

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

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

Thursday, 31st March, 2022

Present:

Councillor Kevin Guy	Leader of the Council, Liberal Democrat Group Leader
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Planning and Licensing
Councillor Tom Davies	Cabinet Member for Adults and Council House Building
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Transport
Councillor Dine Romero	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Communities and Culture
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

23 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair, Councillor Kevin Guy, welcomed everyone watching and participating at the virtual Cabinet meeting. The Chair made the following statement:

“Due to the ongoing Covid situation and a desire to retain a level of social distancing at Council meetings at this time, we are holding this ‘informal’ virtual Cabinet meeting to enable Cabinet, Councillors and members of the public to take part. This virtual meeting will be conducted in the normal manner but, as any decisions made will not be legally enforceable, they will be formally made at the physically reduced, quorate decision-making meeting tomorrow on 1 April 2022.

We will review this approach for any future Cabinet meetings, in line with government and health guidance at that time.”

The Chair asked each of the Cabinet Members to introduce themselves.

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillor Alison Born, who had another official engagement.

25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

26 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Leader made the following urgent statement;

“As we pass two years since the temporary closure of the Approach Course, I am conscious of the importance of securing the future of this much loved and important green space. A petition to keep golf at the site received over 5000 signatures and a GoFundMe campaign attracted many generous pledges of support. This site has always been amicably shared by a variety of users. With golf on offer for over 60 years, residents and visitors of all ages and abilities have been able to play regularly or simply to have a go. Priced to be affordable and socially inclusive, the spectacle of golf played on the Common has been an iconic feature of Bath’s recreational scene.

In May last year I made a commitment to keeping a golf course at the Approach site subject to a viable operator being identified. Restoring this important leisure facility is consistent with our plan to enable more people to be more active more often, improving both health and well-being.

As we emerge from the pandemic, the time is right to look again for a provider. Together with Golf For All, this is an exciting opportunity for a vibrant café, reopening of the public toilets and enhancement of the existing green environment. Subject to council business processes, there will now be a procurement process, starting with a market engagement exercise, with a view to awarding a contract by August.

27 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 30 questions from Councillors.

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

28 STATEMENTS, DEPUTATIONS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Before moving to the statements from public and councillors, the Leader permitted Councillor Richard Samuel to make the following statement;

Councillor Samuel said that it had been stated publicly by Councillor Pritchard in a Conservative news release that public and councillors having to submit their speeches in advance so they can be vetted by Cabinet Members was an affront to democracy. He then asked the Monitoring Officer to confirm that Cabinet Members have no involvement in vetting speeches. The Monitoring Officer responded that he was happy to confirm that was the case. He added that speeches are reviewed by officers to see if they pass a threshold test and that this is purely an officer function, and Cabinet Members do not censure or vet statements.

David Redgewell made a statement about transport and planning [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*]. Councillor Sarah Warren asked if David considered that the current round of bus cuts threatens its recovery as part of the modal shift needed in response to the climate emergency. Mr Redgewell responded that he was extremely concerned. He added that we need to act with the 4 Leaders and hold them to account. When the £150 million is removed from the

network in October, things will become seriously difficult. The numbers do not show anywhere near 90% of passengers going back onto public transport. It needs some proper work to protect the bus network.

Ms Tay McLean made a statement about Bathampton Meadows [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*]. Councillor Richard Samuel asked Ms McLean if she was aware that her statement contained some inaccuracies. He explained that the acquisition by the National Trust of Bathampton Meadows and New Leaf farm were not linked purchases. The transfer of Bathampton Meadows as a community asset transfer to the National Trust was completed before the National Trust concluded negotiations to acquire the land at New Leaf farm, and were funded in different ways by the National Trust. He enquired if Ms McLean would be happy to receive a correction via email. Councillor Samuel further asked if Ms McLean was aware that this issue could have been called in by councillors as part of the scrutiny review process at the time, if they were unhappy with the decision, but that had not taken place. Ms McLean responded that she had not been aware of that.

Councillor Yuktेशwar Kumar made a statement entitled “Are we listening enough?” [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*].

Councillor Vic Pritchard made a statement about Bathampton Meadows [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*]. Councillor Samuel asked if Councillor Pritchard was aware that Mr Graham Pristo had made a complaint to the Council on this subject on 1st March 2020 raising 7 questions. He added that both Mr Pristo and the Leader had given consent for the publication of this complaint which sets out the situation clearly, concluding that there was adherence to policy, procedure and process and therefore it was not recommended that the complaint be upheld [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*]. He referred to some of the inconsistencies covered in the response to Ms McLean. He also added that, at the time of the decision, Councillor Romero had been the Leader, and Councillor Guy had taken no part in the decision-making process.

Councillor Karen Warrington made a statement about the Cleveland Bridge [*a copy of which is attached to the Minutes on the Council's website*]. Councillor Manda Rigby agreed with some aspects of the statement, particularly to keep HGVs from coming back and urged Councillor Warrington to talk to colleagues in Wiltshire to help make that happen. She asked Councillor Warrington how she could reconcile the B&NES newsroom statement with her own statement, and further whether Councillor Warrington would acknowledge that it has been publicly stated that this is a complex project, needing bespoke solutions. Councillor Warrington confirmed she had read the Council statement and wondered if the organisers were therefore not telling the truth, and clarified that it was not a criticism of officers, but of the way the Cabinet had handled the communication on this issue.

29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the approval of the minutes of 11th November 2021 to Cabinet on 1st April 2022.

30 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

There were none.

31 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

There were none.

32 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

33 ADOPTION WEST CONTRACT EXTENSION

Councillor Dine Romero introduced this report. She explained that this was the formal request to extend the existing Adoption West contract by 5 years, to amend the financial arrangements and the service specification. She explained that a small extension of 3 months had already been agreed by all partners, the 6 Local Authorities who wholly own this company. This company has well established governance, including cross-Authority and cross-party scrutiny. Councillor Romero then moved the recommendations.

Councillor Richard Samuel seconded the recommendations, as a pragmatic approach to provide future stability for this important service.

RESOLVED unanimously

1. To note that all other 5 Local Authority owners of Adoption West have approved the contract extension through their respective Executives;
2. To approve the extension of the Commissioning Agreement with Adoption West for the delivery of services as per the original contractual specification, by 5 years until 28 February 2027; and directs the Director Of Children's Services and Education in consultation with the Directors of Finance, and Legal and Democratic Services and in consultation with the Cabinet member for Children's Services and Education to agree in writing, in accordance with clause 3.2 of the Commissioning Agreement, a five year contract extension and execute any and all related documents required to implement that extension.
3. To note that the AW Board, which Mary Kearney-Knowles, Director of Children's Services and Education is part of; is unanimously supportive of the contract extension. This recognises that Adoption West is realising its potential, and delivers a good quality, consistent offer for children and adoptive families across its operational footprint.

34 HERITAGE SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2022-2027

Councillor Dine Romero introduced this report and moved the recommendations. She explained how the pandemic and lockdown had highlighted the considerable reliance the Council places on income that Heritage Services brings in, and there has inevitably been a reduction in the number of visitors. Despite the outlook being unclear with the pattern of visitor travel remaining hard to predict, performance is expected to recover for 2024/25. Nevertheless, the plan does seek to build up visitor numbers as well as address the relocation of the Fashion Museum so I am seeking approval for a new charity to support the Fashion Museum. This will be akin to the Roman Baths Foundation with sustainability and climate emergency embedded within its projects. There are also other opportunities to build on, having achieved the second UNESCO inscription. There are also some more prosaic plans, including fixing the Victoria Art Gallery roof.

Councillor Richard Samuel, in seconding the report, commended the new Head of Heritage Services and his team in doing a great job in providing some good solutions in this report.

RESOLVED unanimously to;

1. Approve the Heritage Services Business Plan; and
2. Approve, in principle, the creation of a charity to support the new Fashion Museum and Collections Study Centre Project

The meeting ended at 8.14 pm

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services