

CABINET MEETING 1st February 2017

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.

Public –

1. Kathleen Hovland (200 signatures petition regarding Keynsham Leisure Centre facilities)
2. Pat Mason – Save our 6/7 bus
3. Vishaka Robinson – about the planned changes to the library service
4. Sue Porter – about traffic and parking in Widcombe
5. Nicholas Beach - about traffic and parking in Widcombe
6. Dan Carey - about the planned changes to the library service
7. Mary English - about the planned changes to the library service
8. Jacob Bishop-Ponte (Member of Youth Parliament Bath) - about the planned changes to the library service
9. Rosemary Naish – about Road Safety
10. Dionne Pemberton – about the planned changes to library services
11. David Redgewell – about bus services
12. Luke John Emmett - about the proposed arts cuts

Councillors –

1. Cllr Sarah Bevan (as Resources PDS Chair)
2. Cllrs Karen Walker and Sarah Bevan (as Ward Cllrs) - Budget
3. Cllr Ian Gilchrist - about traffic and parking in Widcombe
4. Cllr Andrew Furse – speaking on all 4 items
5. Cllr Robin Moss – Budget
6. Cllr Eleanor Jackson – Budget
7. Cllr Karen Warrington – about Road Safety in Clutton

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
<p>Could the Cabinet Member for Transport confirm that the Parking Review planned to lead to savings in the transport budget for 2017/18 will not rule out any possibilities, including imposition of parking charges at BANES car parks which are free at present, such as Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Paulton?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>This administration has a manifesto commitment to maintaining the existing free parking enjoyed at community car parks throughout our area, and we intend on keeping this commitment.</i></p>		
M 02	Question from:	Councillor Lisa Brett
<p>What is the scope of the £200K included in budget papers for changes to the London Road?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>Highway works were undertaken on the London Road in 2015. Experimental TROs were introduced in late 2015 and permanent TROs now need to be implemented. A wide variety of comments have been received from residents and interest groups. These have highlighted a number of issues that will need to be addressed to enable a permanent TRO to be implemented.</i></p>		
M 03	Question from:	Councillor Neil Butters
<p>When can we expect completion of the surface dressing of the Wellow-Peasedown road?</p>		
	Answer from:	Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p><i>We can confirm that there is a Phase 2 of the Wellow Lane maintenance improvement works in the 2017/18 capital programme which is going through final budget approval at the moment. We have not engaged with our Contractor yet but all being well we would hope to have this phase of the scheme completed before the end of the Calendar Year. As and when timings are known there will be advance consultation with local ward members, the parish council and residents.</i></p>		
M 04	Question from:	Councillor Andrew Furse

Residents parking for Lower Weston – west of zone 12 or zone 12 extension westwards to include Audley Close, St Johns Rd and Hungerford Rd. Will the cabinet member introduce an initial consultation in 16/17 budget on whether the council will introduce residents parking in this area for 17/18?

Answer from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

We are currently awaiting the results from the Parking consultation undertaken at the end of last year, which officers are currently assessing, and no so specific budgetary commitment has been made to particular projects until this has been fully analysed. We have a manifesto commitment to provide Residents' Parking Zones (RPZ) where there is demand and clear support from residents, and so I am happy to consider requests for such schemes and how they could best be progressed in terms of consultation and engagement with residents. There are occasions, however, where alternative measures to manage and improve residential on-street parking may be more appropriate than RPZs and can be worth exploring with residents on a case by case basis. If there are more immediate problems with vehicles parking in such a way that causes an obstruction or presents a safety issue then we can investigate and if appropriate provide yellow line restrictions where necessary, and I suggest contacting Paul Garrod in the Traffic Management Team to discuss this should that be the case.

M 05

Question from:

Councillor Andrew Furse

Pavement widening opposite Ustinov theatre. This is the section of pavement that should be widened and over the past few years both Cllr Pearce and I have visited and seen the need. I would argue that the displacement of parking bays has already occurred. The design outline has already been undertaken. Will the cabinet member set aside capital to ensure this widening occurs?

Answer from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

Widening the footway would involve the removal of parking which is a factor that would need to be considered, and whilst these works are not currently proposed in the 2017/18 capital programme I will request a review of the scheme, to include the costs of construction and any traffic regulation orders that maybe required.

M 06

Question from:

Councillor Andrew Furse

Mini roundabout at the top of Marlborough Buildings and its junction with Julian Rd - will the cabinet ensure a budget line for preliminary design for this traffic improvement and implementation for build is introduced and able to be implemented?

Answer from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

I recognise that this is a priority project for residents of Kingsmead and as such we are proposing a budget allocation of £70k in the 2017 /18 capital programme to enable this project to be taken forward.

M 07

Question from:

Councillor Andrew Furse

Weston Road - residents have called for both traffic calming and a safer pedestrian crossing close to King Edwards Prep school and the junction with Weston Lane. Will the cabinet ensure there is capital provision for both design and build in this forthcoming budget?

Answer from:

Councillor Anthony Clarke

There is a scheme in the current Capital Programme linking Weston village with the city centre that will incorporate both traffic calming and junction improvements. All Ward Councillors were sent the proposals and subject to the Traffic Regulations. Orders completing the statutory process, the actual works are likely to start in April/May 2017

M 08

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

What is the total area of floor space of Bath Library currently (including all public and staff areas, display areas, family rooms etc.) and what total area of floor space will be available for the proposed new library at Lewis House?

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

This question suggests that the key issue is the size of the library rather than the service and facilities it provides to residents – whether it is fit for the future, has a long term home, is properly integrated with other services such as the Council's multi-agency one stop shops, is using the latest technology or whether it is sustainable in today's world.

We are currently at the beginning of a process that will shortly include public engagement over the proposals for Lewis House, and the amount of space available will be clearly indicated as part of the information we will put on the web, in Bath library and also the Bath One Stop Shop.

The Modern Libraries and Workplaces programme is seeking to achieve a modern approach with better integration of information and services that will enable our library service to be sustainable for the future and meet with changing ways in which people use the library

There is also intended to be plenty of space for books, browsing and study. Alongside this there will be better technology so there can be increased awareness of the 3M books on offer through Libraries West.

In addition, the University of Bath is developing study facilities opposite Lewis House and we are keen to explore opportunities to work together. The same applies to local schools and the college.

In terms of space it is intended that 3 floors of Lewis House will be dedicated to the library and one stop shop.

We could then progress to fully link these new library and one stop shop facilities to the existing contact centre and communication hub, based in the same building, plus the back office facilities for related services (including those provided by partner advice agencies), and thereby start to deliver the full customer benefits that are available.

Given this integration of service, it is difficult to make a full like for like comparison of floor space in the way you suggest.

However, notwithstanding the above, the best comparisons relating to floor space are as follows:

Bath Central Library is currently located in the Podium and consists of space which is

used in a number of traditional ways. Public accessible space which includes: General Library and study space (including local history and local study space) of 1512m²

Exhibition Space of : - 87m²

Then there is other back office spaces including:-

Back office storage space of :- 257 m²

Staff offices and workroom space of:- 325 m²

Total space of : - 2,181m².

Lewis House which is the proposed site for the new modern library including One Stop Shop services is made up of 5 floors;

Each floor has an approximate floor area of 440m²

The detailed design of the public space for the new service is yet to be finalised, with consultation on designs scheduled to start on imminently. It will be spread over 3 floors giving around 1320m² of public space.

The 4th floor area of approximately 440m² will be for staff serving across the three floors.

On the lower ground floor a space of 59m² will be used as work space for receiving and despatching items for the building; with the mobile library having specific access to park at the entrance to this facility.

The Guildhall Archive Service is planning to merge with local studies and refurbishment to that space is currently ongoing. This will generate an additional 189m² of space for this combined service.

So, on this basis, which is the best like-for-like comparison we can provide based upon the information you request, there is potentially an 8% reduction in the total space available, albeit the space becomes multi-purpose and improved. The intention is to use better space planning and layouts and work with partners like the University to ensure that the space can if anything be better, better designed and better used.

M 09

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

Why have residents in central Bath still not been informed officially that fortnightly residual waste collections will not be implemented for those areas where there are a lot of flats, HMOs and converted heritage buildings?

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

Every household will receive individual letters at the same time as their Council Tax bills detailing their new collection service (whether bins, bags, fortnightly or weekly). This will go out in early-mid March. We will also publish full detail on the website. We are working through the specific detail of which properties will still receive a weekly collection and the type of receptacle they will be given to inform these letters. We will publish as soon as we have finalised the information for everyone.

Supplementary Question:

Exactly which areas will not have fortnightly residual waste collections?

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

I will send you a map of the areas which will still receive a weekly collection.

M 10	Question from:	Councillor John Bull
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Can you tell me what plans you have for branch libraries in the event that your "local community solutions" do not develop in the way you currently anticipate?

Answer from:	Councillor Martin Veal
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We have started consultation with the local community forums in each of the B&NES Council areas to collect ideas, as well as initial discussions with other stakeholders such as Parish Councils and user groups, and the response so far has been broadly positive and constructive. However, we don't believe there is one model that works everywhere and we believe this will be reflected in the final service model. There are examples of how the community led model has worked well, both within our area and in other local authorities to the benefit of service users. We also have funds available as part of the proposed capital sum allocated in the budget proposal to the Modern Libraries project to allow us to support these changes.

There is one new example that is perhaps further ahead, which is the community led scheme for a new healthy living centre in Radstock; including children's centre, health visitors, teaching kitchen, pharmacy, doctors' surgery, library and information point. This proposal has the potential to benefit from substantial external funding and lower running costs. The local consultation on this will commence in the next few weeks.

This example demonstrates the need to think differently, to maximise the benefits from external funding, integrate services and support local community led solutions. It also highlights the potential benefit from joining the government sponsored One Public Estate programme which is also planned so that external support and funding can assist further.

You will also be aware that the Midsomer Norton library is planned to be relocated into the One Stop Shop at the Hollies and is in that respect intended to be similar to Keynsham where this model already exists and is very successful.

M 11	Question from:	Councillor Lisa Brett
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Will the administration commit to maintaining accessible high quality early years nursery provision for children with special educational needs?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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The Council is committed to continuing to promote quality and inclusion in all nurseries and early years settings. We deliver an outreach SEND service to support early years settings through a team of qualified SENCO's. We also support settings through Inclusion Funding for 2,3 and 4 year olds with special educational needs. This was championed as best practice in a recent government consultation on early years funding, B&NES has been doing this for some time. On top of this we also award Transition Supporting funding for those children with high needs transferring into reception year at school.

We commission specialist provision at Bath Opportunity Playgroup. Schools Forum has recently approved increases in the budget for both Inclusion Funding and the specialist

provision. The specialist provision has been reviewed and is being re-commissioned for September 2017 and one of the key aims is to increase accessibility beyond Bath.

M 12	Question from:	Councillor Lisa Brett
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If Parish, Town Councils and community groups show no interest in taking over delivery of Youth Services due to be cut will the Cabinet commit to revisiting this budget saving to ensure services are provided?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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We are confident that alternative models of provision can be developed, as they already have been in some areas, and interest is already being shown. We have a statutory duty to ensure that positive activities are available for young people and we will fulfil that duty. We expect to engage with young people and local communities as the work progresses and will keep the Children's PDS panel updated.

M 13	Question from:	Councillor Lisa Brett
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If employers show no interest in paying for young adults to have improved employment opportunities will the Cabinet commit to revisiting this budget saving to ensure services are provided?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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We are confident that alternative funding models can be secured to deliver an ongoing service and continue to ensure support for priority groups of young adults (eg care leavers and those who have faced mental health problems). This can be achieved through the use of developer contributions to targeted recruitment and training, in line with adopted Council policy.

M 14	Question from:	Councillor Liz Hardman
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Are you getting a positive response from community organisations to your plans for them to take over the running of some Children's Centre buildings?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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Yes, we are already in a constructive dialogue with local organisations in respect of a number of the relevant children's centres buildings and will continue to bring updates to the Children's PDS panel as more definite plans evolve and we are able to share further information.

Supplementary Question:

Is there a plan B if very few community organisations come forward, and BANES still have to pay the cost for some of the Children's Centre buildings?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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There are currently negotiations over Weston Children's Centre which would need to be resolved. The other dialogues look quite secure.

M 15	Question from:	Councillor Liz Hardman
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Can you explain what the impact will be of the £500K of cuts you have offered up from the Youth Connect service? What exactly will the statutory service provided by the Council look like once these cuts have been made?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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The Council's statutory duty is to secure positive leisure-time activities for young people. The description of this specific proposal is about reviewing and exploring options and encouraging and enabling other organisations to play a greater role in delivering those activities. The proposed savings are not expected to begin to be delivered until 2018/19 (and then only a partial saving) so that there is time for the review and exploration to take place to determine the final model. It is therefore not possible to be specific at this stage about the impacts or about what the ongoing Council service will look like. The intention, as stated, is to minimise any impact on outcomes and to continue supporting high-quality youth activities for young people.

Many of the services within my portfolio have a statutory basis and are highly specialist functions. For some, the way in which they are delivered is heavily prescribed. We have considerably more flexibility in the manner in which this particular statutory duty is delivered and there is therefore scope for us to look at working with local communities to enable positive activities for young people to be delivered in a different way, and we will be seeking to engage young people to inform the review process.

Supplementary Question:

I have been informed that there will be no Youth Services workers left by March 2018, and that the work of Youth Services will disappear. What will happen with the pool of highly skilled professional workers if that is the case?

Answer from:	Councillor Michael Evans
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There are no proposed actions on the Youth Centres until the next financial year. I do not have information that there would be 100% redundancies.

M 16	Question from:	Councillor Eleanor Jackson
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How are you planning to use the 2% social care precept and what difference will it make to the previously published service plan?

Answer from:	Councillor Vic Pritchard
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Starting from a net budget for Adult Social Care & Health of £57.9m, we have projected growth pressures of up to £4m for 2017/18 particularly as a result of demographic change and inflationary pressures including the National Living Wage. We believe we

can realistically deliver savings of £2.4m through efficiencies and growth avoidance as set out in the budget papers. This leaves the service with a funding gap of £1.6m. The Adult Social Care precept at 2 per cent will cover this gap and enable us to continue meeting our duties to assess and provide services in line with our existing plans.

Supplementary Question:

You have made a statement to the Guardian on 4th January. Are you suggesting that we will raise the threshold of eligibility for adult social care in order to cut the deficit?

Answer from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Our intention is not to cut eligibility. Our intention is to engage in the preventative agenda so people do not have to require the level of care they have in subsequent years.

M 17

Question from:

Councillor Eleanor Jackson

Have the proposed reductions in the budget for adult social care and the assumptions made to justify those assumptions been agreed with and confirmed by providers both in the private and public sectors? Are private residential care owners confident that, under the proposed plans, they can provide a quality service, they have enough space for local authority funded residents and they will remain solvent?

Answer from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

For the sake of clarity the budget for Adult Social Care is increasing not reducing.

The proposed savings proposals for adult social care have been very carefully considered and take in to account analysis of current activity and associated expenditure, learning and experience from other areas and, also knowledge and understanding of the needs of our local people and communities and their aspirations.

*Proposals have been informed by the extensive engagement with not only the people and communities of B&NES but also with staff and providers delivering health and care services in this area which undertaken as part of the **your care, your way** community services review. Commissioners of adult social care are also currently undertaking a Fair Price of Care exercise with the full engagement of all care home providers. The findings from this exercise will be implemented in a way that balances impact on the care home market and, also, best use of public resource in meeting the social care needs of individuals.*

The proposals do not include a reduction in fees paid to care home providers and, indeed, plans take account of inflationary pressures in the care sector. Rather, proposals focus on:

- Avoiding unnecessary admitting people to residential care or nursing care until and unless they really need to move to a care home setting. There is strong evidence that if people move into a care home before they need to this “over-prescription” can reduce an individual’s confidence and skills and have the unintended consequence of building dependency rather than maintaining*

independence.

- *Maximising independence by focusing on individuals' strengths, interests, abilities and networks and investment in preventative support that enables people to live as long as possible in their own homes.*
- *Efficient systems and processes, including to support making payments to care providers in a timely way and in collecting income from contributions from those individuals who have the means to contribute towards the cost of their care in line with national guidance and regulations.*
- *New approaches to commissioning and contracting care services, including incentives to care providers to deliver good quality outcomes.*
- *Effective brokerage of placements and packages of care to achieve improved value, which includes the quality of the service being delivered.*

I can assure Councillor Jackson that the Council is committed to ensuring the continued provision of good quality care services and recognises that a sustainable care sector as well as longer-term financial sustainability for the Council is key to achieving this.

Supplementary Question:

Your answer presupposes everyone should look after their own health and wellbeing, and they do not get to the stage of needing adult social care; however for some of us it is too late?

Answer from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

That is your interpretation to my answer. We will and have to look after our own health and wellbeing. There is strong evidence that if people move into a care home before they need to, this can reduce an individual's confidence.

M 18

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

Could the Cabinet member please provide a breakdown of the £800k expected savings from the Modern Libraries Review, indicating what proportions relate to: the proposed move of Bath Library; the proposed move of Midsomer Norton Library; proposed changes to other branches; and what proportions relate to [for each location]: reduced staff costs; reduced operational costs; and additional income?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

The Modern Libraries and Workplaces project is at a relatively early stage and, as I have mentioned in another answer, this is a three year programme that is only just beginning, starting with local consultation.

This investment will, as far as possible, reflect the feedback whilst also achieving a more sustainable and modern library service.

At this stage the capital estimates are provisional and only put forward for provisional approval (approval in principle) as it standard practice at the time of the capital programme.

The £800,000 annual savings target is planned to be delivered by year 3 (2019/20) through developing new ways of working across the whole of Customer Services.

The savings will be delivered by combining the management, support and staff costs of the services of about £800,000, income generation of around £200,000 through the letting of office space, and it is also anticipated that some further building costs and operating costs will be saved as a result of working with communities and developing community led solutions for local libraries of about £100,000. The changes in ways of working apply to the whole service so it is difficult to apportion them between sites, albeit similar changes have already been successfully made in Keynsham. Note also that these savings are partially offset by the capital financing charge referred to in another of my answers, which is how the final figure of an £800k savings target has been arrived at.

The staff savings are estimated to mean about 25 fewer jobs across both libraries and the remainder of customer services over the 3 year period and to be achieved mainly through staff turnover, thereby keeping redundancies to a minimum.

Supplementary Question:

What other options, if any, have been considered regarding moving the central library?

Answer from:

Councillor Martin Veal

I will reply in 5 clear working days.

M 19

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

Could the Cabinet member please provide a breakdown of the £6M capital funding for the Modern Libraries & Workplaces project, indicating what proportion relates to: the proposed move of Bath Library; the proposed move of Midsomer Norton Library; proposed projects involving other libraries and workplaces?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

As with the majority of projects in the draft capital programme, capital figures at this stage are only indicative for provisional approval and will be subject to the Council's formal process of approval early in the new financial year.

Capital costs relating to the project have been estimated as follows but are subject to more detailed property work with the aim that some of the estimates can be reduced:

- £2.2m for the refurbishment of Modern Library facility at Lewis House
- £200k for the re-location of Midsomer Norton Library
- £160k towards Community Library developments
- £2.2m towards workplace requirements (including partners' accommodation for leasing opportunities)
- £1.24m contingency

It should be noted that the revenue savings target in the budget proposals already take account of – and are net of – the cost of servicing this capital investment. In addition, there are a number of external funds that the Council will be able to help community groups to bid for and the One Public Estate programme is an additional potential source of funds to support this project.

M 20

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

What is the cost of borrowing the £6M capital for the Modern Libraries & Workplaces project?		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>The Council's capital programme is funded through a combination of capital receipts, service-supported borrowing, Section 106 and CIL funding, and other external grant funding. This is also the case with the Modern Libraries and Workplaces programme, where it is anticipated that some of the costs will be funded through planned capital receipts and potentially some S106 funds to support community library opportunities. The revenue cost of servicing the remaining capital investment may be in the region of £300,000, but this is already taken account of within the savings target and as this is currently an item for provisional approval the aim will be to reduce capital costs further as more detailed estimates are developed.</i></p>		
M 21	Question from:	Councillor Robin Moss
At last year's budget-setting meeting it was implied that there was still work to be done on the detail of the budget. Can I ask the Cabinet Member whether ultimately the business cases for delivery of the 2016-17 budget confirmed the assumptions made at the time?		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>Agenda item 12. "Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring, Cash Limits and Virements – April to December 2016" also on the agenda for Cabinet provides an update on the delivery of the Council Budget for 2016/17 up to December 2016. The Council is making good progress in delivering upon the vast majority of the savings and income targets set at the time of the budget, including the further Management & Service Review savings which were required. The budget outturn report will be presented to Cabinet in the usual way after the end of the financial year.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Can we see copies of subjects to the business cases, as those would give details on potential budget cuts and impact on the budget?		
Answer from:		Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>If your question is referring to year 2016/17 then all that information is available from our officers. If your question is about capital items, which are provisional and yet to be approved, the business case will come forward when these items are ready for approval.</i></p>		
M 22	Question from:	Councillor Robin Moss
What consultation have you undertaken to establish the level of support in our communities for your proposed level of increase in Council Tax?		

Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<p><i>Over the past two months the Council has undertaken the usual process of engagement over its budget plans, including 5 budget briefing and discussion sessions with the Area Forums, as well as feedback on the Service Plans at the public PD&S Panel meetings, including the full budget proposal at the Resources PD&S. The majority of feedback at the forum meetings related to the need to protect priority services as far as possible and to continue investing in projects that have a community or economic benefit to our area and which could provide future income for the Council.</i></p> <p><i>The level of Council Tax proposed will therefore allow the Council to deliver a balanced budget whilst at the same time protecting the majority of front-line services, including increased spend on adult care, whilst continuing to invest in important local priorities such as transport, economic growth and affordable housing.</i></p> <p><i>At the same time, with inflation predicted to rise over the course of this year as the lower value of the pound feeds through to the wider economy, we believe it is important to keep the level Council Tax charged to our residents as low as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Despite the very challenging budget circumstances we are faced with, current indications suggests that the Council Tax rise we are proposing is likely to be one of the lowest in the region and among the lowest in the country. The highest rise we are aware of currently proposed in the West of England is in Bristol, where the Mayor is proposing a total rise of 4.99%.</i></p>	
Supplementary Question:	
How can you have a consultation exercise and then follow it with budget proposals, which include a Council Tax increase, and not give time to people to comment on these?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>We have not changed the process around consultation.</i>	
M 23	Question from: Councillor Joe Rayment
Do you propose to release full information about the impact of last year's budget savings in advance of the Council's 2017-18 budget-setting meeting?	
Answer from:	Councillor Charles Gerrish
<i>Agenda item 12. "Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring, Cash Limits and Virements – April to December 2016" also on the agenda for Cabinet provides an update on the delivery of the Council Budget for 2016/17 up to December 2016. The Council is making good progress in delivering upon the vast majority of the savings and income targets set at the time of the budget, despite some specific challenges and in-year</i>	

pressures in certain areas such as Children's Services. The budget outturn report will be presented to Cabinet in the usual way after the end of the financial year.

Supplementary Question:

Is this information available to Members of the Council before the budget meeting?

Answer from:

Councillor Charles Gerrish

The additional funding provided for the welfare fund was not required. Also, I was informed that there was a reduction in the number of claims under Council Tax benefit relief.

M 24

Question from:

Councillor Joe Rayment

What representations have you made to the Government about the speed and scale of reductions in Government funding at a time when the Council faces increasingly complex challenges in meeting the needs of a growing number of vulnerable and older people needing social care support?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Warren

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Efficiency and I met with Ministers last year about the speed and scale of reductions in funding and this produced £1.8m of extra funding across 2016-17 and 2017-18 for this Council. Through the LGA we continue to lobby Government which has led to extra one-off funding for Adult Social Care in 2017-18 as well as the ability to levy an additional ring-fenced precept for Adult Care to support these pressures. This Council continues to deliver good quality Adult Social Care services and has strong joint plans with the Clinical Commissioning Group to maintain these into the future.

On a more general level our work to deliver the West of England Devolution Deal will bring substantial capital and revenue funding into the area and for 2017-18 has already delivered £2.5m of extra Business Rate income which helps protect front line services. I will continue to lobby Government on Children's and Adult Care services, Housing and infrastructure and on the unique challenges faced by an authority that is home to two world class and expanding universities.

Supplementary Question:

Was the Leader of the Council aware of the cuts in funding from Central Government?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Warren

Yes, I was aware of the impact of funding from the Central Government.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Keynsham, Saltford, and Farmborough Liberal Democrat branch
<p>1. The 2015 traffic counts for the A4 Bath Road Saltford show a "5-day" average of 27747 vehicles a weekday (both directions combined). This represents a 12% fall from the peak count of 31075 in 2002. The awaited final figures for 2016 look set to be about the same as those for 2015. To what does B&NES Highways department attribute this significant and welcome drop in weekday traffic volume?</p> <p>2. Saltford's AQMZ action plan suggests that the annual mean level of nitrogen dioxide will meet the EU target level by 2019 without additional intervention according to DEFRA methodology. Does B&NES Council remain optimistic about this date being met?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Anthony Clarke
<p>1. <i>My officers have not undertaken a specific study on this corridor to establish the reasons for this apparent change. However, it can be noted that there has been an increase in the number of buses running through Saltford in the past few years. Bath Bus Co introduced their service A4 between Bath and Bristol Airport and this competes with First's services for local passengers between Keynsham, Saltford and Bath. It started hourly, but now runs half-hourly indicating a public demand for the service.</i></p> <p><i>Any reduction in traffic movements, even if only representing a snapshot, is to be welcomed, but we must also prepare for - and plan for - future demand, and in particular the significant growth in jobs and housing that will be taking place in the West of England in the years ahead.</i></p> <p><i>The Joint Transport Vision published prior to Christmas therefore seeks to present various options and ideas for how this future growth can be managed. As well as new and improved road infrastructure to meet the anticipated growth in traffic volumes, this vision seeks to continue with the long-established policy of promoting modal shift from the car to public transport with improved bus, 'MetroBus', Park & Ride and rail services, as well as promotion of walking and cycling as sustainable and healthy modes of transport.</i></p> <p>2. <i>B&NES Council remains optimistic about this date being met.</i></p>		