

CABINET MEETING 11th September 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.

Statements about issues NOT on the Agenda

- David Metcalfe (Co-Chairman, Cultural Forum for the Bath Area)
Re: B&NES Council Arts Development Policy

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>On 10 April, in answer to my question about repairs to the high pavement at the Vineyards, Bath, Councillor Roger Symonds said that £10,000 had been allocated in 2013/14 for preparing a detailed cost estimate and programme of remedial works for implementation during 2014/15. Please may I have an update on progress – in particular, on talks with the private owners about their share of the costs?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>Officers are still working on the cost estimate. Once this is finalised, we will be in a position to open the dialogue with the private owners. Officers expect to be in a position to start those discussions by the end of December 2013.</i></p>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>Is there a routine for checking the continuing entitlement to an 'advisory' disabled parking space and to refreshing the white marking? There are many such markings on the highway, which are often very faint leaving other drivers uncertain whether they are still expected not to park there.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>There is currently no routine checking and, in common with other authorities, we rely on residents in possession of an advisory disabled person's bay and other road users to notify us when a bay requires remarking.</i></p> <p><i>The declaration signed by applicants before installation requires them to contact us if they are moving house or when a bay is no longer required. This does not always happen and, in light of the circumstances that could require the bay to no longer be needed, it is unrealistic to expect this to reliably happen. We therefore often have to rely on neighbours or subsequent house occupants contacting us to enquire about a bay. In such circumstances, we attempt to contact the applicant and if no response is obtained within a specified time limit, the bay is removed</i></p>		

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>Is the Council the owner of both sides of the river bank between Pulteney Weir and</p>		

North Parade Bridge? If so, does that give the Council authority to control the mooring of boats against the bank? Are boats permitted to moor against the bank of the Parade Gardens? What are the present arrangements for collecting mooring fees, particularly if the boat is unattended? Is the Council under any duty to ensure that boats are safely moored?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

The Council is the owner of both sides of the bank along this stretch of the river but currently has no enforcement powers to control the mooring of boats against the bank. Any boats moored without authorisation are trespassing and we can take civil action to remove them, through the Courts.

We do not give permission for boats to moor against the bank of Parade Gardens as there are no proper moorings in place.

Users of boats which are authorised to be moored on the Recreation Ground side of the River Avon are expected to pay a fee to Aquaterra Leisure for use of the leisure centre facilities. Aquaterra visit the moorings area frequently and if a boat which has not paid is unattended, a note is left to explain they are required to pay at the Leisure Centre.

The Council does have a general duty of care to ensure that boats are moored safely.

Supplementary Question:

Does the Cabinet member have any plans for strengthening the Council's powers to control unauthorised mooring?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

I have been surprised to see the level of unauthorised mooring. I am looking first at powers to evict, then at steps to take full ownership.

M 04

Question from:

Councillor Brian Webber

Many businesses, especially restaurants, necessarily place large wheely-bins on the highway for the storage of their general waste pending collection. Are they required to obtain the Council's permission? If so, is any licence fee charged? If not, should it be? Does the identity of the authorised user(s) of the bin have to be displayed on the bin? If not, should it be? Should it be a requirement that the lid of the bin be kept closed (and perhaps locked) on penalty of a 'fine'? Should the Council stipulate that large wheely-bins in public places should be of a neutral colour? If we must have these bins on display (which usually we do) does the Cabinet Member agree that we could do more to render them less unsightly and less susceptible to attack by wildlife?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

Businesses are not currently required to get formal permission to place trade waste bins

on the highway but they must ensure that the bins do not cause an obstruction. No fee is charged.

We are not aware of any powers which would provide for the Council to charge for placing a trade bin on the highway. There is no legal requirement for the identity of the bin user to be displayed on the bin but labelling the bin would help ensure that the waste is identifiable to a particular business, so it is good practice to do so.

Under Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, there is a duty on the producer of any waste to prevent the escape of the waste under his/her control. In practical terms, this means ensuring that any waste receptacle is able to keep waste enclosed securely (e.g. a bin with a lid that can be properly closed). Failure to comply with this provision is an offence.

There are no powers for the Council to stipulate that large bins should be any particular colour although those supplied by the Council in the city centre area are coloured to match Bath stone. Many waste contractors provide bins in this area so achieving uniformity is unlikely although it may be possible to request that the BID considers specifying this as part of their Waste Collection Contract.

The key to improving the management of trade waste is ensuring that businesses take full responsibility for their trade bins by managing their collection and condition appropriately. The Council aims to do this through enforcement activities such as in Operation Sunrise, where we carry out early morning patrols to raise awareness with businesses about their management of waste on the streets and in working with the BID to improve the containerisation of waste.

M 05	Question from:	Councillor David Laming
Does the Cabinet agree with me that a most photographed and iconic stretch of the River Avon between Pulteney Weir and North Parade Bridge has been despoiled by the commercial and residential boats moored long term on both sides of the river, some for over eighteen months?		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<i>Yes, I have asked officers to treat the removal of all unauthorised vessels as a matter of urgency. I have recently been updated on progress and we now have a clear way forward.</i>		
Supplementary Question:		
“With regard to the Boat House, which will become the home of the Riverside Trust, will the Cabinet give powers to the Trust to prevent this intrusion?”		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<i>Yes in principle, subject to any legal issues and further work.</i>		

M 06	Question from:	Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones
<p>Is the cabinet aware that Bath's Taxi Marshals who work antisocial hours for modest wages have to buy their own protective equipment? The post-midnight economy can be an intimidating and threatening environment for officials trying to maintain good order so, at the very least, could B&NES and/ or the BID pay for their protective vests?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>This is a service which the Council procures through Bath Business Improvement District. If the marshals feel that they need protective equipment then that is an issue that they should raise with their employer.</i></p>		

M 07	Question from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>What is the Council policy regarding the eradication of Japanese Knotweed, particularly where it impedes a public footpath?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>The Council does not have an adopted policy with regard to the eradication of Japanese Knotweed on public rights of way although the Council's working practice is to eradicate Japanese Knotweed in line with the Environment Agency's Japanese Knotweed Code of Practice if it is impeding members of the public on a public footpath.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>I'm encouraged by the response since Stowey Sutton got no response to several similar enquiries. Will the Cabinet member respond positively if I give you the exact location?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>Yes, I will pass the information on to officers and ask them to deal with it.</i></p>		

M 08	Question from:	Councillor Marie Longstaff
<p>Given the significant number of developments either underway or due to take place in Keynsham in the coming years, including the town centre redevelopment, Riverside redevelopment, Somerdale redevelopment, and the K2 A&B developments, and the impact these will have on traffic and transport in the town, does the Cabinet Member agree that now is the right time to produce an overarching Transport Plan for</p>		

Keynsham, and will the Cabinet Member agree to begin work on producing such a Transport Plan?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

I agree that we will need a Transport Plan for Keynsham to manage the growth in traffic from the developments identified by Cllr Longstaff. We are currently undertaking detailed modelling of the proposals within Keynsham, including the impact of the new Town Hall development. This will allow us to consider what improvements we can bring forward for the High Street and provide the basis for a wider plan for Keynsham as a whole. However we will need to consider how to develop this plan further in the light of the costs involved and the extent of the work proposed. In addition an officer development group chaired by Louise Fradd, director of Place Department, has been set up to coordinate the various development and regeneration initiatives coming forward in Keynsham

M 09

Question from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

When does the Cabinet Member anticipate publishing the Council's traffic proposals for Keynsham High Street, which were deferred when the planning application was submitted for the town centre redevelopment? What consideration has the Cabinet Member given to undertaking trials of a one-way system on the High Street as well as a trial full pedestrianisation?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

We are currently undertaking modelling of the proposed developments in Keynsham, including the impact of the new Town Hall development, which will allow us to consider what improvements we can bring forward for the High Street. Once we have fully understood the impact of these developments I will ask officers to develop improvements to the High Street which could include a trial of a one-way system. I recognise that a trial of full pedestrianisation would be very attractive but would require significant traffic management measures to be successful.

Supplementary Question:

Would the Cabinet member agree that the pending planning application involving two sets of traffic lights near Keynsham High Street should wait until the results of the research on Keynsham High Street have been received?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Yes, I agree.

M 10	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
What is the current expected completion date for the Rossiter Road/Widcombe Parade traffic project?		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>Officers are currently working on the detailed design of the scheme. The indicative programme assumes a 20 week construction period starting on site in July 2014 and completing in November 2014. The final programme, including any utility service diversions, will be agreed with the appointed contractor as part of the normal tender process.</i></p>		

M 11	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
When is the current expected completion date for the Newbridge Park and Ride expansion?		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>As with the Widcombe Parade scheme, the detailed design of the scheme is being finalised and the timescales are the same for both schemes. The indicative programme assumes a 20 week construction period starting on site in July 2014 and completing in November 2014. The final programme, including any utility service diversions, will be agreed with the appointed contractor as part of the normal tender process subject to Planning Approval.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Thank you for the reply. Is there any additional cost caused by the delay?		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<i>I will get back to Councillor Clarke with figures.</i>		

M 12	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
When does the Cabinet Member expect to implement to Dorchester Street bus gate?		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<i>Work has started on preparing the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order. Following for</i>		

this, the manufacture and delivery of new signs and arranging site works, it is anticipated that the restriction will be implemented in November 2013.

M 13	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
When does the Cabinet Member expect a preferred location for an East of Bath Park & Ride to be announced?		
Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts	
<i>I anticipate that the preferred location for this facility should be identified by the Bath Transport Strategy and then included in the Council's Placemaking Plan.</i>		

M 14	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
Noting the long-running difficulties experienced with the 'real time' information displays installed at bus stops within the Somer Valley area, when does the Cabinet Member expect all of the 'real time' information displays at bus stops to be fully operational throughout all parts of the authority?		
Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts	
<i>Since July all the displays in the Somer Valley have been turned on and should be working properly. My staff are monitoring the situation to ensure that the displays work efficiently.</i>		
<i>The Council and its contractors have learned lessons from the problems encountered within the Somer Valley area and have taken steps to ensure that they will not be repeated. Real time information is being expanded across Bath through the Bath Transportation Package with Real Time Information displays being provided at key bus stops and with more buses being fitted with tracking devices. This project is due for completion March 2015.</i>		
<i>Further limited funding secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and through the Better Bus Area Fund will deliver improvements at a limited number of stops outside of Bath'</i>		

M 15	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
When does the Cabinet Member anticipate launching the previously promised consultation with residents of Saltford on the possibility of reopening a train station in		

the village, and has the Cabinet Member liaised with local ward Members in the village regarding this consultation?

Answer from: Councillor Caroline Roberts

I am hopeful that the consultation will still be undertaken in October and I will liaise with the local ward Members prior to this to allow their input into the process.

M 16 **Question from:** Councillor Colin Barrett

How many agency staff were employed by BANES in the financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13 and which Departments were they employed in? What were the financial implications for the Authority for the years 2011/12 and 2012/13?

Answer from: Councillor David Bellotti

Based on numbers of staff engaged through the Council's core agency contract the approximate breakdown of Agency Staff working on behalf of the Council is as follows:

- 2011/12 – 130
- 2012/13 – 140

The total financial costs to the Council are set out below although for accounting purposes, agency staff costs will include interim staff and contractor support payments as well as costs related to the Council's core agency contract:

- 2011/12 - £5,191k including schools (£4,114k without schools)
- 2012/13 - £5,575k including schools (£4,373k without schools)

It is anticipated that going forwards, the Council's policy relating to trainees and apprentices will help to reduce the numbers of agency staff.

M 17 **Question from:** Councillor Colin Barrett

How many staff were made redundant and in which Departments in 2011/12 and 2012/13? As a result of staff being made redundant in the years 2011/12 and 2012/13 what were the financial implications to the Authority?

Answer from: Councillor David Bellotti

The total figures quoted below differ from the details provided in the annual accounts as these relate purely to redundancy figures only and are based on actual date of payment.

2011 - 2012

Strategic Director	Division	No of staff	Costs
<i>Adult Services</i>		4	£96129.84
			£96129.84
<i>Chief Executive</i>	<i>Democratic & Legal</i>	2	£105279.77
	<i>Major Projects</i>	2	£26650.89
	<i>I & P</i>	1	£17889.71
			£149820.37
<i>Education Services</i>		1	£67772.69
			£67772.69
<i>People & Communities</i>	<i>Learning & Inclusion</i>	3	£237303.48
	<i>Children Young People & Families</i>	3	£11719.13
	<i>Health & Strategic Planning</i>	1	£9938.73
	<i>Schools</i>	12	£291561.02
	<i>Youth Services</i>	2	£12914.24
			£563436.60
<i>Resources</i>	<i>Risk & Assurance</i>	1	£55011.79
	<i>Finance</i>	1	£28453.25
	<i>Customer Services</i>	1	£4800.24
	<i>Policy & Partnerships</i>	1	£2684.90
	<i>Property & Facilities</i>	1	2662.45
			£93612.63
<i>Service Delivery</i>	<i>Environmental Services</i>	13	£452516.44
	<i>TLC</i>	4	£85251.61
			£537768.05
Total			£1,508,540.18

2012 – 2013

Strategic Director	Division	No of staff	Costs
<i>Chief Executive</i>	<i>I & P</i>	1	£36332.03
			£36332.03
<i>LEP</i>		1	£86600.74
			£86600.74
<i>People & Communities</i>	<i>Learning & Inclusion</i>	2	£130359.28
	<i>Schools</i>	7	£256135.48
			£386494.76
<i>Resources</i>	<i>Policy & Partnerships</i>	1	£19214.87
	<i>Property Services</i>	8	£124373.58

	<i>Risk & Assurance</i>	1	£47153.52
			£190741.97
<i>Service Delivery</i>		1	£34860.53
	<i>Environmental Services</i>	1	£19061.23
	<i>TLC</i>	1	£1753.67
			£55675.43
	Total		£755,844.93

M 18	Question from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard								
<p>How much of the £249,260 allocated to the B&NES Social Fund for this financial year has so far been used?</p>										
	Answer from:	Councillor David Bellotti								
<p><i>With effect from the 1st April 2013 Customer Services has created a Welfare Support Team to handle customer contacts about a variety of Welfare Support issues that are not included in the general administration of Housing Benefits or Council Tax Support, with a view to creating a single gateway across the Council for supporting those customers who find themselves vulnerable and unsupported by the basic Welfare provisions.</i></p> <p><i>To-date the team has handled a total of 1320 requests for help and support ranging from:-</i></p> <p><i>Help with Council Tax; Meeting a shortfall in their Rent; Meeting fundamental Living Needs that would previously have been met by the Social Fund.</i></p> <p><i>Total of 889 individual awards have been made to these customers within the first 5 months (April to August).</i></p> <p><i>Summary of Spend & Budgets for the Social Fund element is as follows:-</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="316 1505 1316 1639"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Annual Budget</th> <th>Spend to-date</th> <th>Balance</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social Fund</td> <td>£249,260.00</td> <td>£54,722.92</td> <td>£194,537.08</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Social fund spend includes 685 awards for things such as:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Online shop;</i> • <i>Retail Vouchers;</i> • <i>Household items; and</i> • <i>Council Tax</i> <p><i>A detailed report about this and other Welfare Reform changes will be presented to Resources Scrutiny Panel at the end of September.</i></p>			Type	Annual Budget	Spend to-date	Balance	Social Fund	£249,260.00	£54,722.92	£194,537.08
Type	Annual Budget	Spend to-date	Balance							
Social Fund	£249,260.00	£54,722.92	£194,537.08							

M 19	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>Street entertainers are popular and add 'colour' to the city. However, many residents and traders – and, one imagines, many visitors as well – would be supportive of additional measures to better control busking. Some performances are repeated too often; amplification is abused; and some acts and their audiences can occupy so much space as to impede pedestrian movement. How does Councillor Dixon intend to investigate these matters and when might we see specific proposals published by the Cabinet?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>The Council recognises the vibrancy that street entertainers bring to the city. It is also aware that some buskers can create a nuisance to residents, businesses and visitors through amplified noise whether this is during the day or extending into the evening. Historically, the Council has taken the approach that the busker community should be self-regulating but in view of complaints received, I am seeking views and comments on how buskers could be better controlled, possibly through a permitting-type system. This consultation has been promoted in the local media and is currently taking place. Anyone wishing to put forward their views can email them to environmental_protection@bathnes.gov.uk where they will be acknowledged and recorded. Those views will be considered with officers and it is anticipated that any proposals for new arrangements will be submitted before Cabinet by the end of this year.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
<p>London authorities have powers to control busking. Should this Council not press to be given similar powers?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>I would love to have extra powers such as the ones described by Councillor Webber. We could look at bye laws, but this is expensive. Antisocial behaviour laws are difficult to enforce. I will pass on his comments to Don Foster MP who has some responsibilities in this area within government.</i></p>		

M 20	Question from:	Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones
<p>As you will be aware, the Culture Secretary recently wrote to local councils urging them to make public the information they jointly own with BT relating to rural broadband programmes. This information is vital for those community groups and community interest companies wishing to set up their own broadband improvement programmes. Can the Cabinet Member please state when B&NES will be releasing this information, and in particular when it will be publishing a detailed roll-out timetable showing which</p>		

areas within B&NES will benefit from superfast broadband and when?	
Answer from:	Councillor Ben Stevens
<p><i>The Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) team has developed a map to demonstrate the end position (subject to change) for the area once the programme is complete in December 2016. This map complies with the outcomes from the Public Accounts Committee and the commitment from BT that local programmes can publish an outline of the deployment plan. The map is awaiting approval from the CDS programme board; following approval the map will be published on to the website. In addition, with each new phase, a more detailed map will be developed and published on the website (www.connectingdevonandsomerset.gov.uk) to inform residents and businesses of what is expected from that particular phase.</i></p>	
Supplementary Question:	
My question asked for a date when the information would be released. Can the Cabinet member not give a rough answer?	
Answer from:	Councillor Ben Stevens
<p><i>Not really. The ownership rights of the information are complex but we are working to make this available as soon as possible.</i></p>	

M 21	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>For the benefit of residents concerned about the future of their public conveniences, can the Cabinet Member please provide some clarity on the future of the public toilets which the Council has not included in its recently announced maintenance contract. In each case can the Cabinet Member please confirm whether or not alternative toilet provision has been found and agreed, and whether or not the Council still intends for them to close if no alternative is found, either in this or future financial years. Specifically, please provide information on the future of the public toilets in: Weston, Larkhall, Gullock Tynning, Peasedown, Paulton, Ashton Way, RVP Pavillion, Batheaston, Oldfield Park, Charlotte Street.</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Dixon
<p><i>I refer Councillor Ward to the papers published to support the debate at Council (tomorrow) as these provide information on these issues.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Thank you for the response. We are aware that a large contract is about to be awarded; will the Cabinet member say whether more toilets could not have been		

saved?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

The tender process started 2 years ago. We would be able to add more toilets to the contract, or to amend the service level for existing toilets. We have obtained good value and we will ensure this continues as the contract rolls forward.

M 22

Question from:

Councillor Geoff Ward

A previous report to the Economic and Community Development PD&S panel stated that the Council was seeking to reduce its support for leisure services, activities and events from approximately £1m p.a. to zero as part of its Leisure Strategy and new leisure contract. Is this still the Council's ambition?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

Yes. The Leisure Strategy work currently being undertaken is exploring options for the future delivery of the leisure contract as well as the community based services that we provide. Feasibility studies are in progress to look at the most effective ways to drive down the level of overall subsidy required to support the provision of leisure services. These studies will be delivered in December 2013.

M 23

Question from:

Councillor Geoff Ward

Over the lifetime of the planned new public toilets maintenance contract, how much revenue is anticipated to be raised from charging for the use of the toilets, and will B&NES or the private contractor receive the revenue from these charges?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

Based on particular scenarios modelled through the tender process, the revenue estimate is £60k per year. This income will contribute to meeting running costs and will be closely monitored through the contract. The contractor will manage the practical coin collection and banking processes as part of the contract. The Council will benefit from the revenue because this will offset running costs.

M 24

Question from:

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones

What discussions has the Council held in recent months with neighbouring and nearby

authorities in relation to the problems associated with urban gulls, and is the Council progressing the idea of organising a West of England-wide gull conference with nearby authorities to discuss and agree upon coordinated cross-boundary action to address this issue?

Answer from:

Councillor David Dixon

There has been no agreement or request to me for such a conference. May be the member might like to let me know when I received such a request.

It is encouraging to read that our continued action and current 'Don't Feed the Animals' campaign is in line with that evidence. You can find more on this campaign and the advice at <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/dontfeed>. We will be stepping up the promotion of this over coming months.

Officers are in regular discussions with our neighbouring authorities over common gull issues.

Council representatives attend meetings of the Gloucestershire Gull Action Group which normally meets on an annual basis. This group is attended by local authorities within the Severn Estuary and its aims are to share best practice and information on the intervention methods which local authorities are adopting.

After local resident and keen community activist Kirsten Elliott approach myself and then Policy Development and Scrutiny, the Council is progressing arrangements for a Scrutiny Inquiry Day on the subject of urban gulls which will take place in November 2013. In preparation for this day, the Council is intending to survey other local authorities to understand the impact urban gulls have on their communities, the intervention methods they are adopting and the cost of these methods. The aim is for this event to identify actions which can be taken forward by the Council and shared with our neighbouring authorities.

The MP for Bath Don Foster has secured some very helpful evidence from DEFRA which I am sure will be valuable as part of that and has reaffirmed much of our thinking on the current coordinated approach to reducing the impact of gulls in our district.

M 25

Question from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

What level of income has been received so far since the new parking charges were introduced at Royal Victoria Park, broken down by month?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

The income collected from Royal Victoria Park Pay & Display machines by month is shown in the table below. It should be remembered that the objective of this scheme was not to make money but to reduce the long stay parking within the park and this has been achieved. Access for genuine park users is, as a result, now much improved.

Charges commenced 10th June 2013.

Month	Gross	Net
<i>June</i>	<i>£1,563.75</i>	<i>£1,251.00</i>
<i>July</i>	<i>£8,219.70</i>	<i>£6,575.76</i>
<i>August</i>	<i>£11,119.30</i>	<i>£8,895.44</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£20,902.75</i>	<i>£16,722.20</i>

Supplementary Question:

Does the Council have comparative data of genuine park users? It seems to me that there has been a reduction in use despite the recent very good weather.

Answer from: Councillor Caroline Roberts

We plan to review the situation in December to decide our future approach.

M 26 Question from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

Has the Council responded to the Government's recent consultation regarding changes to the payment of New Homes Bonus and if so what has the Council's response been?

Answer from: Councillor David Bellotti

Officers are currently working on a draft response to the "New Homes Bonus and Local Growth Fund – Technical Consultation". The consultation itself relates to the technical aspects of the future arrangements for New Homes Bonus announced in the Spending Review 2013 and, I will consider the response before it is submitted in accordance with the deadline of 19 September 2013. I will be happy to circulate a copy of the final response at that time.

M 27 Question from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

Noting that at the time of this year's Council Budget, £150,000 was set aside to meet the set-up costs associated with a Tourism Levy, can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on what progress has been made on developing proposals for such a tourist levy in Bath and when he anticipates publishing specific proposals in relation to this?

Answer from: Councillor David Bellotti

Officers are currently undertaking detailed feasibility work on a number of options for Visitor Charges. We anticipate that this will include further consultation with relevant stakeholders during September and October. The findings will then be reported at Open Cabinet before the end of the calendar year. The Cabinet will consider which of the options may be taken forward for implementation at this time.

Supplementary Question:

Will the arrangements be introduced from April, so that the full benefit will be achieved?

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

As you can already see from my written answer we have not yet chosen from options for delivering the scheme in the 2014/15 financial year so I cannot answer that your supplementary question at this time.

M 28

Question from:

Councillor Brian Simmons

In the light of recent Council activity in respect of the River Avon, can the Cabinet Member advise of the level of engagement with the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust?

Answer from:

Councillor Ben Stevens

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust are part of the Bristol Avon Catchment group, which the Council set up in partnership with Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire, Bristol, Avon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Wessex Water and is run on our behalf by the Avon Frome Partnership. The Council's ecologist sits on the Partnership and we will consult with them, as we do with other stakeholders, as part of any major developments along the River Avon going forward.

M 29

Question from:

Councillor Martin Veal

At the start of the current Administration promises were made to achieve an HGV weight restriction for the A36, A4 and the London Road that has the potential to threaten our World Heritage status. As the previous unsuccessful attempt to impose a weight limit on the Beckford Road was as a result of a lack of consultation with the Highways Agency and Wiltshire Council officers, has this situation now been rectified and are plans back in place to make a more professional attempt to consult on imposing a weight restriction for HGV's using our fragile road system to transit Bath?

Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>Prior to proposing the restrictions for HGVs on Beckford Road we undertook extensive consultation with both Wiltshire and the Highways Agency on the potential benefits of the diversion for the City of Bath. Notwithstanding these discussions and attempts at reaching an agreed solution an appeal was successful lodged with DfT against these proposals. The appeal was allowed because of the impact of the proposals on the primary road network not because of a 'lack of consultation'.</i></p> <p><i>We have subsequently held discussion with both these Highway Authorities but they effectively have a veto on our proposals.</i></p> <p><i>We will continue to press the Highways Agency to recognise the problems that HGVs cause within the city of Bath.</i></p>	

M 30	Question from:	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>As part of the tender process for the new public toilets maintenance contract, have any proposals been put forward which would enable more public toilets to be kept open whilst still achieving either all or the majority of the Council's desired saving?</p>		
Answer from:	Councillor David Dixon	
<p><i>Not specifically. The outcome of the procurement is the improvement/management package for the toilets being retained at a net annual cost which meets the available budget from 2014. Keeping open any additional locations would incur an additional cost which would need to be treated as a growth item in the Council's budget. The tender process looked to keep as many public loos open with the budget available. Priority locations being parks and open spaces, Avon Street coach park and Monmouth Street 24 hour provision.</i></p>		

M 31	Question from:	Councillor David Martin
<p>New legislation in the form of the Mobile Homes Act 2013 deals with buying and selling properties on park homes sites and with a range of site licensing and related matters. From 1 April 2014 Local Authorities will be able to require site owners to carry out necessary works. Can the Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning confirm that the Council will use these powers to ensure that site licensing requirements and housing conditions for residents of mobile homes in Bath & North East Somerset are kept to the necessary standards.</p>		
Answer from:	Councillor Tim Ball	
<p><i>Mobile Homes Act 2013 amends existing caravan site and mobile homes legislation. It brings the licensing regime more closely in line with other local authority licensing</i></p>		

regimes, such as HMO licensing, including the ability to charge for licences. The Act amends the scope of offences and powers to deal with breaches of licence conditions and introduces a new regime for buying and selling park homes removing the requirement for site owner approval. It also introduces new requirements about site rules and reform to the pitch fee review process.

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Planning fully supports these changes and will utilise the new powers where possible to the benefit of residents and the wider community. This follows the Council's established approach of mainstreaming this form of accommodation wherever possible, as demonstrated by the Council's Home Health & Safety Policy providing grants for low-income and vulnerable mobile home residents to fund essential repairs

Supplementary Question:

There is a park site near 120 residents in my ward. Will action be taken to ensure that licence conditions are met and that housing conditions are maintained?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

I visited the site last week and am concerned about some aspects of what I saw. We will take action to bring about improvements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01

Question from:

Duncan Hounsell

What steps has B&NES Council taken to implement the cabinet decision E2426 to undertake a High level Option assessment on Saltford Station. Which consultancy firm has been commissioned to carry out the studies? When are the studies expected to be completed and the findings available to the public? and what is the expected cost of these studies?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

As Mr Hounsell will know Halcrow have been commissioned to undertake this High Level Option Assessment of Saltford Station; picking up on the issue of parking which was raised at the public meeting in Saltford last year. We anticipate that the consultants will be in a position to undertake a public consultation on their work later in the year hopefully in October. The cost of this work is expected to be within the provision provided by the Cabinet in its original decision to commission this work.

P 02	Question from:	Andy Wait
Does B&NES Council intend to include consideration of a cycle-path adjacent to Keynsham Bypass in its Cycling Audit and Review?		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p><i>Sustrans have been appointed to carry out the Cycling Audit and Review. As part of the review, they will engage with the local community in order that they may put forward their own recommendations and also have an input to the emerging results of the review.</i></p> <p><i>This consultation will take place through 3 public consultation events across Bath & North East Somerset and through the use of a web-based mapping tool. The community will be able to plot their preferred routes (either existing or proposed) via this tool. This will enable a far larger number of people to engage with the project than would otherwise be possible through meetings alone.</i></p> <p><i>The dates and venues of the meetings, and the location of the mapping tool, will be advertised via the Council's website in due course. You will be able to put forward this suggestion via either route.</i></p>		