

# Foreword - Cllr John Bull

I took over as chair of the Policy Development & Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs Group after Cllr Lisa Brett's resignation earlier this year.

As chair Cllr Brett has introduced Policy Development & Scrutiny Members to some pioneering work over the years which have helped to strengthen the future role that Policy Development & Scrutiny Members can make. More recently this has been demonstrated by Lisa's development of piloting a 30 minute pre-briefing meeting, which has improved the questioning of items on panels agendas and enabled richer debates. This has now be rolled out to some of the other panels.

The group would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Brett for all of the contributions that she has made over the years as a panel member and chair which have resulted in adding significant value and positive outcomes for our local community in B&NES.

In Bath & North East Somerset Policy Development & Scrutiny is about making a difference and improving the lives of the people who live and work here. We continue to do this by making a positive impact to the decision making process and ensure that our local decision making remains effective and accountable.

We do this by ensuring that:-

- the decision-making processes are clear and accessible to the public and that the people making those decisions are held

accountable, in a sense it provides a “critical friend” and challenges executive policy makers or decision makers.

- Scrutiny is a powerful tool for empowering communities and enabling local people through their democratically elected representatives to participate in decisions which affect their day to day lives.
- We can examine issues that impact on Bath and North East Somerset residents, businesses and visitors. In doing so, we promote issues which are of relevance to local people, and actively engage them in the scrutiny process.
- Through working collaboratively, councillors have the opportunity to dig deep, and discuss the key issues that matter most to our local community.

I hope that this report provides you with a flavour of some of the excellent work that the Policy Development & Scrutiny Panels have done this year.

**Cllr John Bull**

**Chair of PDS Chairs and  
Vice Chairs Group**

“Scrutiny is about making  
a difference and improving  
the lives of the people who  
live and work in B&NES”

# The Annual Report

The Annual Report is structured into the following sections:

1 Key Information about Scrutiny

2 Facts and Figures

3 Scrutiny committee work

4 Call in of decision

5 Positive Developments in Scrutiny

6 Scrutiny Network & Community





# Key Information about Scrutiny

## Residents and stakeholders can get involved by:

- attending public meetings
- giving evidence to one of the panels; and
- sending in comments about a review.

## The Function consists of:

(4 PDS Panels) :-

- Children & Young People (CYP)
- Resources
- Communities Transport and Environment (CTE)
- Planning Housing & Economic Development (PHED)

(1 Select Committee) Health & Wellbeing (HWSC)

## Scrutiny doesn't:

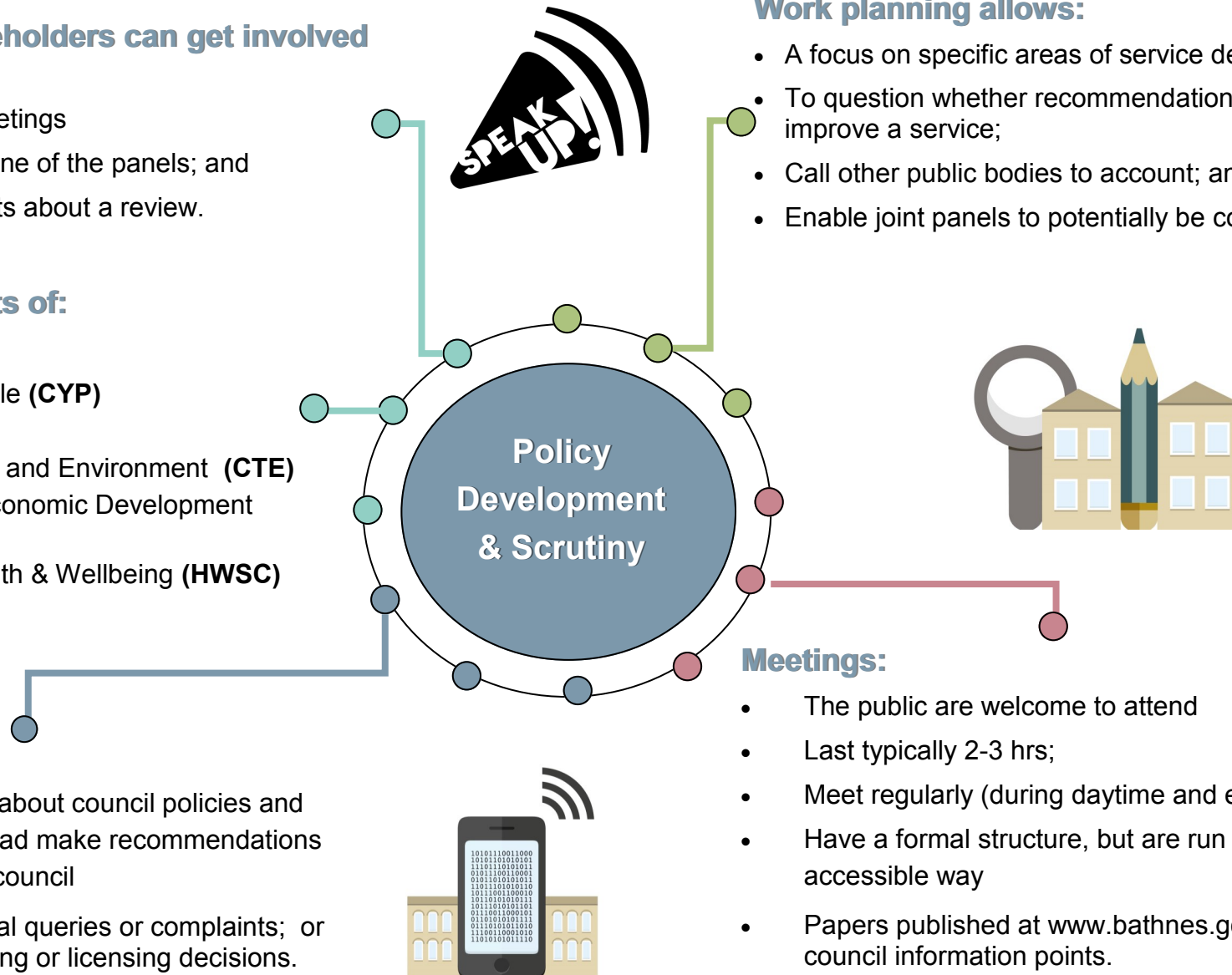
- Makes decisions about council policies and services but instead make recommendations to the cabinet or council
- deal with individual queries or complaints; or investigate planning or licensing decisions.

## Work planning allows:

- A focus on specific areas of service delivery;
- To question whether recommendations could improve a service;
- Call other public bodies to account; and
- Enable joint panels to potentially be convened.

## Meetings:

- The public are welcome to attend
- Last typically 2-3 hrs;
- Meet regularly (during daytime and evenings)
- Have a formal structure, but are run in an accessible way
- Papers published at [www.bathnes.gov.uk](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk) and at council information points.



**37**

Number of Requests for additional Info/ Work Programme Items made by Panels

**6**

Number of joint Cross Panel issues

Discussed at the Chairs & Vice Chairs meetings



Number of recommendations by the Panel to Cabinet Members / Officers

**75%**

Members Attendance 2016/17

**31**

Number of meetings 2016/17

## Planning, Housing & Economic Development PDS Panel

During 2016-17 the Planning, Housing & Economic PDS Panel heard a range of issues and commented on a range of consultations that effect our local area. They also provided feedback to a number of strategies through their development stage. One of these strategies, the WaterSpace project looks at how the Council can protect and enhance both the river Avon and the Kennet and Avon canal in years to come.

The Panel also provided input into the Council's directorate plans which is part of the Council's service planning and budget process, and questioned how we will deliver our key priorities within the current financial climate.

**Cllr Will Sandry**

**Chair Planning, Housing & Economic Development PDS Panel**

**Panel members:**

Will Sandry (Chair)	Barry Macrae (Vice Chair)
Colin Blackburn	Lisa O'Brien
Fiona Darey	David Veale
Cherry Beath	

**Panel**

## contributed to the debate on the Joint Spatial Plan and Transport Study

In September 2016 the Planning, Housing & Economic Development Panel along with invited members from the Communities Transport and Environment Panel shared their views on the Consultation on the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) and the Joint Transport Study (JTS).



Members asked officers to explain the consultation process and asked for assurance that the community would be made aware of the process. The comments made at this meeting regarding the West of England were fed into the "Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy consultation document".

## Panel were kept informed of Flood Risk Management

As the designated Statutory Scrutiny Panel for Flood Risk Management the Chair submitted a number of questions in relation to flood risk management which were discussed at their meeting in March 2017. A mixture of officers and partner agencies such as the Environment



Agency & Flood Authority were present to answer questions and inform the Panel members. This allowed members to be better informed when developing recommendations on flooding in the future.

## Communities, Transport & Environment PDS Panel

The Panel have been busy in 2016-17 and have been updated on a wide variety of different strategies such as; The Water Strategy, Urban Gulls Strategy, and the Cycling Strategy. This work gave both the public and stakeholders the chance to have their voice heard.

During February 2017 the Panel also held a Call-in on the Cabinet decision to allocate a site for the East of Bath Park & Ride.

Members also questioned the Managing Director of First Bus regarding the Strategic Review of Transport and recent Bus service changes, and ensured that we were representing the concerns of the community following a number of petitions received.

Panel members also explored the options available for Churchill Subway, with some undertaking a site visit prior to the panel meeting.

This work has had a positive influence on some significant developments in our local area.

### Cllr John Bull

#### Chair Communities, Transport & Environment PDS panel

#### Panel members:

John Bull (Chair)	Brian Simmons (Vice Chair)
Peter Turner	Alan Hale
Neil Butters	Lizzie Gladwyn
Ian Gilchrist	Bob Goodman



## The Panel value the importance of understanding Domestic Abuse

The Panel received an initial briefing on Domestic Abuse at its meeting in May 2016, presented by our Inclusive Communities Manager.

As the designated Statutory Panel for Community Safety, Members were kept informed of the different local agencies and services involved in the incidents associated with Domestic Abuse and had the opportunity to question how the figures are recorded and verified.

The Panel received a follow-up meeting in September regarding the numbers of Domestic Homicide Reviews, the development of a new Domestic Abuse Partnership and on a Safeguarding Review Day to examine how to stop the cycle of Domestic Abuse.

“Domestic Homicide Reviews – There have been 4 referrals in 15 months and two are going to full DHRs and each cost £10,000 minimum.”

The Panel value the importance of members having a well informed knowledge and understanding of Domestic Abuse and requested that members have further training in this area. A further request was also made for officers and our colleagues at Southside to report back to the Panel again during 2017 with progress on Domestic Abuse in our area including a picture of the how the court system and domestic abuse works.



## Resources PDS Panel

The Resources Panel continues to do important work at a time when public services are stretched and many people are feeling the financial squeeze,

Councillors looked at topics such as ,The Pensions Board, Communications and The Council Tax Benefit Review.

It was also essential for the Panel to be briefed on our organisational development plans to examine the best approach to solving problems and developing a workforce that can continue to deliver our key priorities and excellent performance but with fewer resources available.

It is important for the panel to keep up to date with progress, and understand the likely impact on residents and staff going forward.

**Cllr Sarah Bevan**

**Chair Resources PDS panel**

### Panel Members:

Sarah Bevan (Chair)	Bob Goodman (Vice Chair)
Christopher Pearce	Jasper Becker
Colin Barrett	Chris Dando
Andrew Furse	



## Panel scrutinize Procurement Strategy

During July 2016 the Procurement Strategy was presented to the members seeking their views on reviewing and updating the Councils 'Think Local' procurement strategy 2013-17, in relation to the goods, works and services that we procure.

Members questioned how social values are measured during this process and requested;

- for further information to inform the panel better.
- that a cost benefit analysis on what has been bought back into the local community
- to identify what lessons have been learnt to feed into the development of the new strategy.

## Panel look at Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy supports Council departments and multiple agencies by digitalizing as much as possible both internally and where we engage with users of our services, citizens and visitors.

The Panel were briefed at their meeting in May 2016 and Members scrutinized the strategy's sustainability for the future, questioning areas such as its security, storage and accuracy. The Panel added further benefit by identifying any gaps within the programme which would inform the future shape of the strategy.

**“The Panel ensured that we were adding social value”**



## Children & Young People PDS Panel

The Children & Young People Panel have had a busy year, Members considered the implications of laws such as the *Educational Excellence Everywhere White Paper* and the *Care Act*. They also had a children's themed meeting where the Panel heard from our Local Youth Parliament and were briefed on some key concerns surrounding childhood obesity, Mental health and general children's health.

The Panel, in their role as a critical friend, added value by considering the future options for our local Education system, in light of changing National policy and legislation and made recommendations to the Cabinet member to carry out a detailed feasibility study and cost-benefit analysis of setting up a Teckal Company, which is joint venture between schools and the Council to share services. A final report to Panel on this is now due in the summer 2017.

**Cllr Dine Romero**

**Chair Children & Young People PDS panel**



### Panel members:

Dine Romero (Chair)	Matt Cochrane (Vice Chair)	
Sally Davis	Alison Millar	Peter Turner
Liz Hardman	Karen Warrington	David Williams (voting)
Chris Batten (non-voting)	Andrew Tarrant (voting)	

## Children's Mental Health

The Panel received a detailed report in July 2016 on mental health services for children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset. The report provided an update on commissioning and strategic progress and a request for further support from the Local Authority to continue to prioritize mental health services for children and young people in Bath and North East Somerset.

Members discussed what support was available for young people who might need help and they were updated on some of the CAMHS pilots being developed and the new service delivery model for our area.

The Panel supported the priorities being progressed within the CAMHS Transformation plans for 2016/17 and endorsed the invitation for young people to engage with the re-procurement process as part of these plans for children's mental health Services within the Bath & North East Somerset area .

**“Councillor Liz Hardman commented that the resources that have been produced are fantastic. ”**



## Health & Wellbeing Select Committee

The Select Committee have been busy during 2016-17. Members received regular updates from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), public health and Healthwatch. The Committee looked at the Sustainability Transformation Plans for the integration of our local health services, and considered how we work with our neighbouring authorities to secure and deliver our local health and social care system. They also received regular updates on “Your Care Your Way” the procurement process for the prime provider of community Health and care services in our area. As well as being briefed on the CQC inspection results for the Royal United Hospital and the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership.

**Cllr Francine Haeberling**

**Chair Health & Wellbeing Select Committee**

“The Select Committee added value by bringing a community perspective to the provider’s current and future plans”

### Select Committee Members:

Francine Haeberling (Chair)

Bryan Organ

Paul May

Eleanor Jackson

Tim Ball

Lin Patterson

Geoff Ward



## Select Committee consider the proposed cuts to Community Pharmacies

### Background

In March 2017 the Select Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Public Health. This report was in response to concerns raised by members about the potential impacts on local pharmacies because of changes to the way that community pharmacies are funded. This NHS funding is through a national contract with NHS England and not with the local B&NES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) or B&NES Council and are set out in the Department of Health (DH) paper *Community Pharmacy 2016/17*.

The Committee heard first hand from one of our local Pharmacies the potential impact on the future delivery of his service. Members were able to discuss and explore possible options for preserving our local services and ensure that the needs of our community could be met.

### Recommendations/ outcomes of committee:

The Select Committee discussed the proposals, and raised their concerns on the potential impact of reduced funding nationally and locally. The Committee proposed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health raises the issues discussed at the Committee meeting with the Health & Wellbeing Board who carry out the statutory process for assessing the need for and supply of local pharmacy provision.



## Power of a call-in

Scrutiny legislation allows for a Scrutiny Panel to investigate, make reports and recommendations on Cabinet decisions that have been agreed but not yet put into action. Legislation allows for action on these decisions to be suspended pending such a Scrutiny investigation. This process is referred to as a scrutiny 'Call-in'. Following any scrutiny call-in, the Scrutiny Panel may request Cabinet reconsider its decision on the basis of the further evidence gathered.

## Communities, Transport & Environment Panel Dismisses the Call-in to review the Cabinet Decision to the East of Bath Park & Ride



### Background:

In November 2015, the Council discussed a proposed park and ride facility to the East of Bath. The meeting asked the Communities, Transport & Environment Panel to examine a range of integrated transport solutions for the East of Bath.

The Call-In followed a decision by the Cabinet to consider which site should be promoted as a P&R East of Bath.

### Why was the decision called in:

13 councillors formally asked for the Cabinet Member's decision to be reviewed - or Called-In. Some of the reasons for the call-in include:-

- Concerns with how residents were engaged during the consultation process
- Insufficient consideration of the conclusions from the Policy Development & Scrutiny Inquiry day into alternative integrated transport solutions
- Too much weight was placed on the report from the Local Development Framework Recommendations
- The Cabinet report was misleading, incomplete and inaccurate

To assist in their deliberations, the Panel received a range of written and verbal evidence, interviewed the Cabinet Member for Transport, senior Council officers, and a representative Councillor Alison Millar on behalf of those Councillors who signed the request to review the decision for the call-in request. There was also written evidence from members of the public.

### Cllr John Bull, the Panel chair, said:

*“Several members of the public gave their views which were welcomed by the Panel. Whilst some members of the Panel were disappointed that the call-in was dismissed, the majority view of the Panel was that the cabinet member's decision needs to be implemented.”*



Having considered the evidence, the Panel voted to dismiss the call-in and allow the decision to be implemented.

## 5 Positive Developments in Scrutiny

### Ensuring that we are adding value through the agenda planning process

Following some concern regarding the size of Panel agenda's and questioning whether all of the items add value, we are now looking at how we manage our agenda and questioning each item thoroughly, looking at where scrutiny can really influence.

This is an opportunity to question how we do we make the Policy Development and Scrutiny function work better as some Panel agendas become overloaded with items. It's also about making a careful balanced decision about what information needs to be added and how scrutiny can influence it.

We are now developing a protocol to help members prioritise and carefully consider report requests during the agenda planning meetings. This will include questions such as;

- ✓ is it timely,?
- ✓ Does the items covers our Corporate Priorities?
- ✓ Is this a statutory item? etc.

This will provide clarity about how we decide whether an item can be added and when.



**This protocol will be piloted during 2017 and reviewed with the aim of ensuring that Panel meetings add real value and influence decision making.**

### Building stronger links with the Local Area Forums and Scrutiny

Local Area Forums have evolved from the previous partnership, cluster and PACT meetings but there are some synergies between the forums and scrutiny. Area Forums have a policy development role (non-statutory function).

As part of our 'One Council' approach, we are continuing to look at how we can improve the way in which we plan and deliver our services. A briefing document is being developed which sets out to provide a shared understanding between scrutiny members, officers and the chairs of the Local Area Forums, with the aim of identifying where there are opportunities to add value to existing work planning processes and avoid duplication.

Some of these ideas include:-

- **Sharing and / or Integrating work plans** to avoid duplication
- **Standing item on Chairs/ agenda planning meetings 'other committees'** that could enable a dynamic relationship between a number of different committees.
- **Local based scrutiny** - Identifying where Forums can contribute to future scrutiny work, such as themed work between various forums.
- **Encouraging Forum members to attend and speak** at public Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel meetings, in relation to a shared topic on agenda.





## Pre-briefing meetings

Following the training undertaken by scrutiny members to enable better member engagement and more focussed debate at scrutiny meetings. Two PDS scrutiny Panels (CTE/CYP) have been piloting pre-brief meetings to help with the efficiency and effectiveness of their public scrutiny meetings by helping members to prepare a questioning strategy and provide focus at meetings by considering individual items on the agenda.

Pre-meetings are not intended to be an extra layer of work or restrict the asking of questions during the PDS Panel meeting, but are a method to enable Panel members to undertake more effective scrutiny as the Council's critical friend.

It does this by ensuring:-

- ◆ that all members have read their reports;
- ◆ that members know how the meeting will be conducted;
- ◆ that all members can engage in questioning, including the use of supplementary questions to follow up initial questions, reducing unanswered questions or gaps in evidence
- ◆ It is also a useful mechanism for officers to come fully prepared for points that will be raised in discussions at that meeting.



The two panels piloting a 30 minute pre-briefing meeting have experienced the following improvements:

1. Improved questioning of items on panels agendas by receiving Paper 2 weeks in advance of the Panel meeting
2. Encourages members to challenge and question
3. Delivered a richer debate at Panel meeting.

*“The chairs notes and proposed recommendations are circulated to members who are encouraged to challenge. This has resulted in questions being more meaningful at meetings and avoids repetition. Outcomes are consequently more efficient and effective”*

*Cllr Lisa Brett*

Further ideas to be explored include; bringing a skeleton list of recommendations that Panel members can refer too during a Panel meeting and distribute i.e. to Cabinet, Partners, panels, full Council etc. The aim would be to improve the way scrutiny takes action and or develops recommendations at a meeting.

There is also an opportunity for other Panels to consider what parts of the pre briefing process that they might find useful and develop a best practice approach for their panel.



## Bath & North East Somerset host the South West Overview & Scrutiny Network meeting

### Background:

On October 18th 2016 B&NES hosted the South West Council Scrutiny & Health Scrutiny network event in our new Civic centre meeting room in Keynsham.

### Who attends

- Scrutiny Officers
- Democratic Service Officers
- Scrutiny Members



### What does the network discuss

- Introduction and Regional round up
- Recent Overview & Scrutiny Successes
- Information exchange about current reviews being undertaken or planned (including joint reviews)
- Changes to structure, staffing and funding, (if any)

### Agenda

Cllr John Bull chaired the meeting and on the day we had more people

attend than anticipated which was fantastic. We also prepared a presentation on one of our recent scrutiny successes. This was the Scrutiny Inquiry Day on the proposed closure to Bath Magistrates Court. The scrutiny officer Donna Vercoe talked through the methods chosen to approach the proposals on the day and prepared a presentation and materials to share with the rest of the group.

We also received a presentation by North Somerset on “New ways of working” and had an open discussion on Scrutiny Sustainability and Transformation plans, which were the current hot topics.

The day provided an excellent opportunity for those attending to ask questions and learn from other local authorities in our region.

### Outcomes:

- Sharing of ideas, new ways of working and best practice
- Advice and support from the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPs)
- investigate local and national Initiatives and its impact on local scrutiny;
- Networking between scrutiny officers and scrutiny members; and
- early discussion on areas of concern or future risk

Following the network meeting and the presentation by North Somerset on “new ways of working”, this was shared and discussed at our next Chairs & Vice Chairs Group meeting where we explored the possibility of different approaches for future scrutiny in B&NES.

# Community involvement

Our PDS panels work closely with a wide selection of groups, organisations and individuals. Without positive, trusting and mutually beneficial relationships, the work of the PDS panels and the Select Committee would not be nearly as valuable.

We would like to thank the following, who amongst others, have contributed to the work of the Panels & Committee during the previous year:

**B&NES Councillors and officers**

**Residents**

**NHS B&NES Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)**

**Care Quality Commission (CQC)**

**NHS England Specialised Commissioning**

**NHS South West Ambulance Service Foundation Trust**

**Healthwatch**

**Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust**

**Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust**

**West of England LEP**

**Bathmeadows Alliance**

**National Trust**

**The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPs)**

**Curo**

**Sirona**

**Virgin Care**

**Communications & Marketing Team at B&NES**

**Warm Water Swimming Campaign Group**

**Child Friendly City Steering Group**

**First Steps**



**Senior in Care Council**

**CAMHS Participation Group**

**Camden Residents Association**

**Somerset Care and Repair**

**Avon Local Council Association**

**South West Transport Network**

**Frome and Villages Bus User Group**

**Access Bath Group**

**Cycle Bath**

**Shoscombe Parish Councillor**

**Bath Central Library Rescue Team**

**Save the 6&7 Bus Campaign Group**

**Sort our Subway Group**

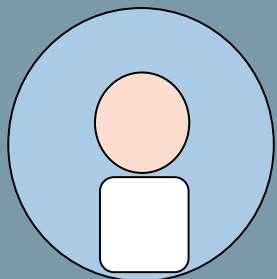
**Stanton Drew Parish Council**

**First Bus**



# Contacts

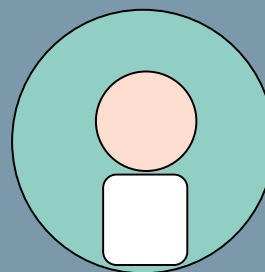
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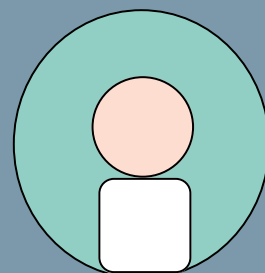
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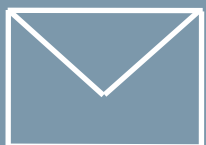
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