

COUNCIL 14TH FEBRUARY 2017

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

List of registered public speakers

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Paul Stansall | Library services | (attached) |
| 2. Yue Rao | Library services | |
| 3. Alexander Lea | Library services | (attached) |
| 4. David Almond | Library services | |
| 5. Andy Halliday | Library services | (attached) |
| 6. Kim Sherwood | Library services | |
| 7. Moira Young | Library services | |
| 8. Jake Bishop-Ponte | Proposed cuts to Youth Services | |
| 9. Amber Sims | Proposed cuts to Youth Services | |
| 10. Jared Downs | Proposed cuts to Youth Services | |

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Christine Boyd
<p>Prior to the last budget and council tax setting meeting on 16th February 2016 budgets with provisional approval required a formal Cabinet decision for full approval. Since last year's budget setting meeting full approval has been approved by a single cabinet member (for example when 300k tranches of money were released for the east of Bath park and ride).</p> <p>The budget and council tax setting report presented to council for approval on 16th February 2016 contains no discussion of this change, neither do the minutes of this meeting. To avoid a perception that this change was slipped past members without them noticing please explain;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How and when this change was explained to members of the council prior to them giving approval for this change? 2. What was the justification for weakening budget controls in this way, given that the effect has been to exclude other members of the cabinet from such decisions, and to make them less transparent to Council members and to the public? 		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reference to a Cabinet decision includes Single Member as set out in Part 3 of the Council Constitution. This use of Single Member decisions for Capital approvals has operated for a considerable number of years and there has been no change in approach by the Council. 2. As above – there has been no weakening of budget controls or transparency. The Single Member decision process requires the same financial and legal sign-off and approval as a Cabinet Report and is subject to the same publication and call-in procedures. 		
P 02	Question from:	Sophie Hooper Lea
<p>Having a car park as close as possible to the library is essential for those with accessibility issues. Please could the Council confirm that Manvers Street car park is not being considered for redevelopment (either as a whole or in part) as part of the long term development of Bath city centre?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Martin Veal
<p>There are no current plans to redevelop Manvers Street car park. Policy SB3 of the Council's Place-making Plan proposes redevelopment of the wider area but plans for the retention of car parking. It should also be noted that the SouthGate car park is also within nearby walking distance.</p>		
P 03	Question from:	Sophie Hooper Lea
<p>The One Stop Shop is not currently open on Sundays, which is a vitally important day for</p>		

schoolchildren and others such as full-time employees to use the library. Please could the Council confirm whether the new library will be open on Sundays and, if so, that it will be open for at least the same number of hours as the current library (i.e. 3 hours)?

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

Yes, we can confirm it is our intention to open on Sundays for at least the same number of hours as the current library.

P 04

Question from:

Mary English

I would like to ask why they has been no consultation re the moving of Bath Central Library All we are being told is what's going to happen AFTER the move, not whether or not we agree with it.

This is in complete contravention to government guidelines
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-libraries-as-a-statutory-service/libraries-as-a-statutory-service> re library changes which clearly state:

Libraries as a statutory service

Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (section 7). Local authorities have the power to offer wider library services beyond the statutory service to other user groups, and the Act allows for joint working between library authorities.

In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining, through consultation, the local needs and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

The key points being:

Opinions on how to consult

Consultation proposals must be at a formative stage as stated in Brent v Gunning, (1985). Lord Singh in Barnet v Partingdale (2003) also said, "however that is what it must be, a proposal and not something that has already been decided".

Applying the learning from judicial reviews

It is good practice to do a thorough analysis of local need - do not 'assume'.

Best value principles state that a consultation needs to:

- *occur when proposals are still at an early stage*
- *provide sufficient reasons for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response*
- *give adequate time for consideration and response*
- *take into account its results when finalising any proposal*
- *factor in the time taken for the different stages*

I would like to know why this hasn't happened and what you intend to do about it?

I have already emailed the Minister for Culture, Media and Sports and informed her of your actions.

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

The Council is presently consulting on what users want the Library to look like should it relocate to Lewis House, and what services users want the Library to provide if relocated to Lewis House. That consultation closes on 1 March 2017. The Council will then reach a decision about what any proposed relocated Library and service would look like. After this, the Council proposes to hold further consultation and this will inform the Council's discharge of the Public Services Equality Duty.

P 05 **Question from:** **William Morris**

Why is it that members of the cabinet and the council are not in active talks with Bath University, to help fund and sponsor the annual costs of a public access library at its current site of the Podium?

Answer from: Councillor Martin Veal

We have had conversations with both Bath University and Bath Spa University about the general provision of library services and will continue to do so. We are still in the consultation process and would be willing to consider alternative opportunities that help deliver the required saving along with the strategic objective. What is clear is that the joint library and One Stop Shop in Keynsham – which opened in October 2014 – is already proving the success of the integrated modern library approach. The number of active users at Keynsham Library (those taking out at least one item) rose from 3,099 in March 2014 to 4,630 in March 2016; while the number of active users in other libraries continued to decline – reflecting the national picture of falling library use.

P 06 **Question from:** **William Morris**

Bath Uni, now one of the largest and richest Universities in England and recently ranked no.3 in the Times league table of student satisfaction, has the economic means to contribute to civic life, driving up standards for low income young people by helping fund a thriving library. They are building their own new library opposite Lewis house, in a new halls of residence. Why is it therefore that the Council, instead of seeking business sponsorship for the podium space, propose to use the podium space for its own BNES offices and staff? (instead of the very loved public access library it now is....)

Answer from: Councillor Martin Veal

See previous answer

P 07 **Question from:** **Jane Middleton**

How many unaccompanied refugee children did the Council state to the Government that it would be able to resettle in this (2016/17) financial year, under section 67 of the Immigration Act (Dubs Amendment)?

Answer from: Councillor Michael Evans

At the point that the Government set up the National Dispersal Scheme for Un-accompanied Asylum-Seeking children, each LA was asked to take up to a number children equivalent to 0.07% of their 0-19 population. For B&NES this meant that we were asked to take up to 23

children over next 2-3 years. This request did not specify that these children would be “Dubs” children. Any children placed through the National Dispersal Scheme would be UASC’s from any destination (They could also be children identified as being smuggled/trafficked in lorries through ports, although primarily Dover).

P 08 Question from: Jane Middleton

How many unaccompanied refugee children have been resettled in Bath & North East Somerset in this (2016/17) financial year, under section 67 of the Immigration Act (Dubs Amendment)?

Answer from: Councillor Michael Evans

Currently B&NES looks after a total of 13 Un-accompanied Asylum-Seeking children. Eight of these children have come since the beginning of the National Dispersal Scheme which began in June 2016.

The organisation and dispersal of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people throughout the South West region is undertaken by South-West Councils following notification by the Home Office. Each of the LA’s in the South West is contacted in turn on a rota basis to identify placements as and when SW Councils are notified by the Home Office of young people that require a placement. All of the young people we have been asked to place have come via either Kent County Council (found as stowaways in lorry’s coming through Dover), or from other LA’s across the South East, having been deposited by lorries at various motorway services. None of the young people were classified as “Dubs” children (ie; from the Calais (or other) refugee camps in France).

P 09 Question from: Mike Midgley

Did the Council give any indication to the Government that it would not be able to resettle any unaccompanied refugee children in the 2017/18 financial year or any future year?

Answer from: Councillor Michael Evans

I can confirm that at no point has the Council indicated that it cannot take unaccompanied refugee children in 17/18 or any future year. In fact the Council has played a leading role in the regional organisation of arrangements for the dispersal of UASC’s throughout the region.

P 10 Question from: Mike Midgley

Had any assessment been made of how many unaccompanied refugee children the Council would be able to resettle in the 2017/18 financial year or any future year, before the Government announcement of the end of the Dubs Amendment programme?

Answer from: Councillor Michael Evans

In the summer of 2016 (at the point that the National dispersal scheme was introduced), the Home office calculated that each Local Authority could take a number of UASC’s up to 0.07% of its child population. In B&ANES this equated to a request to take up to 23 young people. At present we have 13 UASC’s, 8 of whom have come to our care via the National Dispersal system since June. The organisation and dispersal of unaccompanied asylum-

seeking young people through-out the South West region is undertaken by South-West Councils following notification by the Home Office. Each of the LA's in the South West is contacted in turn on a rota basis to identify placements as and when SW Councils are notified by the Home Office of young people that require a placement. All of the young people we have been asked to place have come via either Kent County Council (found as stowaways in lorry's coming through Dover), or from other LA's across the South East, having been deposited by lorries at various motorway services. None of the young people were classified as "Dubs" children (ie; from the Calais (or other) refugee camps in France).