



**Note of the meeting of the Bath City Forum
held on Monday, 28th January, 2019
in Council Chamber - Guildhall, Bath**

Meeting Attendance

In Attendance
Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones
Councillor Rob Appleyard
Ashley Ayre
Councillor Jasper Martin Becker
Councillor Colin Blackburn
Nicolette Boater
Jeremy Boss
Tom Box
Councillor Anthony Clarke
Penny Coatsworth
Councillor Sue Craig
Adrian Davies
Sarah Dinnis
David Dixon
Roger Driver
Councillor Bob Goodman
Mark Hayward
Steve Kendall
Alisha Lobo
Chris Mordaunt
Councillor Paul Myers
Councillor Michelle O'Doherty
Nick Page
Rosie Phillips
Jonathan Raisey
Residents
Paul Roles
Councillor Dine Romero
Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall
Stephen Sumner
Councillor Peter Turner

Apologies Received from
Matthew Crovetto
Robin Kerr
Andrew Page
Councillor Lin Patterson
Councillor Joe Rayment
Leslie Redwood
Joy Saunders

1. Matters arising from the meetings of 13.11.18 & 10.12.18 and the agreement of the minutes

The Chair welcomed the forum members and guests, the apologies received were recorded.

The Chair explained that an e-mail sent from forum member Nicolette Boater raised issues around omissions that she would like included in the minutes from the meeting that took place on 13th November 2018. It was agreed that the minutes will be updated to include the additional points that were raised. The forum had no other matters regarding the minutes and they were agreed by Councillor Rob Appleyard and seconded Jeremy Boss.

2. Avon Fire and Rescue Update

Adrian Davies, Avon Fire and Rescue attended the forum to provide an update on several issues and take any general questions.

The message on water safety continues to be driven and needs to remain a constant active campaign. Volunteers from the local community continue to support the work and the river patrols. A new river rescue boat is being brought into the Bath area and this will be supported by a permanent river birth that is to be located near Pulteney Weir.

There has been a concerted effort by the Fire and Rescue Service to carry out visits to schools in the Bath area, targeting pupils in year's five to seven. The safety messages that are delivered through these visits give pupils an important understanding around a number of safety risks.

There has been a difficulty in getting access to a number of schools that we wish to visit to deliver these messages. The request was made for Councillors to help with opening doors to the schools so that visits can be arranged.

Questions and Comments:

Councillor Peter Turner – It is disappointing to hear that schools have not been active in arranging visits, why do you think this is?

Response:

- The school visits are an opportunity for early intervention on a wide range of issues and are similar to what already happens with the Universities and College. The schools have found it difficult to find the time to deal with the requests and to schedule visits.

Councillor Dine Romero – The primary schools in B&NES is mainly of academy status and are run by executive heads. If details can be provided of what is needed, I would be happy to speak to my contacts.

ACTION: Adrian Davies to provide Mark Hayward with further information to send around to the forum.

Response:

- Ashley Ayre explained that the Council are able to assist in sending any communications on to academy schools.

Councillor Dine Romero – The river pathway near the Churchill Bridge was fenced off recently, have there been any reports of issues?

Response:

- There are a large number of students that live in accommodation along the river and this does add to the difficulties around safety. Early access to speak with university students will help in getting the message on safety across.

Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall asked if that future updates from the Fire Service can be opened up wider to allow the Council to have discussions that can also bring in The Fire Authority.

Response:

- Yes, future agenda setting can reflect this request.

3. Police - Issues in Bath City

Avon and Somerset Police were represented at the forum by Chief Inspector Steve Kendall, Acting Inspector Sarah Dinnis and Neighbourhood Police Team Sergeant, Jonathon Risley.

Steve Kendall gave an overview of the recently published crime statistics. Nationally the picture shows crime has increased 7% year on year overall, in Bath however the overall rate shows a decrease of 2%. There is no room for complacency but Bath does remain a safe place to live.

Visibility of the Police in Bath continues to be an area that is being improved, a number of these improvements have been implemented: -

- The recruitment of additional PSCOs
- Staff being issued hi-spec laptops that make working at community locations much easier.
- A parking bay for a police vehicle is being put in place on Bath High Street in front of The Guildhall.
- Electric Bikes are being used.
- Disruptive Effects through methods of dealing with counter terrorism.
- Targeted foot patrols at key times.

Central Bath does continue to have a public enquiry counter which is situated in the one stop shop at Manver's Street. There are plans for the signage to be improved at this location. The B&NES area does have one of the highest levels of public counter access points in the UK. The police 24/7 response office is based off Midland Road in Bath and there is work in progress for future options for an alternative location.

The methods for the public contacting the police have not changed: -

- For emergencies call 999

- For other reports and enquiries call 101
- Online <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/contact-us/report-a-crime-or-incident/#/>
- In person - walk into any of our public enquiry counters

Sarah Dinnis provided an overview of the emerging national issues of County Lines is having locally. Bath has seen incidents but the levels are far less than many other towns and cities. There is a national co-ordinations centre that the south west regional crime lead is connecting into. The issues around County Lines have to be tackled and the silos that once occurred are being overcome and better ways of working are emerging.

There has historically been an approach that saw enforcement taking place this saw people being pushed out of one area and popping up in other or new areas. In Bath the police are now working on number of different approaches:

- Intelligence gathering
- Days of action in and around the City
- Digging deeper into who is hear
- Obtaining warrants to get into premises
- Working with Housing Associations
- Taking part in intervention and safeguarding

Where there is an approach victims are being looked after, the success rate can improve. Welfare visits to check in on those people that have been cuckooed offers advice on methods of contact.

The age range for the people that are being drawn is seeing more 15/16 year olds becoming involved. The police have difficulties as they are not inclined to stop and search vulnerable young people. Work with B&NES Council takes place on identifying young people by listening to what is being said, provides useful information links from schools, e.g. pupils missing from school unexpectedly, unlikely purchases occurring like new trainers.

Quarterly 'Force Weeks' are being run to make it as uncomfortable as possible for those involved. The tactics are seeing successes locally and known dealers have now moved on. The full impact of this approach will be seen rolled out from April 2019 onwards.

Project Servator is a tactic which sees highly-visible yet unpredictable police deployments designed to deter, disrupt and detect criminal activity – from shoplifting and pickpocketing to more serious crime including terrorism. The deployments also aim to provide a reassuring presence for the public.

Jonathon Risley spoke on neighbourhood policing matters in Bath. The City Centre Patrols are now being planned each week and captures the hotspots where anti-social behaviour and begging occurs.

- To build community confidence Officers and PCSOs are not in vehicles but on foot or bikes
- To support genuine homeless beggars the police work with organisations such as Julian House and DHI to signpost those in need.
- A scheme called 'adopt a block' has been set up to connect the police with a recognised person in the housing blocks in the City.

Questions and Comments:

Councillor Rob Appleyard – Thanked the police for the excellent update provided. The laptops being used in public spaces across the City will really help with visibility. The question was asked, how sustainable will Project Servator be?

Response:

- There is national funding that will see Project Servator rolling out in various locations, Bath starts ahead of Bristol and the work is to be sustained for the long term.

Paul Roles – There have been a number of occasions that I have not been satisfied with the service that I have personally received when I have needed to contact the police on a number of different matters.

Car break-ins are not investigated if CCTV is not available to the police, it has been difficult to get action taken on drug related issues in Kingsmead Ward, and it was finally the landlords Curo that took action on the drug issues.

Why is it that we see drug offenders bouncing from area to area, if the correct action was taken they would be taken out of action?

Response:

- If the service has not met your expectations we are sorry and you are able to feedback directly on the specifics.
- The drug offenders are put in front of the courts but the sentences are not always as effective as we want them to be. Some matters have to be addressed as a civil matter and this can be a lengthy process.

Councillor Sue Craig – Thanks for the initiative with adopt a block as this is a great help in Kingsmead. What are your views on increased levels of CCTV; it appears residents are asking for better coverage.

Response:

- CCTV does assist the police investigating crimes; this has to be weighed up against the arguments that are put about personal privacy. Bath City does have a good level of CCTV and if any more were to be added in it would only be effective if there are the resources to monitor this.
- Private businesses can be encouraged to have CCTV as local resources such as these can be helpful.
- The use of automated number plate recognition (ANPR) through the existing cameras does help monitor the vehicles as they flow into the City.

Councillor Peter Turner – Did the work that was once proposed to link up all of the different police IT systems ever get implemented?

- No

Councillor Dine Romero – The reassurance about the City Centre numbers are positive, does this cover the outlying areas of the City also?

Response:

- Initially the central locations will receive focus but this funding does cover the whole of B&NES.

Councillor Dine Romero – What preparations are being put in place for Brexit?

Response:

- There is a contingency for civil unrest and we are following that advice and lead that is given nationally.

Rosie Phillips – Can it be explained how the children that are excluded from schools can be linked into the work on vulnerable people?

Response:

- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is a multi-agency body that the police are linked into. There is further work that will follow which will see better school connections that will help with those children that do not fit the old stereotypical picture that we have come to expect.

4. Consultation Workshop Update

Councillor Paul Myers reported back to the forum on the Consultation Workshop Event which took place on Saturday 26th January 2019. The workshop was opened up to all of the B&NES community forums following the initial discussion that were brought to light by members of the Bath City Forum.

The workshop saw the group work on three areas; ‘the good and the bad’, ‘what to do’ and a controlled roll play experiment. There was a range of interesting feedback produced at the workshop which underpinned the original Bath views along with wider initiatives.

All sectors of the community agreed that they can do better by working together on a ‘deal’ and they are willing to continue to follow up and consult more on this work. The aim is for a report to be put before cabinet before the purdah period starts.

Roger Driver felt that Saturday have been useful and saw good interaction across the B&NES Parishes, 3SG and Bath Representatives. It is hoped that he the continuum that builds up to and through the elections will be built upon. A point that came from the 3SG representation was that they can make an offering to find the harder to reach groups and make adjustments to involve these people.

Paul Roles felt that the session had been interesting and fun with an active mode. It was clear that people want to hear the truth upfront when announcements are made. A memorandum of understanding to show what and how things should be done has been recommended, it will be great if the work can continue to be developed.

Nicolette Boater was unable to attend the workshop but hoped that this would be the first point in the process and is keen to see it taken forward.

Councillor Paul Myers explained that this work is intended to be neutral and non-political the full workshop notes will be distributed once they are written up. This work is being carried out with financial restraints but it could see large sums of money saved in the future if we get this right.

Questions and Comments:

Councillor Dine Romero – What is the end goal and what’s necessary in reaching this?

Response:

- It is hard at this stage to set out any recommendation yet.

- There has been confusion of the meaning of consultation
- We will look at the code of practice and will this work
- It is hoped that by working together as a group a better co-produced outcome can be reached
- We aim to open up a new way of dealing with consultation, one that sets the scene and has the systems that are backed by a code that has been agreed upon and can be referred to.
- We have to reinvent our way of working with a living and respectful approach.
- We can learn for the example of working different as Frome has done.

5. HMO Licensing in Bath

Chris Mordant, B&NES Team Manager - Housing Standards and Improvement was in attendance to offer advice and discuss the HMO licencing scheme.

- The new HMO Licencing Scheme that came into being on the 1st January 2019 will help with a number of the common issues that occur with low standard accommodation in the city. This scheme will see all shared homes having to be licenced with B&NES Council and those found not to be complying will be committing a criminal offence and can face a fine of up to £30K.
- Properties that require a licence will pay £795 for a five year period (a £50 discount is offered if completed online), these receipts will fund administration and enforcement for the scheme. This scheme is not run for profit.
- There are presently 3,000 properties in the City of Bath, these are a properties occupied by three unrelated people (not from the same families) that are sharing household facilities. A further 500 larger properties in B&NES are also included where the number increases to five people sharing.
- It is understood that 2,600 of the properties in Bath are occupied by students; this information is from council tax records which show student exemptions.
- Once the application process has been introduced an enforcement policy will come into effect which will deliver strong measures against non-compliant landlords.
- The number of properties that are licenced will be reviewed regularly and annually reporting will be produced.
- The Council will be able to inspect properties and will target those that have not been inspected previously and will then move onto and revisit those we have visited before. We will be looking at the quality of the premises, how the property is managed, safety issues, management arrangements for overseas landlords. A fit and proper person needs to be available locally to manage any arrangements for the tenants.
- Other factors for consideration are: - criminal record checks, is the number of occupants correct for the property, are there fire safety measures in place and what management plan is in place for fixing broken items. The standards around waste storage, carbon monoxide detectors, waste location information, fire risk and property information will also be required through the licencing agreement.

- There will be a public register that will appear on the B&NES Council website, all HMOs will appear mapped on the section called My Council. The aim is for all HMOs to be licenced and listed by the end of 2019, presently we are in a period of adjustment where all HMOs are able to continue operating if the landlord is in the process of applying for a licence.
- One an inspection has been carried out on a property a licence can be issued; this may have conditions that need to be addressed by the landlord. Where there is a need to address urgent works these will be dealt with separately. Dependent on the risks follow up visits will be agreed.
- Any member of the public with concerns over a HMO can contact the Housing Standards Team and there will be a duty to investigate complaints. Advice to all tenants is to start by trying to sort out issues in the first instance with the landlord. The Housing Standards Team can be reached by telephone 01225 396444 or the website address is:- <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/houses-multiple-occupation/licensing-houses-multiple-occupation>

Questions and Comments:

Councillor Rob Appleyard – Thanked Chris for a useful update on a complex issue.

Councillor Rob Appleyard – Where a property is found to be a non-student property will details be shared with the council tax department?

Response:

- We will share information on GIS mapping and council tax are able to see this.

Councillor Rob Appleyard – At what point are conditions met and the licence issued? Do adjustments that are requested need to be completed before a licence is issued.

Response:

- We are not able to withhold licences, our duty is to request any adjustments and revisit to see that these are being complied with.
- We have allowed in our business model up to two additional visits for each property.

Alicia Lobo – The Student Union at the University of Bath has partnered with ‘marks out of tenancy’ <https://www.marksoutofTENANCY.com/> to launch in Bath. This scheme could compliment the work on HMOs and the Su are happy to work together on issues.

Response:

- Councillor Shaun Stephen-McGall fed back that the SCP has seen a presentation on work that was carried out by Bath Spa University; it may be helpful to see what findings were picked up previously.

Councillor Shaun Stephen-McGall explained that the 2,600 HMOs in Bath are exempt from paying council tax since the rebate was removed by the government three years ago. The city has missed out on £4.2 million in lost revenue because of the success of the universities, there needs to be a balanced approach that sees a bigger contribution from the universities. The most vulnerable in the city are losing out and there needs to be better understanding of this within our communities.

Response:

- Rosie Phillips agreed that the most vulnerable people are missing out.

Councillor Shaun Stephen-McGall felt that the licencing scheme delivers a baseline standard; this should be ratcheted up in the future by planning ahead and setting out aspirations.

A member of the public asked why we are not looking at the 600 Air BnB's in Bath for inclusion.

Response:

- The scheme (legislation) only covers properties that are main residences.

A member of the public asked what happens if a property is a HMO but is being run as an Air BnB and what will be in place to pick up on this issue?

Response:

- We take on board intelligence that is gathered through neighbours, tenants and advertisements that are placed. If a property is represented then a criminal offence is committed which can carry up to a £30,000 fine.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty asked how the council will reach landlords that live away from their properties.

Response:

- Publicity of the scheme has taken place through the press on three occasions, the website and direct mailings of postcards to every household in Bath. We recognise that people can miss the message and are working with people to get them to apply ASAP during the transitional period.
- There will be follow ups made to those properties that are hard to reach. A point will come where a cut-off point to the introduction finishes.

Councillor Dine Romero – What is the tipping point when a landlord becomes not fit and proper to hold a licence.

Response:

- The Council have a duty to follow up when there are issues that require follow up work to be carried out. We will be taking on landlords by asking questions and providing advice, when works that are set out are ignored we will issue a notice, prosecutions will follow where landlords fail to work on the issues that are set out.
- Where a landlord is found to be unsuitable for reasons such as criminal records that show them to be unsuitable to hold a licence. Where a judgement is made on a landlord being unsuitable they would need to move responsibilities to a managing agent or suitable adult.

Councillor Dine Romero – Students may we concerned about reporting there landlord as they fear being evicted.

Response:

- Landlords are not allowed to evict tenants because they fail to get a licence.

Jeremy Boss – Are there any concerns about disruption to the market, especially two bedroom flats?

Response:

- There were some responses raised when consultation was carried out. The market is strong and it is unlikely to see many issues.
- We have heard from one landlord that will withdraw from the market, less than ten properties have said they are considering what they are going to do.

Cllr Bob Goodman commented that should a HMO revert back to a family home then that is not a bad thing.

Cllr Bob Goodman explained that the issues raised by Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall were valid and over the last three years has been a lot of work carried out to show that the Council does need to receive the missing student accommodation council tax contributions.

Councillor Colin Blackburn explained that there are areas outside of Bath that are seeing the Air BnB market disrupted and there are properties which have returned to the regular rental market.

6. Neighbourhood CIL for Bath Panel

Councillor Rob Appleyard provided feedback from the last meeting of the Bath City Forum which was held on Monday, 28th January, 2019.

Update on previously recommended projects

Four projects have received a single member decision. These are; Sydney Gardens, Student Community Partnership, Bathwick Road Safety and Moorland Road Library. These will be free to implement from 5th February 2019.

The Sydney Gardens Project has received notification that the Heritage Lottery Funding Application has now been agreed. This will allow the Changing Place Toilet Project to go ahead as planned.

Four projects that have been passed by the Bath City Forum as recommendations have not yet been passed for a single member decision as they are presently awaiting further advice from the Councils Legal Team. These are; Bath City Farm, Widcombe Subway, Parade Gardens Bandstand and Bath Carnival. The advice that has been given by the legal team has been interpreted differently to the guidance that has been used previously for the use of neighbourhood CIL receipts. A response is being prepared and will be submitted this week requesting further discussion around these issues.

Financial Summary Update

The next receipts for Neighbourhood CIL for Bath will be received in April 2019. The receipts are paid every six months in April and September.

The present balance table for Neighbourhood CIL for Bath receipts is set out below:

Projects that are cleared with a single member decision	£361,141
Projects that are awaiting a legal decision	£184,500
Projects that are awaiting a single member decision	£56,650
Total funding committed to all recommendations (November 2018)	£602,291

Total Bath CIL Receipts (September 18)	£718,565
Available funding for future recommendations	£116,274

The Urban Garden BA060

The panel spent a considerable amount of time discussing this application from Genesis Trust requesting a contribution of £50,000 towards The Urban Garden project. The panel were not prepared to agree funding at this stage. B&NES Officers were asked to arrange to meeting with Genesis and B&NES Parks to investigate the points that need to be addressed. The application will need to be brought back to the panel once with any additional information has been gathered.

Bathwick Towpath Improvement Project BA059

The panel reviewed that application that was submitted by the Canal and River Trust for a contribution of £34,500 funding towards the improvements of the Bathwick Towpath.

The panel felt that this application showed that the delivery of this scheme was would provide improved infrastructure to an area of footpath that already sees a high footfall. The new developments nearby will see a greater need for improved paths for commuters to and from the city and those who use the canal for leisure purposes. This stretch of the canal has footpath access along only one side; this puts extra demand on wear and tear of this route.

The panel all felt that this project should receive the contribution of £34,500. This funding would be conditional to the remainder is met as it has been set out in the application. The Bath City Forum asks that recognition of the contribution is made by some form of plaque at the site of the project.

Ki Active Health BA061

The panel felt that this application supports the increased need for residents to access public health programmes that provide active fitness benefits.

The project looks to target social housing residents at this trial stage. It is felt that by providing a funding contribution to enable an additional twenty-five people to participate in the trial of this scheme in Bath, it could also lead to evidence that could see a much bigger programme financed further down the line.

The panel agreed that it would recommend funding of £3,125 as a contribution that will enable this programme to move forward. It was requested that the Active Lifestyles Team provide a report on the outcomes that are being set for this project and where the finding will be reported.

Queen Square Benches BA062

This application was a request which asked for funding to enable a project to replace the benches in Queens Square, Bath. The project includes adding back in the benches that have been removed due to these being in disrepair. B&NES Parks would project manage the work and will also put in place a ten year agreement to carry out any necessary maintenance.

The project will look at any existing plaques on the benches and transfer these if they are still required. The remaining benches will carry a plaque which shows the funding has been provided by Bath City Forum.

A question was put by one panel member asking if a partial replacement option should be considered. The remaining panel members felt that this park is high profile and has historical significance; it was felt that the project as it has been set out will deliver a strong improvement to the infrastructure within the world heritage site. A suggestion was made to see if the benches that are removed could be salvaged and reused in other locations in the city.

It was agreed by the panel to recommend an allocation of up to £19,000 for this project

Question and Comments:

Councillor Bob Goodman passed on his appreciation to the panel for the work they have carried out.

Councillor Dine Romero asked about the funding for the benches at Queens Square. The concern was that the funding that is being agreed will not be used to back fill other council funding.

Response:

- The funding is open to all communities in Bath and the applications are looked at on merit of each project.
- Clarity will be checked on the maintenance programme funding.

Councillor Colin Blackburn explained that panel felt the commercial activity that was involved in the Urban Garden project had not allowed the panel to be satisfied it was an appropriate scheme to be involved in without further information being provided.

The forum members were asked to vote on the three recommended projects, all members' votes were cast in favour and nobody voted against.

7. Future Bath City Forum Meetings

Councillor Colin Blackburn explained that this was the last Bath City Forum until after the May 2019 elections; he thanked the co-opted members for their contributions.

Once the new administration has been formed the Bath City Forum will need take instruction from on how it is to proceed and align it to the incoming mix of newly elected members.

Further agenda items will be welcomed once dates for future meetings have been set out. The work that has been carried out by Andrew Page on forum development and the suggestion by Councillor Shaun Stephenson-McGall to include the fire authority on future meetings has been noted as forward agenda items.