

# BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

## CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday, 20th May, 2021

### Present:

Councillor Kevin Guy	Leader of the Council, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Dine Romero	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing
Councillor Richard Samuel	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel
Councillor David Wood	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Tom Davies	Cabinet Member for Adults and Council House Building
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adults and Council House Building
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Transport

### 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair (Councillor Kevin Guy) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chair invited all Cabinet Members to introduce themselves.

The Chair also informed the meeting that speakers will have their opportunity to address the Cabinet before questions from public and Councillors.

### 2 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the evacuation procedure and health and safety notice.

### 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

### 5 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair used this opportunity to read out the following statement:

*'Before we start the meeting proper, I'd like to give an update on the proposal to introduce charges for certain materials at our recycling centres.*

*As Leader, and as a common sense guy, I know how important it is both that we listen to residents and that we respond swiftly to changes in circumstance.*

*Two things have happened since the decision was made to introduce charges for rubble etc at recycling centres.*

*First, I was elected Leader and I reaffirmed that we are a listening council. Cllr Wood and I have listened to local residents and parish councils who say they are concerned about the unintended consequences of these charges.*

*Second, circumstances have changed. The government have launched a consultation about consistency in recycling services in England.*

*Bringing in charges now, only to change them later following government instruction, would be confusing for residents and would add to our officers' administrative burdens.*

***It would make no sense. And I'm a common sense kind of guy***

*That's why I am announcing today that we are **putting on hold** the charges for rubble, plasterboard and tyres at recycling centres.*

***Charges will not be introduced next week.***

*We will look again at how to make alternatives savings to balance the Council's budget. As Liberal Democrats we pride ourselves on being the only party that balances the Councils books every year.*

*I'm pleased the government is seriously looking at new rules that would mean a 'win-win' for council taxpayers and DIY-ers whilst helping us deliver our recycling and climate emergency commitments.*

*It's time we started thinking differently about who pays for recycling. We need new funding streams so that council taxpayers in areas such as ours which prioritise recycling of a wide range of materials don't lose out.*

*So, we will also be lobbying central government for new legislation so that funding to recycle these materials comes from producers rather than council taxpayers.*

*There is strength in listening to different views, there is wisdom in changing our mind when circumstances change, there is integrity in balancing our books, and there's common sense in the pause to charging we are announcing today'.*

## **6 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS**

Malcolm Baldwin read out a statement [a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 1 and on the Council's website] where he said that Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and their effective implementation will be a reflection of the positive aspirations for a cleaner, healthier and more economically energised city, for businesses and residents alike, and asked the Cabinet to be consistent with their narrative.

John Chapman addressed the Cabinet by expressing his concerns regarding Blue Badge parking spaces in the city centre and also access for wheelchair users in respect of the City Centre Security report that would be presented to the Cabinet on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021.

Cllr Jess David read out a *statement [a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2 and on the Council's website]* where she asked the Council to revisit its way of managing weeds, in particular usage of weed killers and when the Council cut grass verges and green spaces.

Bob Goodman read out a *statement [a copy of which is attached to the Minutes as Appendix 3 and on the Council's website]* where he expressed his views about the state of the Council and environmental issues in the area.

## **7 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

There were 20 questions from Councillors and 1 question from members of the public.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 4 and are available on the Council's website.]*

## **8 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **9 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET**

There were none.

## **10 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

There were none.

## **11 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING**

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

## **12 HERITAGE SERVICES REVISED BUSINESS PLAN**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that it was a very difficult year for Heritage Services. Tourism has largely collapsed in many parts of the

country and has affected almost every Council. Some of the Heritage Services staff members had to be furloughed for some time, whilst others had been redeployed in helping with food parcels and at the vaccination site at the Pavilion. In so many ways the health of the Council's finances are impacted by the Heritage Services; Roman Baths had over 1 million visitors before the pandemic and other sites, like Victoria Art Gallery, had also contributed to the Council's finances. This report is about looking forward and how the Heritage Services could return to a normal level of operation. The plan details the whole concept of proper business planning, looking ahead at the investment and numbers of visitors to Council's sites. In terms of the Fashion Museum – the National Trust was always likely to exercise its option to break the lease that the Council held for the Assembly Rooms. Therefore, a new site for the Fashion Museum would need to be acquired by March 2023. Councillor Samuel expressed his hope that a tangible proposal for a new site for the Fashion Museum would be an improvement in comparison to the current location.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Dine Romero seconded the motion by saying that Heritage Services, in normal times, have been the bedrock of the Council's finances. Heritage Services provided the lifeblood for the services this Council provides, especially for the most vulnerable in our community. Due to lockdown, the sudden loss of visitors has hit the area's economy hard during the last 15 months. Councillor Romero also said that she would be looking forward to a new location for the Fashion Museum within the city, and that she would be working closely with Councillor Samuel on this matter.

The rest of the Cabinet recognised the difficult 15 months that Heritage Services endured during the pandemic and lockdown, the importance of the location for the new venue for Fashion Museum, and the aim of the proposed Heritage Services Business Plan.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

- 1) Approve the Heritage Services Business Plan 2021-2026;
- 2) Confirm that it wishes Heritage Services to continue to work to the business principles agreed by the Council Executive in 2004, as amended;
- 3) Confirm that it wishes to relocate the Fashion Museum with a supporting Collections Centre subject to a satisfactory business case being prepared.

## **13 MODERN SLAVERY**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that there were still exploitation of people taking place in our society, in all places at all times, and that the Modern Slavery Act that was passed in 2015 was an attempt to try and shift the debate towards a position where this was unacceptable in the UK and our society. The Council has a small but important part to play in that role, and the Cabinet has been asked to sign up a statement that was attached to the report, which was about highlighting Council's commitment to tackling issues. The Council, as a big public service provider in Bath and East Somerset was trying to create an environment where Council officers, who were involved in Council procurement, begin to exercise the economic power that the Council has as a procurer of services, to drive out slavery in the supply chains that provide services to the Council. The Council's commitment would be to carry out research on the high-risk supply chain areas identified and draw up a plan on how to engage with key suppliers to find out what

they were currently doing to eliminate Modern Slavery in their sub-contracts. The Council would also consider how due diligence can be continued throughout the contract as part of good contract management and not just as part of a tender process. A process of auditing of supplier contracts would be developed.

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor Alison Born seconded the motion by welcoming the report and the statement.

Councillor Dine Romero welcomed the report and added that not so long ago she chaired a well-attended webinar about modern slavery, which included police representatives. Some people were not aware that modern slavery was happening on our doorsteps and Bath and North East Somerset Council would continue to fight against it. Councillor Romero invited everyone to contact the Council straight away if they had any concerns on this matter.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to:

Sign off and publication of the Council's Modern Slavery Statement 2021/2022 by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive and publication in a prominent location on the Council's Website.

## **14 CORPORATE STRATEGY AND COVID RESPONSE UPDATE**

Councillor Richard Samuel introduced the report by saying that this document should have appeared at the end of each year of the current administration. This report covered a two-year period due to the pandemic. Councillor Samuel added that he hoped that this report would be presented to the Cabinet again next year and at the end of this administration's term to summaries what was achieved corporately by the Council over the four-year period. This was quite a comprehensive report covering what has been done in such difficult circumstances, over the last 18 months. The Council has gone through an enormous amount of change in the last two years including a completely new senior management team.

The general public health response to COVID, had consumed a lot of time and energy and corporate capacity over the last year, and this was a priority for this Council.

Nevertheless, all of this has been achieved within the budgets that the Council set. Despite the massive hits, and cuts that the Council had to make in year two of the budget, and despite the government's underfunding of lost income, the Council did not find itself in a position like Luton Council, which relies very heavily on income from Luton Airport, because the government didn't meet the full cost.

Councillor Samuel concluded his introduction of the report by thanking the Council staff on behalf of the Cabinet

Councillor Richard Samuel moved the recommendations.

Councillor David Wood seconded the motion by saying that the report has shown how much had been achieved in two years despite adverse circumstances, but also showed how much could be done in the next two years. Councillor Wood drew attention to environmental issues in Northeast Somerset which have been taken forward, particularly in planning a new recycling centre in Keynsham. litter picking

blitz on the A roads and B roads of Northeast Somerset, and Council's commitment on fly tipping.

Councillor Tim Ball also welcomed the report and thanked the Council staff for the great work done during the pandemic. Councillor Ball added that it looked like business was going back to normal, and this administration would continue delivering its priorities despite the negative impact from the pandemic.

Councillor Sarah Warren also welcomed the report and highlighted that, despite the pandemic, the Council have continued to act on the climate emergency. The Council had conducted a range of webinars on this matter. The Clean Air Zone had started on 15<sup>th</sup> March this year, the first in the country outside London. The Council had also secured funding for redeveloping energy efficient homes, developed partnerships with local organisations around ecological emergency and worked with key local businesses on a more localised economy.

Councillor Dine Romero also welcomed the report by saying that funding for free school meals (FSM) has been secured for FSM provision during summer holidays. Councillor Romero said that she was immensely proud of the Council on delivering services to the residents during the pandemic.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Cabinet agreed to note the progress on the delivery of the Corporate Strategy and the Council's response to COVID-19 during 2020/21, the details of which are highlighted in the report.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by Democratic Services