

COUNCIL MEETING 21ST SEPTEMBER 2023

**STATEMENTS FROM
COUNCILLORS**

Councillors

1. Cllr Dave Harding - Rural buses

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Councillor Karen Walker
<p>Most ward councillors at some point will make a request for double yellow lines, because of parking issues that causes safety concerns. I know there is a staff shortage in parking services, and there are not enough staff to enforce and give penalty fines to those that park on double yellow lines in the villages outside of Bath, so why in the City centre of Bath you see two parking enforcement officers working together?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p>Civil Enforcement Officers are deployed for patrol across the whole of Bath & North East Somerset and patrols are allocated based on the number of factors that include the number and type of restrictions in an area; intelligence on reported contraventions; and the availability of resources. Officers are deployed via on-foot and mobile patrols with mobile patrols able to cover wider areas more readily.</p> <p>It is usual for higher levels of resource to be deployed where new restrictions go live, or where they are more concentrated, to support the adjustment of motorist behaviours and maintain the flow of the network in key areas where more restrictions are typically present; however, the number available at any one time is dependent on vacancies, leave, other absence and work patterns.</p> <p>The council has been successful in recruiting new officers to vacant posts during this year and our number of deployable staff is currently at 22 out of 30 posts. This will rise to 26 officers in September, but of course new staff will need to be trained and mentored before they are able to patrol alone.</p> <p>This training is undertaken whilst on the job, with a new officer accompanying a number of different experienced staff on patrol across many weeks as they gain experience and learn their new role, and this is typically what is taking place when the public see officers working together. Of course, there are other occasions when officers may accompany each other as they walk to their different patrol areas, often by the most direct routes, before going their separate ways. Whilst this may be perceived as them not working as they prioritise their prompt arrival at their assigned location, they will of course address vehicles clearly in contravention, noting that more thorough checks will be undertaken by the officer/s dedicated to patrol this area.</p>			

It should also be noted that whilst the role largely operates as a lone worker with officers being issued with equipment to support and protect them in their duties, such as radios and body worn video cameras, it may also be appropriate under some circumstances for officers to work in pairs for reasons of personal safety. Parking is an emotive topic and during their course of their duties our officers will encounter conflict situations whilst attempting to engage with motorists or take enforcement action. The council has a legal obligation to employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act, which is also reflected in its zero-tolerance approach towards unacceptable behaviour directed at staff, as highlighted in our recent campaign to support our new Violence, Aggression, Threatening and Challenging Behaviour (Staff Safety) Policy.

M	02	Question from:	Councillor Jess David
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What action will the Cabinet Member take to reinstate the Sunday Service for the Number 8 Bus. This is a much needed community service that connects residents on the Moorlands estate and Kingsway with the city centre, Moorlands Road shops and local services.

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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Thank you for your inquiries regarding the Sunday service and frequency of the number 8 bus, which plays a crucial role in connecting Moorlands estate and Kingsway residents to essential destinations, including the city centre, Moorlands Road shops, and local services. We understand the importance of these issues to the community.

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.

We are aware, however, that not only has the Combined Authority been awarded £57m for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, it has also been awarded an additional £500k specifically for the support of bus services.

Bath & North East Somerset Council is actively lobbying WECA to allocate BSIP funds for supported buses, including the reinstatement of the Sunday service and an increase in frequency on the service 8. While we cannot provide a specific timeline, please rest assured that we are unwavering in our commitment to finding a solution that serves the community's needs.

M	03	Question from:	Councillor Jess David
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What action will the Cabinet Member take to increase the frequency of the Number 8 Bus, recognising that this has been cut from running every 15minutes, to every 45minutes. This is a much-needed community service that connects residents on the Moorlands estate and Kingsway with the city centre, Moorlands road shops and local services.

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

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