

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Thursday 18th July 2024

Present:- **Councillors** Michael Auton, Tim Ball, Alex Beaumont, David Biddleston, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Anna Box, Deborah Collins, Paul Crossley, Chris Dando, Jess David, Mark Elliott, Fiona Gourley, Ian Halsall, Dave Harding, Liz Hardman, Gavin Heathcote, Steve Hedges, Saskia Heijltjes, Oli Henman, Joel Hirst, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Grant Johnson, Samantha Kelly, George Leach, John Leach, Ruth Malloy, Lesley Mansell, Matt McCabe, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Ann Morgan, Michelle O'Doherty, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Manda Rigby, Dine Romero, Paul Roper, Sam Ross, Onkar Saini, Toby Simon, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Alison Streatfeild-James, George Tomlin, Malcolm Treby, Karen Walker, Sarah Warren, Andy Wait and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Sarah Evans, Kevin Guy, Alan Hale, Lucy Hodge, Hal MacFie, Robin Moss, Tim Warren CBE and David Wood

### **12 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out on the agenda.

### **13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Monitoring Officer issued a dispensation for any Councillor over 55 in regards to the motion on Ageing Well so that all Councillors could take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Dine Romero declared an 'other' interest in the Youth Justice plan item, as her daughter works for the Police.

### **14 MINUTES - 16TH MAY 2024**

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Eleanor Jackson, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **15 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chair made the customary announcement regarding microphone use.

### **16 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There were no items of urgent business.

## 17 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Chair made reference to the questions from the public and the responses that had been circulated.

Statements were made by the following members of the public;

Helen Dudden made a statement regarding accessible housing, explaining that the need for accessible homes was urgent and asking what more could be done to ease the problems. She explained her own wait for a home and called for a different type of provision, as the current arrangement meant that often one case jumped over another. On a recent search, 64 people were bidding for 1 home. Councillor Joanna Wright asked how many affordable accessible homes had been built in B&NES over the last 5 years. Helen replied that it was very few.

Neil McCabe made a statement regarding the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, setting out his opposition to it and the reasons for that, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. Councillor Sarah Warren commented that there appeared to be inaccuracies in the air quality and traffic data and asked if Neil could provide this information. Neil replied that the information was available via the footnote to his statement, and had been taken from the 2023 Air Quality report. Councillor Grant Johnson asked for the background to the claim that 163 households had been harmed by this initiative, to which Neil replied that the number of households had been available via a map and postcode search and that it therefore followed that more traffic past these homes would mean further harm. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked how much of the data was available before the trial started, to which Neil replied that it was all available before the trial started and so traffic engineers could have reached the same conclusions in a short period of time.

Ian Orpen made a statement regarding the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. He explained his view that the scheme was poorly thought out and said there was still time to stop the trial and consult on a more suitable alternative. Councillor Grant Johnson noted Ian's comment that the Council hadn't implemented the correct interventions in this case and asked what those would be. Ian replied that there were plenty of traffic calming measures that could be introduced, which would not have the danger associated with blocking roads. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked Ian to elaborate on the dangers he had mentioned, to which Ian gave an example of a 12 year old child facing difficulties riding a bike to school and routes being diverted around primary schools. Councillor Joanna Wright asked if Ian was aware if a circulation plan had been put in place, to which he replied that he was not sure what that was.

Alan Morley made a statement regarding the Sydney Road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. As a resident from the bottom of North Road, he explained why he considered the scheme was problematic and not for the benefit of the majority.

Eleanore Dickson made a statement on behalf of Danielle Selwood who had been unable to attend. She outlined many incidences of dangerous near misses

happening and the problem of pollution from idling cars contributing to asthma diagnoses.

Simon Allen, Chief Executive of Age UK (B&NES), made a statement relating to the Liberal Democrat Age Friendly motion, setting out the reasons why he urged Members to adopt the motion and join the over 60 current Age Friendly communities in the UK to ensure inclusive communities for everyone. Councillor David Biddleston asked Simon how many older people were affected by Council budget cuts to which Simon replied that it was difficult to say, but he urged all those eligible to take the survey so that the information could be gathered. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Simon if he knew what percentage of the B&NES population was over 55, to which he responded that he didn't have that number, but did know that there were 35,000 over 65s and 31% of those live on their own.

Neil Dickinson made a statement about low traffic neighbourhoods, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. Councillor Shaun Hughes asked if Neil agreed that enforcement was a key part of solving these issues, to which Neil replied that he certainly did. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Neil, as a member of Speedwatch, what was the fastest speed they had recorded. Neil responded that it was 51mph in a 20mph zone.

Malcolm Baldwin made a statement about the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. Councillor Grant Johnson asked what the Administration could do to improve the implementation of Liveable Neighbourhoods, to which Malcolm responded that the Council must be proactive in consultation and further reinforce that these are trials. Councillor Joanna Wright asked how many tourists entered the Circus every day. Malcolm replied that it was several hundred every day and it was probably the second largest visitor destination after the area around the Abbey.

Adam Reynolds made a statement about the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, a copy of which is attached to the online record and added to the Minute book. Councillor Grant Johnson asked Adam what B&NES could learn from South Gloucestershire Council regarding the delivery of CRSTS for our Authority to achieve the infrastructure it so needs. Adam replied that they appeared to study the rules carefully and accelerated their use of compulsory purchase orders. Councillor Saskia Heijltjes asked if the cost of living crisis had had an effect on implementation of CRSTS, to which Adam responded that since quotes were received in 2020, building costs were considerably higher.

Jane Samson made a statement in support of the Peace motion on the agenda and highlighted some disturbing statistics from the situation in Gaza. She urged Councillors to take a moral stance and vote in favour of the motion.

The Chair thanked everyone for their statements which would be referred to the relevant Cabinet Member.

## **18 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2024 - 2026**

The Council considered the Youth Justice Plan for 2024 – 2026.

On a motion from Councillor Paul May, seconded by Councillor Dine Romero, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to approve the Youth Justice Plan.

## **19 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Council considered the annual report of the Standards Committee.

On a motion from Councillor Toby Simon, seconded by Councillor June Player, it was

**RESOLVED** to note the work of the Standards Committee as set out in the Annual report.

*[Notes;*

- 1. The above successful resolution was carried with 48 Councillors voting in favour and 2 Councillors abstaining.]*

## **20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24**

The Council considered a report giving details of performance against the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24.

On a motion from Councillor Mark Elliott, seconded by Councillor Paul May, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

1. The Treasury Management Report to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice, is noted; and
2. The Treasury Management Indicators to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 are noted.

## **21 PROPORTIONALITY REVIEW**

The Council considered a report proposing a revised proportionality table, following the change in political group membership numbers.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Lesley Mansell, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** to approve the revised political proportionality table.

## **22 GREEN GROUP MOTION ON PEACE**

The Council considered a motion from the Green Group calling for peace in Gaza.

On a motion from Councillor Joanna Wright, seconded by Councillor Sam Ross, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

Council expresses horror at the conflict in Palestine and Israel and sympathy to all in the Bath and North East Somerset area who have been affected.

Council Notes that:

1. East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and Gaza are internationally recognised as being under illegal occupation by Israel. Amnesty International states that Gaza has been subject to 16 years of blockade and multiple NGOs recognise a system of apartheid within this region.
2. On the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Hamas, launched an assault on Israel – the European Parliament has described this as the deadliest attack on a Jewish community since the end of the Holocaust.
3. The UN states that all nations have a right to self-determination and self-defence, but these rights must be defended within the purview of international law. Nevertheless, a devastating and violent conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza has ensued since 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023:
  - a. Tens of thousands of civilians have lost their lives in this conflict, including Israeli and British citizen, but fatalities are predominantly Palestinian women and children.
  - b. Approximately 75 percent of Gaza's total population, equating to two million people, have been displaced. The displacement exacerbates challenges in the international asylum system, forcing individuals to seek refuge as asylum seekers and refugees.
  - c. The conflict has left Palestine without critical infrastructure, food, water, and resources: multiple hospitals have been targeted in IDF operations, contravening the Geneva Convention; UN officials have deemed the supplies sent to Gaza via trucks as "grossly inadequate", many of which have been blocked by the IDF; the lack of access to clean water has led to the spread of disease due to inadequate sanitation facilities; Palestinians suffer daily from malnutrition, famine, and starvation.
  - d. Both Hamas and Israel are alleged to have committed grave breaches of the Geneva Convention which are defined as War Crimes by Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
4. Israel's ongoing targeting of Gaza, most recently in Rafah - where many refugees have sought shelter, poses a grave threat to regional and international stability. Deliberate attacks on non-combatant civilians or civilian infrastructure are deemed as war crimes under the Rome Statute. Amnesty International has warned that Israel's recurrent assaults on Rafah violate these international laws;
5. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the highest court of the United Nations, has heard a case of alleged genocide by Israel. The ICJ issued an

interim ruling instructing Israel to prevent genocidal acts and enable humanitarian assistance, despite which civilian casualties in Gaza have increased.

6. The profound and traumatising impact the conflict has had on local residents in Bath and North East Somerset, particularly those with close ties to family, friends or loved ones in Palestine and Israel, and expresses thanks to all residents who shared their experiences and heartfelt feelings at recent full Council meetings.
7. The international conflict has heightened security concerns, exacerbated social and political divisions, increased defence and military budgets, caused economic impacts, potentially distressed diaspora communities, led to protests, occupations, and demonstrations, and influenced media coverage, shaping public perceptions and attitudes within B&NES.

Council:

1. Recognises that the UK has an historical responsibility in this conflict and should support innocent civilians affected by it while striving to secure long-term peace.
2. Reinforces that Hamas do not represent the Palestinian people – and the Palestinian people are not Hamas.
3. Reiterates the ICJ's insistence that Israel must take all measures within its power to prevent acts contravening the genocide convention, ensuring, with immediate effect, that its forces do not commit any act of genocide and immediately improve the humanitarian situation in Gaza.
4. Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine, offering solidarity to those in the B&NES area impacted by this conflict.
5. Believes in the long term there can only be a political solution to this crisis. Discussions must restart immediately for a two-state solution, aiming for a safe and viable Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel, to achieve lasting peace.
6. Hopes for an immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.
7. Believes that Muslims, Jews, and people of all faiths and none should feel safe and supported worldwide and condemns the increase in Antisemitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK.

Council therefore:

1. Supports calls for an immediate, bilateral, ceasefire locally, nationally and internationally.

2. Asks the Council Leader to write to the UK Government on behalf of B&NES Council urging a ceasefire, the release of hostages, the reinstatement of funding for UNRWA, and advocate for lasting peace with a two-state solution on the global stage.
3. Repeats its dedication to combat racism and discrimination in our communities and condemns the use of all dehumanising language. We call on our communities to treat each other with respect and refrain from inflammatory terminology.
4. Resolves to explore how the Council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, enabling them to come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.
5. Pledges to promote and facilitate access to local services that offer the best support for residents.
6. Pledges to support these services and facilitate their needs, as they play a key role in assisting and nurturing our residents during these challenging times.
7. Calls on the government to ensure that there are safe and legal routes for refugees and to reform the UK Resettlement Scheme to allow a route to safety for the most vulnerable in Gaza with emergency pathways for those seeking refuge from the conflict and emphasises our readiness **as** a community in Bath and North East Somerset to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events, as the community did for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.
8. Desires to fly the UN flag as a symbol of peace at the Guildhall on appropriate occasions, such as the UN International Day of Peace, in recognition of our shared hope for peace across the world.

*[Notes:*

1. *The above successful motion incorporates various amendments and additions proposed by Councillor Manda Rigby and accepted into the substantive motion by the mover and seconder.]*

## **23 LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MOTION ON B&NES AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY**

The Council considered a motion from the Liberal Democrat group regarding various B&NES Age Friendly initiatives.

On a motion from Councillor Alison Born, seconded by Councillor Sarah Moore, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** that

Council:

1. Welcomes the “Ageing Well | Bath and North East Somerset” programme, which is an initiative by Age UK B&NES and the St John’s Foundation.
2. Understands that the goals of the programme are to transform B&NES into an inclusive, supportive and accessible place where everyone can age well, in whichever way they see fit, and for B&NES to become an Age Friendly Community, as defined by the World Health Organisation.
3. Notes and applauds the role of the B&NES 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Group in reviving and facilitating the Ageing Well Network. This brings together voluntary sector organisations supporting people to age well and encourage older people to speak out about the issues that are important to them and their communities.
4. Notes the Age Friendly Community framework, established by the WHO, which consists of eight “Domains” or areas of the built and social environment which, when acted upon, can help to address barriers to ageing well, and a “Four-Step Programme Cycle”, which is a development process that places go through to embed an age-friendly way of working.
5. Notes that the “Ageing Well | Bath and North East Somerset” programme has successfully applied for membership to the UK Age Friendly Communities Network. This brings together the approximately 80 age friendly and ageing well communities across the United Kingdom.
6. Endorses the eight goals of the Ageing Well | Bath and North East Somerset programme and welcomes the involvement of Cabinet lead and officer representatives, alongside other local stakeholders, on the Steering Group intended to ensure older people’s needs and views are listened to when decisions are made.
7. Notes that the Health and Wellbeing Board have agreed to receive reports on the progress of the Ageing Well | Bath & North East Somerset programme.

Council therefore:

8. Supports the application to the WHO for B&NES to become an Age Friendly Community.
9. Encourages B&NES residents aged 55 and over to share their insights and experiences in the inaugural [Ageing Well Community Survey](#), which closes on 31 July 2024 and has already received over 1,000 responses.
10. Supports the relevant Cabinet member and Council service sharing relevant data, within information sharing protocols, with the “Ageing Well | Bath and North East Somerset” programme towards the 2024/2025 evidence-based “State of Ageing Report”, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of ageing in B&NES.
11. Invites the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel, upon the publication of the evidence-based “Ageing Well | Bath and North East Somerset” programme’s “State of Ageing Report” at the end of 2024, to



consider actions the Council might take, under the eight Domains of Age Friendly Community Framework, to address barriers to ageing well in B&NES.

12. Requests that the relevant Cabinet member and Council service investigate B&NES signing up to the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, taking into account that Age is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

[Notes;

1. *During debate, an amendment was moved and seconded by Councillors Saskia Heijltjes and Joanna Wright to add a request to consider improvements to pavements and pedestrian areas, including additional rest areas, clear pathways and enhanced lighting. This was lost on a vote of 10 Councillors in favour, 36 Councillors against and 4 abstentions.]*

## **24 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Councillor Shaun Hughes made a statement regarding the proposed parking changes in Midsomer Norton. He set out his view of the negative and damaging impact this would have on the town, which outweighed any positive benefits this would achieve. He commented that there was no financial justification nor realistic air quality implications. He called for common sense to prevail. Councillor Grant Johnson asked if Councillor Hughes considered that the introduction of these charges would impact on the benefits that should be coming from the much needed investment in the town, to which Councillor Hughes replied that they absolutely would. Councillor Joanna Wright asked Councillor Hughes asked how many motorbikes came into Bath from Midsomer Norton every day, to which he replied that he had no idea.

Councillor Onkar Saini made a statement concerning residents' continuing concerns about anti-social behaviour in Combe Down and similar demographic regions. He called for effective partnership working with Police to deter criminal activity and increase feelings of safety.

The Chair thanked both Councillors for their statements which would be considered by the relevant Cabinet Members.

The meeting ended at 8.46 pm

Chair .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**