

## **CABINET MEETING – 14 JULY 2022**

### **STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

1. Jenny Newman – Ponds in Victoria Park (also presenting a petition on behalf of children from the Aspire Academy)
2. Shiva Page – Lack of mitigations for low waged, chronically unwell or disabled residents in the Clean Air Zone, Low Traffic Neighbourhood and Active Travel schemes

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Shaun Hughes
<p>It is becoming increasingly difficult for businesses and residents that own non-CAZ compliant vehicles to access the motorway, these are residents and businesses that cannot in the current economic situation afford to upgrade their vehicles even with grant assistance, the situation is likely to get worse as Bristol introduce their CAZ and cut off another motorway access route.</p> <p>Do you think that for BANES council tax paying residents and businesses there should be some dispensation to allow them to access the motorway via the outskirts of Bath?</p> <p>It is very important that we work with everyone on our journey towards Carbon neutrality and not unfairly burden our residents, local businesses and employers.</p> <p>Surely by pushing non-compliant vehicles on longer detoured routes and pushing our carbon footprint into other people's back yard rather than reducing it we cannot genuinely claim to be helping the environment. It's a global issue and we're all in it together.</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>The Clean Air Zone (CAZ) was introduced because of the need to urgently reduce levels of nitrogen dioxide within the city due to the detrimental impacts pollution has on human health. Significant periods of public consultation took place in the development of the scheme to identify how businesses and residents could be supported in bringing forward the replacement of their vehicles and around 800 vehicles have now been replaced through our innovative Financial Assistance Scheme. Further help has also been provided in a raft of exemptions to support those who need assistance due to reasons of affordability or accessibility. It should be remembered that private cars are not charged to enter the CAZ.</i></p> <p><i>The Bath Clean Air Zone Annual Report 2021 documents how the collective effort by everyone has resulted in nitrogen dioxide levels</i></p>			

*reducing by 21% within the zone and 22% in the urban areas outside of the zone. It is unlikely that this would have been achieved without the introduction of the scheme.*

*A dispensation or exemption for residents was considered as part of the feedback from the public consultations and it was concluded that such a dispensation would undermine the need for behaviour change and the need to reduce the dangerous levels of nitrogen dioxide in the shortest time possible.*

*As part of the monitoring and evaluation of the scheme, traffic flows on key routes around the south and west of Bath have been regularly monitored to understand any impacts from increasing number of non-compliant vehicles using potential diversionary routes. The outcome of this monitoring can be viewed in Appendix 2 of the Bath Clean Air Zone Annual Report 2021*

*<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Appendix%202%20Investigating%20traffic%20displacement%20concerns.pdf>.*

*Key points from monitoring carried out on Lansdown Lane (a potential route through to the M4 motorway) in April 2022 indicate that when compared to August 2021, there has been at least a 30% reduction in the number of LGVs travelling along Lansdown Lane. This monitoring also demonstrated that the percentage of compliant LGV and HGV vehicles travelling along this route has also increased.*

*This monitoring does not indicate that non-compliant vehicles are being displaced onto routes onto the motorway by avoiding the CAZ, however, it will be continued in future months so that any emerging trends can be assessed.*

*The CAZ Project Team are always happy to speak with businesses who are experiencing difficulties with complying with the CAZ to understand if any further help is possible.*

**M**

**02**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

In the Lib Dem B&NES Liveable Neighbourhoods information for the public consultation, the council haven't put in any maps of the main routes and key network across the whole of Bath. Without the maps, people can't see how they will be affected. Therefore, everyone should be part of the consultation. Instead, B&NES Council under your direction have, it appears, used the consultants, AECOM, who are now consulting at a very limited street level. This doesn't let residents take the wider view. People don't just care about the street they live in, but about their whole city journey and the lives of their neighbours. This is poor engagement. It's hard to see how this can be the foundation for effective delivery of the Liveable Neighbourhood policies. Poor engagement will also turn many residents against the positive possibilities of people friendly streets. Is this how AECOM have advised that you run the consultations, and if there are differences, please share them?

What discussions have you had with AECOM conducting only micro-level, limited-street consultations?  
How are you going to retrofit broader public consultation into the process?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*The Liveable Neighbourhoods programme is being delivered in line with the strategy adopted in July 2020. In line with this strategy, in June 2021 Cabinet agreed to proceed with the current 15 priority liveable neighbourhood areas. Between November 2021 and January 2022, a wide engagement was then undertaken which sought to identify key themes for each neighbourhood. Respondents expressed a desire for changes to improve pedestrian safety, reduce 'rat running' and speeding, improve cycling infrastructure and improve the public realm. The current stage of the delivery programme is co-design with the communities in the 15 areas. These workshops are focused on understanding people's 'lived experience' of their communities - what's good, what needs to be nurtured, key movement patterns and potential interventions. So far, they have been well received. The project team are also engaging with school children, young adults and other lesser heard voices within these communities to understand their thoughts and concerns, and what they would also like to see improved. The next step will be to feed back all that's been heard at a series of exhibitions that will be open to all. The team will then engage again at the preliminary design stage and ultimately consult at the detailed design stage, either prior to implementation or via an experimental TRO approach. We are far from any final decisions being made and there will be ample opportunity for everyone to be part of the process.*

**M**

**03**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

What actions have been taken to include children's voices and views across the region into the Liveable Neighbourhood consultation? Please give full details?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*As part of the liveable neighbourhoods programme, Sustrans are providing support with additional engagement activities to increase the involvement of underrepresented groups alongside the main co-design workshops for the Phase 1 schemes. Activities to support youth engagement, resident engagement as well as support for a city-wide stakeholder event are taking place.*

*Youth specific activities are being delivered in all 15 Liveable Neighbourhood areas, the engagement involves interactive drop-in sessions with young people, including carers where suitable. Sessions are taking place at organised activities in schools, after school clubs, youth*

*clubs, through nurseries and at community events. At these sessions large maps are being used to gather information with post-it and sticky labels to gain an understanding of what young people think of their street or area.*

*In three Liveable Neighbourhood areas there has been more in-depth engagement with young people, priority has been given to more deprived areas where possible, which so far has led to co-design workshops taking place with young people from Foxhill and Southdown. The co-design sessions provide an introduction to the concept of liveability, an audit of their street either physically or virtually, and the development of ideas on improving liveability in their street or area.*

*The outputs from the above sessions will be used to inform designs.*

*The youth engagement dialogue (in addition to the activities with other underrepresented groups) will continue as the liveable neighbourhoods programme proceeds through the prelim design/further engagement and detailed design/final consultation stages.*

<b>M</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Joanna Wright
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As Ward councillor for Lambridge I am repeatedly being asked by residents and local businesses where are the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) in Lambridge? On repeated occasions CEOs have been asked to come to Lambridge to fine vehicles for overstaying on 30-minute waiting zone in the Larkhall Square. It would appear that the CEO officers are directed by senior management to focus on the centre of Bath, thus many parts of the city are left with no CEOs checking on the misuse of parking spaces, including Lambridge. With the recent consultation of Resident Parking Zones (RPZ) in Walcot the need, I have asked repeatedly how will the Council be increasing the number of CEOs to oversee the many more cars that will now use Lambridge as the Park and Ride on the East of Bath.

Please can you give me full details of what CEOs have been Lambridge Ward in the last 3 months?

Please can you give full details of the number of extra CEOs that will be recruited to work across the city to maintain the RPZs and the misuse of parking spaces in non-RPZ sites across the city?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Manda Rigby
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*As you'll no doubt be aware the council is not immune to the national challenges facing many sectors across the country that are actively looking to recruit staff, noting that earlier this month it was reported that for the first time on record the number of job vacancies was greater than the number of individuals seeking employment.*

*The role of Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO), which can be challenging to recruit to under more usual circumstances due to often inaccurate national stereotypes, experiences higher turnover than other council jobs due to the physical nature of the role.*

*Currently the council has 13 vacancies out of a total of 30 posts and we are working to address this shortfall and the national recruitment challenges by reviewing the way the role is both advertised and how the role is delivered operationally. As a role that covers shifts across the working day, 7 days a week, it is often perceived as not attractive or compatible to many potential candidates that have ongoing commitments; for example, those with young families, or those that are in full time education. An example of some early and successful changes have been implemented are the use of financial incentives such as golden hello and retention payments.*

*Even without these pressures, our CEOs are typically unable to respond reactively to reports of vehicles that are alleged to be in contravention as often the vehicles will have left by the time our officer arrives, and this reduces their effectiveness and impacts on other locations. However, these reports provide valuable intelligence that the team use to proactively deploy officers to areas at specific times in order to address consistent issues, although of course resources may also have an impact on this.*

*Whilst it may appear that team resources are prioritised within the city centre, this is more a reflection of the fact that within the city centre there exists a greater concentration of restrictions and locations where motorists are more likely to exercise selfish behaviour. We have a statutory duty to enforce a valid restriction and officers will seek meet this duty by balancing the resources that are available, with intelligence from the community a key part of this. Reports can be submitted to the Parking team at [parking@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:parking@bathnes.gov.uk).*

*Technology also has a key role to play in providing more effective and efficient coverage, particular when resources are limiting. Whilst we are unable to use our vehicles equipment with Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras to issue automatic Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) we can use them to survey vehicles in permit areas. We operate the first compliant electric moped in the country fitted with these cameras, providing greater flexibility compared to a car as its able to stop in small spaces to investigate a possible vehicle without a permit. Planned changes this later this year to our pay and display equipment so that cash payments are linked to our enforcement system will allow CEOs to cover car parks using our ANPR equipment in the same way (we will still have to have officers issue PCN directly) and this will release staff to cover on street areas.*

*Since April 1<sup>st</sup> this year, locations within the Lambridge Ward have received 229 visits by a CEO, recording 148 observations resulting a 49 PCNs being issued where compliance wasn't achieved. Whilst there are no proposals to add additional CEO posts to the team, the proposals described above are intended to reduce the number of vacancies and improve the effectiveness of CEOs so that these additional areas can be ensured of regular coverage.*

<b>M</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>In November 2021 I asked this council for financial training from the Local Government Authority (LGA) and was told that it was not possible for me to have this training. The Treasury Management Code of 2017 states it is the responsibility of the relevant Officer for an Authority to ensure that all council members have access to relevant financial training.</p> <p>I have contacted both the CEO of B&amp;NES and the Section 151 Officer and asked for financial training since November 2021. It is now July 2022 and over eight months have passed and there has been no progression with financial training for myself or any Councillor who does not sit on the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee. Yet every councillor is responsible for signing off the Council's budget.</p> <p>As Leader of Council are you able to put in place proper financial training for all Cllrs so that councillors can properly fulfil our legal responsibility to sign off this council's budgets having been given appropriate financial training?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Tom Davies
<p><i>The Council does not have an approved budget at an adequate level to fund external training courses for individual Councillors. To accommodate Councillor Wright's request, access has been given to the Council online finance training modules that give a comprehensive overview of Local Government Finance and Financial Management. In addition, the Council's S151 Officer and Deputy S151 Officer will be providing an all-Councillor workshop on Council Finances in October to help Councillors prepare for the 2023/24 budget proposal. This workshop will have the added advantage of being specifically tailored to BANES Council's finances, thereby ensuring that it will be an effective use of Councillors' time and focus on the areas of particular relevance to their role as BANES Councillors.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>Many residents are unaware of the ecological emergency issues declared by B&amp;NES Council and the ongoing need to restore habitat and nature recovery. Many see the long grass and plants in verges as purposeful neglect by the council. What pro-active and long-term messaging are you creating to be delivered throughout B&amp;NES to enable residents of all ages and backgrounds to help support them and make better sense of the changes to grass cutting and weeds on the highway?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor David Wood
<p><i>There is information about the Council's Let's Get Buzzing project on the Council website which follows guidance from high profile,</i></p>			

*independent national campaigns such as The Blue campaign, and Plantlife's Road Verges and No Mow May initiatives; and in line with the practices of most other district and unitary authorities. The Let's Get Buzzing campaign has also been adopted by parish and town councils, such as Saltford and Radstock.*

*Since September, B&NES has been inviting residents to help contribute to the Let's Get Buzzing project by volunteering to help improve verges as part of the Neighbourhood Nature Area scheme. There is an explanation of the scheme on the Council's website and an information pack will shortly be sent to all ward councillors to help publicise and promote the scheme.*

**M**

**07**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

In May's Cabinet I addressed a question to you asking "How will the Council begin to work with the UNESCO Slave Route Project to question the social, cultural and economic inequalities inherited from this tragedy? Will B&NES Officers read the Jan 2021 Healing the Wounds of Slave Trade and Slavery report and report back with immediate and practical steps towards connecting with the Slave Route project to Bath with the Council taking a lead in this work?"

Your response stated:

"The World Heritage Centre's primary purpose is to help visitors to Bath understand what a World Heritage Site is and why Bath was inscribed as one. It is not a space where a detailed history of Bath is explored and the press release reflected this. However, in the permanent displays in the centre there is prominent reference made to the fact that some of the wealth that created Georgian Bath (and hence one aspect of the UNESCO listing – the classical, Palladian architecture) was derived from Britain's involvement in the Transatlantic Trade. Further to this, Heritage Services would like to undertake a more in-depth exploration of this subject in the temporary display area of the centre. The exhibition programme for this space will be established post opening. It is worth noting that other institutions in Bath have, and continue to interrogate, the history of Bath's involvement in Transatlantic Enslavement. Displays at Bath Abbey and the Holburne Museum will hopefully be complemented shortly by renovated interpretation at Beckford's Tower. These sites all have direct connections to enslavement and it is wholly appropriate and highly relevant to their locations and specific histories that they have undertaken to exploring these connections. Whilst the World Heritage Centre can introduce the story to visitors to Bath, they will then be able to explore it in detail at these other venues during their visit to the city."

Are you aware that using the term "Transatlantic Trade", in this response, is in itself a way of obfuscating the role of slavery and fails to address the healing needed. The lack of active historical information about the role of the "Transatlantic Slave Trade" and the huge profits that many in the city of Bath made from this human misery is at the centre of the question and the real need for Leadership in Bath and North East Somerset is the ongoing challenge that is being asked of you. What are you going to do to create immediate and practical steps towards connecting with the UNESCO Slave Route Project to Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage Site visited by millions every year?



<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Kevin Guy
<i>At this time there are no further plans for B&amp;NES to connect with the UNESCO Slave Route Project.</i>		
<b>M</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Joanna Wright
What provisions are you making to put in place the Council owned site at Deadmill Lane/Gloucester Road into an appropriate allotment and possible orchard site in Lambridge? What is the timescale for delivery of this?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor David Wood
<p><i>The land at Deadmill Lane was given to the Council for use as an allotment as part of the S106 agreement relating to the development of Southbourne Gardens but the agreement did not involve a transfer of funds for the development of new allotments at Deadmill Lane and the £60,000 transferred to the Council was used to create new allotment provision at Fairfield Valley.</i></p> <p><i>The principal obstacle to the development of the new allotment site at Deadmill Lane is the requirement to provide new pedestrian or vehicular access to facilitate vegetation clearance and ongoing maintenance. There is currently no budget for such a scheme.</i></p> <p><i>The Council has a right of access for vehicles and pedestrians across the adjacent land which has been recently subject to a planning application and refusal for the development of 15 affordable dwellings. The Council's Parks Department had responded to the planning application consultation requesting that the developer provide a vehicular and pedestrian access to the Councils land at Deadmill Lane as a condition of planning permission.</i></p> <p><i>In the event that there are any future planning applications relating to the adjacent land, representation for new access into the Council land will be made. In the absence of a budget to progress the scheme there is no timescale for the development of new allotments or community growing spaces on the land.</i></p>		

<b>M</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>Residents in the ward of Lambridge wish to run services under a public highway in a duct, using approved contractors, supervised by B&amp;NES and fulfilling all regulatory requirements.</p> <p>They want to do this so that they can charge EVs, feed solar panel energy back to their homes from their gardens across the street and facilitate home working – all things aligned with confronting the climate emergency.</p> <p>Such needs are envisaged and facilitated by NRSWA Section 50, which provides a suitable licencing regime “...the street authority may grant a licence permitting a person ... to place... apparatus in the street...”</p> <p>NRSWA -The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), supported by relevant Regulations and Codes of Practice, provides a legislative framework for street works by undertakers (including utility companies) and works for road purposes – to the extent that these must be co-ordinated by street authorities.</p> <p>B&amp;NES council has to date refused residents this NRSWA Section 50 permission.</p> <p>What actions are the Council taking to give residents permission to put ducts under the pavement to charge electric vehicles and or run cable from their homes from solar chargers?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Manda Rigby
<p><i>The New Roads and Street Works Act was written at a time before solar energy and electric vehicles were widely available. Our Highways team are concerned that a Section 50 licence does not provide the council with the necessary protection from liability and give it sufficient certainty should future works in the highway be needed to access or repair that cable and its ducting. This differs to when utility companies place their cables within the highway because these are ‘adopted’, which places certain responsibilities on them and cannot necessarily be replicated on a private individual through a Section 50 licence.</i></p> <p><i>The council is keen to enable more people to change to electric vehicles and to use solar power, but the placing of private electrical cables beneath a public road requires certain safeguards and guarantees that we are not currently satisfied can be sufficiently provided through a Section 50 licence.</i></p> <p><i>We understand the government is reviewing this matter and we are also making legal enquiries as to how we can enable residents to do this whilst ensuring the council does not become liable for dealing with any future incidents that may arise from private electrical cables within the public highway.</i></p>			

<b>M</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>Presently it is very challenging for anyone to navigate the many supposed offerings for reductions on train travel, particularly with regard to young people accessing education. I have looked online at the GWR website and searched for information on the Scholars Scheme. I could not find any reference to it. It is quite clear that many young people are unable to use the Scholars Scheme as neither the train operator or school have informed the student of this reduction, nor is there any information on the GWR website how, so how is anyone to know?</p> <p>This is not fair, and fares should be fair for young people attending education.</p> <p>As Cabinet Member who leads on issues around young children what will you be undertaking to make sure all schools across B&amp;NES offer students the Scholars Scheme?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Dine Romero
<p><i>The response below was sent out following the meeting:</i></p> <p><i>We are working with schools to promote sustainable and independent travel to schools; advocating for affordable fares across the public transport network with WECA and other transport providers such as the Rail Operators is a key part of this. We will shortly be recruiting a school travel officer and will ensure that they pass on all information received regarding travel offers to schools.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
What has the East Express Feasibility Study cost to date? What is the forecasted carbon output of this bus route?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Sarah Warren
<p><i>The West of England Combined Authority funded a feasibility study into a bus service on the East of Bath. The East of Bath Express Feasibility Study has cost approximately £130,000 (2020/21 financial year). The study investigated the potential demand for a high frequency direct, metro style bus service along the A4 corridor between Chippenham and Bath.</i></p> <p><i>We are in the process of preparing the report for publication and will release it in due course, containing detail of carbon emissions for</i></p>			

<i>the options modelled.</i>		
<b>M</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Joanna Wright
Please can you list the actionable quantified roadmap to carbon neutrality that you are overseeing?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Sarah Warren
<p><i>The latest progress report on climate action was brought to Council in March and can be found here: <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s70850/Climate%20Emergency%20Annual%20Report.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s70850/Climate%20Emergency%20Annual%20Report.pdf</a> with the outline route map in the Appendix here: <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s70936/Appendix%20-%20Climate%20Report.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s70936/Appendix%20-%20Climate%20Report.pdf</a>. As noted in this year's report, more detailed work on the route map is being undertaken in 2022-23 and will be reported in the next annual report to Council.</i></p>		
<b>M</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Joanna Wright
What actions have you taken as Cabinet Member to work with housing associations such as Curo and LiveWest to deliver safe cycle storage solutions to many residents who live in properties with no place to store a bicycle?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Sarah Warren
<i>We are committed to improving safe cycle storage facilities and will be trialling on-street cycle storage hangers by the end of 2022.</i>		
<b>M</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Joanna Wright
Brighton is set to become the first city in the UK to take action against second homeowners and holiday lets after a wave of buyers during the coronavirus pandemic pushed house prices to over £500,000. Local Green Councillors have voted to ask officials to draw up proposals which will ban new-build second homes and holiday lets in some areas of East Sussex.		

What actions are you and the Cabinet putting in place to deal with the many second homeowners in Bath, the holiday lets and the air B&B Accommodation that has now made Bath and surrounding areas unaffordable to many local residents?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Tom Davies

*Preparation of the new Local Plan for B&NES is now underway, and this provides the opportunity to review the evidence and consider the options for introducing controls over new second homes and short-term holiday lets in the district. Seeking to meet the housing needs of residents is an existing Council commitment and will be a priority for the new Local Plan.*

**M**      **15**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

What regulations are in place for short term lets in the city of Bath? How could B&NES implement a citywide landlord licensing scheme that sets standards for rented properties and funds a bigger Private Housing inspection team?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Tom Davies

*The regulatory framework for dealing with the residential private rented sector is complex. However, it does include some scope for the licensing of the private rented sector and which has been adopted by the Council. The Council therefore already requires all houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the city, and larger HMOs outside of the city, to be licensed. The licensing fee is ring-fenced to fund the operation of the scheme. However, this licensing scheme will expire at the end of next year and the Council will be reviewing future options, including further licensing models.*

**M**      **16**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

The continued roll out and testing of VOI Scooters in the WECA region is a great benefit to many residents. However, as a councillor on the east of Bath this extension has failed to address the real dangers on the London Road due to the lack of cycle/scooter infrastructure and the high numbers of accidents already taking place for cyclists. The VOI scooters have been programmed not to work on the canal and nor can a resident use them to get to the University using North Road. This is therefore making journey purposely long and putting many residents in danger on a road already littered with

signs on the cycle infrastructure due to the works on Cleveland Bridge.

Please can you let me know:

Was the University included in part of the discussions about the route to the campus at Claverton?

Why has North Road been avoided? This seriously impacts many on the east of Bath and fails to deliver sustainable connectivity?

There appears to be no connection between Batheaston and Bathampton - why?

Will the Canal and River Trust be asked for permission to use the canal route?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*The response below was sent out following the meeting:*

*The Voi e-scooter trial is being undertaken by WECA, and WECA will be able to respond to issues pertaining to the trial.*

**M**

**17**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

Ella Roberta Adoo Kissi-Debrah died on 15 February 2013 at the age of nine as a result of asthma contributed to by exposure to excessive air pollution in London. She was a bright, talented girl who loved sports, music and reading. Ella was the first person in England to have air pollution named as a cause of death by a coroner, but every year tens of thousands of people around the UK are killed by air pollution. In his report, the coroner urged the government to take action to bring air quality up to minimum World Health Organization (WHO) standards.

In a recent press release on air pollution in Bath (16th June 2022) it states:

“The report notes that while air quality across the city has improved - with a clear decreasing trend in NO2 concentrations across all 123 monitoring sites - three sites within the zone continue to exceed the EU and UK limit value of 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air (µg/m3).

These sites at Walcot Parade, Wells Road and Dorchester Street, remain a concern for the council and will be carefully monitored. In 2019, 11 monitoring sites in Bath exceeded the limit value”

Please can you give full pollution details of the data for the sites at Walcot Parade, Wells Road and Dorchester Street and how they differ from the World Health Organisation air quality standards?

What is the time scale left for the Council to be compliant in the shortest time possible? Will the Council be fined?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*Full pollution details of the data for the sites at Walcot Parade, Wells Road and Dorchester Street can be found in the 2022 Air Quality*

*Annual Status Report for which can be found at this link:*

[https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Environment/Pollution/final\\_asr\\_bnes\\_2022.pdf](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/sitedocuments/Environment/Pollution/final_asr_bnes_2022.pdf)

*The World Health Organisation published revised air quality guidelines in 2021 where they recommended that the air quality guideline level for nitrogen dioxide is reduced to 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup>; this guideline level remains a recommendation and is not currently incorporated in UK legislation.*

*The Council was required to achieved compliance with the Ministerial Directions in the shortest time possible and by 2021 at the latest.*

*The question of whether the Council should be fined is a matter for the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU). However, the Cabinet Report makes reference to recent comments from JAQU where ‘JAQU understands that local monitoring shows that Bath is making good progress towards achieving legal compliance for Nitrogen Dioxide levels’.*

<b>M</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
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The B&NES Liberal Democrats brought a motion to the March 2022 council meeting titled “Cleaning up our rivers”.

Please can you let me know what work is the cabinet currently pursuing to reduce the cumulative pressure from development on our water and sewage systems?

Have you asked the Chair of the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy, Development and Scrutiny Panel, Cllr Karen Walker to invite the Chief Executives of Wessex Water and Bristol Water plus senior representatives from the Environment Agency and Natural England to attend a meeting to answer questions on the current levels of sewage discharge?

Have you asked from this date onwards, in all planning consultation responses for major developments, to clarify which treatment works will be managing the sewage; whether it has the information available to assess the impact on the number or duration of sewage discharges into local rivers or seas, and if it does have this information to share it (noting that this can only be requested not required)?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor David Wood
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*We are in the process of setting up a scrutiny inquiry day to examine our new responsibilities within the Environment Act 2021 and also following the Lib Dem Full Council Motion March 24<sup>th</sup> 2022 ‘Cleaning up our Rivers’ -*

*We are working closely with Wessex Water and Bristol Water through the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership and are working with them*

*both on their next investment plans for the period 2025-30 to help improve the water quality of our rivers*

*Planning applications don't take a blanket approach as it wouldn't be relevant to all major applications, but we consult our Drainage colleagues and/or the Environment Agency in cases where there are some planning implications for discharge into any watercourse or drainage matters.*

**M**

**19**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

In May 2022, I wrote to Dan Norris, Mayor of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) about my concerns over Cleveland Bridge and I received the following email from Dan Norris.

"The original funding bid for the Cleveland Bridge works, submitted by Bath and North East Somerset Council, can be found here:

<https://travelwest.info/app/uploads/2020/05/Local-Highways-Maintenance-Challenge-Fund-LHMCf-02-Cleveland-Bridge-Application-Form-FINAL.pdf>

Based on this funding bid, the works to Cleveland Bridge received a £3.5million grant from the Department for Transport allocated in February 2020.

Details regarding this funding award is found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/869349/challenge-fund-schemes.csv/preview](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/869349/challenge-fund-schemes.csv/preview)

As indicated in the funding bid, the Department for Transport provided the grant funding on the basis that the local authority would meet any additional costs over and above the requested amount.

The Department for Transport (DfT) also provides funding for road maintenance through the Maintenance Block grant (MB) which is directly allocated to the West of England Combined Authority for road maintenance. The allocation for Bath and North East Somerset Council was £5,915,274 in 2021/22 and for 2022/23, £6,997,343 for road maintenance activities. This includes for bridges and structures, potholes and road resurfacing works. The allocations provided are detailed within the following report, that was provided to the West of England Combined Authority Committee on the 28th January 2022:

<https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s3292/15b%20-%20CRSTS%20report.pdf>

As the Maintenance Block funding is transferred each year to the local authorities for the maintenance of their local road network, Bath and North East Somerset Council will of course be responsible for local maintenance priorities on their local road network including the allocation of this funding into maintenance priorities, and it is therefore for Bath and North East Somerset Council and local councillors, to prioritise this spending on road maintenance, bridges and structures. If additional funding was required for the Cleveland Bridge works, then the maintenance block funding allocation provided could be utilised to undertake the works.

Regarding the issue of lorries utilising the bridge, Bath and North East Somerset Council, as the Local Highway Authority, can of course determine any traffic restrictions on the bridge through the traffic regulation order (TRO) process. This can include weight limits on bridges if required. Any decision regarding weight limits on the bridge would of course be subject to a consultation process, with the final decision being made by the Local Highway Authority."

As Cleveland Bridge now has no known date for being fully reopened how much will the overspend on Cleveland Bridge be?



<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Manda Rigby	
<p><i>The council announced in April that traffic management will remain as investigations continue into how to solve the complex engineering issues discovered in January during the agreed repairs to the Grade II* listed structure.</i></p> <p><i>The corrosion is a safety critical issue and was revealed when sections of concrete were removed from the hanger bars which support the main trusses of the bridge. The bars are essential to maintaining its structural integrity but are not commonly found in bridges. The engineering solution is proving a technical challenge as any solution will be bespoke and there are few experts in this historic methodology. We will be providing a fuller update regarding the hanger bars in the coming weeks.</i></p> <p><i>The extensive repairs will be assisted by a £3.5m grant from the <u>Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund</u>, and by the Department For Transport's headroom uplift for maintenance. The forecast cost will be updated once the hanger bar repairs options are agreed.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>As part of the team that helps to organise Kidical Mass in Bath, I am aware that Saskia Heijltjes has written to the Council on several occasions asking for Council support at the end of the bike rides from the Council's Travel Road Show Team.</p> <p>I have also reached out for support to WECA's Travel Road Show Team asking for support only to be told that all support for this should come from B&amp;NES Council.</p> <p>It appears to me that there are a enormous number of consultations and policies to support active travel, yet when a community action group supporting this activity, which is a core council strategy, approaches B&amp;NES, the Council has very little, if any resources to offer. This is really not good enough in light of the Climate Emergency.</p> <p>To date we have still not received any response of the support that B&amp;NES can offer.</p> <p>Please can you let us know why?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>		Councillor Sarah Warren	
<p><i>Unfortunately, it won't be possible to provide these services on the 17th July. However, we are working with Saskia to provide a Dr Bike booking on the 24<sup>th</sup> September, a full day before the next Kidical Mass, and to support the Kidical Mass with Roadshow representatives on the 25<sup>th</sup>. As the Roadshow team are funded by the DfT Capability Fund which ends September 30<sup>th</sup>, we are unable to confirm bookings after for May until the DfT announces a replacement funding stream.</i></p>			

<b>M</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
Are you aware as the Co-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing board, that this board is not filmed or made available to all residents on the Council's YouTube channel? Please can you find out why the Health and Wellbeing board is the only board not accessible to the residents in Bath and North East Somerset via the variety of on-line connectivity options available to the Council?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Dine Romero
<i>When webcasting meetings began the small team only had the staffing and technology resources available to webcast a limited number of selective Council meetings including Cabinet, Council, Scrutiny and Planning. This did not include any partnership meetings such as the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board. I will ask the team whether they can review the current arrangements and whether it would be possible to webcast the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board meetings in the future.</i>			
<b>M</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Joanna Wright
<p>Presently residents who take on a B&amp;NES allotment receive a letter of eviction for not maintaining their plot as set out in the B&amp;NES allotment policy. In many cases this leads to many residents instantly giving up on their allotment plot and returning the plot often in the state that they found it, in poor condition. This cycle then repeats itself. Many residents have complained that they feel that they are being unfairly treated and the letter sent, sends a message of overwhelming failure and that the Council appears uncaring.</p> <p>As a ward Councillor I have repeatedly heard on the doorstep from residents about the issue of eviction from allotments and those, in some cases with mental health issues, are reluctant to sign up for an allotment due to the perceived view that they will be evicted. Therefore, the benefits of the allotments are lost for many residents that would value the health and wellbeing outcomes that allotments offer.</p> <p>Please can you ask the appropriate officers to examine allotment policy, particularly with reference to eviction letters?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor David Wood
<i>Since the onset of the Covid pandemic there has been a nationwide increase in the demand for allotment plots and this demand has not abated. The average waiting time for an allotment plot has doubled to two years and is greater than that on some sites. Currently, there are circa 900 applicants waiting for a plot on the Council waiting list. It is important therefore, that allotment sites are actively managed, and that underutilised and unused plots are made available to waiting applicants.</i>			

*To this effect, Council allotment sites are inspected 3 times each during the growing season. Plots are inspected to ensure that they are being adequately cultivated by the tenants. Plots deemed to be not adequately cultivated are sent a Notice giving the tenant 4 weeks to remedy the issues. Tenants may also be sent a notice for other reasons, commonly rubbish or sapling removal. Tenants are required to have 75% of their plot cultivated. New tenants are exempt from inspection for the first 3 months of their tenancy and are expected to have cultivated around 25% of the plot after the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 months. Typically, the allotments officer will take a reasoned approach to new tenants, provided that an effort has been made to start cultivating the plot after the 1<sup>st</sup> three months. Consideration is given to those unable to tend to their plots due to illness, or bereavement. The allotments officer is open to contact from tenants by phone or email to discuss in detail the requirements of the notice sent to them, to answer any of their questions and listen to any of their concerns.*

**M**

**23**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

The plans for a ramp to replace the steps from the canal into Sydney Gardens is it believed were dropped due to budget issues. The new entrance from Beckford Road presently has no drop kerbs so is inaccessible to people on wheels coming from the canal and crossing the road. Please can you give full details of how the with accessibility issues and using wheels will be able to access Sydney Gardens other than making a long detour to the front of the park?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*The pedestrians crossing at the Sydney Rd / Beckford Rd / Warminster Rd signalised junction provides a safer option to cross the A36 and access the park, we will keep under review the need for any further provision.*

**M**

**24**

**Question from:**

Councillor Joanna Wright

Please can you give a full update on the Citizen's Panel that you organised to deliberate the Active Travel measures for North Road?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*Britain Thinks the Consultants appointed by the Council to undertake the Citizen's Panel on active travel have now completed the project. The draft Report was circulated to the Cabinet Members Cllr Manda Rigby and myself on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. We are now in the*

*process of examining the report with Bath University who assisted us in sponsoring the panel. We will shortly be looking to make the report available to the Council and the general public. The “call for evidence” as part of the information gathering to assist the panel in their deliberations received over 750 responses and we are aware that there will considerable interest in their findings.*

<b>M</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Karen Warrington
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On average, how many lighting column replacements does the council carry out to the district's lamp posts every year? Does the administration have any plans to replace the district's street lamps with new ones that incorporate electric vehicle charging points?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Sarah Warren
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*The council replaces approximately 450 lighting columns per year.*

*The council's current focus for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging is rolling out schemes in off street car parks, where we are providing rapid charging facilities, up to 50kW. 16 new charging bays were introduced in council car parks across the district in June 2022 and a further 14 charging bays will be available later this year. When combined with existing facilities, this amounts to a total of 50 public off street charging bays.*

*On street EV charging technology is changing rapidly and the council is currently investigating options to partner with one or more on-street charging supplier to deliver facilities across B&NES.*

<b>M</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
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It was recently announced that almost £1 million is to be spent on a new drive to tackle graffiti. Please provide a breakdown of how and where this money is to be spent.

<b>Answer from:</b>	Councillor Dave Wood
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*The investment in the Clean and Green campaign is to tackle priorities across the Highways, Cleansing and Parks Services, details of where*

*the money will be spent is outlined in the report presented to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel in March 2022. The report can be accessed via this link*

*<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s70663/Neighbourhood%20services%20report.pdf>*

**M**

**27**

**Question from:**

Councillor Karen Warrington

I note recent efforts by the council to push the Solar Together scheme that supports residents to make the switch to renewable energy. Have any members of the current administration taken part in the Solar Together scheme?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*The Solar Together scheme was procured by the West of England Combined Authority and, like all Bath and North East Somerset residents, members of the administration are free to participate in the scheme.*

**M**

**28**

**Question from:**

Councillor Vic Pritchard

Please provide a date for the completion of the Cleveland Bridge works.

**Answer from:**

Councillor Manda Rigby

*The council announced in April that traffic management will remain as investigations continue into how to solve the complex engineering issues discovered in January during the agreed repairs to the Grade II\* listed structure.*

*The corrosion is a safety critical issue and was revealed when sections of concrete were removed from the hanger bars which support the main trusses of the bridge. The bars are essential to maintaining its structural integrity but are not commonly found in bridges. The engineering solution is proving a technical challenge as any solution will be bespoke and there are few experts in this historic methodology. We will be providing a fuller update regarding the hanger bars in the coming weeks.*

<b>M</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>Last year, you publicly recognised the ecological importance of protecting the site to the rear of Englishcombe Lane, known as the Tufa Field. Last month, however, you reversed course and announced plans to build on it. Please explain how building on the Tufa Field is in keeping with your administration's ambitions to tackle the Climate Emergency?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Kevin Guy
<p><i>The Council fully recognises the ecological importance of the tufa. Therefore, what is being considered is a small housing scheme for residents with learning difficulties that works sympathetically with the existing site ecology. The proposed scheme would protect the tufa and enhance the biodiversity of the site. It would provide very energy efficient accommodation for vulnerable residents who will be able to live as independently as possible within the district close to family and friends. This scheme demonstrates my administration's commitment to addressing the Climate Emergency whilst improving residents' lives.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Vic Pritchard
<p>Please confirm if any of the City Centre Security barriers intended to restrict vehicular access to the city centre were temporarily removed for events that took place in Bath this week. If so, please explain why they were removed.</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Kevin Guy
<p><i>All events within Bath and North East Somerset, particularly any events held within Bath City Centre are subject to the Safety Advisory Group for Events. Membership of the SAGE includes Avon &amp; Somerset Police, and where necessary, Counter-Terrorism Security Advisors, who advise the event organiser on what measures are to be put in place for the protection, security and public safety of anyone attending. The Queen's Baton Relay was subject to the same scrutiny.</i></p> <p><i>The requirement to remove the barriers at certain points was done in consultation with the police and the SAGE process, with additional</i></p>			

*security measures in the area at all times; supported by CCTV.*

*The Queen's Baton Relay, was stewarded by both our own security team, alongside Officers from Avon & Somerset Police and West Midlands Police, who escorted the Baton Relay runner throughout.*

**M**      **31**

**Question from:**

Councillor Paul May

The Liveable Neighbourhood schemes consultation events widened the agenda to cover a whole range of issues. Can you assure me and my ward residents that the agreed scheme of a safe crossing to the village play area remains the construction priority?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Sarah Warren

*Regarding the A37 crossing, this is now being progressed through concept design. As soon as AECOM's report has been compiled and agreed, officers will share it with you*

**M**      **32**

**Question from:**

Councillor Paul May

We have heard that the SDS being prepared by WECA has been rejected by South Glos and work has now been stopped by WECA. Will you tell me what the implications are for residents in BANES because WECA refused to consult on their plans. We know nothing, and that is a major worry for our residents.  
Will you confirm the leader's assurance that we will still focus on BANES housing needs only?

**Answer from:**

Councillor Tim Ball

*The WECA Mayor has advised the Secretary of State that as it was not possible to reach unanimous agreement on the Spatial Development Strategy, he has halted all further work on the Plan. A response from the Secretary of State is still awaited and hence clarity on the way forward is still unclear. However, B&NES will continue to progress its new Local Plan and will ensure that local communities are fully involved in the process from the start. It is premature at this early stage to make commitments about the approach to housing land supply other than to reaffirm the Council's existing commitment to meeting the District's housing needs.*

<b>M</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Paul May
If WECA keeps on refusing to work with the local authorities, will you press the Government to return WECA's powers back to the local authorities?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Councillor Kevin Guy
<i>Bath and North East Somerset Council is committed to working with the West of England Combined Authority to ensure that our area benefits from mayoral devolution, such as through the unprecedented investment in transport coming through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.</i>			
<b>M</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Yuktेशwar Kumar
Can the cabinet give the councillors and residents any update on the citizen's panel for North Road, please?			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Sarah Warren
<i>Britain Thinks the Consultants appointed by the Council to undertake the Citizen's Panel on active travel have now completed the project. The draft Report was circulated to the Cabinet Members Cllr Manda Rigby and myself on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. We are now in the process of examining the report with Bath University who assisted us in sponsoring the panel. We will shortly be looking to make the report available to the Council and the general public. The "call for evidence" as part of the information gathering to assist the panel in their deliberations received over 750 responses and we are aware that there will considerable interest in their findings.</i>			
<b>M</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Councillor Yuktेशwar Kumar
The council supported GLL/Better the operators of the leisure centre in 2020, but because of the impact of pandemic on our finance, will you not give them any further financial support?			



<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Dine Romero
<p><i>Leisure officers have continued to work with GLL through the pandemic to apply for funding and monitor financial recovery. Covid 19 has impacted across the entire leisure market in the UK, leading to many councils and contractors being faced with very similar issues that face the B&amp;NES Council and GLL.</i></p> <p><i>Supplier relief was provided plus officers were successful in drawing down National Leisure Recovery Funding that was used to support GLL.</i></p> <p><i>A revised 13-year business plan has now been agreed.</i></p> <p><i>Regular reviews of the business plan take place. Officers are working with GLL on a range of options including accessing grant funding and identifying opportunities to invest in sustainable energy solutions for the leisure sites.</i></p> <p><i>Briefing note for councils – the impact of rising energy costs on the leisure sector:</i>  <i>This briefing note has been produced to update councils on the impact rising energy costs are having on leisure providers operating services and facilities owned and delivered on behalf of councils.</i>  <a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/briefing-note-councils-impact-rising-energy-costs-leisure-sector">https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/briefing-note-councils-impact-rising-energy-costs-leisure-sector</a></p>	
<b>M</b> <b>36</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Councillor Yuktेशwar Kumar
Every single paid member of staff of the council Youth offending services is White British. What are you planning to enhance inclusivity and diversity?	
<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Dine Romero
<p><i>We share the concern behind this question, particularly as we see an over-representation of children with Black and Mixed heritages in our caseload, and we want to be confident we can meet their needs. It would also be good for children with White heritages to work with Black staff and for the workforce to benefit from their participation in team decisions and developments. We have been working to address the</i></p>	

issue at a number of levels.

1. Draw on the expertise already in our area of work. Our Management Board now has two members with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic heritages, as does our cohort of community volunteers, who convene and chair Referral Order Panels. We welcome the influence of these colleagues in the decisions made about individual children, and in holding us to account and supporting our development.
2. Improve our recruitment practice to make it more inclusive. We have taken advice from Human Resources about some of the things we can do to attract a more diverse group of applicants when we have vacancies. This has included refreshing the wording in adverts and including a Black colleague from another team in shortlisting and sitting on our recruitment Panel. We also include children in our recruitment processes and some of these have been from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. Since we started this, we have not interviewed anyone other than White candidates but there has been some learning about how we assess candidates' suitability on equalities and diversity issues. We recognise we need to draw on other colleagues to help with this going forward, to prevent it from becoming a burden.
3. Challenging partner agencies on their recruitment practice – we have posts from Probation, Health and Police, who are statutory partners in the work of the YOS, and have asked them to consider what they can do to encourage a more diverse group of applicants for their YOS posts.
4. Identifying Disproportionality – we participated in this review of disproportionality in the criminal justice system across Avon and Somerset and are now committed to address the recommendations. The YOS Management Board will oversee responses from B&NES (with the focus being on how permanent exclusion and other school engagement issues increase the risk of children offending, sometimes as a result of exploitation). There is also a strand of work here about the workforce and monitoring not only recruitment but a range of employment related processes according to ethnicity. HR has agreed to work with us on this and we anticipate them beginning to provide data from iTrent as part of a wider piece of work they are involved in. We are also linking with the Ethnic Minorities Staff Network on this issue and hope to collaborate with them as well.
5. Membership of Race Task Force and the School Exclusion Working Group (which has a focus on ethnicity) – this means the YOS is actively involved in work to address disproportionate responses to children and in production of the Race Charter for Schools. We do this to help keep children out of the youth justice system and support equitable treatment but a side benefit may be that potential applicants view us as a Service with a commitment to equalities, that they would want to be part of.
6. Review staff training. This year's training plan includes a commitment that all staff have refresher training in equalities issues, including race. We are procuring Diversity and Cultural Competence training from SARI. Our involvement in developing systemic practice in the YOS includes a focus on individual characteristics and the Service is now more confident in having conversations with children and families about how their ethnicity impacts on them (positively and negatively).

7. Ensure staff have access to consultation. *The Service benefits from access to consultations facilitated by SARI*