

CABINET MEETING 12th February 2014

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

- Bryn Jones (Chair, Transition Larkhall)
Re: London Road Gateway project proposals
- Nigel Sherwen
Re: Cycling on the London Road
- David Redgewell (South West Transport)
Re: Greater Bristol Supported Bus Network
- David Redgewell (South West Transport)
Re: MetroWest as core element in WoE LEP's Strategic Economic Plan
- Jay Risbridger
Re: the Bath pound

Re: Agenda Item 12 (Children's Centres)

- Cllr Liz Hardman

Re: Agenda Item 16 (Budget)

- Elizabeth Derl-Davis (Radstock Town Council)

Re: Agenda Item 19 (Scrap Metal Dealers)

- Dawn Milsom (Chairman Clandown Residents Association) *(to speak at the start of the meeting)*
- Cllr Eleanor Jackson
- Nettie Williams

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor David Laming
<p>The lack of a one way system for Deadmill Lane and Ferndale Road in the Ward of Lambridge continues to be a serious safety issue and has been an on-going problem for many years. A proposed traffic scheme to solve this problem has been available for years; how and when does the Cabinet Member intend to implement the scheme?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Officers have carried out a study of this traffic issue and are currently evaluating options prior to reporting back to me. I am aware that any scheme coming forward will also need to give due consideration to the traffic impact on the wider network. If the proposed scheme is acceptable to the local community, I anticipate works will complete by summer 2014.</p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Will Councillor Roberts clarify the nature of the proposed scheme.		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<i>I will reply within 5 working days.</i>		

M 02	Question from:	Councillor Nathan Hartley
<p>For almost a decade residents of Peasedown St John have been calling for more safety measures at the junction connecting Bath Road and the A367 by-pass (Radstock-end of Peasedown). Thousands of vehicles pass this junction each day, often at high speeds. There have been a lot of accidents here too, with many people breaking bones and seriously injuring themselves.</p> <p>Since 2006 councillors have taken an active role in trying to secure funding for either a roundabout or traffic lights to be installed here, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting a resident-led petition to B&NES Council in 2006 asking for a roundabout to be built here. Over 700 people signed the petition. • Featuring the campaign on the front of a special newsletter to all villagers in 2011 • Lobbying B&NES Council for a roundabout over many years, asking for funding to be made available • Meeting with Traffic and Safety Officers to look at changes to the physical layout of the junction 		

We've achieved some success by seeing £35,000 being made available in S106 money from David Wilson Homes, who have recently completed at 95-house development in the village.

The most recent call for a roundabout came from Cllr Sarah Bevan in November 2012: <http://www.peasedownlibdems.org.uk/local-news-mainmenu-2/1-latest/538-roundabout-calls-continue-25th-nov-12.html>

We recognise now though that finances are becoming increasingly sparse, and that identifying £250,000 to carry out the works is more unlikely in the near future.

We ask, therefore, of the Cabinet that the £35,000 we've helped secure is put into an allocated pot and ring fenced for this project in the future. If not, can the funding be transferred elsewhere to a more local funding pot (eg, Peasedown Parish Council) to ensure it is looked after and only spent in Peasedown St John?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Officers have investigated the status of the Section106 contribution and, as is usual in such contributions, there are restrictions on the use of this money that must be complied with. If it is not then the money must be returned to the Developer.

I am also aware that officers have met with representatives of the local community to consider traffic management issues.

I will ask officers to establish the accident statistics and costs of the work requested. There is considerable demand for the limited capital funding available but I am happy to consider this project as a potential scheme to include in the programme.

As in previous years, the proposed programme will be consulted upon and subject to a formal decision.

Supplementary Question:

X

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

X

M 03

Question from:

Councillor June Player

In January 2012, I asked Cabinet: 'What action is the Council prepared to take to restrict the To Let Signs in areas such as Westmoreland and Oldfield Park'. (M 07).

In their response they: 'acknowledged that the Council's existing policy and practice on a number of issues related to advertisements within Bath is in need of review. I have asked Officers to undertake this review and this will include the issue of 'For Sale' and 'To Let' signs'.

These signs are, however, once again 'rearing their ugly heads' which blights our streets, makes them look uncared for and unattractive to prospective house buyers.

They do not benefit the areas they are in and they are purely put up as free advertising for the Estate Agents. In addition to this, all these signs advertise the many Houses of Multiple Occupancy to potential burglars. I do find it extremely disappointing that I am AGAIN having to ask for them to be dealt with.

Please could the Cabinet Member update me on where we are with the review he asked his Officers to undertake on the Council's policy and practice on a number of issues related to advertisements within Bath which was also to include the issue of 'For Sale' and 'To Let' signs and in the meantime, because it is clearly not yet in operation, may I ask that this Council write again to the local agents as they did in 2012 to: '...request that they use restraint with regard to their advertising'

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

In the previous reply to this question in January 2012 we said that we expected the review relating to the possibility of extending the control over To Let and For sale signs outside of the Conservation Area would take place after the (then) timetable for the Core Strategy Hearings.

Because of the delay in the CS timetable this work has not commenced. I have therefore kept the response general in terms of this work recommencing, alternatively you could refer to the review taking place when the CS hearings finish later this year.

M 04

Question from:

Councillor Dave Laming

Following yet another recent tragic death by drowning in our River Avon, can the Cabinet Member confirm when the "Immediate Actions" will be completed as recommended in the June 2011 RoSPA River Safety Report; particularly the repair of all grab lines and ladders and the visibility of the ladder cut-outs.

Answer from:

Councillor Dave Dixon

Apologies for not having the answer ready for you yet. The reason is that I want to give you an accurate answer. I am shortly to meet with the Canals and Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and the original author of the RoSPA report to review all the "Immediate Actions." When we have done that, I will come back to you straightaway.

Supplementary Question:

Will Cabinet ensure that all matters concerning the river corridor and its catchment area, will in future be co-ordinated through the River Corridor Working Group, including matters of river safety, and that it will be adequately funded to ensure that it carries out its designated duties and priorities.

Answer from:

Councillor Dave Dixon

The more help we can get from all levels and from other organisations will be really appreciated and the higher the level in that organisation the better. In short the answer is yes.

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>A few years ago I was given a conducted tour below ground at the so-called Bog Island in Bath, and I saw the mass of metal supports. Is there any realistic prospect in the foreseeable future of the space – or at least that part which is in the Council’s ownership - being brought back into use?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor David Bellotti
<p>The first two phases of the Grand Parade and Undercroft project are proceeding on time and Bog Island has always stood in a future phase. Detailed plans will be therefore be shared in due course when the first two phases have progressed.</p>		
M 06	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<p>On 11 September 2012 in response to my written question Councillor Caroline Roberts gave an update on the repairs to the high pavement at the Vineyards, Bath. Please may I have a further update on the investigations and the consultations with affected residents?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Consultation with residents and all interested parties on the scheme is due to commence towards the end of March 2014. The consultation is expected to be for 2 months. When all parties are in agreement, the works will be put out to tender. Upon receipt of tenders it is anticipated that works will commence June/July 2014 dependant on the agreement of all parties.</p>		
M 07	Question from:	Councillor Brian Webber
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All the parking meters in the Central Zone and nearly all the meters in Zone 1 are dual user, ie for paying visitors as well as permit holders. Might it reduce the amount of cruising around by both classes of motorists looking for empty spaces if there were fewer meters but they were reserved for paying visitors (as they are, for example, at Laura Place)? Fewer but more productive meters would also be cheaper to service and maintain. 2. The parking meters at Laura Place are for paying visitors and are not available (during operative hours) for permit holders. They are similar in that respect to Manvers Street car park. In what way is Laura Place so much more attractive that it is charged at the ultra-premium rate of £3.40 for 1 hour and £5 for 2 hours, whereas at Manvers Street car park the fee is £3.10 for 2 hours? The contrast at Milsom Street is even more stark because the meters there are dual-user: a paying visitor has to pay £3.40 for 1 hour, if he can find a space in competition with residents, whereas round the corner the Broad Street car park is exclusively for paying visitors and the fee is only £1.60. 		

3. If most meter parking is aimed at facilitating essential short visits, would it be more logical to make the charge for each successive period progressively more expensive rather than less expensive?
4. Approximately how much does it cost to re-calibrate a single parking meter if the tariff is changed?
5. I cannot see where the decision to vary the charges at certain parking meters with effect from 9 December 2013 is shown on any of the registers of decisions (cabinet, single cabinet member or officer) on the Council's public website. Has it been displayed? Before the decision was made were any of the following consulted (a) residents associations in the area (b) bodies representative of traders (c) ward councillors?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

1. The current scheme was implemented to increase the amount of flexibility within all parking areas and to service the many different reasons people enter the city. Allocating specific areas as suggested would not allow such flexibility and could result in some areas sitting empty when parking spaces are required by other groups. The idea will however be considered again when a review of the zone is undertaken.
2. The charges are set to encourage use of the car parks, thus maintaining the availability of on street parking for those who value convenience over cost. Parking within the most central of areas on street within the city should be at a higher rate than at car parks (where usage is encouraged) or in the more remote areas (where vehicle movements have less impact).
3. Whilst charges could be set in the way suggested, this may then have a counter-productive effect on usage as the level of price elasticity is reached. Charges are set to support behaviours which free up road space but support the local economy rather than penalise people going about their daily business. Officers would be happy to discuss with Councillor Webber the underlying principles of the tariffs adopted and that might be more helpful than attempting a detailed response here.
4. Approximately £112 per machine including call out fees
5. All Local Authorities have the powers under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to vary prices using a process called Notice of Variation under Sections 35(1) and 35(3) and 35C and also Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This statutory process allows changes in tariffs to be undertaken without public consultation or objection. All Local Authorities are required to do is to advertise both on site and in the local paper which is what was done in this case. These changes were agreed by me and the Council Leader in order to help achieve the outcomes agreed previously by Council at the Budget meeting and advertised accordingly. The Notice of Variation was displayed as per normal on the Council website and was signed by the Divisional Director for Environmental Services Matthew Smith

who has delegated powers to set fees and changes.	
M 08	Question from: Councillor Anthony Clarke
It is understood that the policy of this Council is to enforce bus lanes where they exist to ensure the bus lanes are effective and used for their intended purpose. Does the Council therefore intend on installing ANPR cameras to enforce the new bus lane restrictions on Dorchester Street, and if so when?	
Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Yes, in February.</p> <p>The Council uses ANPR technology to enforce bus lanes within the city at different times. Not all bus lanes are enforced all of the time but Dorchester Street is a valid and enforceable restriction and will therefore be enforced at some point. Any vehicle that contravenes the restriction may receive a PCN at any time however, warning letters will be issued in the first instance for a short period to raise awareness of the scheme. We do not publicise when enforcement may be undertaken to prevent selective usage of routes thus reducing the effectiveness of the scheme</p>	
Supplementary Question:	
If the enforcement is not seen to be working, in terms of vehicles being displaced into surrounding roads and consequent delays to buses, do you accept that it is not possible to make valid decisions about the effectiveness of the scheme.	
Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
<i>We will report back after the six-month trial. We will know whether enforcement is working and whether the scheme is a success.</i>	

M 09	Question from: Councillor Anthony Clarke
How many cars does the Council estimate have breached the Bus Lane restrictions on Dorchester Street since the bus lane came into operation on the 20 th January?	
Answer from:	Councillor Caroline Roberts
Numbers of vehicles contravening the regulation during the implementation and familiarisation phase are not recorded but all vehicles contravening the regulation once enforcement commences will receive a PCN	
M 10	Question from: Councillor Anthony Clarke
At the Full Council meeting of the 4 th March 2013 at which the draft Core Strategy was	

debated by Councillors, upon an amendment moved by the Conservative Group it was resolved 'To request that Cabinet work with Bristol City Council and the Local Enterprise partnership to consider the feasibility of creating Park and Ride for the A37 at Whitchurch'. Traffic on the A37 remains a major issue for residents in the area, and so can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on this work?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

A Park and Ride at Whitchurch would need to be a joint project between ourselves and Bristol. Officers have raised the issue with their counterparts in Bristol and the project is not currently a priority for Bristol CC. Nonetheless, given Bristol's current focus on creating Resident Parking Zones, the demand for a Park & Ride site in this location may increase although it would still require revenue support. I will ask officers to raise this issue when the Joint Local Transport Plan is reviewed in the near future. I am aware that there is technical information on potential usage of this facility which was developed for the Core Strategy and I am happy for officers to share this with Councillor Clarke if he wishes to understand the challenges with this proposal. In any event, the capital funding of the facility would have to be sought from the limited budget available to the Local Transport Body/LEP.

M 11

Question from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

I understand that for Keynsham shops looking to relocate to the new Town Centre, the rent is higher than existing units in riverside and they are expected to fit out from scratch an empty shell. This is all well and good for national multiples but should we not be supporting and encouraging local business. Could the Council therefore not be doing more to help smaller local businesses who are considering locating in the new town centre but are being put off by these concerns?

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

The council has a range of different shop sizes available for local businesses. Rents are comparable with the commercial rents within the town centre and are not being marketed at a premium. The council is also providing business support to current retailers within Riverside to investigate options for alternative accommodation.

Supplementary Question:

What is the name of the officer to whom enquiries from traders should be directed.

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

The Properties Team is keen to include existing businesses in Keynsham in the new development. There are three officers working on this.

M 12	Question from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>Following the successful campaign by Stowey Sutton Action Group to prevent asbestos and non-hazardous waste being dumped in the quarry, and the Council being awarded costs despite withdrawing from the process, would the Council acknowledge the Action Group's success, and if so how?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball
<p>The Council does acknowledge that the Stowey Action Group played an important role in the consideration of both the planning application proposals and the scheme as amended and accepted at appeal by the Planning Inspector. The Action Group was able to engage in the Planning Process, which is designed to be open and transparent and is designed to ask for and to take into account the views of interested parties when decisions are made in the public interest.</p> <p>The Planning Inspector has recorded the evidence submitted at the Inquiry by the Action group along with his consideration and conclusions which were based, in part, upon this evidence. This is a matter of public record which I consider acknowledges their role and, in addition, I will be pleased to ask the Leader of the Council to write to them accordingly.</p>		
M 13	Question from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>What negotiations has the Council had with Network Rail about the proposed electrification of the rail line through Bath?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>The Council has had several meetings with Network Rail in preparation for the implementation of this important project. This has included providing advice on engagement and what statutory consents may be required. We expect the applications for these consents to be submitted later this year. The West of England Joint Transport Executive Committee meets regularly with Network Rail on this and other topics. Part of these discussions has been pressing the case to extend electrification to other parts of the local network e.g. the Westbury line, to Weston Super Mare and local services like Severn Beach.</p>		
M 14	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>Noting the Planning Application which has now been submitted for a 13 pitch traveller site on the Lower Bristol Road, and that a key element of this application is the demonstration of Very Special Circumstances for allow development within the Greenbelt, have the consultants been given access to the absolute latest information on the 27 sites that were suggested to the Council through the public Call For Sites? If so, can Councillors through the PT&E PD&S Panel also be given access to this information?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball

Combined Answer for M14 & M15

It is inappropriate to release the work on the site assessments currently being undertaken as part of the Gypsy, Travellers & Travelling Show People Sites Plan prior to this work being complete. This is because there is a proper process for the release of this information when the options are published for consultation towards the end of 2014 and the suitability of sites can be made clear. At previous stages in the process, the release of partial information before studies were complete resulting in ambiguity over sites caused considerable difficulties for local communities and criticisms of the Council.

M 15	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
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When will the Council publish an update to its list of preferred gypsy and traveller sites?

Answer from:	Councillor Tim Ball
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See response to Question 14 above.

Supplementary Question:

Can you confirm that the occupied site on the Lower Bristol Road is owned by the Council.

Answer from:	Councillor Tim Ball
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Yes. the families currently there were placed there by the previous administration.

M 16	Question from:	Councillor Liz Richardson
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Whilst the Council undertakes the process of seeking planning permission for the travellers' site on the Lower Bristol Road, what action is the Council taking to clean up this site and bring it up the standard one would expect of land designated as Greenbelt?

Answer from:	Councillor Tim Ball
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Since the occupation of the site the Council has endeavoured to keep the site clean and tidy through provision of Portaloos, Skips and the installation of a standpipe. These facilities have been replaced as necessary and additionally ad hoc repairs to fencing undertaken as well as regular litter picks and waste and recycling collections. Adjacent land in Council ownership remains in agricultural use.

M 17	Question from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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The Government's pupil premium has now risen to significant levels and is providing welcome support to help direct resources at improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. However, it is also important for steps to be taken to ensure the

most gifted pupils from all backgrounds are challenged by schools to ensure they reach their potential. Can the Cabinet Member please spell out what initiatives are in place at schools within B&NES to ensure that the most able and gifted primary and secondary school pupils of all backgrounds are supported and challenged to help them realise their potential?

Answer from:

Councillor Dine Romero

The responsibility for supporting gifted and able pupils lies with schools. Schools locally take a range of approaches to provide support and stretching opportunities for the most gifted and able pupils. This includes the activities they include within the curriculum, with lesson planning to ensure that individual needs are addressed and work is differentiated within the classroom. In some schools pupil groups or sets operate within or across year groups to provide additional challenge. Some schools also put on extra-curricular activities for more able students to recognise artistic, musical, physical and creative talent as well as academic performance.

Some examples include:

- Opportunity to spend a day at the University of Bath, trying out new sports activities and fitness testing alongside talented pupils from other schools;
- Special visit to the Houses of Parliament including a behind the scenes tour and discussion with a local MP;
- A variety of after school clubs including performing arts, sports, music, art;
- Links between schools with opportunities for primary pupils to enjoy targeted experiences at a local secondary;
- Specialist sports coaching;
- Literacy events and writing and art competitions;
- Residential weekends with activities ranging from art, design, performance, team work, rocket science, philosophy, history, public speaking, natural history (with sponsorship available to ensure cost needn't be a barrier)

Schools can also expect Ofsted inspections to include scrutiny of what they do to help gifted and talented pupils to realise their potential.

Supplementary Question:

Your reply states that some schools provide additional challenges and lay on extra-curricular activities. Is there information about the proportion of schools that do this, or which schools. I would be concerned if were not all schools.

Answer from:

Councillor Dine Romero

I will report back if detailed information is available. Responsibility lies with the schools to provide such activities. The Council will give support where it can.

M 18

Question from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

The Cabinet Member has previously made repeated promises that the new parking charge regime at Royal Victoria Park would be reviewed, first in December then in January, but with still no announcement made. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm when this review will take place, or announce the outcome of this review?

Answer from:

Councillor Caroline Roberts

As confirmed previously, the review of the parking restrictions in Royal Victoria Park commenced after 6 months of operation in December 2013. Officers have completed the evidence gathering processes and these were discussed by officers earlier this month prior to consideration by Cabinet members later this month. We will consider the results of the review and I will make an announcement about our intentions shortly afterwards.

M 19

Question from:

Councillor Brian Webber

How many hours of work are involved in assembling and displaying every month on the Council's website under the Transparency section (if you happen to know where to find it) the data on items of expenditure over £500? Is the value of this information to the public commensurate with the cost of providing it, or is this yet another example of misguided overkill and interference by central Government?

On the other hand, does the information on senior salaries disclosed in the Council's annual accounts meet the requirements of the Government's code of recommended practice, which appear to include an organisational chart with salary bands covering all posts remunerated at more than the minimum Senior Civil Service pay band (approximately £58,000)?

Answer from:

Councillor David Bellotti

The current Government issued a new code of practice for Data Transparency in 2011 requiring councils to publish a range of different information to support a drive toward more openness within local government. The requirements to publish this information were not statutory but were recommended good practice and included for instance the requirement to publish spending >£500 and senior salaries.

The Council has been complying with this Code in an efficient manner and we believe does comply with the code however it does require officer time to enable information to be analysed and published appropriately and this takes on average between one and two days per month.

In relation to payments it has gone further than the requirements of the code of practice and publishes all expenditure, not just those >£500 and in relation to senior salaries the Council publishes this information both in its annual accounts and Pay Policy Statement. Its threshold level for disclosure of senior staff salaries is at the minimum point of the senior civil service pay scale and above as at 31 March which details senior managers by job title and pay grade.

The Council believes transparency is important to allow its community to understand how its taxes are spent on local priorities and has a range of different mechanisms to allow the community to both access information and interact with the Council on its activities.

The government has just released a new code of practice on Data Transparency in December 2013 which will take effect from the 1st of April 2014. This new code will now be a statutory obligation and require further and more detailed information to be published in the public domain and the Council is currently assessing how much resource will be required to comply with its requirements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Graham Harrison
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My name is Graham Harrison, and I am Vice-Chairman of the Bath Branch of the Federation of Small Businesses. As a committee, we are very concerned about the impact on business in the area if, as a consequence of hydraulic fracturing and exploratory testing in the Mendips, the flow of water from the Hot Springs is jeopardised.

The possibility of fracking in the UK is very much in the spotlight at the moment, and arguments, both for and against, are in the public domain. The opinion of our committee, however, is that the local implications of such procedures in and, more particularly, around the Bath & NE Somerset area are still a subject of mass ignorance. The current position adopted by the council on the matter is, I believe, broadly in line with that of Bath FSB, but I am also aware that many in the business world have little knowledge of the unique and fragile nature of the geological coincidences that have come together to produce the Hot Springs, and the ease with which these conditions could be put at risk.

Can I ask what measures the council has taken to educate the public, in both the business and residential sectors, to the hazards of disrupting the subterranean structures in the Mendip hills? Since the primary purpose of fracking is to damage the shale layers, what information is being assimilated and distributed about the relatively small pressure head at which the water is forced to the surface, and how resilient it is to disturbance?

The committee of the FSB believe that there should be a facility to educate those in the council's area, of the generally held theories concerning the source of the Hot Springs, the geography of the Mendips and its effect on Bath, and the principles of how fracking works. By doing this, we can better understand what the threats are to the livelihood of many who live and work in Bath, and allow all to form their own opinions of the issues involved.

Perhaps an 'Information Day' could be organised to allow the simple truths of the subject to be presented to all interested parties. At the very least, a permanent display of information could be assembled in a public area. From an FSB point of view, it is vital that those who run businesses in the area have as much information as possible, to allow them to join with the council in any consultations that might take place over the coming months. This is particularly important where objections to any future planning applications may be invited.

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

Thank you for the question from your committee regarding hydraulic fracturing and the potential threat to the Hot Springs of Bath. The Hot Springs are a vital part of the local economy as they generate so many visitors to the City and region. Thank you also for your useful suggestions. I would confirm that the Council shares your concerns about the threat to the Hot Springs from any hydraulic fracturing operations that could be undertaken in the region. Perhaps I can use my response to explain the actions the Council has currently been taking over this matter.

The Leader of the Council, Paul Crossley has issued a number of press statements and given a number of talks about the Council's concerns which have been covered in the local and national press. He has also written to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on a number of occasions. You may also be aware that the Council passed a resolution about this matter last year. I have enclosed the text of that resolution for your information.

The Council appointed the Building Control Manager, Philip Mansfield who has overall responsibility for the protection of the Hot Springs, to act as lead officer to collate the Council's response to potential shale gas and coal bed methane extraction in the region. He has given talks to various groups about this matter to explain the technicalities of the subject and would be happy to give a talk to your group if you think this would be useful. Please contact him on 01225 477541 if you want to arrange this. He has also been in regular contact with the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to ensure they are aware of the Council's concerns. B&NES Council are also liaising with other councils and agencies in the region to share information and provide a more co-ordinated response to this potential threat.

In 2012 the Council commissioned a report by the British Geological Survey (BGS) to look into the potential for damage to the Hot Springs. They produced a balanced and detailed report which has been used to help the Council's case. I have asked the officers to send you a copy of the report for your information.

With regard to wider dissemination of information on this very important subject the Council will soon be placing information and guidance on their website so that the wider public can be well informed.

Once again I would like to thank you for your interest in this matter and would assure you that the Council is doing its utmost to ensure the continued protection of the Hot Springs in Bath.