

Statement to the 12.9.13 meeting of B&NES Council

"Thank you Chair for allowing me to address Full Council tonight.

I speak from the heart as a member of three generations of a family living in Bath and North East Somerset, and draw on my expertise as a strategic management consultant and economist.

My eye was caught by the sudden arrival of item 11 on the agenda and even more intrigued by the absence of any attempt to develop and evaluate alternative options, supporting figures or facts, reference to corporate objectives or equality considerations!

Although I have since learned that this item has been withdrawn, I remain concerned by its relationship to the "Allocation of Statutory Roles" paper deferred from May's Council meeting, and now scheduled for the November one, the changed title of which suggests that the Council is in no hurry to fulfill the spirit as well as the letter of its statutory duty to designate a Scrutiny Officer.

For the real reason I find item 11 so disturbing, is that the very statutory officers debarred from fulfilling the Scrutiny Officer function seem to be asking Council to covertly fund the protection of their reputation and powers whilst yet again deferring the designation of a Scrutiny Officer, who as a critical friend, with the long term needs and interests of your electorate uppermost in their mind, would help them identify and avert such costly and risky errors. **Herein lies the importance and value of having a non executive officer working alongside those with more formal powers.** For despite the best intentions, competence and hard work of the Cabinet and their executive directors, their perspective and the pace and scale of the strategic and financial challenge ahead, means as item 11 hints, that there will be errors and some of these will have bad consequences.

So on behalf of all those in our community and economy who lack the time or expertise to follow your policies and decisions, **I implore you to specify, budget, appoint and only then designate, the influential and appropriately empowered leader the Overview and Scrutiny function now requires** and thereby help ensure that *all* your policies and decisions go into making our locality, in the future as well as now, a great place to be."

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