

CABINET MEETING 13th February 2020

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.

1. Councillors Karen Walker and Sarah Bevan - Budget allocation for Peasedown St John Ward
2. Ian Barrett (Chief Executive – Avon Wildlife Trust) - Nature Emergency under Corporate Strategy

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Councillor Jess David
<p>What is the Council planning to do to alleviate the severe parking problems in Moorlands ward (including Hensley and Egerton Roads, Hensley Gardens, Bloomfield Park and Grove, Chantry Mead Road and parts of Englishcombe Lane), following the introduction of a residents parking zone in the Bear Flat area in May 2019?</p>			
Answer from:			Councillor Joanna Wright
<p><i>We need to make significant changes to the way people travel in our city in order to reduce pollution and improve the quality of life for our communities. This will involve the introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods which will reduce the dominance of traffic in residential roads and the expansion of residents' parking schemes. This is an ambitious plan and we are currently drawing up a strategy to outline how we'll achieve this and involve communities in the process. We can no longer take the former approach of looking at a handful of roads in isolation, especially when it leads to traffic and parking problems being passed from one place to the next.</i></p> <p><i>Officers have recently received the results from the parking occupancy surveys which were undertaken in these roads in Moorlands last autumn, which will quantify the level of parking that typically occurs and what proportion of those vehicles are likely to be non-resident. That information will help identify what action we need to take. At the moment I can't provide detailed timescales as to when we will be able to consult on proposals to tackle this until we've finalised the strategy for the city as a whole, but we intend to have that strategy completed during the spring, which will set out how we intend to deal with these issues across Bath. In the meantime, once officers have checked the parking survey report they will send it onto the affected Ward Members.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, our Civil Enforcement Officers continue to regularly patrol this area and take appropriate action against vehicles parked illegally. I am aware that in some areas the road markings are a challenge, and this is being addressed to ensure that the restrictions, where appropriate, are clear.</i></p>			
M	02	Question from:	Councillor Paul May

Bristol Council have finally recognised the ecological emergency in partnership with Avon Wildlife trust and six city partners. The cabinet members commitment and work has been well documented. This plan goes further into stopping wildlife habitats from being destroyed. Will you work with Bristol to investigate ways to stop wildlife habitats being destroyed and managing land in B&NES in a sustainable way as this initiative is relevant to the City of Bath and the countryside of North East Somerset?

Answer from:

Councillors Sarah Warren and David Wood

Thank you for your question about the current Ecological Emergency. In the Climate Emergency progress report presented to Council on 10th October 2019 we acknowledged the Ecological Emergency in Section 3.6 and highlighted some of the actions B&NES is leading on to address this.

Bath and North East Somerset and Bristol along with South Gloucestershire and North Somerset have a strong working relationship and established the West of England Nature Partnership together with other partners (including Avon Wildlife Trust). This partnership is recognised nationally as a leading Local Nature Partnership and is featured as a case study in the government's 25-year Environment Plan. In 2019 the partnership launched the Nature Recovery Network which sets out a strong regional ambition. We also helped establish the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership (which covers part of Wiltshire and the WoE) looking after the quality of our water environments.

B&NES was the first authority in the WoE to publish a Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013) and we have taken this forward into delivery with the Heritage Lottery funded Bathscape Landscape Partnership, the award winning Waterspace Programme, Get Bath Buzzing Pollinator Strategy and are developing a new programme linking health and natural heritage in the Somer Valley area. Our Parks Department are reviewing their sites to improve them for biodiversity and seeking opportunities for more tree planting

We are currently recruiting for a Tree & Woodland Officer to take forward our commitment for 100,000 new trees to be planted by 2023 and have provided the leadership to develop a WoE Green Infrastructure Strategy which will be published later this year.

The Environment Bill provides new opportunities for such a requirement for new developments to provide 10% Biodiversity New Gain.

It's important to engage our communities with this agenda and through our membership of the Natural History Consortium we will be providing citizen science opportunities through the City Nature Challenge and the Bath Festival of Nature.

Supplementary Question: *(raised after hearing speech from Avon Wildlife Trust Chief Executive – Ian Barrett)*

It's clear that Bristol City Council are picking up the subtlety of distinction between an ecological emergency and a climate emergency; would the Cabinet Members agree that both aspects are really positive and would they support that concept?

Answer from:

Councillor Sarah Warren

If the public have a deep enough understanding of this, declaring an ecological emergency would help.

M

03

Question from:

Councillor Karen Warrington

One of your Administration's strategies is 'Prevention'; I appreciate that it focuses on Health & Wellbeing but would the Cabinet care to include regular unblocking of drains in the Prevention? We have had localised flooding in some rural areas, with homes flooded and this has caused anxiety within communities.

Answer from:

Councillor Joanna Wright

There are a total of 30961 highway gullies across our whole road network in Bath & North East Somerset that are linked by a series of manholes and catchpits (4664 no.) through a maze of underground drainage pipelines. These gullies are visited at least once over a two year annual routine cleansing regime, at which time they will be cleared of debris and their silt traps (where present) sucked out leaving the gully fully operational. During routine cleansing any ironwork or underlying pipework defects will be identified and added to a planned works programme for repair. Gullies in high risk areas and main roads will be visited more frequently.

The gully cleansing programme is currently operated through our Highway Team Maintenance Contract with Volker Highways.

Supplementary Question:

With regard to a number of gullies in the Chew Valley area being blocked and residents' concerns about whether these are being cleared annually - can the Cabinet Member give an assurance that those prone to flooding will be looked at?

Answer from:		Councillor Joanna Wright
<i>I'm aware that this is a real issue for people so will ask officers to follow up.</i>		
M	04	Question from: Councillor Paul Myers
I have received a number of communications from local residents concerned that lights are left on in the B&NES Offices all night in the Hollies in Midsomer Norton, at a time when the Council claims to be committed to Climate Emergency. Could something be done to switch lights off at night in the Hollies?		
Answer from:		Councillors Sarah Warren and David Wood
<p><i>The Council is committed to addressing the Climate Emergency and has identified tackling the climate and nature emergency as a core policy shaping our work.</i></p> <p><i>The Hollies is occupied by Virgin Care staff as well as Council staff. The Virgin teams work outside of standard office hours and can be in the office 24 hours per day 7 days a week, so as such the building is in use out of hours.</i></p> <p><i>In the unoccupied areas the lights should turn off automatically, the sensors are being checked to ensure that this is happening as it should. If there are any issues with these then they will be resolved as soon as possible.</i></p>		
Supplementary Question:		
Can the Cabinet Member explain whether all other Council buildings also have the lights off out of hours?		
Answer from:		Councillor Sarah Warren
<i>I will request that information.</i>		

M	05	Question from:	Councillor Paul May
Residents in Whitchurch Village really appreciated your commitment to work with them regarding development post the JSP. Can you advise the current position in The WECA area regarding the four local authorities and will the new sub regional development plan start from the pre 2016 assessment of suitable sites?			
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball	
<i>Full Council made a decision on 16th January 2020 to withdraw from the Joint Spatial Plan. The next step for the 4 Local Authorities is to agree the approach to sub-regional working to address strategic planning issues alongside progressing their Local Plan reviews. Both sub-regional work and Local Plan reviews will require up-to-date evidence. This will include a review of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), as is required in the National Planning Policy Framework and other evidence.</i>			
Supplementary Question:			
Can the Cabinet Member please explain the situation should Bristol City Council not withdraw from the JSP?			
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball	
<i>All Councils will withdraw automatically 3 months from the first Authority withdrawing (which was North Somerset in January).</i>			
M	06	Question from:	Councillor Paul Myers
What progress has been made to date to ensure that local planning regulations relating to Listed buildings in the Authority can allow owners to address improved glazing energy efficiency in the light of the Climate Emergency?			
Answer from:		Councillor Tim Ball	
<i>The Council's policy on energy efficiency and renewable energy with regard to listed buildings is set out in our Supplementary Planning</i>			

Document (SPD) “Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy Guidance for Listed Buildings and Undesignated Historic Buildings”. This document was published in 2013 and remains up to date in respect of windows in listed building and national legislation and guidance. It seeks to take a facilitative approach requirement by setting out how changes and adaptations can be made in the context of the Climate Change Emergency whilst also having regard to our statutory duty.

We have sought to ensure to make the SPD accessible to owners through links on various planning documents and in ensuring that it will be easily accessible on the Council’s new planning website, to be launched in the next couple of weeks

We have also introduced a pre-planning application category at our lowest fee in respect of secondary glazing, to enable owners to explore opportunities quickly prior to making an application (if needed).

A review of planning policy is now underway, and this will include revising the SPD to ensure that it is up to date with developing technologies and good practice.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Cabinet Member provide further details about the timing of the review and revision of the SPD mentioned in the final sentence of his answer above?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

Yes. At the Local Development Framework meeting on Monday, timelines were provided for this so I’ll supply those.

M

07

Question from:

Councillor Paul May

Clearly, despite efforts made to improve the JLTP4 since it was consulted upon over a year ago, it is out of date in its shape and logic. When will the JLTP5 be prepared and will you consult with communities directly affected in Banes, before it is issued?

Answer from:

Councillors Joanna Wright and Neil Butters

To transform our region, we will need to be flexible, agile and brave in our approach to the climate emergency. The Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4) sets out to decarbonise and promote and transform cleaner and greener and sustainable forms of transport – cycling, walking and public transport but it is unlikely to be enough to be transport carbon neutral by 2030. It is a good starting point. As technologies evolve and lifestyles and future strategic and local development planning change, so the JLTP4 will not be set in stone and will remain under review. We will undertake an immediate review which will include further work to build up the evidence base and establish what will be required to reach the 2030 target and this will set the basis for the next JLTP.

Our focus at this time is to undertake the final amends to the JLTP4 for the WECA Joint Committee to consider for adoption on 20th March. Immediately after this a joint officer group from across the sub region will begin work to map out the review that will get us to a carbon neutral position by 2030.

Supplementary Question:

Will it be possible for minor amendments to be made to the JLTP4 before submission to WECA on 20th March?

Answer from:

Councillor Joanna Wright

Yes, we will be making amendments to the document.

M 08

Question from:

Councillor Karen Warrington

There is £200,000 in the budget for residents parking and low traffic Neighbourhoods - can the Cabinet member please tell me how much is earmarked for the areas outside Bath?

Answer from:

Councillors Joanna Wright and Neil Butters

The £200,000 is a revenue sum which will be used to employ additional officers to support the delivery of low traffic neighbourhoods across Bath & North East Somerset. The plan on where the LTNs will be implemented is yet to be developed and we are unable to provide the locality detail as requested at this time. One of the new roles will be dedicated to working with and engaging communities

and partners as the plans are developed and we look forward to working with ward Cllrs to help inform the delivery plans.

M 09

Question from:

Councillor Karen Warrington

There is £150,000 in the budget for walking & cycling and, whilst I appreciate that there is money being made available from WECA, how much of the £150k allocation from B&NES is going to made available outside Bath?

Answer from:

Councillors Joanna Wright and Neil Butters

There is £150,000 in the budget for Cycling and Walking Master Plan and scheme development. The intention is to develop a master plan for the whole of Bath and North East Somerset. It will encompass existing proposals and will provide an opportunity for aspirational schemes to be captured. In parallel we will continue to further develop schemes, such as the Keynsham to Bristol link and the North Road to Combe Down link.

Supplementary Question:

Can we be sure that North Somerset and the Chew Valley area are included in the Cycling and Walking Master plan as there are currently very few safe routes?

Answer from:

Councillor Neil Butters

Yes, the plan represents a large rural area. We will keep in touch as it develops.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P 01	Question from:	Nicolette Boater
<p>In the complex, uncertain and uncontrollable environment the Council operates in, strategic collaboration with diverse governmental institutions, businesses, and communities, realising co-benefits and avoiding adverse side effects will be critical to achieving its ambitions.</p> <p>Given this, in framing the Council's 4 year Corporate Strategy around just two "core policies" and thereby seemingly reducing the potential for multiple and strong connections between policy goals and prioritised activities, is the Cabinet mindful of the impact this might have on its ability to deliver its Strategy?</p>		
Answer from:		Councillor Dine Romero
<p><i>The new Corporate Strategy sets out a single new purpose for the council - to improve people's lives. Our core policies - addressing the climate emergency and giving people a bigger say - will shape what we do and how we do it. This simple and clear approach is reflected in the commitments set out in the strategy and the transparent and accountable framework for its delivery, which will require close collaboration with local partners and communities.</i></p>		