

CABINET MEETING 11th February 2021

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. David Redgewell – Statement on transport issues within West of England Combined Authority
2. Kari Elizabeth Erickson - Bath City Centre High Street Renewal
3. Councillor Paul Myers (Chair of the Corporate PDS Panel) – ‘Matters Referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Bodies’
4. Councillor Lucy Hodge – Approach Golf Course
5. Councillor Mark Elliott – Approach Golf Course
6. Theresa Franklin – Approach Golf Course
7. Lynne Fernquest – Approach Golf Course
8. Patricia Ludlam – Approach Golf Course
9. Ben Reed – Approach Golf Course
10. Peter Langley – Approach Golf Course
11. Sally Parkes – Approach Golf Course
12. Justin Draeger – Approach Golf Course
13. Emilio Pimentel-Reid – Approach Golf Course
14. Lyn Jacobs – Approach Golf Course
15. Robert Sumner – Approach Golf Course
16. Rachael Hushon – Approach Golf Course

- 17. Liz Hallam – Entry Hill Golf Course
- 18. Katina Beckett – Entry Hill Golf Course
- 19. Martin Grixoni – Budget 2020/2021

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Councillor Duncan Hounsell
Can Councillor Paul Crossley, Cabinet Member for Community Services, provide an update on the search for suitable 14 day moorings in the B&NES area?			
Answer from:			Councillor Paul Crossley
<p><i>Thank you for the question Cllr Hounsell. I am pleased to say that I received a briefing on our future mooring strategy from officers on 15 January. As you are aware, this strategy looks to identify additional mooring locations along the River Avon. Specifically between Pulteney Weir and Hanham Lock.</i></p> <p><i>Officers are near to completing the first phase of this project, a detailed desk-based assessment. This involved pulling together a range of data sources, a review of riparian ownership arrangements, determining the provision of local amenities, river and bank conditions and a number of informal conversations with users of the river.</i></p> <p><i>Our next steps are to undertake site visits to validate (or not) the desk top assessment, engage stakeholders and our neighbour – South Gloucestershire. Resulting in a robust business model for future consideration by this Council. I will of course keep you updated as this programme of work progresses.</i></p>			
M	02	Question from:	Councillor Sarah Bevan
Further to Councillor Samuel's encouraging emails to me, can you confirm that there will be funding in this year's budget for the Ward Councillors Empowerment Fund, and clarify where in the budget papers I will find the relevant information?			
Answer from:			Councillor Richard Samuel

Whilst the majority of 2021/22 budget adjustments are for budget pressures, the budget has provided for the continuation of the Ward Councillor empowerment fund providing £1k per Councillor for 2021/22 funded from the revenue budget contingency.

This narrative can be found in section 5.2.5 of the budget report.

M

03

Question from:

Councillor Shaun Hughes

An article in The Times (27th January) titled “£1 million wasted on cycle-friendly road zones that councils abandoned” highlights how almost 1 in 10 low-traffic neighbourhoods had been abandoned after a month at huge expense to the public.

Out of 138 schemes completed 13 were scrapped and 25 altered following a backlash from residents and emergency services. Issues identified included increased pollution, traffic gridlock and delaying emergency service vehicles.

As Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are a key part of your future plans, can you please tell us what safeguards are you putting in place to ensure we don’t fall into the same traps as the 25 other Councils who have had to reserve/cancel their schemes?

Answer from:

Councillors Joanna Wright and Neil Butters

The Times article dated 27/1/21 is based on research undertaken by Auto Express which represents the interests of car enthusiasts, manufacturers and dealers. Unfortunately, the report confuses low traffic neighbourhoods with a range of active travel schemes developed through the Department for Transport’s Emergency Active Travel fund, which sought to quickly facilitate active travel in response to problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

On 10/12/20, Bath & North East Somerset Council’s Cabinet resolved to adopt the three Liveable Neighbourhood strategies (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods; Residents’ Parking Schemes; and On-Street Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy) with minor amendments.

The Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) strategy proposes that communities should express a desire to be considered for LTN interventions through their Ward Member(s) and scheme development will be on the basis of co-design. In considering schemes, the council will consult a wide range of stakeholders including the emergency services and groups representing disabled people. These procedures will ensure that implemented schemes will be in the best possible position to meet their objectives and secure widespread support from the community and other stakeholders.

M	04	Question from:	Councillor Paul May
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Can you provide details of all of the additional Government funding since the start of the pandemic provided for the council, businesses and residents including supplements for children's and adult services?

Answer from:	Councillor Richard Samuel
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Grant funding allocated to B&NES from the start of the pandemic to 8th February 2021:

	England Total in £m (provided for context)	B&NES Total £m
Covid 19 Government Support & Grants via Councils		
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 1	1,600	4.644
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 2	1,600	5.358
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 3	500	1.296
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 4	1,000	0.644
Local Authority Sales, Fees & Charges Income Loss Support Scheme - Latest Full Year Claim (April to July Claim submitted for £7.7m, August to November Claim submitted for £5.1m)	Tbc	12.800
Sub Total Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant	4,700	24.742
Other Covid 19 Grants and Support:		
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (Round 1)	600	2.189

Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund (Round 2)	546	1.870
Adult Social Care Rapid Testing Fund	149	0.557
Workforce Capacity Fund for Adult Social Care	120	0.365
Contain Outbreak Management Fund - National Restrictions (£8 per head of population)	465	1.546
Contain Outbreak Management Fund - Local Restrictions (£2 per head of population) - from 2nd Dec - 28 days funding	200	0.387
Wellbeing for Education Return Grant	8	0.030
Local Authority Test & Trace Service Support Grant	300	0.849
Test & Trace Support Payments Grant - Main Programme Costs	25	0.062
Test & Trace Support Payments Grant - Discretionary Costs	15	0.037
Test & Trace Support Payments Grant - Discretionary Costs - extra grant to 31/1/21	10	0.013
Test & Trace Support Payments Grant - Administration	10	0.029
Next Steps Accommodation - shorter-term/interim accommodation and immediate support	105	0.255
Next Steps Accommodation - longer-term accommodation and support (2020/21 - 2023/24	161	1.853
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	50	0.173
Local Authority Compliance and Enforcement Grant	30	0.074
Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies	63	0.143
Support for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Individuals	32	0.097
Council Tax Hardship Fund	500	1.288
New Burdens Grant - Council Tax Hardship Fund and Business Rate Relief Administration Costs	9	0.027
Covid Winter Grant Scheme (DWP)	170	0.387

Business Support Grants:		
Small Business Grants Fund & Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grants - Amount of grants paid to businesses	12300	40.78
Small Business Discretionary Local Authority Grants - Amount of grants paid to businesses	617	2.12
New Burdens Grant - Small Business Grant Fund & Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grants - Administration Costs	Tbc	0.170
Local Restrictions Support Grant Scheme (LRSGS) Grants for Businesses required to close during the period between 5th November and 2nd December.	Tbc	4.240
Additional Restrictions Grant (Business Support) - Grant to distributed on the basis of £20 per head to enable Councils to support businesses over the coming months more broadly, who are a key part of the local economy.	1100	3.866
Additional Restrictions Grant (Business Support) - Top Up Grant	Tbc	0.571
New Burdens Grant to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund • Reconciliation process for the first three Business Grant Schemes (Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF), Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund (RHLGF) and the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund (LADGF)) • Post payment assurance process of the first three Business Grant schemes (SBGF, RHLGF and LADGF) • Parliamentary Constituency data exercise 	Tbc	0.077

Local Restriction Support Grants - LRSG (Open) allocations for those LAs in both Tier 2: High alert and Tier 3: Very High alert. Covering period 2nd December to 19th December	Tbc	0.721
Local Restriction Support Grants - LRSG (Closed) payment for those LAs in both Tier 2: High alert and Tier 3: Very High alert. Covering period 2nd December to 19th December	Tbc	0.037
Local Restriction Support Grants - LRSG (Open) allocations for those LAs in both Tier 2: High alert and Tier 3: Very High alert. Covering period 20th December to 4th January	Tbc	0.527
Local Restriction Support Grants - LRSG (Closed) payment for those LAs in both Tier 2: High alert and Tier 3: Very High alert. Covering period 20th December to 4th January	Tbc	0.313
Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs (CSP)	Tbc	0.109
Closed Business Lockdown Payment (Business Support) - supports businesses that have been required to close due to the national restrictions that began on 5 January 2021.	Tbc	12.717
Local Restrictions Support Grant - Closed Addendum Payment (Business Support) - covering period 5th January to 15th February	Tbc	6.360
Sub Total - Other Covid19 Grants & Support	17,585	84.839

M	05	Question from:	Councillor Paul May
Could you please provide details of all of the Council's free and earmarked reserves?			
Answer from:			Councillor Richard Samuel
<i>Total Council reserves are listed in the table below, this balance is at the start of the 2020/21 financial year and does not include planned in year drawdowns. To note General fund unearmarked balances are held in recognition of, and to manage future years budget risk, these are reviewed annually by the S151 Officer when assessing the robustness of the budget proposal.</i>			

<i>Capital Financing Reserve</i>	8,335
<i>Revenue Funding of Capital</i>	506
<i>Financial Planning & Smoothing Reserve</i>	6,285
<i>Revenue Budget Contingency Reserve</i>	4,778
<i>Invest To Save Reserve</i>	699
<i>Revenue Grants Unapplied</i>	5,649
<i>Transformation Investment Reserve</i>	3,130
<i>Restructuring & Severance Reserve</i>	2,183
 <i>Dedicated Schools Grant Reserve *</i>	 (1,250)
<i>Business Rates Reserve</i>	5,876
<i>Other</i>	2,458
<i>Sub Total - Corporate Earmarked Reserves</i>	40,444
 <i>General Service Earmarked Reserves</i>	
<i>Information Technology Reserve</i>	533
<i>Finance VAT Advice Reserve</i>	408
<i>Leisure Reserves</i>	497
<i>Waste Reprovision Reserve</i>	964
<i>Combe Down Stone Mines Interpretation Centre Reserve</i>	145
<i>Care & Health Reserve</i>	1,705
<i>Other General Service Reserves</i>	170

Sub Total - General Service Earmarked Reserves		4,422
Service Specific Reserves		2,769
Total Revenue Unearmarked and Earmarked Reserves		61,738
<p><i>* The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Reserve holds the balance of DSG to be carried forward for use in future years. Based on the separate report of DSG deployment in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as amended (Regulation 7 (4)), the 2019/20 DSG overspend has resulted in a negative reserve, for recovery against future years' DSG.</i></p>		
M	06	Question from: Councillor Paul May
The Council-owned property company ADL was set up to provide revenue support for the Council. Since its start, can you provide the audited actual net contributions received by the Council year on year?		
Answer from:		Councillor Richard Samuel
Please find the ADL income to the Council revenue budget year on year.		

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	TOTAL
LOAN INTEREST	£19,439	£74,775	£267,034	£641,196	£1,002,444
<i>DIVIDEND (Estimate)</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL RETURN	£19,439	£74,775	£267,034	£641,196	£1,002,444

M	07	Question from:	Councillor Paul May
Do you think joining adults and children's scrutiny together in one committee could be reviewed bearing in mind it represents over 80% of Council expenditure?			
Answer from:			Councillor Kevin Guy
<i>The composition and resourcing of scrutiny is a question for Council. I understand the current composition was decided following a cross party review of the previous arrangement and agreed by Full Council. Following the work on scrutiny review currently planned with support of the LGA, Council will be in a position to consider if it wishes to make any changes.</i>			
M	08	Question from:	Councillor Karen Warrington
In the Local Plan Update there are policy options relating to renewable energy which appear to be confined to solar farms and wind turbines. Can you please confirm that this premature strategy of concentrating on solar and wind energy is not set and that this Council is investigating other options, given that:			
a) there is a duty to cooperate with our neighbouring authorities;			
b) the authority has a great deal of water that can generate power, and			
c) the fact that the Government is committed to off-shore wind power generation that will supply energy to all residents by 2030?			

Can you also confirm that any renewable energy locations will not just be concentrated in one area, which appears to be North East Somerset at the moment as per the Local Plan Update accompanying maps?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

The council's current Local Plan (Policies CP3, SCR1, SCR2, SCR3 & SCR4) sets out the current approach to increasing renewable energy generation. These policies relate to all forms of renewable energy generation and not just wind and solar. However, the policies refer explicitly to wind and solar because the evidence underpinning the Local Plan highlights that these offer the greatest potential to generate renewable energy in B&NES and because national policy requires Local Plans to be more explicit about wind energy generation in particular. In reviewing the Local Plan the council has updated its evidence base in the B&NES renewable energy resource evidence base prepared by Regen SW and this study identifies potential renewable energy capacities from a range of technologies including wind, solar, hydro etc. As the Local Plan review is an update to the existing Plan, the scope and approach of the Local Plan must be maintained. Under the Duty to Co-operate, the Council is continuing to co-operate with neighbouring authorities on cross boundary strategic issues and thus will include renewable energy generation where relevant. Any such discussions will be included in the Local Plan Statement of Common Ground

However, as part of the forthcoming new Local Plan and West of England Combined Authority Spatial Development Plan, the Council has commissioned a Renewable Energy Resource Assessment Study (RERAS) jointly with South Gloucestershire Council and North Somerset Council to assess the potential energy capacities from a wide range of technologies. This joint work will facilitate the Councils to apply a strategic approach to energy production in co-operation with neighbouring authorities.

M

09

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Worldwide it has been recognised that wetland areas offer the most natural effective source of absorbing Co2 and are being lost at an alarming rate. Yet we here in BANES have the opportunity to construct our own wetland area in Keynsham and I understand there is a section 106 agreement to that effect that has not been implemented. What progress has been made in taking this forward, or is it preferred to forgo the opportunity and return the money to the developers?

Answer from:

Councillor Tim Ball

We can advise that there is a section 106 that requires Wetland provision at Keynsham former Cadburys site. The applicant has commenced footpaths and planting in connection with that provision and that work continues with a view to completion over the next 2 years at which point it will be open to the public.

M 10

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

The Council has committed to an increase in charges to address rat infestation to a cost of £130 (this charge is reduced to £60 to those on benefits). Has it not been considered that this cost may prohibit many from reporting rat infestation and cause a Public Health concern?

Answer from:

Councillor Paul Crossley

The current price rise is £138/60. The Pest Control Service is a non-statutory service that provides an excellent service to residents and businesses across the district. Price setting is a delicate balance between offering an affordable service to residents and also minimising the cost to the council. The less income we make from customers, the more the council needs to subsidise the service. This is money diverted from other services. The Council's Pest Control service is the only regional pest control service that offers a significant reduction to those on income related benefits and a very cost-effective service to others who are able to better afford it.

M 11

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

The Council appears supportive of the Government's directive to protect and restore our natural environment by planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year by promoting their own tree planting scheme. Does the Council give a supporting grant to enable organisations or individuals to proactively engage in tree planting?

Answer from:

Councillor David Wood

The Government's directive to protect and restore natural environment by planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year is national

initiative. Increasing tree cover within the district is one of this Council's key priorities (as per B&NES Local Plan Tree Policy NE6 and its Green Infrastructure Strategy) – with an ambitious target to plant 100,000 trees over the course of the current administration.

There are several organisations that Government money is passed through in order to stimulate tree planting regionally, such as The Forest of Avon, The Forestry Commission, The Woodland Trust & The Tree Council. There are various grant schemes available through these organisations which can be found on their websites. In the Council's budget there is a proposed total allocation of £150K (CIL allocation for 20/21 and 21/22 combined) to support new tree planting schemes across the district. This will fund various different planting initiatives over the course of this administration.

The Council is currently developing its Tree and Woodland Delivery Plan which will refine planting objectives within the district and we will be working with private land owners and partner organisations to deliver the planting that's needed. The Council will work up further schemes to raise voluntary donations, advise Parish/Town councils, implement a tree sponsorship scheme, and a school tree eco/education project to be launched later this year alongside its own planting programme. We can also give advice to any organisation that is thinking of submitting an application to a grant award body following the publishing of our delivery plan (approx. June 2021).

M

12

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Councillor Wood has remained particularly quiet over measures to counter air pollution in the Temple Cloud area of his ward. Does he share my doubts that installing internal purifiers at £14,000 each in an outdoor setting where their effectiveness extends over a very limited distance does not address the concerns of residents?

Answer from:

Councillor David Wood

Officers have been working to investigate the efficacy of the currently available technology, bearing in mind that for large scale, outdoor uses this is a very new and emerging potential solution. Dependant on their findings, officers will make recommendations to the Cabinet Member around the potential use of this technology in Temple Cloud.

M

13

Question from:

Councillor Vic Pritchard

An enormous amount of money has been secured from WECA by the Leader of Council for the Chew Valley recreational trail. Why did she not consult with either of the two ward councillors who both learnt of her negotiations through an article in the Chew Valley Gazette?

Answer from:

Councillors Dine Romero, Joanna Wright and Neil Butters

The funding awarded has conditions which we have been working on to satisfy. These include Planning conditions and land agreements which need to be in place prior to construction within a tight timescale. We therefore did not want to raise expectations until the funding conditions were satisfied or we were more confident the project could go ahead. There are still some risks but are making progress with the funding conditions. We will make sure you are updated when we have satisfied the funding conditions.