

Appendix 1 - Budget Aims and Ambitions

Bath and North East Somerset Council, in partnership with other local public sector agencies, has developed an ambitious 2020 vision for the area. This was reported to Council last year at the start of the 4 year financial plan and, together with the Corporate Strategy, remains the overarching strategic guide for future changes.

‘Bath and North East Somerset will be internationally renowned as a beautifully inventive and entrepreneurial 21st century place with a strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing, where everyone is invited to think big – a ‘connected’ area ready to create an extraordinary legacy for future generations’

The Corporate Strategy has been shaped by and will deliver the ‘Putting Residents First’ manifesto which contains three core aims and six key priorities for the Council to focus on:

Core Aims

- Efficient and well run;
- Invests in the future of the area; and
- Puts the interests of residents first

Key Priorities

- Tackling waste and increasing efficiency
- Improving transport
- Delivering new homes and jobs
- Investing in young people
- Supporting cleaner, greener and healthier communities
- Promoting choice and independence for older people

The Council is already making good progress in working towards this vision. This year’s budget sets out the position for the next 3 years in more detail. This is also reflected in the Directorate Plans which in addition refer to some of the achievements in the first year of the strategy.

These priorities will continue to guide Council activity and budget planning over the next year, ensuring that resources are allocated in a robust and sustainable manner and enable the Council to invest in the things that matter most to local people.

Below are some examples of how the budget will continue to deliver the Cabinet’s commitments:

Tackling waste and increasing efficiency

- Generating significant additional income by investing in new commercial property and other innovative projects such as the Council’s new housing company which will deliver additional local homes
- Customer services and digital transformation programme to enable a ‘digital by choice’ approach for all with simpler end-to-end processes, a more truly mobile and flexible workforce and better citizen engagement, improving efficiency and saving £2.8 million

- Moving towards commissioning the right services - in a more cost effective way - to protect, where possible, frontline services. Examples include Your Care Your Way and looking for independent partners to operate two early years nurseries currently run by the Council
- Modernising the library service by investing in new facilities, integrating this service with customer services in Bath and Midsomer Norton (building on the Keynsham model), and working with local residents on tailored solutions for our community libraries.
- Improving financial efficiencies and saving over £4 million through:
 - Securing lower interest rates and capital savings
 - Changing the way we make provision to repay borrowings on capital items
 - Departmental underspends and back office efficiencies
 - Reviewing organisational management and support arrangements

Improving local transport

- Investing £4.7 million to tackle potholes and improve road and pavement surfaces – including additional Government grant secured through the West of England Devolution agreement.
- Investing £2.2 million in local transport improvement projects, road safety initiatives, Safer Routes to School projects, cycle schemes, new bus shelters and improving traffic flows.
- Providing £0.5m to improve traffic flow at the A39 Two-Headed Man junction.
- Earmarking £110,000 to improve the pedestrian environment and public realm in Kingsmead Square.
- Seeking grant funding towards the £2.5m scheme to improve public realm on Keynsham High Street and enable a permanent one-way scheme should the forthcoming trial prove successful.
- Providing £15,000 to enable a detailed study of home to school transport needs and solutions.
- Continuing to provide support to, and encourage greater use of, community transport services such as our local Dial-a-Ride and Ring-and-Ride services.
- Supporting the creation of a new West of England Combined Authority to enable greater local powers over public transport, including the opportunity for more integrated or franchised local bus services.
- Preparing the Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study in partnership with the other West of England authorities to deliver a long-term strategy of transport infrastructure improvements needed to meet the needs of a growing population and thriving local economy.

Delivering new homes and jobs

- Securing £500,000 from the Government's New Homes Bonus scheme as a result of delivering the highest number of new homes since B&NES was created over the past year.
- Investing more than £3 million to support the delivery of affordable housing schemes across the district as part of our commitment to delivering 465 new affordable homes over the 3 year period 2015-2017 comprising: intermediate housing; Starter Homes; and affordable homes for rent.
- Investing in infrastructure, such as the East of Bath Park & Ride, to support the Core Strategy target for delivery of new homes and jobs, including the delivery of around 3,900 new homes between 2016-17 & 2019-20 through the Placemaking Plan.
- Improving connectivity through continued support for rural broadband and the Digital B&NES project to enable the provision of WiFi, and ultrafast and superfast broadband;

- Investing up to £30 million to support the delivery of the Bath and Somer Valley Enterprise Zone. On Bath Quays this will lead to the creation of up to 2500 quality jobs for local people. Our ambition in the Somer Valley is to create up to 400 new jobs by 2020 as the first phase in a long term programme of investment in Old Mills and the surrounding area. Supporting local traders through investment in the public realm and 'Wayfinding' projects.
- Investing an additional £226,000 in the development of the setting for the educational facility (Archway Centre) at the Roman Baths

Supporting our young people

- Investing £18.3 million to expand local Primary School provision and improve and upgrade school buildings.
- Working to deliver innovative plans to enable the continuation of high-quality Children's Centre services - transferring some Children's Centre buildings to community organisations which can make better use of them and enabling local community groups to offer supplementary services for young people alongside our existing Children's Centre services.
- Review children's social care services to determine if new models of working can be developed which build upon the success in Connecting Families, strengthen early help and reduce reliance on more specialist or statutory interventions.
- Investing £760,000 over five years to upgrade and improve children's play areas across the district, recognising the importance of outdoor play to children's health and wellbeing.
- Developing plans to work more closely with local communities and Parishes to provide locally-tailored youth services.

Enabling cleaner, greener and healthier communities

- Creating a new £92,000 Community Empowerment Fund to enable local areas to bid for match-funding to improve their public realm and support community initiatives.
- Securing £3.2 million of grant funding to protect, restore and improve Sydney Gardens as a 21st century pleasure garden.
- Providing £10,000 to continue with a programme to increase allotment provision in Bath.
- Investing £1.68 million to support the transformation of Midsomer Norton Town Hall to expand and modernise this community facility for the benefit of the town and Somer Valley more widely.
- Bringing forward proposals for a local energy tariff that will help reduce residents' and businesses' energy bills.
- Investing in modern leisure facilities with our partner GLL by improving Bath's leisure centre and enhancing the leisure centre in Keynsham.
- Allocating funds to allow the continuation of measures to tackle urban gull problems – including a successful nest-removal programme – and working alongside the Bath Business Improvement District to continue with business waste enforcement measures.

Promoting greater choice and independence for older people

- Investing an additional £1.6 million to protect services to elderly and vulnerable residents through a ring-fenced 2% council tax precept for Adult Social Care.

- Allocating £733,000 to a Social Care Reserve to recognise the challenges posed in meeting demographic and inflationary cost pressures in Social Care, such as increasing numbers of elderly people and young adults needing care.
- Redesigning services to maximise people's independence as part of implementing new tailored community health and care arrangements developed through the Your Care Your Way project, including system-wide transformation and improvements to ensure that services are as integrated, effective and efficient as possible to meet the needs and priorities of our community, which they have told us are:-
 - A person not a condition
 - A single plan
 - Investing in the workforce
 - Joining up the information
 - A focus on prevention.
- Developing and implementing an Older People Five Year Strategy which goes beyond health, care and housing to encompass all of the services which impact upon older people's lives and which, if aligned and sign-posted more effectively, can positively manage demand and escalation of need through promoting independence and preventing the need for more specialist support.
- Investing £1.1 million a year in Disabled Facilities Grants – such as home adaptations and equipment – to support greater independence for elderly and vulnerable residents.

Further details on the context and strategic drivers of the budget are set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2016-2020. This strategy sets the Council's direction of travel over the next four years enabling it to shape its business so that it is able to deliver the Cabinet's manifesto commitments. Further details on context to the budget can also be found in the Council's press release and budget video:

- B&NES Council Corporate Strategy 2016-2020:
http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/bnes_corporate_strategy_2016-2020.pdf
- Press release: <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/latestnews/living-within-our-means-%E2%80%93-council-sets-out-budget-savings-proposals>
- Budget video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1i-y34PVn4>