

CABINET MEETING – 9 MARCH 2023

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. Malcolm Baldwin – Liveable Neighbourhoods - Sometimes less can often mean more!
2. Jackie Head – Sustainable Transport
3. David Redgewell – Bus Franchising and Public Transport Network
4. Jevon Smith – Bus Franchising and Public Transport Network
5. Luke Emmett – New use for the old King Edwards School, using spaces in the Post Office and other empty shops in Bath
6. Bob Goodman – The Real Climate Emergency
7. Nicolette Boater – Climate Annual Report & Ecological Emergency Action Plan
8. Cllr Lucy Hodge – Building back the B&NES Music Service after COVID

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Eleanor Jackson
<p>In the letter dated 26 January 2023 which the cabinet member for Climate Change and the Leader of the Council sent to parish councils urging them to write to the WECA mayor about the five new 'spinal routes', there is mention of Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Timsbury, but Westfield, which will be very seriously impacted by the loss of the 82 bus service, is omitted.</p> <p>In Cllr Karen Walker's question to February Council, M01, the 82 is described as Paulton-Midsomer Norton when in fact it runs from a really isolated settlement in Tynning, Radstock, through the former council estates and the Waterside in Westfield and past Norton Hill School to Midsomer Norton, then on to Paulton. It is similarly omitted from Cllr Warren's answer to a member of the public, P04.</p> <p>With 4,813 voters and their families Westfield should not be ignored in this way. Westfield lies along the Fosseway, just as important now as in Roman times, and with two schools and a college campus, it is, in the words of the parish council, 'a community committed to enterprise and education.'</p> <p>A substantial number of Westfield residents demonstrated on the steps of the Guildhall on 21 February. Why are their needs not being considered by this council to whom they pay council tax in the same proportion as the residents of Bath, who are getting all the supported services?</p> <p>Does it not make a mockery of 'levelling up' and the high streets programme if there is no regular bus service to MSN high street, or Radstock shops?</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>			

This week I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of residents who use the 82 and am grateful for the time they spent with me outlining their travel needs.

Westfield will be served by WECA's new DRT service, which, we understand from WECA, is contractually bound to collect residents within an hour of booking and will bring residents to MSN High Street and Radstock shops. *DRT provides a unique opportunity to transform the way that our communities can travel around the region, but it is essential that timely investment is made by WECA both in engagement with local communities, supporting them in making the switch to using DRT, and reliable spinal services for the DRT to connect to.*

We are continuing to lobby the Mayor to invest the resources necessary to commit these resources to enable the success of the DRT system.

M

02

Question from:

Cllr Joanna Wright

Vital subsidised bus routes in North East Somerset have been cut.

This means that the more vulnerable in our community, children, older people and those who are unable to drive will not have a local bus service. Those least able to give their views will have bus services, that improved their lives, cut.

Please can you give full details of the Equality Impact Assessment that was carried out to make this decision?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

WECA is the transport authority so please direct this question to WECA.

M

03

Question from:

Cllr Joanna Wright

This administration is clearly aware of the debacle with the proposed P&R on the Meadows in Batheaston and that the streets on the east of

Bath are an unofficial Park & Ride. How is this administration addressing this this urgent issue?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

The administration does not accept the characterisation of the east of Bath as an unofficial Park & Ride, but nevertheless has many plans, highlighted in its Journey to Net Zero plan, aimed at reducing congestion and car use, and increasing the attractiveness of alternative modes. The Joint Local Transport Plan 4 also includes a commitment to explore and support options for increasing travel choices and reducing single occupancy vehicle use into our urban areas.

One such measure is the report published last year investigating feasibility of the East of Bath Express, which investigates whether a Link & Ride is viable along the A4 linking Chippenham and Bath. Link and Ride works in a similar way to a traditional Park and Ride, by intercepting traffic before it reaches the city centre. However, instead of having one large Park and Ride interchange hub, which people potentially have to drive further to reach, Link and Ride provides multiple, smaller interchange hubs at strategic locations along a set route.

The feasibility study tested different scenarios to better understand how a Link and Ride bus service could work between Chippenham and Bath. The introduction of a series of small interchange hubs, in locations along the A4, could enable more people to walk, wheel, or drive to a local hub before catching a quick and direct bus service into Bath city centre.

The report sets out our initial findings and recommendations and provides a good platform to move forward and discuss the idea further with the West of England Combined Authority, as the region's transport authority, Wiltshire Council and local transport stakeholders. Further in-depth analysis, including community and stakeholder engagement, would be required before any decisions to progress could be made.

Other measures that might assist to the east of Bath include the extension of residential parking zones to the area. The council continues to work with local communities to develop and implement these to manage the intrusion of commuter vehicles into residential neighbourhoods and promote active travel and more sustainable modes of transport.

M	04	Question from: Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>The budget sets out cost to the city centre anti-terrorism measures. The cost to deliver these measures has now risen from £1.5 million to £7.4 million. Why have the costs to this project spiralled?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Richard Samuel
<p><i>The budget for the City Centre scheme was set in 2019/20 at £673,885.36, with a provisional approval of £2,356,000. This gave a total overall budget of £3,029,885.36</i></p> <p><i>In 2019/20 the Council was making its first investigations into the provision of Hostile Vehicle Mitigation (HVM) measures in crowded places that lay in the vicinity of the Roman Baths/Bath Abbey. This work was being carried out in response to the recommendations set out in the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) report issued to the Council in 2016.</i></p> <p><i>A budget estimate was carried out in 2019/20 to forecast costs for the City Centre Security works which gave a forecast of £3,029,000 and included preliminary estimates of:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. the civil engineering works costs</i> <i>2. HVM sliding and static bollards</i> <i>3. Traffic management costs</i> <i>4. Highways design fees</i> <i>5. Consultation/ engagement, including a Public Inquiry</i> <i>6. Other costs such as TTROs and cellar surveys</i> <p><i>The main areas where cost increases have occurred include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The civil engineering works costs were initially estimated at approximately £0.5m and are now of the order of £2.5m. At the early</i> 		

*stage that the estimate was made, complications and difficulties associated with the specialist security nature of the works, traffic management requirements, statutory undertakers diversions had not been anticipated. **Cost increase £2m.***

- 2. Sliding bollard costs – Only initial estimates had been obtained from the market at the time of the original estimate. **Cost increase £0.2m.***
- 3. Statutory Undertakers' diversions – More complicated than initially anticipated. **Cost increase £0.2m.***
- 4. Traffic Management requirements – Significantly more complex than originally estimated these are the traffic Marshals required for the construction works across the four sites (Cheap Street, Hot Bath Street, Lower Borough Walls and Upper Borough Walls). **Cost increase £0.9m***
- 5. Design fees – The initial anticipation was for a faster delivery of the scheme, and had not fully anticipated the level of engagement required, both internally within the Council and with other stakeholders, together with appointment of specialist consultants in Accessibility and Security and the resultant decision to accommodate access for Blue Badge Holder's into Cheap Street/ Westgate Street. **Cost increase £0.7m.***
- 6. Parking suspensions were not included within the original estimate. **Cost increase £0.2m.***
- 7. Costs associated for external structural consultants, extent of Orders, etc. **Cost increase £0.1m.***
- 8. Costs for the Automated Access control system more expensive than initially estimated. **Cost increase £0.1m.***

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Sam Ross
<p>A school street is defined as follows: “a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic.”</p> <p>How many of the Liveable Neighbourhoods, which are being delivered across B&NES will include a school street?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>I understand that school streets are being considered with communities as part of two of our 15 liveable neighbourhood projects.</i></p>			
P	02	Question from:	Sam Ross
<p>A school street is defined as follows: “a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic.”</p> <p>Are there any plans for standalone school streets in B&NES in the next budget?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>There is no specifically dedicated funding in the budget for next financial year for school streets outside the liveable neighbourhood programme, but discussions are ongoing with Schools and external sources of funding are actively being sought.</i></p>			
P	03	Question from:	Sam Ross
<p>How many trees have been planted to date in B&NES with regard to your attempt to plant 100,000 by 2023?</p>			

Answer from:	Cllr Dave Wood	
<p><i>At the end of the 2021/2022 planting season, the total number of trees planted across Bath and North East Somerset through both Council led projects and planting by our partners totalled 64,000.</i></p> <p><i>Current data indicates that the 100,000 tree target (net) will be exceeded this season. However, as the planting season has several weeks left to run, exact figures will not be available until later this month at the earliest.</i></p>		
P 04	Question from:	John Leach
<p>I believe the Government is currently conducting yet another “strategic review” of how traffic could flow between the M4 and the Dorset coast. It should be perfectly clear to all that the A36/A46 route is completely unsuitable for this traffic given the newly uncovered structural weakness of Cleveland Bridge and the fact that Bath now has a Clean Air Zone. May I ask, what is the timetable for the government’s latest strategic route study to be published, and what assurances can the Council provide that the government will not impose yet more HGV traffic on Bath?</p>		
Answer from:	Cllr Manda Rigby	
<p><i>The M4 to South coast study has been ongoing over the past year and is getting close to the stage where preliminary recommendations can be made to the decision maker, the Secretary of State.</i></p> <p><i>In essence, the study has looked at all the routes available with a view to checking if the current designations are still the best ones, and what investment is needed were there to be any redesignations.</i></p> <p><i>It is hoped that by early Summer the report will go to ministers for their consideration, and I am very pleased with its progress. The suitability of the A46/A36 for both volume and weight of traffic has been assessed, alongside the heritage and health impact of using this route on the residents of the City of Bath, and its Grade II* listed asset, Cleveland Bridge. Similar work has been carried out on all the other alternates, and a scoring system has been applied in order to help decision making and I fully support the direction of travel so far.</i></p>		

In addition, there is a project looking at moving freight back on to railways where there is redundant capacity, again with a view to lessening the impact of often empty HGVs using local towns and cities as a cut through.

P

05

Question from:

Saskia Heijltjes

The consultation period for the consultation on the installation of up to 20 additional cycle hangars is only 11 working days (from 27 Feb to 13 March), including the day of publication, which seems very short. Could you please provide best practice guidelines for a public consultation like this one and if there were any particular reasons for this very short consultation period? How did you make sure the target audiences knew about this consultation and had the chance to respond?

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The consultation has been developed with advice from our community engagement team and communications teams to ensure it reaches as much of the community as possible within the available timeframe. Determining the consultation period was a balance between giving people enough time to respond, whilst complying with the timescales available with the project funding. We also considered that this a simple survey which should take no more than 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

We have worked with the community engagement team to send details of the consultation directly to area forums, town councils and other relevant community groups. The communications team have sent out a press release and social media posts to further raise awareness amongst the community. This consultation is the first of an ongoing programme of consultations on this issue and more will be launched when appropriate to reflect the growing demand for cycle hangers and available funding secured to deliver the schemes.

P

06

Question from:

Saskia Heijltjes

During the budget meeting on 21 February 2023, it was said that there is funding available for School Streets in 2023, including from the funding available for the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme. Please provide information on the process for schools to request a school street, including for schools that are not within one of the 15 Liveable Neighbourhood areas.

Answer from:

Cllr Richard Samuel and Cllr Sarah Warren

The use of measures, including traffic calming measures and improved pedestrian facilities, and the exclusion of motor vehicles at school arrival and departure times is a feature of Liveable Neighbourhoods policy and the council is keen to take forward the use of School Streets in order to make roads outside of schools safer and better environments for people to walk, cycle or wheel to school. It is important that the school involved is fully supportive. We consider requests from the community in consultation with local ward councillors, and the council's Highway team will then collate the requests and make an initial assessment as to whether such a scheme is likely to be feasible. These will then be shortlisted for potential consideration and funding in our extended TIP Plus programme for 2023/24, or the Transport Improvement Programme for 2024/25 or for consideration within a future Liveable Neighbourhood scheme

P **07**

Question from:

Jackie Head (On behalf of CVAF C&NE(ST)WG)

We are grateful to Kevin Guy and Sarah Warren for writing to Dan Norris putting the case for the introduction of BSIP fixed routes which were scoped and put out to tender by WECA and then not progressed (with the exception of the 522). Thank you for forwarding our report which makes a case for the retention of the 672 to Dan Norris.

In an email response to Sarah Warren from Dan Norris, forwarded to our group by Sarah Warren, it appears to be clear that the WECA Mayor is not considering bringing in the other BSIP proposed routes which impact on the Chew Valley (517 Chew Magna to Wells, 526 Chew Valley circular, 527 Chew Magna to Bristol) on the grounds that they are too expensive are not now and are not likely to become commercially viable within the 2 year life of the BSIP funding.

Please can you clarify:

Additional funding for 672: Will you now reconsider your own position in terms of funding the 672 as a bus service in the light of the detailed evidence of present need, potential growth when coupled with DRT and also when the proposal is seen through the lens of decarbonisation goals?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

We are actively exploring the options to maintain support for the 672.

P 08	Question from:	Jackie Head (On behalf of CVAF C&NE(ST)WG)
<p>Proper Comms about the DRT project: Our own attempts to connect with Dan Norris have been less successful and we will be taking this up with him via WECA democratic processes, but would you agree with us that there is a need for much clearer comms to yourselves, your officers, and B&NES communities about the introduction of DRT from the WECA Mayor and WECA comms? Will you lobby WECA for a clear comms plan to be produced that can be shared with those who are being asked to make this significant change and those supporting them to make the change?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>We have made repeated calls to the Mayor to release a properly thought out and resourced comms and engagement plan to support our communities in transitioning to DRT, and will continue to do so.</i></p> <p><i>Time is rapidly running out, and it is imperative that the Mayor acts immediately to ensure that communities are able to access this new service.</i></p>		
P 09	Question from:	Jackie Head (On behalf of CVAF C&NE(ST)WG)
<p>Making time for behavioural change: If B&NES is not in a position to fund 672 <i>indefinitely</i>, would you agree with us that 2 months will not be a sufficient extension of time to bring regular vulnerable users of the 672 across to using DRT, particularly in the light of such a dearth of accurate comms at present? Therefore, will you consider some further extension, perhaps 6 months rather than 2 is a more realistic target? Our own understanding of behaviour change tells us that when people are angry and anxious and lacking clear information, they are more likely to cling on to the known, and that they will need time and considerable support to move to a different <i>attitude</i> to change, not just be facilitated pragmatically.</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>		

We have already increased our levy contribution which has enabled us to fund the continuation of the 672 for two months to support our communities in transitioning to DRT and are actively exploring the options to maintain support for the 672.

(This response was sent within 5 working days of the meeting).

P 10

Question from:

Edmund Cannon

In the response to a question from Cllr Joanna Wright (9 February 2023 Cabinet Meeting, q.25) it was reported that £12,500 was spent on refurbishing the Keynsham public toilets in Ashton Way car park and that running costs to that point had totalled £2,750. Since it costs 20p to use the toilets I assume that it is possible to work out total usage from revenue received.

1. How well used have the toilets been since re-opening (how much money has been collected and hence how many people have used it)?
2. What benefit-cost ratio was envisaged by the council when re-opening these toilets and has this been achieved?

Answer from:

Cllr Dave Wood

A total of £414.60 has been collected from its use by 2,073 people since opening in May 2022.

The income forecast was £1K per annum, this has not yet been realised. The facility does however continue to provide a convenient provision next to a busy town centre car park and the main bus stop connecting Bristol and Bath.

(This response was sent within 5 working days of the meeting).