

Feb 9th speech final draft, 3 min

Cabinet, I am here today to lobby you on the issue of dangerous rural roads and the action our council can take against this. I'm standing here, not simply as a candidate for the Chew Valley ward in May, but as a deeply concerned resident, mother and health professional.

Two weeks ago a child was knocked down by a speeding vehicle when he was making his way to school in the village of Chew Stoke, whilst he was on the footpath no less! Over the last year when myself and my ward colleague, Dr David Harding, have been out campaigning, we have stood on many doorsteps and heard countless stories of near misses, and sustained injuries on our roads. It's simply not good enough.

I am sure we can all agree, that this issue is hugely complex, but I will give you the start of what I see as a small solution. The idea I put to you is to change your algorithm for how you allocate money for road safety across the council. Rural roads are statically more dangerous and yet urban environments get more funding as they have more people. I

propose that rural communities should have a different variability factor to improve equity in our communities. In fact, don't we as Lib Dems stand for improving equality for all? I'm aware there are many factors for funding allocation, and I am lobbying you to add an extra component for rural village centres.

For too long, multiple BANES administrations have been Bath centric and I know that when leader Kevin Guy came to power, he said that this would change. His leadership has shown this with the successful implementation of the Chew Valley cycle path, money for the redevelopment of Keynsham centre including the new footbridge, the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone, and standing up to WECA mayor, Dan Norris' betrayal on our rural buses. We can build on this positivity with changing our funding parameters, thus continuing to prove to the people of North East Somerset that the council care about them too.

There is a common misconception, repeated by councillors not present and the wider council staff that we have to have a death on our valley

roads before the council sit up and listen. I myself know this is untrue, but cabinet, the message is out there, the residents believe this is fact. And the idea I have put forward today will go towards improving how they see you. Daily, I see the fantastic work done in NE Somerset around road safety, such as 20 mph limits in Mendip ward, and the hard work of the Clean and Green team - and I think we can go much further.

The elephant in the room, of course, is firstly about community compliance and second - quality representation. However, I believe that Dr Harding and I can unite our rural communities to agree on road safety measures. Late last year, we gathered over 240 signatures supporting our campaign for a 20 mph limit in Bishop Sutton Centre, a parish of only around 500 houses. So I believe the will is there. But, sadly, the Chew Valley has for too long been let down by its Conservative councillors that will not advocate for this important issue, but simply continue to complain about the obstructive Council, even when they had a majority no less. Cabinet – I assure you that if I'm

elected on May 4th, I will fight to improve the safety of rural roads and do this with the collaboration of our community. I feel that if you support my motion today, this will demonstrate to the people of the Chew Valley that we can be effective in giving them what they need, and that we care, when others have shown they don't.