior to approval.</i> • <i>The information is publicly available on wastedataflow (A public access account for running reports can be obtained here - http://www.wastedataflow.org/Register.aspx)</i> • <i>We publish an end user register each year to show where all of our waste for recycling is processed (Download the 2011/12 version - http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Bins-and-Recycling/Waste-strategy-statistics-and-health-safety/recycling_end_use_register_2011-12.pdf)</i> • <i>We also publish annual stats on our website with full details of all of our waste management statistics</i> • <i>In 2011/12, we landfilled only 38% of the household waste we collected (this rises to 40% for all the waste we collected when we include trade waste)</i> • <i>We are in the top quartile of all local authorities for our recycling performance and are the 8th best Unitary authority (2011/12)..</i> 		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>a) The Cabinet has been consulting on proposals to close some of the public conveniences. It would assist the making of informed responses if we knew how much patronage each site currently receives. Are reasonably current figures available? If they are in a published document, it might suffice to point me to it.</p> <p>b) It is proposed to close the three automated conveniences, which are available 24 hours. Would closure entail the cancellation of any hire or maintenance contracts? If so, what is the current annual cost of those contracts (approximately) and how long is the unexpired life of the contracts?</p>		

c) The conventional toilets at Seven Dials in Monmouth Street, Bath, are open 24 hours. Does the 24 hour opening entail disproportionately heavy expenditure on cleaning and repairs, relative to the cost of running similar sites which are open only during the day?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

a) Some user count information is available and has been attached to these papers [Appx. 1]. The consulted closure proposals are not based on patronage but consider instead the need for provision where there are no alternatives available (i.e. parks and green spaces, main transport interchanges).

b) There are existing contracts which would need to be renegotiated. The proposals include the possibility of relocating the internal Automatic Public Convenience units to more suitable locations such as in parks. The current contract cost of the 3 units is approx £30k per year (net of income) and includes utilities. The contracts have between 7 and 8 years to run.

c) The Council's agreed service standard provides for cleaning to be carried out during the normal working day. No additional out of hours cleaning is carried out, but the cleaners do have to spend more time as a result each morning. The spend by Property on general repairs and maintenance over the past 6 years, has been less than £1k more per year at Seven Dials compared to Riverside Coach Park which is another large city centre facility, open 12-14 hours per day, therefore this is not disproportionate.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for your informative reply. Can the Cabinet member explain why, when the figures apparently show huge usage of the Seven Dials facility, it is marked for closure? Can he also explain why the Gullock Tynning facility is marked for closure when the suggested alternative at The Hollies will only be available during office hours?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

There are plans that the toilets in the leisure centre right next to Gullock Tynning will be made accessible. I agree, this when it is completed will be a better solution than the one suggested in the report.

M 03

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

What are the latest figures for the number of homeless individuals in B&NES?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

There is no single definition of homelessness. However, it is common to include rough sleepers and statutory homeless households provided with temporary accommodation when discussing the number of homeless.

At the time of writing the number of households provided with temporary accommodation is 27. This is around the average for the past 18 months which during this period has ranged between 35 and 20. This figure is significantly lower than the national rate which if applied to this district would mean that we would have 176

households in temporary accommodation – not 27.

Providing an accurate number of rough sleepers is more challenging. Historically Bath and North East Somerset have carried out an actual count of rough sleepers. However, due to antiquated rules, such as someone must be lying down to be counted, and the need to actually see the rough sleeper it under-represents actual numbers. As such most other authorities use “estimates”, based upon the knowledge of local agencies providing support services. This more rigorous approach is support by Homeless Link the Government’s advisory agency.

For the first time Bath and North East Somerset Council used an estimated approach to ensure that we capture the best possible estimate of rough sleepers. The figure identified (November 2012) was 22. Whilst this is significant increase in the figures from the previous actual count it is considered to be from better counting and identification rather than increased numbers.

Bath and North East Somerset Council commission a wide range of services for rough sleepers, including floating support and supported housing. In addition the Council has financially support the recent refurbishment of Julian House Night shelter that has been well received by partners and service users.

Supplementary Question:

Would he not agree that there is some vagueness about the count? The national figures seem to be clear that homelessness across the country has increased by 25% and in London by 40%. What specific initiatives does he himself have?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

Officers have done an excellent job in delivering a reduction in the homeless figures in the area. I might remind him that when he was responsible for tackling homelessness, a person only counted as homeless if he or she was actually lying down, and if their full name was known. We take the view that the agencies are much better at understanding this issue and we use their figures and work with them to reduce homelessness. Our partnership with Julian House for example has proved very successful in lowering the Christmas homelessness figures, without spending the large amount of money which he had said he would spend.

M 04

Question from:

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones

It was recently announced that York, Cambridge and Oxford, cities often seen as comparator cities to Bath, are to benefit from the Government’s Smaller Cities Urban Broadband Fund, meaning they will soon be able to offer ultrafast fibre-optic broadband with speeds of up to 100mbps.

With Bristol already part of the original Superconnected Cities project, there is clearly a real danger that Bath is left behind as ultrafast Broadband is rolled-out in our competitor cities, drawing in the high-tech and creative industries we need to attract to Bath’s Enterprise Area. It is vital that action is taken to ensure this does not happen and that the vision of creating a booming local economy based on the City of Ideas concept is realised.

Can the Cabinet Member please detail what work the Council is undertaking with the

Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure that ultrafast broadband is also delivered in Bath?

Answer from: Councillor Cherry Beath

The Council made a direct but ultimately unsuccessful challenge to Ed Vaizey MP, UK Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries over the criteria for the Government's Smaller Cities Urban Broadband Fund, which meant that Bath would not be eligible. We continue to fully support the high-tech and creative industries in the city and are currently exploring the options available to deliver ultrafast connectivity of up to 100 Mbps to the Bath City of Ideas Enterprise Area and to wider Bath. We look forward to being able to bring forward these proposals in the Spring.

M 05 Question from: Councillor Colin Barrett

Please would you provide me with details of the expenditure for the year 2012/13 (to date) for all Highway and Footpath Maintenance carried out in Weston Ward together with locations.

Answer from: Councillor Roger Symonds

*The schedule of jobs completed in Weston Ward is attached with costs where appropriate [Appx.2].
Some of the projects are listed as zero cost as these have been incorporated into combined works orders carried out by the Council's inspector gangs etc. In addition to these specific projects, various cyclic operations such as gully cleansing, verge maintenance and winter gritting have also been completed in the ward.*

M 06 Question from: Councillor Colin Barrett

Please would you inform me of the current situation regarding the planting of the Traffic Island at the bottom of Lansdown Lane and the Troughs outside Brookside House in Weston Village for the Spring of 2013 and future years. Have any other Wards been affected by the reduction in planting of Flower Beds etc. if they have, provide me with the details together with financial savings for 2013.

Answer from: Councillor David Dixon

The current position regarding the planting of the traffic island at the bottom of Lansdown Lane and the troughs in Weston Village is that these are being planted and maintained by volunteers coordinated by Councillor Malcolm Lees. At present the Council is consulting over the 2013/2014/2015/2016 budget and engaging with stakeholders (e.g. Bath in Bloom, and Bath and North East Somerset in Bloom) over how best to organise floral arrangements within the resources that are likely to be available. Weston had, in the past, been unique in the level of planting it received and it is now receiving planting based on the same criteria as the rest of the authority. Other

examples of where changes have been made within Bath include Royal Victoria Park, where floral bedding around the Obelisk has been replaced with permanent planting, Sydney Gardens where there has been a reduction by one bed, Orange Grove where the floral bedding has been shortened and Memorial Park Shaftesbury Road where the rose bed is now maintained by a community group. At this stage it would be premature to state finalised details as this is still subject to on-going consultation. In the meantime, officers and members will continue to engage with relevant key stakeholders to continue the successful approach and results of recent years through supporting local communities to help themselves, maintain standards and enable the most effective use of available resources within Bath in Bloom and Bath and North East Somerset in Bloom. It is worth noting in particular the numbers of residents, community groups and schools throughout Bath and North East Somerset who are working successfully on projects which have been recognised by South West in Bloom with 38 In Your Neighbourhood Awards in 2012. I would like to extend my gratitude to them all for helping to make neighbourhoods in Bath and North East Somerset where people are proud to live.

M 07	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
I am aware that Cabinet Member has given notification that he is now able to make a decision regarding the proposed one-way system on Somerset Lane. Is he aware that all the residents of Somerset Lane are opposed to the proposal, and will he therefore abandon this proposal in light of the local opposition?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Due to the objections from residents, the developers have asked if they can omit the one way system. Officers are awaiting further technical information from the developer. The one way proposal is part of a Section106 agreement. Therefore, to remove the proposal would require the agreement of the Council's Development Control Committee.		
Supplementary Question:		
Thank you for providing clarity for local residents. Can he therefore confirm that no action will be taken until the full due process has been followed?		
	Answer from:	Councillor Roger Symonds
Yes.		

M 08	Question from:	Councillor Tim Warren
The Government recently invited the Council to produce a bid for funding from its new Pinch Point Fund, aimed at projects to alleviate congestion bottlenecks. With such a large number of traffic 'pinch points' within our area, this is clearly something which		

B&NES could benefit from.

Can the Cabinet Member please detail what action the Council plans to take to produce a bid and ensure B&NES takes full advantage of this funding offer?

Answer from:

Councillor Roger Symonds

Of course we will be making a submission to this fund if at all possible. I would be as keen as everyone to obtain additional funds for our area. We have reviewed those projects that might conform to the criteria for this fund and would be deliverable in what is a very tight timescale. Over the next couple of weeks officers will be developing options and would be happy to share any proposals with Cllr Warren once they are finalised.

Background:

Heads of Transport have discussed this fund and each of the authorities will develop their own bid which will be discussed in a couple of weeks 8/2 when it will be decided if the WoE need to co-ordinate the submission to give them a more strategic feel.

DfT guidance states that the money must be spent in the next 2 financial years 13/14 & 14/15. At page of the guidance:

The Fund is designed to promote economic growth through the rapid deployment of schemes that remove transport barriers or prevent the emergence of new transport barriers. Eligible schemes should be those that provide new or improved links to key economic sites (such as an Enterprise Zone, development site or urban employment centre), or which tackle congestion or address the condition of highway structures that are near to the point of becoming a barrier to access. Investment need not be restricted to roads and can include investment in cycling and bus infrastructure to help reduce congestion on road networks and/or demonstrate the links to growth. The DfT funding must only be used for expenditure that qualifies as capital.

We envisage that potential projects could fall into two categories, with the vast majority falling into the first category given the delivery timescales for investment:

- small schemes requiring DfT funding of between £1m and £5m; and*
- by exception, large schemes requiring DfT funding above £5m but no more than £20m. **Bidding authorities should be aware that there will be a presumption against bids over £10m unless they are of truly exceptional value.***

Schemes should address congestion or provide or improve access to key economic sites through solutions that can be delivered quickly, particularly where they:

- improve access to a development site that has the potential to create jobs and housing;*
- improve access to urban employment centres;*
- improve access to Enterprise Zones; and*
- address the condition of structures which, if left unresolved, could impose restrictions that cause congestion, restrict access or lead to lengthy diversions*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

There were none.