

CABINET MEETING 6th Feb 2019

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.

Councillors:

1. Councillor Sarah Bevan – As a Chair of Resources PDS Panel
2. Councillor Karen Walker – Budget setting for Peasedown St John
3. Councillor Lisa O'Brien – Keynsham High Street

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M 01	Question from:	Councillor Robin Moss
<p>What discussions have taken place between B&NES, Somerset County & Mendip District Councils about creating a larger 'Avon in the Hills' Council? What have been the conclusions drawn from those discussions and what are future plans?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Warren
<p><i>Bath & North East Somerset Council were invited to participate in discussions between Somerset County Council and the five District Councils within Somerset concerning the future of local government structures for the administrative area of the county. I attended two meetings and was accompanied by the Chief Executive to the latter meeting. After that meeting the six affected Councils agreed to commission work through independent consultants to review potential options. At that time B&NES stepped back from further active participation, however, we did undertake to provide any data already publicly available. There has been no further active participation or discussion on the matter. Obviously should we be approached further I would brief the Group Leaders accordingly.</i></p>		
M 02	Question from:	Councillor Robin Moss
<p>Press reports late in 2018 about New Cross Health Care uncover their policy of 'fining' staff who reported in sick for work. This has meant that staff has gone to work when they were sick, which could include when they have infectious illnesses.</p> <p>As New Cross operate in B&NES, supplying temporary staff to residential homes, what actions have been taken by B&NES council to alert residential homes to this potential threat to residents' health? I understand that supply staff agencies such as New Cross are not covered by CQC regulations or inspection. What discussions have there been with the CQC & what are the current conclusions?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p><i>The Council has notified all care homes that a concern has been raised regarding New Cross Healthcare. The Council has also contacted the Care Quality Commission as New Cross HealthCare is registered for domiciliary care as a separate arm of their company although they have not yet been inspected. These concerns have been raised through the Council's CQC Liaison Meeting structure, which are regular liaison meetings led by the Council that CQC and other key agencies attend and where concerns about agencies or providers are discussed. Concerns regarding New Cross have been managed through at the Tier 2 meeting, however it was noted that the concerns were about the arm of the organisation that is not regulated by the CQC. The Council and CQC will continue to monitor the situation and it should be noted that</i></p>		

neither the Council nor the Clinical Commissioning Group purchase domiciliary care from New Cross HealthCare.

The Council also encourages care homes not to use agency staff unless it is a last resort due to the cost but also the lack of continuity of care for residents and variability of training for agency staff. Instead the Council encourages care homes to set up their own bank of staff, offer staff overtime rates and incentives to help with recruitment. When agency staff are used, the Council encourages providers to use the same agency and book the same staff, block book with the agency so that they can have continuity of agency staff and ensure they have relatively short contracts (e.g. up to 3 months) so that they can change agencies as required. All care homes are asked to report concerns about the quality of agency staff immediately with the supplying agency.

M 03	Question from:	Councillor Ian Gilchrist
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Can the Cabinet Member please confirm that the fee charged for the garden waste service will be increased in 2019/20 in addition to the pause in collections over the winter months, as introduced this winter? What increase will be charged for 2019/20? What increase in the charge for garden waste collections would be required to provide a full 12 months garden waste collections service in 2019/20? What would be the total annual charge?

Answer from:	Councillor Bob Goodman
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The garden waste charge for 2019/20 will be £45.90 per bin and will include a suspension of the service between Monday 9th December 2019 and Friday 17th January 2020.

If the green waste service was re-introduced to cover the 12 month period the cost of the subscription would need to have increased by an additional £2.20 per bin. The garden waste charge for 2019/20 would then have been £48.10 per bin.

M 04	Question from:	Councillor Richard Samuel
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Can the Cabinet member confirm that in relation to the contract awarded to 3GS the following will apply:

- A clause provides for termination for poor performance or oppressive enforcement?
- Monitoring arrangements and regular reports to the Cabinet member that are publically available?
- Appropriate complaint and appeal mechanisms will exist for members of the public that are publicised in advance of the contract commencement?
- A transparent statement on the final basis on which the contract was awarded (without disclosing commercially sensitive information)?

Answer from:	Councillor Bob Goodman
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An answer will be provided within 5 working days.

M 05	Question from:	Councillor Richard Samuel
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The Cabinet Member asserted recently that “a record amount of waste” had been recycled over the festive period.

Can he publish the comparative figures for all waste and recycling categories with percentages for 2017/18 and 2018/19 for the Christmas collection period? The figures should be provided on a consistent basis.

Answer from:

Councillor Bob Goodman

An answer will be provided within 5 working days.

Supplementary Question:

Can Councillor Goodman explain why it is possible to be quoted in official press release from the Council on this matter which was presumably done on the data asked in this question yet not possible to answer my question? If the data does exist why it cannot be provided?

Answer from:

Councillor Bob Goodman

The reason behind this is that we are going back several years. The information I gave in the press release was absolutely correct in terms of the growth in recycling.

M 06

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

Is the Cabinet Member aware of the concerns that have been raised about nudity in the common areas of the communal changing rooms at the Bath Leisure Centre? Is this having a negative impact on the numbers of residents using the swimming facilities, particularly women and children? What steps are being taken to enforce appropriate behaviour?

Answer from:

Councillor Bob Goodman

I am aware of the concern that has been raised.

The Leisure Centre remains popular with record membership sales and casual swimming usage being reported, this has remained strong and consistent through January. Usage of the leisure centre has always been a roughly even split between men and women and this remained the case in January with 51% of users being women. Junior and Under 5 swimming lessons also increased by 63 heads in January from the December numbers.

The use of gender neutral changing villages are very commonplace across the country and in other local facilities and the design was approved by Sport England who advise that around 90% of the schemes they fund use this type of layout. Based on the customer feedback GLL have received this would appear to be an isolated incident with no other concerns raised throughout the 6 months since it has been open. However GLL have installed new clear and direct temporary signage to make people aware of the rules for the village changing room, these will be replaced by permanent signs once they have been produced. All staff are aware of their obligations to ensure these rules are kept to and are monitoring this regularly. The single gender changing room and shower block are available throughout the opening hours.

GLL report that the new design of the facility has been very well received by families in particular, but also by all users including females.

M 07 **Question from:** Councillor Dine Romero

With regard to retail in the city: could the Cabinet Member provide an update on actions the Council is undertaking (e.g. marketing, consumer research) to fill empty retail units in its portfolio. Has the level of voids remained static in recent years? What start up incentives, to attract new retail businesses, have been tried?

Answer from: Councillor Charles Gerrish

Bath remains an attractive retail destination, with an 8.7% vacancy rate in the city centre in 2018 (McMullen Commercial) compared with 11.2% nationally (Local Data Company). Our council-owned total retail vacancy rate is even lower at 4.8% of total rent roll of the commercial estate. If those units currently under offer are also removed this reduces the retail void figure to 3.6% of total rent roll. Retail employment levels have remained fairly constant at around 7,000 jobs in Bath from 2015 – 2017, however its proportion of total employment has declined slightly to 11.9% (ONS). We are firmly aware of the challenges facing retail and are supporting retailers to embrace the opportunities presented by demand for technology, experience and leisure in store. The Council is continuing to subsidise up to 12 hours of free training and consultancy to retail SMEs who wish to receive assistance with running their business. There is support available in areas including marketing, business planning and cashflow management. In addition £280,000 has been secured from WECA to undertake feasibility work for high street improvement projects for Bath City Centre North, Midsomer Norton Town Centre and Twerton High Street and run some pilot activities during 2019-20. This would facilitate a further funding bid to WECA for £3m towards high street investment in public realm events and animation and business support. The Council is also working with other major retail landlords in the City of Bath to agree priorities on improving the retail offer of Bath as a whole and we are supporting many public realm improvement projects including Union Street, Kingsmead Square, York Street/Swallow Street, Midsomer Norton High Street and Keynsham High Street. All projects are being undertaken alongside consultation with retailers.

M 08 **Question from:** Councillor Dine Romero

Further to my question of 5 September 2018, would the Leader please give an update highlighting what is being done to prepare for a no-deal Brexit?

Answer from: Councillor Tim Warren

Officers have attended a series of briefings and planning meetings including those hosted by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and Local Government Association. Relevant Services are also actively engaged with government departments on this issue, especially with the Department of Health & Social Care, NHS England & CCG.

Business Continuity and Contingency Plans continue to be reviewed based on the

advice from central government as the issues continue to evolve and we will be especially active in this area as the situation develops. We also continue, through the LRF, to liaise with our key partners regionally and nationally and have robust engagement mechanisms in place to respond to any issue that might arise in B&NES.

That said, many of the issues connected to Brexit are outside of the Council's control and the range of scenario's are complex, unpredictable and very diverse, for example B&NES has none of the strategic infrastructure which might be directly affected if the UK were to leave the EU without an exit agreement in place e.g. sea port, airport, etc however it could be indirectly affected by its proximity to these key assets and any significant issues arising from a no-deal scenario.

The senior staff of the Council had a further briefing and review today, 6 February, and should the likelihood of a no-deal position increase further our planning will step up again to meet potential risks."

Supplementary Question:

I understand that some money has been allocated by this Council for Brexit operations so could you explain on what that money would be spent on?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Warren

We don't know what implications from Brexit will be to the Council. In fact, we don't know what type of Brexit will ne.

M 09

Question from:

Councillor Dine Romero

Further to the closure of Bath Community Academy and the expected closure of Bath Studio School, what process is envisaged to decide the future of these sites? What engagement with pupils, parents, the community and stakeholders will be undertaken?

Answer from:

Councillor Paul May

These two sites are important to the community and as the cabinet member for Children and Young People I will be working hard with officers and other relevant partners to seek learning/skills and/or care outcomes within both sites that can contribute to meeting the needs of the B&NES population. Their potential is enormous and we have to explore sustainable solutions but it is essential that appropriate stakeholder engagement is carried out as part of the development of any plans.

The Children and Young People's PDS panel in September 2018 received a briefing on both short term use of the BCA site and the process for determining the longer-term future of the site. There is nothing substantive to add to that briefing at this stage.

We await a final decision from the Department for Education on the closure of the Bath Studio School and we have been pressing them for an answer on that. If the closure is confirmed, we anticipate that DfE will be the ones to determine the engagement process and future use of the site. The DfE are aware that we consider there is a need for

additional special school capacity locally and that this has the support of a wide range of stakeholders through previous engagement work.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Sarah Moore
<p>Please can the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm that the cost for restructuring/resurfacing North Way, Twerton, has been included in the coming years' budget as this road is extremely dangerous, as well as the costs for a crossing on Poolemead Road as the traffic on this road regularly exceeds the speed limit outside the infant school, making it an unsafe route to school?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Mark Shelford
<p><i>There is a sum of £25k earmarked in the draft capital programme for a surface treatment of North Way. Officers continue to inspect this road periodically and have repaired defects to ensure it remains safe.</i></p> <p><i>The costs of zebra crossings vary depending on the amount of work required, but a budget of £35k is required to fund the project. There is nationally applicable guidance and standards that apply and therefore Ms Moore is asked to submit her evidence/information to officers in order that the location can be assessed.</i></p>		
P 02	Question from:	Sarah Moore
<p>Please can the cabinet member for Development and Neighbourhoods confirm why the bin to be put in by the entrance/exit in Pennyquick Park (Shaw's Way end) that was promised last year has still not been put in place?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Bob Goodman
<p><i>An answer will be provided within 5 working days.</i></p>		