

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

COUNCIL MEETING 17 NOVEMBER

Robbie Bentley – South West Transport Network – Public Transport

We welcome West of England mass transit system and future light rail Bristol to Bath via Weston Newbridge Salford/ Keynsham Brislington Arnos vale Bristol Temple meads station Bristol Bus and coach station. Public consultation

Both as a mass transit system corridor and city region bus corridor.

And Bath bus and coach station to Radstock, Westfield, Midsomer Norton, Paulton. City regional transport corridor and the A37 Farrington Gurney Clutton Pensford Whitchurch Hengrove Knowle Bristol Temple Meads Station Bristol bus and coach station

And the loss of local bus link by the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority. First group is of Very Deep passenger concerns.

11 Bath spa bus and coach to Bathampton.

12 Bath bus and coach station to Haycombe cemetery.

20 Bath RUH Hospital to Lansdown and Twerton and the Bath spa bus station.

We are still very concerned about what the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority and North Somerset council Bus service improvements plan.

Budget of £ 105 .5 million going to do about the recruitment of bus Drivers in Bath bus Depot, Wells bus Depot Somerset and Bristol to maintain Bath and North East Somerset bus services and the west of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset bus service.

With 200 bus drivers short on First group plc buses and 50 on stagecoach west.

Bus services.

We will also need to aware with 40 % transport inflation that not all of city region transport plan can be delivered on the Ground.

And a second round is required by the Department for transport.

The Enhanced quality partnership with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council.

Should hopefully fill gaps in the North Somerset Greater Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset and south Gloucestershire bus Network.

With First group plc and stagecoach group.

If not, because bus services are important, to ask to school college universities Hospital medical centre, shopping centre leisure and Tourism facilities.

Then if an enhanced quality partnership does not work with A bus services improvement plan and bus service Advisory Board.

Then with North Somerset council joining the West of England Mayoral Combined Transport Authority a Franchising mode for bus services in the city region may need to move forward.

With mayor Dan Norris.

Adam Reynolds – Active Travel

Last year the council lost around £1 million in funding to improve walking and cycling in Bath and North East Somerset by failing to engage with community groups & local ward councillors, failing to refer back to the West Of England Combined Authority Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan/>), and, most importantly, failing to follow the Active Travel England's Active Travel Fund (ATF) bid rules.

ATF Tranche 4 bid submissions are due imminently and could be worth up to three years of money. The LCWIP identifies 5 cycling and 2 walking routes in Bath, 3 cycling and 2 walking routes in Keynsham, and 3 cycling and 2 walking routes in the Somer Valley. Given that the LCWIP was authored before the introduction of new National Cycle Design Guidance and the ATF, some of the routes could never be implemented now and many of the walking routes would be much better delivered as Liveable Neighbourhoods.

In August of this year, Active Travel England required Metro Combined Authorities (and all Highways Authorities) to submit a Active Travel Capability and Ambition Self-Assessment

(https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yyd2NdEzK3_APV_h5I6FE8hFQI8EylhC/view) that scored organisations on their Political Leadership, LCWIP maturity, and Schemes Delivered. WECA scored a 2 and was allocated Capability Funding and will be allowed to bid for ATF Tranche 4. Some Highways Authorities scored a 1 and will only be allowed to bid for small schemes, and if you scored a 0, you had no access to ATF. Next year BaNES Highways Authority will be required to submit their own self-assessment and cannot hide its failings behind WECA. We are likely to lose access to millions in public realm improvements if you as councillors do not act.

I would highly recommend that councillors take the time to walk along the ATF Tranche 2 Upper Bristol Road Phase 1 scheme. I would ask councillors to particularly look at the significant improvements to the pedestrian space. The majority of the £520k that has been spent has been spent on improving space for walking and wheeling, and NOT cycling.

So, with Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 bids imminent, the LCWIP up for a rewrite by the end of 2023 and this administration's penchant for focusing only on Bath, what are Keynsham and Somer Valley councillors doing to ensure their slice of the pie? In a time of austerity and massive cutbacks, this is pretty much your only access to funding for the next one, four, and ten years to improve your ward.

PS: You can ignore the Citizen's Panel report as it completely undermines the Capability and Ambition Self-Assessment and will lose the council millions in investment if ever taken seriously.

Rev Kenny Nelson – Future of Parkside Building located in Charlotte Street Car Park

Thank you Mr Chairman and members of the Council. I would like to speak this evening to the issue of the Parkside building located in Charlotte Street Car Park.

It is almost 4 years to the day when I first discovered that Parkside (then Parkside Children's Centre) was set to be demolished to make way for additional short-stay car parking spaces.

Recognising the contradiction of a clean-air city looking to build more car parking, as well as the loss of this fantastic community asset, myself (in my capacity as the minister of Bath Elim Church in Charlotte Street) as well as a few others, campaigned to save this centre from demolition. Now whether the decision to reverse the proposals was as a direct result of that campaign or not, the building was indeed saved.

Despite the fact that 4 years have passed, the only progress on this building is that the northern portion has been converted for use by the street cleansing team, but the southern part still lies completely empty.

For additional context, the church has been actively working with the council and other partners and agencies across the city to try to occupy this building and breathe new life into it again and on three separate occasions we have even been invited by the council to submit formal proposals, which we duly did.

There is often much anticipation to the potential of these proposals and at this stage I wish to acknowledge the support of our Kingsmead Ward counsellors, in particular Cllr Craig who is a source of continued encouragement to me.

But, and there is a 'but'. Whenever we get to the point of formalising agreements etc., the discussions move to a higher level while further deliberations take place somewhere which always lead nowhere.

As time passes the very fabric of this wartime building continues to be compromised. In the words of Bath Preservation Trust, *"the lack of occupancy will likely have a negative impact on the material integrity of this area of the building."*

They go on to recommend that *"the future of the southern portion of the building is opened up to Bath residents and local groups who might have a need or interest in the available space."* So, our current proposal to bring a counselling hub and family centre as well utilising the space for additional ad hoc community activities is very exciting and one that I know will breathe new life and wider hope into this into this asset.

However, we cannot keep going round in circles and so my ask of you the council is two-fold. Firstly, decide as a matter of priority what is to happen to this space. Secondly, I implore you to put this in the hands of our community.

Matt Cooper – Renewable Energy Motion

BATHNES states on its website that the climate emergency it declared in 2019 is: "A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it." Last week the UN secretary general, António Guterres, warned: "We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator." Urgent action is required. Time is of the essence.

Can nuclear help? Not according to a Greenpeace article titled “6 reasons why nuclear energy is not the way to a green and peaceful world” [1]. Of the 6 reasons, 3 are pertinent when it comes to taking urgent action to address climate change: nuclear energy is too expensive, too slow and delivers too little to matter, in terms of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Too expensive.

Too slow.

Delivers too little.

So we can put a big red cross against nuclear as an option for tackling climate change, but can we also put a green tick against renewables? I’m pleased to say that we most definitely can.

Further to Prof Mark Barrett’s modelling on the cost of nuclear, I’d like to draw your attention to a study published in the journal “Energy & Environmental Science” co-written by Prof Mark Jacobson of Stanford University, titled: “Low-cost solutions to global warming, air pollution, and energy insecurity for 145 countries.” [2] The study claims all the countries examined (including the UK) could switch to 100% renewable energy in a few years, using technologies available today.

Professor Jacobson said: “We do not need miracle technologies to solve these problems. By producing electricity from clean, renewable sources, we can create safe, cheap, and reliable energy everywhere.” [3]

It will mean a net increase in job numbers.

It will reduce illnesses and deaths caused by fossil fuel air pollution.

It will enhance global energy security.

It will slash greenhouse gas emissions.

What’s the catch? The cost of making the changeover to 100% renewable energy in those 145 countries is estimated at a staggering \$62 trillion. But here’s the thing: Jacobson and his team say the savings made from this transition mean those costs would be paid back in just 6 years!

I would ask you to reflect again on the urgency of action required, and the desperate need for bold leadership. In the last week, France passed a law that within 5 years all car parks with more than 80 spaces must be covered by solar panels. That is bold climate leadership. Please show the people of Bath & North East Somerset bold leadership by pushing Westminster not only to back renewables, but to go further and faster with genuine urgency.

References:

[1] “6 reasons why nuclear energy is not the way to a green and peaceful world”
<https://www.greenpeace.org/international/story/52758/reasons-why-nuclear-energy-not-way-green-and-peaceful-world/>

[2] “Low-cost solutions to global warming, air pollution, and energy insecurity for 145 countries”

<https://web.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/Articles/I/145Country/22-145Countries.pdf>

[3] "Switching The World To Renewable Energy Will Cost \$62 Trillion, But The Payback Would Take Just 6 Years"

<https://cleantechnica.com/2022/09/06/switching-the-world-to-renewable-energy-will-cost-62-trillion-but-the-payback-would-take-just-6-years/>