

# BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

## CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Wednesday, 14th May, 2014

### Present:

Councillor Paul Crossley	Leader of the Council
Councillor David Dixon	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
Councillor David Bellotti	Cabinet Member for Community Resources
Councillor Katie Hall	Cabinet Member for Community Integration
Councillor Caroline Roberts	Cabinet Member for Transport
Councillor Dine Romero	Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children and Youth
Councillor Ben Stevens	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair was taken by Councillor Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council.  
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair drew attention to the evacuation procedure as set out in the Agenda.

### 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillor Simon Allen who was representing the Cabinet at a civic function.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

### 5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was none.

### 6 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 14 questions from Councillors.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

**7 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

There were none.

**8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

On a motion from Councillor Paul Crossley, seconded by Councillor David Dixon, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**9 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

There were none.

**10 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

There were none.

**11 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

**12 SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2015-16**

Councillor Michael Evans in an *ad hoc* statement asked whether the Cabinet member had taken account of the view of the Early Years, Children and Youth PD&S Panel, which had discussed the issue at length and voted on it.

Councillor Dine Romero explained that 4 options had been discussed by the Panel. She assured Councillor Evans that she had taken full account of the Panel's comments but that she had felt that the Panel's preferred option would have led to terms of unequal length.

Councillor Romero reminded Cabinet that the school calendar had historically been based on a 195-day year, including 5 staff training days which would be different for different schools. She asked Cabinet to agree to recommend a fixed 190-day year (with 5 training days arranged separately), while still offering schools the alternative of a 195-day calendar (with 5 training days set within). She felt that this would make it possible in future years for schools to choose term dates which would work better for children, staff and parents, particularly where children from the same family were at different schools.

She moved the recommendations.

Councillor Katie Hall seconded the proposals. She felt that they were an important compromise which had been reached after listening to the consultation feedback. Parents with children at different schools were presented with difficult dilemmas. She reminded Cabinet that it was important to do away with random length terms.

Councillor David Bellotti said that the proposals were a success story. Schools had responded very positively the previous year. The Council would be giving a clear recommendation while at the same time allowing for schools with special or different circumstances to make other arrangements. The move to schools having roughly equal term dates was very welcome.

Councillor Paul Crossley said he felt that consistency of dates would be good for schools, parents and children. He recommended the 190-day option to schools but asked them to consider the alternative suggestions if they were not able to adopt this pattern.

On a motion from Councillor Dine Romero, seconded by Councillor Katie Hall, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To NOTE that the majority of local schools and academies can already set their own term and holiday dates, by virtue of being an Academy, Voluntary Aided or Foundation School and that the Deregulation Bill currently before parliament proposes to allow every school to set their own dates;

(2) To RECOMMEND the Council's preferred calendar of School Term and Holiday dates for the academic year 2015-16 based on a 190 day calendar (as set out in Appendix A) to all schools and academies in order to maximise consistency of dates for the benefit of children and their parents;

(3) To RECOMMEND to all school and academy governing bodies that good practice would be to consult parents and take account of their views in the event that they propose any variation from the recommended calendar; and

(4) To RECOMMEND, since a number of schools and academies have already indicated that they may still prefer to set a 195 day calendar, that in this event such schools adopt the 195 day calendar (at Appendix B), which most logically fits with the Council's recommended 190 day calendar.

## **13 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROJECTS 2014/15**

Councillor Geoff Ward in an *ad hoc* statement said he was delighted that £1M was to be spent on open spaces and parks. He reminded the Cabinet of the need to consult closely with local members and not to favour the city in their allocations. He felt that the public toilets issue had been emotive because there had been insufficient consultation.

Councillor David Dixon responded to Councillor Ward by saying that not only had the Cabinet consulted about the public toilet proposals, but had also listened to the feedback. The proposals would be sustainable and would deliver long-term solutions. He had held a number of conversations with local members and was delighted that it had been possible to provide clean, safe toilets at locations where people wanted them. The £3.3M would be invested in improving, maintaining and safeguarding local toilets.

Councillor Dixon referred to the contract to replace play areas across the area. He noted that there had been no budget for this when he had taken office. He had visited every Council-owned and run play area and was delighted at the wide range of improvements which would be achieved.

He moved the proposals.

Councillor Caroline Roberts seconded the proposal. She was very pleased with the plans because it was about 10 years earlier that she had been a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel which had recommended the automated toilets which were now beginning to be introduced. She also welcomed the play area upgrades because she had witnessed the difference they had made by bringing the local community back together.

Councillor Katie Hall observed that the proposals would fit very well with the Health and Wellbeing Board's Fit For Life promotion.

Councillor Paul Crossley explained that one of his constituents with a challenging illness needed clean, readily available toilets if he was to be able to leave home. He was very pleased that local children would benefit greatly from the investment in play areas.

Councillor David Dixon summed up by reminding Cabinet that when new equipment arrived in a play park, it brought new vitality to the community as people started using the parks again. He emphasised to Cabinet that the Monmouth Street toilets were not being closed – they were being refurbished.

On a motion from Councillor David Dixon, seconded by Councillor Caroline Roberts, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To APPROVE the budgets for the following capital projects and for the projects to proceed:

- Parks and Green Spaces Capital programme (£1,010k);
- Public WC Conversions (£100k);

(2) To DELEGATE authority to the Divisional Director for Environmental Services, in consultation with the Chief Property Officer and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, to decide where the detailed spend on WC conversions project is targeted.

## **14 HERITAGE SERVICES BUSINESS UPDATE**

Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones in a statement reminded the Cabinet that he had previously presented a petition to Cabinet relating to free entry for local residents. He had been delighted to see the recent scheme allowing free entry for those under-21 plus some other good initiatives. He asked Cabinet however to ensure the future of the gallery. He felt that it was not only an educational and leisure asset, but was an important tourism asset too.

Councillor Ben Stevens, in proposing the item, said he wanted to be very clear – the Victoria Art Gallery would not close on his watch. There had been a small drop in visitor numbers but that did not threaten the viability of the gallery. It was a good museum, run well. He was particularly complimentary about the crucial role played by Stephen Bird (Head of Heritage Services) in attracting tourists to the heritage sites and his work in bringing the Beau Street Horde into public display. He also mentioned Stephen's work in extending the educational facilities under the Roman Baths, his infectious love of the Bath heritage and the fact that a benefit of £55 per Council Tax payer was generated by the Heritage Service.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposals. He agreed with Councillor Stevens about the debt of thanks owed to Stephen Bird and his team for delivering

such longstanding success across a wide range of attractions. He expressed great disappointment that Councillor Anketell-Jones had spoken of the possible closure of the Victoria Art Gallery. He emphasised in the strongest terms that this was not a possibility and asked Councillor Anketell-Jones to support the gallery's long term future by the things that he said.

Councillor David Dixon said that he had recently found it necessary to explain to a local resident that far from closing the Victoria Art Gallery, the Cabinet was investing in it. He reminded the meeting that local residents can gain free access to the gallery and many other attractions by showing their Discovery Card. He told the Cabinet that he had recently had a glimpse of the tunnels under the Roman Baths and he was excited about what was planned.

On a motion from Councillor Ben Stevens, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

- (1) To NOTE the provisional out-turn for Heritage Services for 2013/14;
- (2) To APPROVE the Fashion Museum Forward Plan;
- (3) To APPROVE further investigation into extending the Victoria Art Gallery into the void behind it to enable it to make a positive contribution to the Guildhall market redevelopment project; and
- (4) To APPROVE the capital budget for the Beau Street Hoard project in the Council's Capital Programme for 2014/15 and 2015/16 in the amounts of £203k and £17k respectively, and note the technical adjustment made to the capital budget for this project in 2013/14 to reflect grant-funded spend.

## **15 "GETTING AROUND BATH - A NEW TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR BATH" PROPOSED CONSULTATION**

Councillor Anthony Clarke in an *ad hoc* statement emphasised the need for cross-party support if the transport strategy consultation was to be effective. He felt that particular mention should have been made of north-south travel to school. He observed that report did not address the transport issues across the area and should be seen as the first building block of a wider transport policy.

Councillor David Laming in an *ad hoc* statement supported the proposals although he felt the title should have said "Getting Round and Through Bath". He observed that no mention had been made in the report of river ferries and other ways in which the river would be part of the solution. He asked Cabinet to consider the need for a safe, well-lit cycle path from Pulteney Weir right through to Newbridge.

*[David Redgewell (South West Transport Network) arrived after the debate had already started but the Chair at his prerogative agreed that David could still make his statement]*

David Redgewell welcomed the consultation and emphasised a number of issues which he felt must be addressed: the Dorchester Street scheme; a strategy for cross-border services; bus fleet upgrade; the public realm and the transport strategies for Bath and the rural areas.

Councillor Caroline Roberts, in proposing the item, said that a lot of hard work had already been done to bring the proposals to consultation and she was pleased to

propose that the consultation period should begin. She asked Councillors and members of the public to feed all their comments into the consultation.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal. There had been significant problems but also significant opportunities. He hoped to hear from residents during the consultation period. He reminded the meeting that recent improvements already introduced had been hybrid buses, Park and Ride options, variable messaging about car park places, cycle hire and the electrification of the main line to London. He encouraged Councillor Laming to feed his river ideas into the consultation. He was delighted that Councillor Clarke had offered to support the consultation process and assured him that funds were already earmarked to conduct similar studies of Keynsham and Somer valley.

Councillor Tim Ball observed that in his view very slow progress had been made in developing the city's transport strategy by the previous administration but that it had planned to build a bus route through the back gardens of Newbridge residents with no consultation. He reminded Cabinet that the Council's Core Strategy was dependent on the outcome of the three transport strategies so it was essential to make progress on them as soon as possible.

Councillor David Dixon said that the three main concerns were congestion, air quality and (especially in Larkhall) the river. It would be essential to maintain cross-party support for the consultation to be a success. He emphasised that the strategy could not be only about the city centre.

Councillor Ben Stevens expressed the hope that the Strategic River Group would get involved. He contracted to work with Councillor Laming to enable this. He was determined that the strategy should work for the whole community and said that the residents of Batheaston would remember a plan put forward by a previous administration to concrete over their meadows.

Councillor David Bellotti said that the Rossiter Road scheme, which would remove pressure from Widcombe and was welcomed by local residents, had been held up because of opposition from some Councillors who had not listened to local feelings. He regretted that there had not been cross-party support for the Council's priorities: pedestrians first, cycles, 20mph schemes for safer roads.

Councillor Caroline Roberts summed up by saying she did not intend to score points over transportation. She reminded Cabinet of her commitment to the Rossiter Road scheme, which she had championed since 1999; but regretted that the £250K put into the budget that year had not been used for that purpose and the Council was only now on the verge of delivering the scheme.

With reference to comments made about the scheme excluding Keynsham and north east Somerset, Councillor Roberts reminded Cabinet that funds had been reserved so that these schemes could be developed. She finally reminded Cabinet that the present proposals were not detailed because they were intended to encourage consultation responses.

On a motion from Councillor Caroline Roberts, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To ENDORSE the Getting Around Bath Launch Document for consultation.

## 16 AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES

The Chair asked all Cabinet members to confirm that they had read and considered the public interest test (Appendix A replacement). All agreed.

On a motion from Councillor Caroline Roberts, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(1) To AGREE that Appendix A constitutes exempt information according to the categories set out in the Local government Act 1972 (amended Schedule 12A) because it contains information which relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and therefore that the public interest is best served by exemption of the information.

The Chair asked Cabinet members if they would confirm that they would not make reference to exempt Appendix A during the debate, so that the public need not be excluded from the meeting. All agreed.

David Redgewell in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the proposals. He listed a number of services which he was pleased to note would be saved or extended by the plans, particularly a number of village services. He made particular reference however to the fact that it was necessary for the Council to subsidise cross-boundary services to which Somerset County Council did not contribute although he recognised that these services provided a valuable social benefit and also supported the Bath night-time economy.

Councillor Liz Richardson in an *ad hoc* statement welcomed the fact that service 752 was retained and that the evening service 672 via Chew Magna was being supported.

Councillor Caroline Roberts in proposing the item, said that the proposals would deliver increased services but with a saving of £12K. This had been achieved in two cases by using the Council's own underused fleet. A number of services had been improved but it had also been felt necessary to reduce some services where usage did not warrant the subsidy. She encouraged residents to make use of their local services to ensure their viability.

Councillor Paul Crossley seconded the proposal and said that it was crucial to protect rural communities and to support the night-time economy in the city. He felt that the plans achieved both these aims. He welcomed the support for shopper services – it was very good news for example that the 636 shopper service was being increased from 2 days to 3 days a week.

Councillor David Dixon highlighted the fantastic news that the net budget for supporting bus services was almost £1M. He regretted however that it would still be impossible for him to make a social visit to Chew Magna by bus without going via Bristol.

On a motion from Councillor Caroline Roberts, seconded by Councillor Paul Crossley, it was

**RESOLVED** (unanimously)

(3) To CONFIRM the changes to contract services as set out in the report;

(4) To NOTE the tender prices received, as set out in exempt Appendix A of the report; and

(5) To AGREE the award of contracts as recommended in the report.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by Democratic Services**