

COUNCIL MEETING 21ST FEBRUARY 2023

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC & COUNCILLORS

Public

1. Martin Thomas - Residents parking zones
2. David Redgewell - Transport issues
3. Rosemary Naish - Rural transport
4. Bob Goodman - Where is Bath going?
5. Graham Pristo - Bath in general
6. Ann Perry - Chelsea Road RPZ
7. Louisa McFarland - Entry Hill Golf course
8. David Pye - Proposed RPZs in the Moorland Road & Oldfield Park area

Councillors

1. Cllr Kumar - Honesty is the best policy

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Karen Walker
<p>The combined authority are working to improve public transport, thanks to £540 million secured from Government through a successful city Region Sustainable transport settlement.</p> <p>Supported bus services, why has this Council chosen not to supported funding after June for:</p> <p>82 Paulton-Midsomer Norton-Paulton 172 Bath-Paulton 179 Midsomer Norton-Bath 672 Blagdon-Bristol 768 Midsomer Norton- Bath.</p> <p>What will happen to evening and night time workers, especially those that work in hospitality? Demand Responsive Transport stops at 7pm</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>As the local Transport Authority, the West of England Combined Authority is responsible for bus services within the West of England B&NES has provided funding to continue the following bus services until the end of May 2023: 672, 82, 179, 172 and 768, to support communities in the transition to Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services. B&NES is currently lobbying the combined authority to commit additional resources needed to support communities during the transition to DRT and to engage with all affected B&NES communities on the final design of the DRT, which should include hours of operation. The Metro Mayor also has approximately £50million of government funding available to provide new transport services through the Bus Service Improvement Plan. Therefore, we are also pressing the Mayor to confirm investment in five new spinal routes, which will complement the introduction of DRT and ensure bus provision for Chew Valley, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury.</i></p>			

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Lee O'Bryan
<p>It is evident that BANES faces significant short term financial challenges, for instance a BANES press release in November 2022 said that BANES is 'facing an unprecedented financial challenge '. It is my understanding that some services have already, and will in the very near future, need to be reduced / cut to meet budgets. Given this challenge, I do not understand why BANES undertook an asset transfer of land at Bathampton to the National Trust 'for a peppercorn rent'. Government guidance for some years has encouraged a flexible use of capital receipts, and this guidance states any such money can be used for revenue costs associated with transformation activities, including for instance, the revenue costs of activities to reduce costs, income generation, and also activities in support of more efficient provision of services. <i>I would like to know why BANES council decided to gift the land at Bathampton to the National Trust, and thereby forego the opportunity of securing hundreds of thousands of pounds of income, which could be used to help protect and improve current services to the residents of BANES, at a time of 'unprecedented financial challenge'.</i></p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Richard Samuel
<p>The Council received an application from the National Trust in accordance with its Community Asset Transfer Policy and determined that a disposal at nil consideration was warranted in order to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.</p>			
P	02	Question from:	Jackie Head
<p>I am a member of Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency, Sustainable Transport working group, who have been working with officers in B&NES and WECA since 2021 to try to secure improved public transport services in the Chew Valley.</p> <p>Thank you for lobbying the WECA Mayor about the 5 new BSIP routes proposed to WECA, designed by them, tendered and bid for, before being dropped. 3 of them have a direct impact on the Chew Valley area (517, 526, 527) . We hope you are successful in this, as we believe they would give DRT a fighting chance of working and thus help to achieve the modal shift towards buses and decarbonisation that we so desperately need.</p>			

1. However, if you are unsuccessful, will you act to ensure spinal routes, needed for DRT, are in place. i.e

- **will you fight to re-instate the 672**, run by Eurostar, a greatly valued service and essential travel for many people who are vulnerable to loss of jobs, already living with social isolation and in poverty? This includes Ukrainian refugees, young people and working families as well as the elderly for whom it is a lifeline? As I write a new petition to save the 672 has over 500 signatures. If you calculate its carbon benefit by applying a carbon calculator to passenger uptake now (passengers x miles travelled) it may compare favourably with inner city routes with shorter average journeys per passenger
- **will also lobby for improvements to the 376 service on the A37/9 bus corridor**, given that this service is insufficiently frequent and too unreliable currently, to allow DRT to work effectively for the Chew Valley. It is run by First Bus, whose reputation is at an all time low in our area.

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

As the local Transport Authority, the West of England Combined Authority is responsible for bus services within the West of England

B&NES is pressing the Mayor to confirm investment in the five new spinal routes, funded via BSIP, which will complement the introduction of DRT and ensure bus provision for Chew Valley, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury. I am also writing to the Mayor to support to the exceptional work undertaken by the Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency working group which clearly sets out the case for the continued support for the 672 and improvements to the 376.

P

03

Question from:

Jackie Head

We understand that WECA only plans to move to begin community engagement about Demand Responsive Transport in March, and we fear this will be too late to prevent people, who are currently angry and anxious about bus cuts, from future-planning car use options (in some cases buying a car when they do not currently have one in others increasing car use) which would be a retrograde step in B&NES journey to net Zero plans . As a group we would like to set up community meetings to allay fears and assist the transition to using DRT at an earlier stage.

- Will B&NES offer support (potentially including financial support) to our group in booking community spaces, creating fliers/posters, exploring options for shared transport to get people to such events, and sending personnel to attend?

Answer from :		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>As the local Transport Authority, the West of England Combined Authority is responsible for bus services within the West of England</i></p> <p><i>B&NES has pressed the Mayor to allocate resources to help local people make the switch to DRT, by engaging fully with local communities to raise awareness and support the transition to using the unfamiliar new system, and to publish a comprehensive funding and transition plan so that local authorities can effectively support all the activities identified. B&NES has provided funding to continue the following bus services until the end of May 2023: 672, 82, 179, 172 and 768, to support communities in the transition to Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services. All B&NES funding that we have been able to secure has been devoted to continuing the above services until the end of May and unfortunately we are unable to support personalised travel planning.</i></p>		
P	04	Question from: Jackie Head
<p>Given that certain communities could be unduly disadvantaged financially or socially by any failure in DRT to deliver straight away, will B&NES commit to supporting those who are currently reliant on supported bus services to get support in journey planning, on an individual basis, and will you lobby WECA to put resource into this? I am in particularly thinking of the elderly, of those on low incomes, of Ukrainian Refugees, and of those who do not have access (and have no prospect of access) to the internet and smart phones.</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>As the local Transport Authority, the West of England Combined Authority is responsible for bus services within the West of England</i></p> <p><i>B&NES has pressed the Mayor to allocate resources to help local people make the switch to DRT, by engaging fully with local communities to raise awareness and support the transition to using the unfamiliar new system, and to publish a comprehensive funding and transition plan so that local authorities can effectively support all the activities identified. B&NES has provided funding to continue the following bus services until the end of May 2023: 672, 82, 179, 172 and 768, to support communities in the transition to Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services. All B&NES funding that we have been able to secure has been devoted to continuing the above services until the end of May and unfortunately we are unable to support personalised travel planning.</i></p>		
P	05	Question from: Jane Chapman

How much are Council Tax Arrears 2022?

Answer from:

Cllr Richard Samuel

As at 9 February 2023, the amount of Council Tax outstanding for 2022/23 is £5,755,017.08.

P 06

Question from:

Jane Chapman

What is the lost revenue to date from the closure of the Fashion Museum?

Answer from:

Cllr Richard Samuel

The Fashion Museum closed to the public at the end of October 2022. From November 2022 to January 2023; the lost revenue income has been £52,514. This is due to the National Trust exercising the lease termination clause which has required museum operations to cease at the Assembly rooms, until a new facility is opened there will be corresponding reductions in the operating costs to minimise the impact on the Council's revenue budget.

P 07

Question from:

Jane Chapman

How much is the cost for removal of modern white paint from the pillars in Bath Street?

Answer from:

Cllr Tim Ball

The work to remove and reinstate an appropriate finish to the columns in the colonnade in Bath Street will be carried out by the leaseholders in accordance with listed building consent 22/02699/LBA.