

CABINET MEETING – 13 July 2023

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. Robbie Bentley – Public transport issues
2. Joy Arnold – Loss of 179 bus
3. Paul Roles (Rosewell Court Residents' Association) – Damage to pavement
4. Nicolette Boater – Draft Corporate Strategy 2023-27
5. Cllr Dine Romero – The Future of Culverhay
6. Malcolm Baldwin – Time to press the re-set button!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall
<p>Back in early 2022 positive changes were made to the Highway Code. Although the law and advice changed immediately, changes in drivers' behaviours will take years to embed. Alongside investing in Active Travel through engineering changes to our roads, what is the Council planning to do to run future poster campaigns to remind drivers not to close pass horse riders and cyclists on our rural roads in North East Somerset?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>Over the years we have held several events highlighting the dangers of close passing vulnerable road users and advising drivers that a minimum of 1.5m is required to do so safely. We have also had input into the Avon and Somerset Constabulary's Close Pass initiative, helping highlighting areas where these negative behaviours occur. Additionally, in 2020 a poster campaign was run advising drivers to pass cyclists and pedestrians at safe distances. These were predominantly used in areas where conflict between vehicles and cyclists/pedestrians had been reported or heavy cyclist flows are experienced. Through the Safe Systems approach, the Road Safety Team and its partners remain committed to highlighting the dangers of close passing and will continue to do so through various means. They will continue to work to protect all road users and strive to minimise risk of personal injury collisions on the highway.</i></p>			
M	02	Question from:	Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall
<p>Nationally increased demand as well as historic reductions to local public health budgets have put sexual health services at risk of breaking point. Recent figures published by the UK Health Security Agency show diagnoses of certain sexually transmitted infections, such as Gonorrhoea, doubled last year. What is B&NES Council doing to improve funding for sexual health services locally as demand for their services increases? How is the Council lobbying central government to ensure sexual and reproductive health funding is increased to levels which match the increased demand in services as we all know that investment in early intervention helps to save costs to the NHS and</p>			

prevents problems in the future?

Answer from:

Cllr Alison Born

In B&NES, new STI diagnoses are generally lower than the England and South West averages, and generally stable in terms of growth. Gonorrhoea shows an increase during 2022/23 to date, although still lower than the England average, and in line with the ongoing South West outbreak and increased diagnoses across England. Some areas of service activity have increased, including patient attendance at B&NES's main sexual health service, and GP prescribing for Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), whilst other activity has reduced or remained stable.

All local authorities receive a ring-fenced nationally determined public health grant for use on a number of public health functions. B&NES Council allocates funding for sexual health services via this grant.

There is a South West Sexual Health Commissioners Network and a National (English) Sexual Health and HIV Commissioners Group which raise issues of concern to the Department for Health and Social Care. The national group is supported by funding from the Local Authorities and secretarial support from the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).

The ADPH is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK and represents the professional views of DsPH as the local leaders for the nation's health, including on sexual health. The ADPH advocates nationally for improved population health, and this includes advocating for adequate funding through public health grant allocations.

M

03

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

All funding for supported bus routes in North East Somerset comes to an end at the end of July, and many rural communities lost their only bus to Bath at the beginning of June. The Metro Mayor, Dan Norris has offered 50% funding to help B&NES Council with these routes, allocated from the Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). Will B&NES actively work with the Metro Mayor to ensure that these bus routes are reinstated and protected for these communities by finding a way to put in place the other 50% needed?

Answer from:	Cllrs Kevin Guy and Sarah Warren		
<p><i>B&NES, as a unitary authority has no significant funding for buses over and above that which is already transferred annually to WECA as our transport levy. The remainder of our budget is fully committed to other council services such as social care, children's services (which together consume the vast majority of our budgets), housing, parks, waste management and so on, so there is very little remaining for discretionary expenditure such as on buses.</i></p> <p><i>The Combined Authority has been awarded £57m for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, as well as an additional £500k specifically for the support of bus services. On the 8th June we, alongside South Gloucestershire Council, wrote to Mayor Norris welcoming the news that the Minister has confirmed that Bus Service Improvement Plan funds can be spent to extend supported bus services, and in response to his offer to match the funding provided by the UAs for bus services. We reminded him that B&NES had already contributed £1.04m towards bus services, South Gloucestershire had contributed £1.454m. Cllr Kevin Guy has also written this week to the Mayor to put forward a more cost effective proposal for a bus network for North East Somerset. As you are aware, this plan was worked up with cross party input from councillors around North East Somerset, and it includes pointers to sources that WECA, as transport authority, could use for funding.</i></p> <p><i>We remain ready to work with the Mayor and his team at any time to develop our innovative plans for our communities further, as we understand the vital importance of public transport to some of our most vulnerable residents.</i></p>			
M	04	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
<p>In a recent press statement from B&NES Council it states how the Redevelopment of the Council depot in Keynsham significantly lowers emissions. It would appear that the embedded demolition and construction costs were not included in these emissions calculations and were omitted from the press release. Please could you give figures on the emissions output for demolition and the construction?</p>			
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren	
<p><i>At the time of project award, it was not the intent to approach the demolition and construction under BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment). This route of delivery would have helped measure the environmental impact of a building asset</i></p>			

as well as measuring sustainable (emissions) during demolition and construction, however, it also comes at a cost with considerable resource required for monitoring and assessing. The process looks at locality for resourcing, materials specification, transportation (delivery area) and site management, which as you will appreciate, requires resource and further cost implications for this project.

However, we can positively report on the following:

Demolitions: Undertaken by Penny's a local demolition and plant hire contractor from the Radstock area. Penny's were appointed to undertake the full demolition of the existing properties across the Pixash recycling hub's 4 hectares of land. This included a sizable former MOD warehouse and print works, 2 residential properties and a small number of outbuildings. The scope included for removal of ground slabs, driveways and all foundations. All stone / concrete and brick was crushed and retained onsite for sub ground hardcore for the construction of the new development. All metal and re-enforcing steel work was separated on site with band magnets, loaded into 40yarders onsite and removed for recycling. Green waste as also separated for re-use where possible onsite and remainder taken off site for composting / recycling. Timber separated for off-site recycling. Total waste vehicles leaving site for either recycling or disposal 24no. approx. over 80% of these were recyclable materials rather than hazardous or non-recycling. Sourcing of local contractor, onsite separation and recycling of bulk materials ensured this phase of the project had low emissions.

Construction: On going and through appointment of Farrans Construction. (18-20month project). However, the site works are delivering the following:

B-Rated Cabins - Our site cabins are the most energy efficient within the market. We worked with our suppliers to develop a 'greener solution' for the project. This comprised the provision of a total of 12 'B' rated cabins. These 'B' rated cabins significantly reduce energy demands as they have far better EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings than traditional accommodation units. Their features include on-demand ventilation to reduce energy and heat loss, improved temperature controls and LED lighting, as well as neurodiverse features such as coloured plug switches to assist the visually impaired and wider corridors to improve access for wheelchair users. As the power requirement of the 'B' rated cabins is significantly less than standard units, this allowed Farrans Construction to downsize to a Stage V 60kVA generator.

Hybrid Power - Farrans delivered innovative, greener and cleaner methods of sustainable construction and management throughout the works, including on-site renewable energy generation.

With a hybrid power system reducing carbon emissions and allowing the site to power cabins overnight with zero emissions, zero noise and zero fuel consumption. A battery storage unit (BSU) was installed alongside the generator, providing a more sustainable and cost-effective

alternative to having the generator run 24 hours a day.

These measures have enabled Farrans Construction to reduce generator use by 54%, equating to a reduction in fuel consumption of 54% based on average power loads.

HVO - *One of the most carbon efficient fuel sources is being used to power the site and in onsite vehicles - white HVO fuel.*

In order to reduce carbon emissions further and move towards a diesel free site, we used ISCC certified white HVO fuel. This is managed by a central hub where remote monitoring of fuel usage on-site and only refill when required to reduce unnecessary journeys from carbon emitting vehicles.

Farrans have used 16,078 litres of HVO on the project to date providing a carbon saving of 37,308Kg of CO₂e.

Vibro-Piling - *Vibro-displacement is a method of constructing columns of granular material up to 5.0m below ground level in order to improve the load bearing properties, stiffness, hydraulic conductivity and shear strength of the existing ground. The spacing of the columns is determined by design and the proximity of columns reflects the load which will be supported, and the settlement criteria. Farrans used the vibro-piling technique as an alternative to CFA piling using 40mm to 80mm aggregate / crushed recycled concrete – approx. 0.8 Tonnes per column. With 4,500 piles in total, using this technique provided a 92% carbon saving by reducing use of virgin materials, reduced deliveries through the use of site won materials and reducing programme.*

The piling option would have generated around 3,689 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), while the vibro method produced just 118 tCO₂e, by using recycled aggregate.

Local Sourcing - *for staff, materials and plant where possible. This reduces travel time and provides a positive net gain to the local social value and economy.*

(The above response was sent within five working days of the meeting).

M	05	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
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In a recent B&NES press statement, '**Chew Stoke Church School recognised for success in encouraging sustainable travel**', it states that:

"Pupils and staff at a Bath & North East Somerset school have been recognised for their exemplar achievements to encourage more

active, safer and sustainable ways to travel.”

Chew Stoke Church School represented the South West region at the National STARS School Travel Awards event in London last week, competing against five other primary schools for the National Award for Primary School of the Year.

Modeshift STARS recognises and rewards schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel.

Chew Stoke Church School has achieved Platinum Accreditation the highest level of accreditation for the last two years for its School Travel Plan initiatives and is the STARS South West Primary School of the Region 2022/23. Deputy head, Vicki Hennessy and teacher, Carole Hope attended the event with four students.

Councillor Sarah Warren, deputy leader and cabinet member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel, said: “Chew Stoke Church School is an excellent example of what can be achieved when a whole school, supported by a committed group of parents and teachers, works together to support sustainable travel. It is an exemplar school, leading the way in changing behaviour and championing healthy and active ways to travel to and from school, as well as embedding those habits for pupils in later life.”

However, it would appear that there are no pavements near this school and young children are expected to make the change to get to school, while the Council have not committed any infrastructure funding to enable a safe route to get there. Further in February 2023 Full Council the Liberal Democrats refused to agree to an amendment to the Council’s budget for school streets. Can you explain why all the emphasis is being placed on young children aged 7 to 11 years old to make change whilst no infrastructure to support them is being put in place by adults who can release the necessary funds?

Answer from:

Cllrs Sarah Warren and Manda Rigby

The Council’s transport delivery programme prioritises schemes that support active travel. The B&NES School Travel Officer is reviewing with Chew Stoke Church School opportunities for improvements and will liaise with the Council’s Traffic and Safety Team. We will continue to work together to support sustainable travel and any proposals will be assessed for inclusion in future work programmes. Funding has been identified for the school year 2023/24 to explore the piloting of school streets, and we will be working with schools to bring this forward.

M	06	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
Following the recent reports of sewerage discharges by Wessex Water into the river Avon, what steps are B&NES taking to monitor water quality and potentially warn residents who swim and play in the river?			
Answer from:			Cllr Tim Ball
<p><i>The Council does not have a statutory duty to monitor water quality in rivers in our district, the Environment Agency (EA) are the statutory body responsible for monitoring water quality in rivers. Water quality in river basins is governed by The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017. Information about water quality can be found on the Govt website https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/. However, if B&NES officers become aware of sewage problems in our local rivers, this should be reported to the EA. If a stretch of river achieves designated bathing water status, which is determined by DEFRA, then local authorities are required to put up signage to indicate the quality of the water from monitoring undertaken by the EA.</i></p>			
Supplementary Question			Is the Cabinet Member aware that the Environment Agency is not good at responding to or acting on concerns raised? I hope that the Cabinet Member shares my concern about this and is aware of the role of community leaders on this potential health crisis.
Answer			I am aware of the Environment Agency's failure to respond on a number of occasions, but the Council does not have a budget to deal with the issue as it is an Environment Agency responsibility. I will undertake some further research on this and perhaps assist with some monitoring. However, this can only take place if a suitable budget can be found.

M	07	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
<p>Recently Lisa Nandy MP, shadow Secretary of State, said that "my mantra is council housing, council housing, council housing". Can the administration please provide an update on progress to their commitment to build council housing in B&NES.</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>I am pleased to confirm that the Council has now delivered 39 units of council owned housing. This includes supported housing for some of our most vulnerable residents, shared-ownership housing for those who were unable to buy on the open market and the first social rented council housing in the district in a generation. The social rented scheme was also a finalist in the prestigious national Best Affordable Housing Scheme Awards organised by the Municipal Journal. Contractors are on-site delivering another 14 units of supported and social rented accommodation. We have secured planning permission for another 8 units on the Lower Bristol Road and have further schemes at pre-planning application stage. However, we want to do more which is why we are currently reviewing our delivery strategy to ensure we deliver on our manifesto commitment for 100s of council house units by 2027 and with an aspiration of over 1,000 units by 2030.</i></p>			
M	08	Question from:	Cllr Grant Johnson
<p>Local campaigners in the Somer Valley have been fighting to stop the development of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone in Paulton, which has been zoned for industrial use for some time. Is the cabinet committed to delivering this project, and will it be supporting the Local Development Order (LDO) following further consultation?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) is an allocated site for employment via the Local Plan in 2007 and was re-established in the Local Plan Partial Update in 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Delivery of SVEZ is a manifesto commitment which the Council has pledged to complete. The next stage for SVEZ is to submit the LDO for a</i></p>			

secondary statutory consultation via the Local Planning Authority, for the LDO to then be adopted by Cabinet. Within the documentation for the LDO resubmission will include a Statement of Clarifications which is to address the main concerns raised by the public via the initial statutory consultation.

M	09	Question from:	Cllr Grant Johnson
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Is the administration committed to extending the cycle lane from Midsomer Norton to Farrington Gurney, as was proposed during the development of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ), but later removed?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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Through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), B&NES is working closely with the Combined Authority to deliver walking, wheeling, and cycling improvements between Farrington Gurney and Old Mills Lane (south of Paulton) that will provide a safe route for cyclists via a shared-use path on the northern side of the A362 that is segregated from traffic. This route is proposed as part of the Somer Valley Links project, which is currently at public consultation. Combined with the proposals for Old Mills Lane, this would create a mostly traffic-free route between Farrington Gurney and Paulton. Residents are encouraged to provide their feedback on the proposals at the Somer Valley Links consultation website: www.haveyoursaywest.co.uk

East of Old Mills Lane, the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) is proposing improvements to the walking, wheeling and cycling offer to Thicket Mead, enabling a link to the Norton Radstock Greenway at Midsomer Norton. The Somer Valley Links proposals have been developed with these in mind and, whilst they can be delivered independently, the combination of the two sets of proposals will deliver a traffic-free route for cyclists between Farrington Gurney and Midsomer Norton.

M	10	Question from:	Cllr Grant Johnson
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is there a plan in place to extend the same cycle track (see question 9 above) North to Bristol from Farrington Gurney?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren		
<p><i>The Somer Valley Links project has proposed options to improve the cycling provision between Hallatrow, Clutton, Pensford, Publow, and Whitchurch through the development of a 'quiet route' that would provide a safer alternative to use of the A37. The 'quiet route' would use existing but direct rural roads to the east of the A37 to achieve this, with safe cycling supported through several measures, including reduced speed limits, reductions to vehicle speeds achieved through road narrowing and speed bumps, the creation of new passing places to provide adequate widths, new road markings, and a comprehensive wayfinding strategy to direct cyclists. In addition, the proposals include new shared-use pavements designed to the latest guidance standards (LTN1/20) alongside the A37 between Chelwood roundabout and Pensford, and between Hursley Lane and Queen Charlton Lane, and a new crossing between Chelwood roundabout and Pensford. These proposals are subject to further design review and feedback received from the public from the current consultation exercise.</i></p> <p><i>The consultation additionally highlights a future opportunity to consider the reinstatement of parts of the old railway path to Hallatrow, which could provide a fully off-road route, and which could link into the proposals for a shared use path along the A362 between Farrington Gurney and Old Mills Lane. This route is more complicated to deliver and would require discussions with landowners around its feasibility. It is not possible to achieve this within the approved budgets or required timescales of the Somer Valley Links project but is an opportunity for future consideration.</i></p>			
M	11	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>BANES Council has plans to further electrification of the Council's fleet, will any of the current internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles in the fleet be replaced by cycles or electric cycles?</p>			
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren	
<p><i>No current replacements of ICE vehicles with cycles or electric cycles are planned. (These are always evaluated on a case-by-case basis). However, this is principally because we have already made some changes in the past few years. In the city centre we already have the following 8 ebikes in use, and partially financed by grant funding:</i></p>			

1. 3x enforcement officer ebikes for use in the city centre (as well as 3x electric vans for fly tipping / rural enforcement etc duties)
2. 2x city centre supervisor ebikes (replaced one ICE van)
3. The Waste Education and Campaigns Officer has 1x ebike which is in regular use
4. 1x pool e bike formerly based at Ashmead Road Recycling depot is about to be relocated to the new Keynsham recycling hub.
5. 1x pool ebike in use by a project manager on the construction project.
6. In August, a 4th enforcement officer hire van will be replaced by an electric van following consolidation of a dog warden and environmental enforcement role

Where range / payload is an issue then it may be more appropriate to purchase an e van. For example, 8 Nissan e vans have recently been purchased for the highways department.

M	12	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
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On the recent Climate Connect June email sent out by the Council, it implies that by responding to consultations, making lifestyle changes or joining a local action group will help the Council reach net zero. Why is this the only net zero action being asked for by the Council?
<https://mailchi.mp/1c7f3fbb2d01/climate-connect-refresh-9351689?e=7079ae0eac>>

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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The Climate Connect newsletter forms one part of a range of communications which are provided to our residents. Other campaigns have included encouraging residents to take part in the West of England solar together scheme, inviting those who are eligible to take advantage of home energy efficiency grants and taking part in events such as the upcoming Green Open Homes weekend. Our close connections with parish councils have also supported local action planning and working groups to form. We have raised awareness of the climate and ecological emergencies through events like the Climate Festival and the Festival of Nature. We will also be promoting the recently launched Retrofit West service which aims to support residents to retrofit their own homes. These all form a suite of actions residents can take to help the council reach its net zero target.

M	13	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>Recently the Government announced which local authorities had successfully received Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 funding. B&NES applied to this funding through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and we have learned that Bristol successfully received £3.8 million whilst B&NES council failed to receive any for their application. Please can you inform us as to why no community groups were included in the consultation on the Active Travel Fund tranche 4?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>The bid to Active Travel England was developed and submitted by the West of England Combined Authority. It would be more appropriate if this question was addressed to them.</i></p>			
M	14	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>In 2015 Lidl opened a superstore on the Lower Bristol Road in Bath. In 2018, the Co-op closed a store in Twerton High Street.</p> <p>Please can you give full details about what and how much B&NES has spent on improving Twerton High Street in the last 4 years, including grants from WECA and any other funding bodies?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>The Regeneration team has expended £94,585.05 on Twerton High Street from 31/08/21 onwards. We do not have expenditure recorded for the remaining period of the request (which begins in 2019).</i></p> <p><i>Exclusions: the summary below does not include items such as salary and certain other costs which relate to the Bath Local Centres High Street Improvement Scheme as a whole, rather than being attributed to a specific local centre.</i></p>			

Cost category	Expenditure	Key items funded
<i>Art and events</i>	<i>£5,718.37</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Foyer mural</i> • <i>Sensory garden planting and nature event</i> • <i>Art for new planters, designed by local children</i>
<i>Consultation</i>	<i>£297.95</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Venue hire and printing</i>
<i>Meanwhile uses</i>	<i>£53,005.69</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2x long term vacant shops have been reanimated – now used as an arts and community space and a local artist residency and exhibition space</i> • <i>Fit out and ongoing rent, utility etc costs funded by the Council for an agreed period. Management and activity costs external</i>
<i>Public realm</i>	<i>£34,741.00</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sensory garden</i> • <i>Planters</i> • <i>Hanging baskets</i>
<i>Replacement, repair and maintenance</i>	<i>£450.04</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Planter and hanging basket maintenance</i> • <i>Graffiti removal</i>

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Chad Allen
<p>Would it be possible for the Council to provide me with some funding to purchase some tree climbing equipment to enable me to properly remove English ivy from the trees?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Tim Ball

The Council does not accept your repeated assertions, at Council meetings, that English Ivy damages healthy trees. The Council declared a climate emergency at its meeting on 14th March 2019 and an ecological emergency at its 23rd July 2020 meeting. The Council considers that English Ivy provides a suitable habitat for many wildlife species and pollinators especially during the winter period.

In the circumstances the Council will not provide any encouragement, equipment or support to enable you to remove English Ivy. Indeed, the Council requires that you stop damaging ivy by removing it from any tree growing in any public space within the Council area.

If you continue to remove ivy from trees in any public space within the council's area, then the council intends to support any Police action against you to prevent you from damaging the ivy and the natural habitat as a result.

The answer to your questions is therefore: No.

P	02	Question from:	Chad Allen
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Can the Cabinet provide me with a letter or documentation to produce to the Police to avoid arrest when entering public spaces to clear ivy from the trees?

Answer from:	Cllr Tim Ball
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No (see PO1 above).

P	03	Question from:	Chad Allen
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Would it be possible for me to have a job with the Council specialising in the removal of English ivy?

Answer from:	Cllr Tim Ball
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No (see PO1 above).

P	04	Question from: Lisa Loveridge
<p>The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) have stated that there is a need to reduce car miles by 40% if 2030 targets are to be reached. Will the B&NES Climate Strategy and Journey to Net Zero document be updated to say 40% reduction in car miles is needed by 2030 as per latest targets from WECA?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>Bath and North East Somerset's Journey to Net Zero strategy contains an aspiration to reduce car mileage per person by 25% by 2030. The basis for this figure is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Local Figure of a 25% reduction was produced in 2019 by Anthesis as part of the original work that supported the need for a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019</i> • <i>The figure covers the B&NES district only</i> • <i>The 25% reduction is a figure for passenger km per person per year and as such is a distance reduction, rather than a modal shift target.</i> • <i>The 25% figure has been developed using the SCATTER model which is based on the Department for Energy & Climate Change work published an open source 2025 pathways calculator tool. Anthesis made some modifications to this including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Scaling down the data by building in localised data sets to the model</i> • <i>Technology specifications changes were reviewed and updated where judged to be out of date and constraining ambition</i> <p><i>The 40% figure provided by WECA was published as part of their recent Climate and Ecological Strategy and Action Plan. The basis for this figure is as follows:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The figure excludes aviation and maritime but does include emissions from all of the West of England land-based transport modes, including those in North Somerset</i> 		

- *This figure has been derived from a Transport Decarbonisation Model developed by WECA*
- *The model provides bottom-up calculations based on inputs from rail, bus and coach, and road traffic (traffic models) to reflect a baseline year (2019) and future year forecasts of transport emissions (2030 and 2050)*
- *The model takes the outputs of the regional and local traffic model and converts vehicle km to carbon emissions*

From this it's clear that the two figures for carbon reduction above have been derived using two different methods. They also cover two different geographies and are based on different assumptions and base data. As a result, it's no surprise that they give a different end figure. The conclusion therefore is that there is currently no agreed consistent way of calculating carbon emissions associated with transport. On this basis, we consider it correct that we still refer to the locally derived figure of 25% reduction in passenger-km per person per year. This is the figure that was agreed as part of our climate emergency in 2019 and the figure we are working to at a local level. The Journey to Net Zero is a local transport plan, not a regional transport plan.

P

05

Question from:

Lisa Loveridge

How much did B&NES Council spend on AECOM reports for Active Travel and Liveable Neighbourhood projects?

Answer from:

Cllrs Sarah Warren and Manda Rigby

B&NES has commissioned AECOM to provide consultancy services to support the Liveable Neighbourhoods project. This support has to date cost £609.5k and has included:

- *In 2021, prioritisation of 15 liveable neighbourhood schemes, development of public consultations, support at events and provision of data analysis*
- *In 2022, development of co-design workshops, support at workshop events and provision of data analysis*
- *Throughout 2023, development of pre-liminary designs for measures identified at co-design workshops for 15 liveable neighbourhood schemes*
- *Throughout 2023, development of the full business case for submission to WECA*

In addition to the Liveable Neighbourhoods projects, B&NES has commissioned AECOM to provide consultancy services in support of

several Active Travel schemes recently. These included proposals for improving user safety, and proposals for new and improved active travel routes. The incurred costs and commitments for outstanding work for these recent projects are:

- Highway safety improvement studies (six corridors): around £81k
- Bristol to Bath Railway Path extension options report: around £62k (funded through WECA grant fund)
- Bath Quays Links: around £65k spent to-date, with commitments for around a further £45k (funded through WECA grant)

Scholars Way: around £279k spent to-date, with commitments for around a further £98k (funded through WECA grant and B&NES match funding).

P	06	Question from:	Lisa Loveridge
Will the Cabinet conduct a transparent review of the impact of the AECOM reports for Liveable Neighbourhoods, as there is a perceived failure in these tax-payer reports?			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>All technical reports, irrespective of the consultancy producing them, undergo appropriate scrutiny by B&NES officers to ensure that they meet the scope of the commission. They are then further reviewed as part of the project governance process and the Cabinet Member who has responsibility for the functional area or portfolio according to Para 1.6 of the Council's constitution will sign off the next steps in the project delivery. The Cabinet also has responsibility for receiving performance management reports including updates on action plans and major projects, in accordance with Para 2.2.2 of the Council's constitution.</i></p> <p>https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s77259/Constitution.pdf</p>			
P	07	Question from:	Erica Davies
The Council purchased an electric cargo bike for use by the Parks team. Is this bike still in use and if so, how often is it used?			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren

The Council's Parks & Green Spaces Team did have an electric cargo bike which they had been trialling across their various teams, however, it was proving impractical under our current operational models. Therefore, they approached the events team, who have taken the bike and will use it during Bath Christmas Market supporting the traders with deliveries and product restocking, reducing the need for traders to drive into the city every day to replenish their chalets, as well as the events team in delivering equipment across the city and supporting our climate emergency commitments.

The bike will also be used for other events and be made available for other teams, should they require access as we further develop our approach to sustainable transport service delivery.

P	08	Question from:	Erica Davies
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Please can you give full data on car miles and number of vehicle trips in B&NES since the Journey to Net Zero document was first published. Does the council know where they are in terms of progress in reducing car miles by 25%?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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Whilst it isn't possible to know the exact number of vehicles entering or travelling around Bath & North East Somerset, the Council does monitor traffic flows at key points on the traffic network using a number of permanent traffic count sites. In total there are 73 automatic traffic count sites located across the district and these continually monitor and provide data on traffic flows, traffic speeds and vehicle classification. Using these sites as a proxy for traffic levels across the district, it is possible to monitor traffic flows and the long-term trends in terms of numbers of vehicles on our network.

We are currently reviewing the data we have in order to develop a set of meaningful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure that we are able to accurately monitor our progress towards the key aims of the Council.

P	09	Question from:	Erica Davies
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Please can you give full details of how many signalised pedestrian crossings there are in B&NES and how many were optimised for pedestrians in the past 4 years?

Answer from:	Cllr Manda Rigby		
<p><i>In B&NES we have 75 signalised pedestrian crossings and 44 signalised junctions, of which 34 include pedestrian crossings. Pedestrian wait times at signalised crossings in B&NES are significantly lower than in many cities in the UK. In Bath last year we reduced the wait time at the A36/Widcombe Parade crossing and we have also reduced the wait time at the Charles Street/James Street West crossing.</i></p> <p><i>We have recently started a review of the operation of the signalised junctions and crossings in Bath that operate under Urban Traffic Control, which is a system that coordinates a series of traffic signals in close proximity to each other in order to minimise congestion. As we undertake this review we will look to reduce pedestrian wait times. We are also upgrading the system that allows us to remotely monitor traffic signal faults across B&NES, which will enable us to review pedestrian wait times at locations outside of Bath too. These reviews are taking place over the next few years.</i></p> <p><i>In reviewing wait times we have to be mindful of the impact on buses and general traffic, particularly in locations where there are issues with air quality. However, we are reducing pedestrian wait times wherever this is possible.</i></p>			
P	10	Question from:	Barbara Gordon
<p>The Council are presently consulting on emission-based parking charges. As buying a least polluting car requires upfront financing it is often the wealthiest in society that can afford the least polluting cars. Does the Council have any data on who owns the least polluting cars in B&NES using socio-economic data?</p>			
Answer from:		Cllr Manda Rigby	
<p><i>The introduction of emission-based car park charges is proposed for public car parks in Bath to reduce air pollution by encouraging drivers of higher polluting vehicles to seek cleaner, more sustainable travel options, such as the city's park and ride service where the charges will stay the same, rather than pay higher charges to park in the city centre.</i></p> <p><i>The impacts of air pollution on health are well established and any amount of pollution can be damaging to health, but the more that you are</i></p>			

exposed to, the bigger the risk and this further increased among vulnerable groups including children; older people, and those with lung or heart conditions.

We do not have any vehicle ownership data that can be matched to socioeconomic data. However, analysis undertaken for the introduction of emission-based charges for residents on street parking permits in 2021, which looked at permit holder data rather than entire vehicle population, showed that there was no relationship between older/more polluting vehicle ownership and deprivation. It was acknowledged that this did not mean that those individuals living in more deprived areas would not be disproportionately impacted by a higher price for their permit and mitigations, such as a more flexible and affordable 1 month permit, were introduced.

Not all drivers using our car parks in Bath will be affected by the increase, only those with more polluting vehicles, and we estimate that 34% of customers (which includes regular commuters and visitors from outside B&NES) will see no change because of these proposals. However, the remaining 66% will see their parking charges increase by on average a modest 11p per hour if they continue to bring their vehicles into the city centre, having a negative impact on the health of people living and visiting the city, rather than seek cleaner and more sustainable travel options.

It should also be noted that some of our communities have much lower vehicle ownership rates than others, with recent census data from 2021 showing that within Twerton, which has the highest proportion of households being economically inactive (due to sickness or care of family members), 37% of households own no car or van. Whilst an individual within this community may be impacted by these proposals to a greater extent than one from a less socioeconomically deprived community, there is less impact across the community due to the lower rates of car or van ownership. Those households that do not own cars or vans are equally affected by the health impacts of poor air quality but contribute less to the air pollution that causes it.

P **11**

Question from:

Barbara Gordon

Please can you give full details of how many 3G pitches have been given planning permission in the last 2 years and how sustainable this product is?

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

Only one artificial pitch has been approved (issued) in the last 2 years - at Larkhall Football Club in December 2022. One was also

approved at committee last month (at Bath University) but the decision hasn't actually been issued yet.

The Planning Department can't comment on the sustainability of artificial grass as a product as that is not a planning issue/area of expertise.

P	12	Question from:	Matt Cooper
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Keynsham High Street has recently had parklets installed on the street so that residents can find a place to sit and enjoy the local ambience and location. Can the Cabinet Members involved in selecting this location confirm that the Ward councillors in Keynsham were in agreement?

Answer from:	Cllr Paul Roper
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Yes, the Keynsham Ward Councillors were engaged as part a multi-stage design process in the Temple Street Improvement project which included the design and installation of parklets, and there was also full public engagement in the design process. Detailed information summarising the designs and public consultation can be found on the Keynsham High Street Heritage Action Zone website www.hikeynsham.co.uk

P	13	Question from:	Matt Cooper
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Has the council applied to Active Travel England for funding for School Streets in B&NES? If not, will they do so for Active Travel Fund tranche 5?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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Funding has been identified within B&NES for the development of a number of pilot school street schemes in B&NES in the 23/24 school year.

Should this prove to be effective, further funding will be sought from all potential sources to roll this out further.

P 14	Question from:	Matt Cooper
<p>The Church Commissioners for England, which manages the Church of England's £10.3bn endowment fund, recently decided to "exclude all remaining oil and gas majors from its portfolio, and will exclude all other companies primarily engaged in the exploration, production and refining of oil or gas, unless they are in genuine alignment with a 1.5C pathway by the end of 2023."</p> <p>In a Response to Public Committee Statements at the Avon Pension Fund Committee on 23rd June 2023, it was stated: "Along with 10 other local government pension schemes across the South West, Avon Pension Fund (APF) is served by the Brunel Pension Partnership, an asset manager based in Bristol. Brunel's climate policy reflects extensive input from all 10 local schemes including a strong consensus that blanket divestment is ineffectual in driving real world impact. However, we do expect companies to demonstrate plans to transition to net zero 2050 or before, underpinned by tangible actions and evidence of progress. Companies with a mere verbal commitment without a credible delivery plan or those with no commitment will form no part of the portfolio beyond 2030." How will you be influencing the Avon Pension Fund to act in the same way as the Church Commissioners for England?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>Bath and North East Somerset Council delegated its responsibility as administrator for the Avon Pension Fund to the Avon Pension Fund Committee. As such the administration of the Avon Pension Fund is not a Cabinet function. I welcome the statement from the Avon Pension Fund Committee that it is reviewing its climate goals and policies with a view to setting more ambitious targets before the end of 2023 and encourage engagement in that process.</i></p>		
P 15	Question from:	Anne Coghlan
<p>A recent tweet post on Nextdoor by a B&NES councillor states that "in the past four years, B&NES has become a leader amongst councils in Climate Action (i.e reducing the areas carbon footprint). The goal is in the next four years to make B&NES a leader in Climate Adaption."</p> <p>Can you therefore explain how the emission numbers in B&NES have in real terms gone up and explain how B&NES scores badly in national reports?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Sarah Warren

The most recent greenhouse gas emissions data from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero show that overall district emissions to the end of 2021 continued on a downward trend year on year with the exception of 2021 relative to 2020, where emissions were lower than 2019, but increased compared to 2020 due to Covid 19.

Footnotes:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1168138/2005-21-local-authority-ghg-emissions-statistical-release-update-060723.pdf states: 'Between 2020 and 2021, greenhouse gas emissions increased in 358 out of the 374 local authorities in the UK (96%). This is consistent with the increase in overall UK emissions in 2021, which increased by 5% largely due to COVID-19 restrictions easing and colder temperatures increasing the use of heating in buildings, though emissions were still lower in 330 local authorities (88%) than they were in 2019.'

The most up to date info re district wide GHG emissions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021> . Our latest report <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Climate%20Progress%20Report%202023.pdf>