

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, 16th March, 2023

Present:- **Councillors** Tim Ball, Sarah Bevan, Colin Blackburn, Alison Born, Shelley Bromley, Neil Butters, Vic Clarke, Sue Craig, Paul Crossley, Gerry Curran, Chris Dando, Jess David, Tom Davies, Sally Davis, Winston Duguid, Michael Evans, Andrew Furse, Kevin Guy, Liz Hardman, Joel Hirst, Lucy Hodge, Duncan Hounsell, Shaun Hughes, Dr Eleanor Jackson, Dr Kumar, Matt McCabe, Hal MacFie, Ruth Malloy, Paul May, Sarah Moore, Robin Moss, Michelle O'Doherty, Lisa O'Brien, Bharat Pankhania, June Player, Vic Pritchard, Manda Rigby, Mark Roper, Richard Samuel, Bruce Shearn, Brian Simmons, Alastair Singleton, Shaun Stephenson-McGall, Karen Walker, Sarah Warren, Karen Warrington, Andy Wait, Ryan Wills, David Wood and Joanna Wright

Apologies for absence: **Councillors** Douglas Deacon, Mark Elliott, Alan Hale, Steve Hedges, Grant Johnson, Paul Myers and Dine Romero

84 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair asked the Democratic Services Manager to read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

85 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dave Wood declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 as Director of Avon Needs Trees. [This disclosure was made at the start of that item.]

86 MINUTES - 21ST FEBRUARY 2023

On a motion from Councillor Vic Pritchard, seconded by Councillor Karen Warrington, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that the minutes of 21st February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

87 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL OR FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chair made the following two announcements about recent Council successes;

'We were informed in early March that our 'preparing for the future programme', changing how we worked and the refurbishment of Keynsham Civic Centre, has been shortlisted for the national PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards 2023. Congratulations to all involved! It's great to see the hard work of the many teams who contributed to this successful project being recognised.

Last week the Council found out that the Roman Baths has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Museums and Heritage Awards for Learning Programme of the Year. <https://awards.museumsandheritage.com/2023-shortlist/>

This is such wonderful recognition for our learning and participation team and workshop leaders who have created a truly unique experience for schools in the new Clore Learning Centre and Investigation Zone. The award ceremony will take place in May.'

And finally, in the light of some councillor colleagues not standing again, including some after many years, the Chair took this opportunity to say thank you on behalf of Bath and North East Somerset for their service to our community. And as this was the last Council meeting for this electoral term, the Chair explained that he had arranged for a photographer to take a photo of members in the Chamber. Some members will recall this was last done in 2017.

88 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business.

89 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The following members of the public had registered to address Council;

Deborah Collins made a statement about Active travel, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked Ms Collins whether she agreed that an acceptable balance was needed between car travel and other forms of travel. Ms Collins agreed that a balance was needed but the problem is that moving to car friendly policies in the short-term may be convenient, but this means traffic then increases and it becomes harder for everyone.

Onkar Saini made a statement about community engagement with regard to the Voter ID item later on the agenda, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. Councillor Vic Pritchard checked which ward Mr Saini was standing in, and was informed it was Combe Down.

Naomi Johns, Director of the West of England Falconry centre, made a statement regarding the ecological emergency item and how that aligns with the work of the centre, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. She briefly outlined the work of the charity and explained that they were forming relationships with key groups, looking for funding opportunities and to share research and raise awareness and would love to align with the Council too. Councillor Guy asked if she would like to meet with a Cabinet member to take this further, to which Ms Johns replied that she would.

Fiona Gourley had registered to make a statement about the Village Agents' scheme. As Fiona had tested positive for covid and was unable to attend the meeting, David Harding presented the statement on Fiona's behalf. A full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes.

Bob Goodman made a statement about this Administration's approach to residents, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. In reference to comments made during his statement, Councillor Richard Samuel asked Mr Goodman if he was aware that this Administration had followed all

financial procedures and policies that were in place when Mr Goodman was a councillor, and further whether he was aware that the Council deferred millions of pounds to the business community during the covid period, without a single complaint. Mr Goodman did not agree with this position. Councillor Colin Blackburn referred to Mr Goodman's comment regarding inept consultation and asked if he had any examples of that, to which Mr Goodman referred to the recent Parks department consultation on Backstones Open Space.

Dana Lazarevic made a statement about institutional discrimination, a copy of which has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. Councillor Eleanor Jackson asked Ms Lazarevic if she was aware that only 15% of senior academic posts are held by women, to which Ms Lazarevic responded that she was aware and added that she had applied for non-academic positions too, and had still been rejected.

David Harding made a statement about public transport within the Chew Valley and specifically the supported bus service 672 which had not been funded by WECA and would shortly lose its funding from the Council. He outlined the reasons why this service was so vital and potential problems with the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) proposals and asked if the Council would consider a further extension of the financial support while the DRT service was being established. Councillor Richard Samuel asked Mr Harding if he was aware that, due to the specific circumstances around public transport in the Chew Valley and the untested nature of the DRT service, he had today approved further finances, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel to extend the support to the 672 service to the end of July 2023. Mr Harding responded that he had not been aware, and greatly welcomed this news. Councillor Liz Hardman asked Mr Harding if he was aware that all the supported bus services subsidised by B&NES Council were in Bath and none in North East Somerset, to which Mr Harding responded that he was aware and was also aware that the proposal to WECA included a spine service and a Chew Magna to Bristol service being retained.

Angela Goldson made a statement about HGV traffic. A full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked Ms Goldson if she was saying that a chicane road layout was against public opinion, to which Ms Goldson replied that she was. Councillor Robin Moss asked if residents were consulted on the parking model, to which Ms Goldson replied that the original model they were consulted on had a continuous line of parking on both sides of the road, using inaccurate measurements. When residents pointed out this would not work, the alternatives presented were for residents to keep parking on the east side of the road which currently works well, or the chicane so residents were only consulted on an unworkable model.

David Redgewell had submitted a statement about the public transport network. As David was unable to attend due to the train strike, Councillor Hardman summarised the main points. A full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes.

Andy Stewart made a statement regarding the Climate & Ecological emergency item on the agenda. A full copy of the statement has been placed on the Minute book and is attached to these minutes. Councillor Sarah Warren asked if Mr Stewart was

aware how many trees the Council had planted, to which Mr Stewart responded that he had planted a considerable amount and thought that the Council had planted over 11 thousand. Councillor Vic Pritchard asked Mr Stewart if he was aware that the Clean Air zone was introduced by the Conservative Administration and Mr Stewart responded that it was implemented by the Liberal Democrat Administration. Councillor Robin Moss asked if Mr Stewart shared his hope that the Administration's tree planting figures were more accurate than its house building figures, to which Mr Stewart responded that he was acutely aware of the need for social and affordable housing in the city and commended the Council for all it was doing to try and increase that.

Chad Allen made a statement about English ivy and its negative effect on trees' ability to photosynthesise. He called on the Council to consider this in its tree planting programme and take steps to remove this invasive weed which is destroying our natural habitat. Councillor Karen Walker asked if Mr Allen thought the Council should do more to stop the invasion of English ivy, to which he responded that he thought we all should be doing more.

The Chair thanked all speakers for their statements which would be considered by the relevant Cabinet Member.

90 CLIMATE ANNUAL REPORT & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Council considered a report which set out the progress on the climate and ecological emergencies work over the past year and described future work plans.

On a motion from Councillor Sarah Warren, seconded by Councillor Jess David, it was

RESOLVED to

1. Note the positive progress and achievements over the last year on implementation of the council's Climate Strategy. This is summarised in the Climate Progress Report, at Annex 1, which includes a range of climate and nature case studies and the annual carbon performance dashboard for the whole area;
2. Note the particular progress made in understanding renewable energy in Bath and North East Somerset and in the development of the delivery pipeline shown in the renewables section of the Climate Progress Report, at Annex 1.
3. Note the Climate Action Plan and Route-map to 2030, at Annex 2.
4. Note the updated Climate Strategy, at Annex 3.
5. Note the development of the Ecological Emergency Action Plan, at Annex 4.
6. Note that the ambition on nature recovery contained in the Ecological Emergency Action Plan will only be fully realised with external investment and through working in partnership; and

7. Approve the Climate Annual Report and the new Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

[Notes;

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

91 JOINT COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Council considered a report setting out the current position on the Council's draft Joint Community Safety Plan.

On a motion from Councillor Alison Born, and seconded by Councillor Vic Pritchard, it was then unanimously

RESOLVED to agree the Joint Plan.

92 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS 2023: ELECTION FEES

The Council considered a report which set out the proposed fees to be paid to the Returning Officer and the staff he employs to undertake various duties in connection with these elections.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, and seconded by Councillor Karen Walker, it was then unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Agree the scale of fees payable to the Returning Officer and his staff as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

93 CONSTITUTION REFRESH - PART 2

The Council considered a report recommended to them from the Constitution working group who had met on 24th February. This picked up the further rationalisation work needed on the Financial Regulations, Contract Standing orders and picked up a few glitches identified since the new Constitution was adopted in July 2022.

On a motion from Councillor Tim Ball, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Agree to move the whole of Section 3.9 - Financial Regulations and Budget Management Scheme - to the Library and amend section 3.7 as set out in Appendix 1, and described in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.5 of the report;

2. Agree with the small amendment to the Code of Conduct to reinstate the link to the Councillor role descriptions, in line with Council's earlier wishes, as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report;
3. Agree the wording in paragraph 3.7 of the report be added to the public speaking rules within the Constitution (and the guidance) to clarify deadlines when a meeting is adjourned after the agenda has been published;
4. Agree the necessary constitutional and scheme of delegation changes for approval regarding the statutory officers disciplinary process, as set out in paragraphs 3.9 – 3.11 and that the Director of People & Policy be given delegated authority to take all steps necessary to implement these;
5. Agree the revised Contract Standing Orders, as explained in paragraph 3.12 and appendices 2 and 3 of the report;
6. Note that the full review of the Contract Standing Orders will be brought back to Council once the legislation is in place;
7. Agree the delegations to the Chief Executive as Electoral Registration Officer and Returning officer for those powers described in paragraphs 3.15 - 3.17 of the report; and
8. Agree that these changes take effect from 1st April 2023.

94 'FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT' WITH THE CITY OF OLEKSANDRIYA, UKRAINE

Following the formation of a new local group, the Friends of Oleksandriya, this report sought to further develop the relationship with the city of Oleksandriya by putting in place a formal friendship agreement between B&NES Council and the city of Oleksandriya.

On a motion from Councillor Kevin Guy, and seconded by Councillor Chris Dando, it was unanimously

RESOLVED to

1. Pursue and agree a friendship agreement between B&NES Council and the city of Oleksandriya;
2. Agree to establish a working group to work with the Friends of Oleksandriya and Oleksandriya City Council to draft a friendship agreement; and
3. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to negotiate, agree and sign the finalised friendship agreement on behalf of B&NES Council.

95 MOTION FROM LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP - VOTER ID

On a motion from Councillor Matt McCabe, seconded by Councillor Joel Hirst, it was

RESOLVED that

Council:

1. Notes that new Voter ID requirements, introduced by the Elections Act 2022, involve voters having to show photo ID before being issued with a ballot paper at all elections from May 2023 onwards.
2. Notes with concern that this new requirement creates a new barrier to residents exercising their democratic right to vote and may lead to some Bath and North East Somerset residents being disenfranchised.
3. Notes that a list of 'accepted' forms of photo ID has been published and that this includes fewer forms of ID held by younger and marginalised people.
4. Notes that voters can obtain a 'Voter Authority Certificate' from the Council if they do not have an 'accepted' form of photo ID.
5. Notes with concern the additional costs and administrative burden this will place on Electoral Services, and the risk of abuse towards poll workers from anyone denied a vote due to lack of ID.
6. Believes that this legislation is unnecessary, undemocratic and an egregious example of attempted voter suppression.

Council therefore:

7. Calls on Cabinet members and Council services to make every effort to communicate these new requirements, to avoid any resident being disenfranchised.
8. Calls on the government to urgently expand the list of 'accepted' forms of photo ID and to fully fund the costs to Councils of implementing this policy; and
9. Requests that the Leader communicate Council's views to government and to our local MPs.

[Notes;

1. *During debate, an amendment was moved by the Independent group, to remove point 6 of the recommendation. This was lost, with 8 Councillors voting in favour, 38 Councillors voting against and 1 Councillor abstaining.*
2. *During debate, an amendment was moved by the Conservative group, welcoming the strengthening of the electoral process but acknowledging this could discourage some voters. This was lost, with 11 Councillors voting in favour and 36 Councillors voting against.*
3. *The successful resolution was carried with 37 Councillors voting in favour, 10 Councillors voting against and 1 Councillor abstaining.]*

96 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR WRIGHT - HGV TRAFFIC

On a motion from Councillor Joanna Wright, seconded by Councillor Robin Moss, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

Council notes that:

1. Government figures show that HGV traffic nationally is increasing. The most recent figures (September 2021) show that whilst car traffic had decreased, there was an 8.9% increase in HGV traffic in just one year.
2. The growth of HGV traffic on many of our local roads generates noise and air pollution and undermines residential safety. It can have a real impact on the quality of life of residents living on affected streets, including sleepless nights and mental health problems. It affects cyclists and pedestrians, especially older or vulnerable people and families with small children.
3. One significant cause of HGV traffic along unsuitable roads is the use by lorry drivers of Google Maps and/or sat navs that are only intended for car use. In extreme cases, HGVs are routed up narrow, unsuitable routes and become stuck (one example is Brooklyn Road, Lambridge).
4. Locally, a large volume of HGV traffic is caused by new development. Residents frequently report frustration that the appropriate routing of construction traffic is not given sufficient care and attention as part of the planning process, and may feel like an afterthought, when from their perspective it should be front and centre.
5. Bath and North East Somerset Council does not require a 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' to be submitted at the same time as a planning application for major development.

Council resolves to:

6. Ask the Cabinet Member for Transport to write to Government Transport Minister Mark Harper asking for his view on the Local Government's Association's call for HGVs to be required to use commercial satnavs; and expressing this Council's support for such a measure.
7. Ask officers to review the 'National and Local Information Requirements – Planning Applications (including Outline, Reserved Matters and Variation of Condition)' document and to **pass this matter to the relevant Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel to consider the value of** making the submission of a 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' a mandatory validation requirement for planning applications for major developments *that should be accompanied by appropriate enforcement*. This will allow our officers, councillors and the public to have access to more information when determining the suitability of planning applications.

8. Subject to the **PDS review and** funding being identified, produce a 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' guidance document for developers that highlights the importance of routing construction traffic away from narrow, unsuitable and residential roads in order to ensure that this is an integral feature of any planning applications and is actively considered at the earliest possible stage in the planning process.

[Notes;

1. *The above successful resolution contains wording proposed by the Conservative group – the italicised section in point 7 “that should be accompanied by appropriate enforcement” – which was accepted into the substantive by Councillor Wright.*
2. *The above successful resolution contains additional wording proposed by the Liberal Democrat group to refer this matter to Scrutiny – the bold wording in points 7 and 8 – which was accepted into the substantive by Councillor Wright.]*

97 QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS AND PETITIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The Chair made reference to the public and councillor questions and responses which had been circulated prior to the meeting and will be added to the Council's Minute book and online record.

Councillors Richard Samuel, Andy Furse and Gerry Curran made farewell statements to Council, in the light of this being the last Council meeting for each of these councillors, highlighting significant moments and thanking staff and their councillor colleagues for their support.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

Chair

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services