

## CABINET MEETING 11<sup>th</sup> June 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**

- Robert Morgan  
Re: Local Government Ombudsman Findings
- Anna Morgan  
Re: Local Government Ombudsman Findings
- Rachel Mercer  
Re: Pedestrian Safety
- Cllr Patrick Anketell-Jones  
Re: Victoria Art Gallery

#### **Re: Agenda Item 14 (Radstock Ecology Mitigation programme)**

- Cllr Eleanor Jackson
- Deborah Porter (Cam Valley Wildlife Group)
- Colin Currie

#### **Re: Agenda Item 15 (Funding Approval for Indicative Affordable Housing Development Programme)**

- Cllr Eleanor Jackson
- Amanda Leon (Radstock Action Group)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M 01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>At the Council budget meeting on 18 February, 2014 it was agreed "To earmark an on-going revenue allocation of £300k for 2015/16 onwards to be ring-fenced to further reduce the savings required specifically relating to Children's Centre Services. It is intended that this funding will be allocated as part of the 2015/2016 revenue budget"</p> <p>I have looked at the consultation on the future of Children's Centres and I am finding it hard to see what difference this £300K has made. The model of service delivery now proposed seems very similar to that proposed before the additional £300K became available.</p> <p>Please can you tell me how it is proposed to utilise the £300K ongoing revenue allocation and what difference this reduction in the savings target will make to the services that will be provided in Children's Centres?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The consultation is taking place on the emerging model for Children's Centres considered at the Cabinet meeting on 12th February. The Council's budget meeting took place on the 18th of February, after Cabinet had considered the proposals and asked officers to consult on them. The intention is to review how the £300K should be allocated once we see what comes out of the consultation. The utilisation of the additional £300K will be covered in the July Cabinet report.</p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>There is nothing in three proposals in consultation booklet that takes account of extra allocated money. At what stage there will be a consultation on how this extra money would be used?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>We are in the process of consultation and we are looking to find out how we can deal with the reduction in money for these particular services. Usually there are two options – either to reduce what you are doing or to do things differently. We are looking to reconfigure the service to suit the actual needs and we are looking what those needs are. We are looking to target those families with the biggest need, making sure we are funding front-facing services to continue to be effective and efficient and also provide better value service. By looking into all of these issues we can find out what these savings will be and also how much money we will need to do this. We know what the current spend is in different areas so we are consulting on what the needs are, following the consultation with the stakeholders and other parties. When we know what is fully needed, then we will be able to ensure that what we are able to do would not have unintended consequences. At the moment I cannot give a proper and full answer. The model will be much clearer after the meeting in July 2014.</p>		

<b>M 02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>At the Council budget meeting on 18 February, 20145 it was agreed to "To allocate a sum of up to £200k in 2014/2015 to support the transition and implementation of the new delivery model for Early Years and Children's Centre Services. This funding will be allocated from the Council's Financial Planning Reserve as may be required during the financial year".</p> <p>Please could you provide a detailed breakdown of how this allocation is to be spent?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The £200K will be used to ensure there is a planned and managed transition to the new models for all the services affected by the budget reductions during 2015/16. It will also fund capacity building in the local market, particularly with the local voluntary sector, to support the formation of local partnerships and capacity to manage council contracts associated with the delivery of the Early Years and Children's Centre services. This will be covered in July Cabinet report.</p>		

<b>M 03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Hardman
<p>During the budget process, it was agreed to permanently delete £500K of the savings originally required from the Early Years and Children's Centres base budget in 2014/15 and subsequent years.</p> <p>Please could you tell me how it is proposed to utilise this additional £500K and what difference this reduction in the savings target has made to the services that will be provided in Early Years and Children's Centres?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>Proposals for utilising the £500K were included in the Cabinet report on the 12th February in appendix 4.</p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>What are the specific proposals now which differ from the Cabinet report in February which would use an additional money given to children centres and children services?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Dine Romero
<p>The model itself will dictate how the money will be spent, so more information will be available after July 2014.</p>		

<b>M 04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>What measures are being taken to prevent gull breeding on Council owned buildings in Bath this year? Please provide the scale of works in comparison to last year.</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p>Officers from the Environmental Protection team met with colleagues from Property Services earlier in the year to discuss treatments for Council owned buildings. From those discussions the following buildings are being treated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Guildhall</li> <li>• Victoria Art Gallery</li> <li>• Southgate Street (3 properties which are owned by B&amp;NES)</li> <li>• Northgate House</li> <li>• Lewis House</li> <li>• The Pump Rooms</li> </ul> <p>Each building will receive 4 visits throughout the breeding season. Nests will be inspected and if they are empty and unoccupied, they will be removed. If there are eggs in the nests then these will be replaced with dummy eggs.</p> <p>In 2013, there were trials of 'bird gel' on the roof of the Roman Baths Kitchen rather than egg replacement treatments on any other buildings.</p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>Despite these works detailed in your response, are you really happy with the state of streets?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p>I will be happy when our streets are spotless all the time. Our officers are doing a fantastic job and I am seeing a lot less litter and rubbish in the city centre and around. We will never eradicate gulls from the city centre but what we can do as to keep the city centre as clean as possible.</p>		

<b>M 05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm when work is due to restart on the Batheaston foot and cycle bridge over the River Avon and when is it finally due to be completed?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Works to complete the cycle and foot way commenced on the 29th May 2014 and will be complete mid-June.</p>		

<b>M 06</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what the total final cost is of the new Batheaston foot and cycle bridge, and provide a breakdown of how it has been funded, including the Council's own contribution?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>The budget for the new Batheaston foot and cycle bridge is £910k and current forecasts show spend will be on target, although final completion was delayed into the 14/15 financial year due to site conditions caused by adverse weather, and thus final payments are not through yet. This has been funded from LSTF grant funding (£380k), Transport Improvement block grant funding (£250k), and a council contribution of (£280k).</p>		

<b>M 07</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Geoff Ward
<p>Whilst investment to modernise the Council's public toilet provision is widely welcomed, the proposals to significantly reduce capacity (in terms of a reduction in cubicles and removal of urinals) at many of the Council's public toilets has caused significant alarm and opposition amongst members of the public, particularly in relation to public toilets situated in or near parks and shopping areas. Will the Cabinet Member commit to undertaking a full public consultation on the proposed changes for each affected public toilet before implementing the reduction in capacity?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p>We had a long discussion at one of the Council's meetings, on locations where public toilets would go. One thing that needs to be done is to ask the relevant officers to do the count and see how many cubicles are needed in each location and deliver the same in right places. We had four 'loo reviews' in this Council about where the loos will go and we really don't need any more of these reviews in the next 15 years</p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>What makes you think there will be a sufficient capacity given that single cubicles, like the one in Charlotte Street, have queues? Are we going to see queues in the parks as well?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p>We know how many people need to use our loos, we have all the counts and data. We know that each cubicle can take 25 people in an hour. We also opened the first set of cubicles in Monmouth Street and I have never seen a queue there. We know that this model works now. We already are providing one extra cubicle in Royal Victoria Park. We know that 800 people visit loos in Victoria Park each day, during the summer months.</p>		

<b>M 08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>In the light of the considerable support for a wider Transport Strategy than that being consulted on at the moment, related to the Enterprise Zone and the Core Strategy, can the Cabinet Member confirm that she is prepared to support the establishment of a cross-party committee to develop such a strategy, so that a cross-party approach can be taken to transport and traffic management?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>Further to Cllr Clarke's query above, a vehicle for cross party working is already established through the LDF steering group, remit of which has been extended to incorporate the Transport Strategy. The membership reflects this change and Cllr Clarke has been invited to these meetings as a nominated member.</p>		

<b>M 09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>Has the Council yet refunded any fines issued in relation to the Dorchester Street Bus Gate, and when does the Council anticipate that all the fines will be refunded?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>The Council has commenced refunds on Monday 2nd June 2014. Credit/Debit card refunds are being refunded directly onto the card that made payment. Cheque payments will be refunded in a batch via BACS and all cash and postal payees will receive a letter shortly outlining how the refund can be claimed. We anticipate that the refunds for Credit/Debit Cards, which are by far the majority, will be completed within 3 weeks. The process takes this long as each must be actioned individually. Cheque and cash refunds may take slightly longer</p>		

<b>M 10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>In relation to the Parish Ranger pilot, the B&amp;NES website states: "This is a new role for the Council and will if successful be rolled out across the whole rural district from April 2014". Noting the apparent delay in rolling-out this scheme, can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the current programme for the Parish Ranger roll-out, and can the Cabinet Member please confirm whether the Parish Ranger scheme is still considered to be cost neutral?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Dixon
<p>The trial of the Parish Ranger scheme was extended to ensure we evaluate the</p>		

approach for longer period. We looked at all comments submitted to us, including comments from Councillor Richardson. The extension of the trial is not cost neutral – it will be over and above what we do at the moment with cost implication. Currently, there is no allocated funding for this scheme. However, as a Cabinet we will consider some learning points from this scheme. It was an amazing learning exercise.

<b>M 11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Liz Richardson
<p>In February it was highlighted to the Council that the Traveller site on the Lower Bristol Road, Twerton, is sited directly above an existing 18 inch trunk water main. Wessex Water advised that the existing main operates at significant pressure and presents a dangerous hazard to the public if a burst occurs. In light of this knowledge what action has the council taken to ensure that the occupants of the site are safe?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Tim Ball
<p>This was addressed in the planning application resolved on 4th June 2014. With due respect it is a shame that the member who keeps questioning did not check her facts before submitting her question.</p>		
<b>Supplementary Question:</b>		
<p>This was not referring to planning application. It was referring to current situation because the Wessex Water report did highlight how dangerous that mains is and I was wondering if anything had been done to ensure that nobody is within that dangerous area</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Tim Ball
<p>As far as we are aware nobody is parked next to that dangerous area. The improvements to the site will be carried out as soon as the site is cleared out, which will be in the next couple of months. The travellers who are currently there will be relocated to other sites or to temporary accommodations whilst the site is developed. Not only that we will remove dangerous pies but we will enhance nature reserves. This will be a huge exercise to protect our wildlife whilst enhancing conditions for gypsy and travellers community.</p>		

<b>M 12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>What measures have been taken to find Wood Works, an organisation which helps disadvantaged and disabled adults learn woodworking and upholstery techniques in a supported environment, alternative premises given the Council's proposed</p>		

redevelopment of 1 James Street West, in which Wood Works is currently located?

**Answer from:**

Councillor David Bellotti

Woodworks are currently considering an opportunity to take a retail unit under the ownership of the Council to act as a showroom. The Council is also looking at alternative opportunities within Council ownership to facilitate the upholstery and woodworking element of their business. In addition, Council Officers have been working with Woodworks to identify potential alternative solutions in private ownership.

Woodworks provide a service which is important to a particular group of residents in our area. The Council will do all it can to help them notwithstanding we have no contractual relationship with them as they are a part of the Genesis Trust programme. Genesis Trust are also doing all they can to help Woodworks.

The building at James Street West which will be developed is the building earmarked by the last Conservative Administration for a hostel which they failed to put money in the budget to provide.

**M 13**

**Question from:**

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Does the Cabinet Member envisage reducing visibility distances when dealing with new planning applications within new 20mph speed limit areas?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Visibility distances are determined on a site by site basis by using actual speed measurements rather than speed limits.

20mph speed limits help to reduce vehicle speeds and hence visibility distances.

**M 14**

**Question from:**

Councillor Anthony Clarke

Kelston Road has now been closed for four months, blighting the livelihoods of businesses in the area and causing severe traffic problems on alternative routes, including local lanes near the Kelston Road as well as through Keynsham, the A4 Keynsham bypass, the A4 through Salford, the A4 Newbridge Road and local roads into Weston and Newbridge.

Several weeks ago the Council promised that once underground investigations had been completed it would be possible to provide a clearer timetable for the work required to enable the reopening of Kelston Road. However, no such timetable or further information has since been provided. Residents naturally find this situation unacceptable and are demanding greater clarity.

What is the current timetable for reopening Kelston Road, when is repair work expected to commence, has the Cabinet made a financial commitment to whatever sums



necessary to undertake this work, and has the Council made application to Government to assist with or cover the cost of repairing and reopening the road?

Why has no progress been made by the Council on implementing the idea of a temporary alternative road bypassing the Kelston Road closure and, given the known willingness of local landowners to allow such a temporary road to be constructed on their land, is this something the Council is now progressing as a matter of urgency?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Caroline Roberts

Kelvin Packer, Group Manager Highways and Traffic, attended a workshop with the neighbouring Authority on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June to discuss the Kelston Road issue.

Although site works have stopped, laboratory testing of materials from site and detailed design of a solution have been continually progressed. Officers will liaise with Parish and Ward councillors on holding a public meeting to sharing all the information and advising the public of both the work to date and proposals for the permanent works.

The proposed timetable for the works is that they will start in July and conclude with the road reopening before Christmas 2014.

The Council is preparing a bid to Government for funding for the scheme and officers have been asked to consider that, in the event of Government funding not being available to advise Cabinet of alternative options and impacts. This will enable Cabinet to determine the most appropriate funding for the repairs.

From early on in the closure period independent consultants were asked to consider the viability of a temporary road. Their expert opinion is that progressing with a temporary road would take 16 weeks to construct at a likely cost of £1.6m and only be suitable for light traffic.

As there is a need to conduct construction operations in the area where a temporary road would be located (making it unavailable for periods during the works) officers have been asked to concentrate their efforts on getting the existing road reopened as quickly as possible.

**Supplementary Question:**

Has the Council given thought to some rebate, or refund, on Council Tax and/or Business Tax for those people who have been so seriously inconvenienced with considerable financial loss for some of the businesses in the light of the likelihood that this road will stay closed for 8-9 months?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Caroline Roberts

We are concerned on the impact that this closure has on businesses. However, a good proportion of people affected by the closure are from South Gloucestershire, so we have to have some cross boundary working with them to find out the best solutions on how to compensate people who may be affected. We need to go back to the Government to get the funding.

<b>M 15</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>The Government has provided emergency funding for areas affected by the winter flooding to address the scale of damage caused by some of the worst precipitation and consequent flooding in living memory. This Central Government Funding reflects the enormity of the destruction caused and the resulting affect it has had on local communities. On Thursday morning 29th May, in a public meeting at the Shepton Mallet Showground, Dan Roberson MP, Minister for DEFRA, said this funding was due to end in the last week of June 2014. The closure of the A431 has been caused by the combined effect of persistent high precipitation and high levels of ground water, together with the pressure associated with weight of land mass sitting on top of an insecure ground strata caused by the exceptional weather.</p> <p>What has the Council done to facilitate the local communities of Kelston and North Stoke accessing these Government funds to alleviate and compensate those communities for the extreme problems, inconvenience and costs associated with this road closure? Will urgent action be taken by this Administration to make application to access the Government funding only available for the next few weeks?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Paul Crossley
<p>The authority is co-ordinating claims for central government funding in respect of homes and businesses affected by the flooding. We will expedite all claims made to us in accordance with the terms of the scheme.</p> <p>Businesses and Communities can access information via the B&amp;NES web site – search for Lead Local Flood Authority on the site.</p> <p>The grant in question is for flood resilience measures and is applicable to properties that have actually flooded and want to install resilience measures; or want to apply for business support as a result of flooding. Therefore, this grant would not be available to residents and traders inconvenienced by the Kelston landslip.</p>		

<b>M 16</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Martin Veal
<p>When will the Council make available to the public the consultant's report and second opinion (from the independent engineer) on the Council's approach to the Kelston Road closure and planned next steps?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Caroline Roberts
<p>In addition to a public meeting to explain the progress, programme and decisions taken, I would advocate that officers and ward members meet to review the reports and complex technical information collected to date.</p> <p>The Council will continue to provide public updates on the website and once all the arrangements are finalised release the information</p>		