

CABINET MEETING – 7th March 2024

STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. Kari Erickson – Liveable Neighbourhoods
2. Chad Allen – English Ivy and Liveable Neighbourhoods
3. George Clutton (Radstock Town Clerk) – Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan
4. Cllr Chris Dando – Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan
5. Cllr Eleanor Jackson – Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Eleanor Jackson
<p>Three local residents in the Somer Valley, in Radstock, Westfield and Midsomer Norton respectively, have approached me concerning their sudden discharge from the RUH following surgery for fractures in the period just before Christmas. No 'step down' to Paulton Hospital, no re-enablement, no assessment for necessary equipment, and the hospital knew they were older women living on their own. I have referred the individual cases to Healthwatch, and suggested they talk to their GPs, but while it would be inappropriate to talk about individual cases, the question is, do we have a systems failure here? What happened to arrangements for adult social care where that would have been appropriate?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Alison Born
<p><i>We have forwarded the Cllr concerns to the RUH for their consideration of the matters raised.</i></p> <p><i>Answer from Paran Govender, Chief Operating Officer, RUH:</i> Processes are in place to assess patients' needs on the wards prior to discharge home. Following a physical assessment of needs and discussion around the individuals home circumstance, a referral will be completed to the Transfer of Care Hub to gain access to care and reablement on discharge. Community teams will assess at this stage for if the patient meets the criteria to access a community hospital for rehabilitation or care on discharge with therapy support. This is the process for all patients. Without patient details it is difficult to comment further but support is available within the BaNES catchment for those requiring this. Access is also available from the Community Wellbeing Hub to provide support from providers such as Age UK, this is captured during admission as part of the recent development of the Onward Form allowing easy access to voluntary sector support. Patients are also discussed daily as part of the whiteboard reviews with the MDT which highlights if a patient's condition changes and reassessment is required.</p>			

Supplementary Question 1:

- The RUH is a big organisation, so would the Cabinet Member kindly send me details as to whom these questions were addressed?

Response: *The questions were directed to the CEO – Cara Charles Barks.*

Supplementary Question 2:

- What can B&NES do to ease the pressures with regard to discharges and post-operative care in the community?

Response: *The council works together with health and social care partners to enable B&NES residents to return home (or other place of permanent residence) after a stay in a hospital as soon as it is safe for them to do so. This work comes under the Home is Best programme that covers admission avoidance, ensuring best practice in discharge planning during the hospital stay, and significant investment in community-based interim care to ensure demand and capacity are balanced over the course of the year.*

We are proud to report that in 2023/24 the Home is Best programme has delivered wide ranging positive results, resulting in shorter length of stay in acute and community hospital and reduced number of people categorised as No Criteria to Reside. This has enabled more people to go straight home and more people to receive reablement that has reduced the need for long term care.

We are taking learning from our achievements to date into the 2024/25 planning process that is currently taking place.

M	02	Question from:	Cllr Eleanor Jackson
There are residents who have been referred for specialist appointments at the RUH or elsewhere of their choice in letters from their GPs, but no appointment with a consultant is forthcoming. Is one of the 'ghost lists' mentioned on Radio 4 last week operating here?			
Answer from:			Cllr Alison Born

We have forwarded the Cllr concerns to the RUH for their consideration of the matters raised.

Answer from Paran Govender, Chief Operating Officer, RUH: We are confident that we do not have ghost lists for patients waiting for new appointments, but we do have very long waits for first appointments in most specialties.

We are not directly bookable through Electronic Referral Service (ERS), which is the national framework for referring patients from their GP into hospitals, for most specialties due to the capacity constraints and so routine patients wait on a “work list” and are on our electronic patient record as “blank encounters” (patients waiting for an appointment) until such time as the capacity becomes available. We are fully sighted on this cohort of patients. We would be very happy to investigate any examples if these could be provided.

We understand the “ghost lists” referenced are patients on follow up lists which are not reported nationally currently. The patients have previously been treated but are still under long term care. At the RUH we do have the Care Co-ordination Solution (also known as Improving Elective Care Co-ordination for Patients) module for Outpatients which provides us with easy access to follow up lists. This feeds directly from our electronic patient record and presents the data in one place.

M	03	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
----------	-----------	-----------------------	-----------------

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is an important source of revenue, helping to mitigate the effects of planning - "to deliver infrastructure (such as schools, transport links, open spaces, recreational or waste facilities) to serve the residents".

While a small proportion (under 20% overall) goes to parish and town councils most of this revenue is the responsibility of BaNES.

As such, it is important that residents understand how and where it is being spent.

Please can you provide (for the last two complete years – 2021/22 and 2022/23):

details of CIL income

details of CIL spending

the relationship links between income & spending (where there is spending, which development did the money come from).

Answer from:	Cllr Mark Elliott
---------------------	-------------------

Information on the CIL income received and CIL spending is set out publicly each year in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statements. The Infrastructure Funding Statements can be accessed on the Council's website at <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/annual-cil-spending-reports>

It should be noted that the previous year CIL income is allocated to be spent in the following year. However, there may be instances where CIL is carried forward where it relates to projects that have not started or been completed.

It should also be noted that CIL is used to fund strategic infrastructure provision across B&NES and is not charged or spent on projects that mitigate the impacts of individual development schemes. Planning Obligations through S106 agreements secure site-specific developer contributions to mitigate the impacts of that development. As such it is not possible to set out a direct relationship between development from which CIL is generated and spent.

Supplementary Question 1:

- *Would you agree that there is a contradiction between your statement above "It should also be noted that CIL is used to fund strategic infrastructure provision across B&NES and is not charged or spent on projects that mitigate the impacts of individual development schemes" with the commentary on the 2008 Act which is that the CIL is a planning charge introduced by the Government in the Planning Act 2008 to provide a fair and transparent means of ensuring that development contributes to the cost of the infrastructure it will rely on. I would argue that there should be a direct relationship between CIL money that comes from individual projects and where that money is going to. The Act is clear that it should be related to the development and should also be fair and transparent?*

Response: *I do not agree with your statement and feel that the CIL process is transparent, and that funding is spent on infrastructure projects which mitigate the impacts of development. I do not see the incompatibility you are suggesting, however, I will provide a fuller written response.*

Written response (provided after the meeting): *CIL is used to fund strategic infrastructure provision across B&NES and must be related to or mitigates the impacts of development across the district as a whole. CIL spend is linked to and directed towards those areas within the district where greater levels of development or growth have been delivered and is also linked to the Council's capital budget and spend programme, in that it is sometimes used to part fund key infrastructure projects. The projects on which CIL has been spent are set out in the annually published Infrastructure Funding Statements and is therefore, transparent. The overall relationship between the distribution of CIL spend and development can be ascertained by reviewing the Infrastructure Funding Statement and the Housing Delivery Trajectory. The*

Housing Delivery Trajectory can be found here: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Housing%20trajectory%20March%202023.pdf>

As stated in the response to the original question Planning Obligations secured via S106 agreements are used to secure funding to mitigate impacts of a specific development scheme.

Supplementary Question 2:

- Are you aware that a number of concerns have been expressed by parishioners in North East Somerset about being unclear about where residual CIL money from developments in their patch is being spent?

Response: *I am happy to continue this discussion with you.*

Written response (provided after the meeting): *As set out in the response to supplementary question 1 information on projects on which CIL is spent is set out in the annually published Infrastructure Funding Statement. Should parish councils or residents have questions regarding the spend of CIL I would suggest that you contact the Planning Policy team in the first instance, and they will be able to help or will direct the query to the appropriate part of the Council for a response.*

M	04	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
----------	-----------	-----------------------	--------------------

An amendment has been put forward for a school street in this and last year's budget. We were given an assurance that a school street was being developed for 2023/24. This did not happen.

Again, an amendment was put forward this month for a school street as there were none in the 2024/25 budget. At the council meeting on the 20th February, Cllr Elliott declared that B&NES was going to implement a school street and that meetings were in place deciding this and the funds for it. I repeat there are no school streets listed in the budget papers.

The importance of the right measures for children to get to school safely are necessary, because B&NES needs to ensure the correct business case to get CRSTS funding, but more than that because all our children deserve safe routes to school.

Presently, there are no school streets in B&NES, and none programmed into the 2024/25 budget.

A "soft school street" is not a "school street".

Where is the documentation evidencing what Cllr Elliott has stated at the council meeting on 20th Feb, is this information publicly available? Accordingly, what school is to have a school street in B&NES as stated by Cllr Elliott at Full Council?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

Cleaner, greener, school travel is a key element of the Journey to Net Zero and we are committed to delivering a range of schemes which will support children to travel to school by active modes of transport. As mentioned by Cllr Elliott in the Budget and Council Tax meeting on the 20th February, £250,000 of funding from the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) reserve has been allocated to develop a School Streets programme. The spending allocations from the CAZ reserve are reported on an annual basis with the next report due to be published this summer.

We are currently undertaking a prioritisation exercise to inform which school will be selected for an initial trial scheme in financial year 2024/25. We then anticipate expanding the programme further if future funding becomes available. We will provide further updates on the School Streets programme as they become available.

M

05

Question from:

Cllr Joanna Wright

B&NES council has spent considerable officer time designing a Zebra crossing in Mount Road, with the full knowledge that this infrastructure design is not supported by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding guidelines. Southlands and Church Street could get funding for crossings through the CRSTS because of the modal filters delivered at these locations.

Would officer time have been better spent by designing appropriate infrastructure that would be supported by CRSTS funding?

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The Zebra crossing in Mount Road will be funded from the council's internal highways funding, not CRSTS.

M	06	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>Lambridge Ward members have put forward a proforma for a Liveable Neighbourhood and have regularly asked to be supported on changes to the highway due to through traffic and children attending schools and play groups in the ward. B&NES has decided not to progress this proforma, so now this means that no CRSTS funding can be delivered in Lambridge.</p> <p>How are Cabinet Members making decisions to ensure that all wards are supported and have the public purse spent on much needed transport infrastructure that will reduce the demand by council to all residents to cut vehicle miles by 25% per person by 2030?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>As outlined in Single Member Decision E3285 (Liveable Neighbourhoods), the application for a Liveable Neighbourhood (LN) in the Lambridge Ward was not included in the initial 15 LN areas as it was considered that the issues in this area are complex and a potential scheme would benefit from experience gained from implementing other LNs beforehand. While the Lambridge application was not successful in this initial allocation of funding for the Liveable Neighbourhood programme, subject to future funding, we anticipate being able to open up further rounds of applications. We would welcome interest from any wards that were not selected for this initial phase of the programme at the appropriate time and will use lessons learnt during ‘phase 1’ of the LN programme to inform this.</i></p> <p><i>The Council is delivering significant programme of interventions, committing unprecedented levels of funding, over the course of the next three years to enable more travel choices across our community, in support of our ambitious target to be net zero by 2030. The liveable neighbourhoods programme is one strand of the overall programme of interventions planned. Robust processes are in place to ensure that the schemes proposed contribute to the overall aims of the Council and meet the needs of our communities. To ensure transparency and visibility to our communities of the proposed programme of interventions, the Council is currently developing a Transport Action Plan, due to be published later in the summer.</i></p>			
M	07	Question from:	Cllr Lesley Mansell
<p>Does the council know how many B&NES families are eligible for government-funded Free School Meals but have not claimed this year, and</p>			

in each of the previous three years, and what are they doing to maximise the uptake so all eligible families receive this important support?

Answer from:

Cllr Paul May

*The B&NES free school meal team only have data available with regard to the numbers of pupils of families **that have made a claim to Benefit-related free school meals and are now transitionally protected.** The team do not have any information about % take up as we do not have reports from the DWP to advise what families with children that live in B&NES **may be eligible to claim.***

- *4743 children were eligible for Free School Meals in January 2024 which is 17.38% of children on roll in B&NES schools (including nurseries and 6th Forms)*
- *The numbers of children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) in B&NES has risen year on year since May 2020, partly due to transitional protection which means that all children eligible at 1st April 2018 and new claims since 1st April 2018 will continue to be eligible until April 2025 even if their household income goes above the threshold for FSM in the interim period.*

In order to ensure the highest take up possible, the team advertise and promote benefit related free school meals using flyers in every school, on the B&NES website, Livewell, in all the B&NES libraries and One Stop Shops, on Facebook and X (the Communications Team do this promotion on our behalf). In the libraries they have large TV style screens with constant electronic moving displays.

We are always promoting Benefit Related Free School Meals (BRFSM) and B&NES schools with Reception classes will give every new starter one of our paper application forms and/or give the link to our B&NES Online FSM Application Form. As well as this, schools with infant classes often do a promotion of benefit related free school meals throughout the year, especially nearing census days to make sure that even those on universal infant free school meals apply for benefit ones if they qualify. Junior and secondary schools often run promotions nearing census days.

We have always understood the importance to approve as many children as possible for a benefit related free school meal both from the children/parent/guardian side as well as the schools. Because of this we think it is important to have various avenues to apply for a BRFSM. We have the following routes to apply:

- *Paper Form which can be downloaded, completed and sent to us direct or via the school or handed in to B&NES one stop*

shops.

- *Online form – this is our most popular way to apply. It is also the quickest and we have designed this form to cover all the information we need and also have a notes/comments section if the applicant wants to add some extra details.*
- *Telephone application – we always receive positive comments via this avenue as the public are so pleased (and surprised) to be able to speak to a human.*

As well as the above, we work very closely with our schools and if a school finds it difficult to get someone to apply for BRFSM, but they think they may qualify, then the school can obtain the relevant details along with permission to use parent/guardian's data (re GDPR) to check their eligibility. Sometimes depending on what a parent/guardian tells us in an email we also use that email as an application. Nothing is off limits, if we can get someone on for BRFSM then we will as long as it is in line with GDPR.

If we have to refuse an application, we always list the qualifying benefits and add a paragraph to ask the parents to contact us if they feel our decision is incorrect.

M

08

Question from:

Cllr Lesley Mansell

Following Council's unanimous support of the Get Me Home Safely motion last November, has the council applied for funding from the Home Office's Safety of Women at Night Fund to support initiatives in Bath?

Answer from:

Cllr Tim Ball

The Safety of Women at Night Fund closed on 1st September 2021. Since then, Bath and North East Somerset has successfully attracted funding from the Safer Streets Fund, working in partnership with Avon and Somerset Police, the BID and others. This has provided significant enhancements to the safety of women and girls, particularly in the night-time economy, including the introduction of the Bath Safe Bus last year. Under the latest round of Safer Streets, announced in November of last year, a further round of investment was secured – amounting to £1m across the Avon and Somerset area- which will lead to enhancements to key city centre safety initiatives such as street marshals.

Round Five of Safer Streets Fund England and Wales was launched in July 2023. For the first time, every police force area across England

and Wales was able to bid for up to £1 million to deliver a range of interventions over the period from 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2025. At the end of October 2023, we were advised by the OPCC that B&NES application, as part of the combined Avon and Somerset application had been successful. The main elements of the successful application were:

Funding for B&NES local approach to address antisocial behaviour focussing on Bath City Centre ASB hotspots identified by our crime audit.

Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to lead on developing a Women’s Safety Charter

This will entail a single Avon and Somerset template, based on the work already undertaken in Bristol and other local authority areas.

B&NES the other LA areas will work in partnership to develop the template but also consult locally to shape the B&NES document and approach to reflect local concerns. The OPCC aims to promote both the charter and bystander training (see below) simultaneously and in doing so ensure that the training closely adheres to Charter principles.

Bystander training

The OPCC is commissioning a training provider to develop ‘bystander training’ for individuals who will be trained as VAWG champions and will assist in ensuring the legacy of this work.

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

M	09	Question from: Cllr Lesley Mansell
Following Council’s unanimous support of the Get Me Home Safely motion last November, has the council considered drawing up a Women's Safety charter, to encourage employers across BANES to take actions to ensure women's safety at night?		
Answer from:		Cllr Tim Ball
<i>The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will lead on developing a Women’s Safety Charter (see further details set out in question M08 above).</i>		

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

M

10

Question from:

Cllr Saskia Heijltjes

Please can you explain the duties and penalties on the Council regarding the legal duty to make the road safe as per Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, how does this duty impact the provision on safe routes to school, pedestrian and cycle safety?

Answer from:

Cllrs Manda Rigby

Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act places a duty upon local highway authorities to carry out measures to promote road safety, to carry out studies into traffic collisions and to take appropriate action as a result of such studies to prevent future collisions. It also requires local highway authorities to take measures to reduce the possibility of collisions when building new roads. The legislation makes no reference to penalties with respect to this duty.

The council fulfils this duty in a number of ways. Primarily, it regularly receives collision data from the police which officers analyse to identify causes of collisions and identify what measures could be taken to help prevent further collisions. This may take the form of engineering measures on roads, road safety education to school children, working with partner agencies such as the police to share intelligence about speeding issues or other matters, and road safety campaigns. When highway improvement schemes are being designed, road safety audits are undertaken at the design stage and after construction.

These casualty reduction measures are evidence-led. This means if there is evidence of collisions on routes to school, or of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists, then we will investigate and take action where we can to reduce such collisions.

The council also uses its internal highways funding to take forward highway improvement schemes to make our roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists even where there is no history of collisions. We aim to be proactive in making our roads safer, not just being reactive to where collisions have occurred in the past. The CRSTS schemes under development also bring additional funding that will help to make it safer for people walking and cycling.

M	11	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>ROSPA have created a road safety guide for Councillors see https://www.rospa.com/media/documents/road-safety/factsheets/road-safety-guide-for-councillors.pdf</p> <p>What groups of councillors are making sure everyone knows this advice? How does the council define "safety"? And how do council officers decide if a road is safe?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>The Cabinet Member is not responsible for issuing guidance produced by other organisations. An information pack was produced and sent to new councillors last year which covered many council services including Highways together with contact details for queries about traffic management and road safety issues.</i></p> <p><i>We do not have a definition for 'safety' and we do not define or categorise roads as 'safe' or 'unsafe'. Our Road Safety team looks at collision data to identify where there are issues and determines what action is appropriate. In many cases the road environment is not a factor as to why a collision has occurred. People's behaviour, vehicle condition and driver or rider experience can be factors too. Making our roads safer involves a variety of initiatives and measures, many of which are outside of the council's control.</i></p>			
M	12	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>ROSPA have created a road safety guide for Councillors see https://www.rospa.com/media/documents/road-safety/factsheets/road-safety-guide-for-councillors.pdf</p> <p>It states in the report on Evaluation that:</p> <p>"Help and guidance on how to plan and conduct evaluations of road safety programmes is available at www.roadsafetyevaluation.com, which contains an interactive road safety evaluation toolkit called E-valu-it to help road safety practitioners plan, carry out and report the results of road safety evaluations."</p>			

What evaluations have taken place on the modal filters placed in B&NES through the Liveable Neighbourhood Programme?

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The designs for the Liveable Neighbours schemes go through an internal technical approval process. This enables officers from various highways and transportation teams in the council to comment, including road safety considerations. Formal road safety audits are also carried out by qualified road safety auditors who are independent of the designers. These audits are undertaken at design stage and post-construction. In addition to this, the West of England Combined Authority has its own procedures, as part-funder of the initiative.

M

13

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

Many councillors are repeatedly getting post from residents complaining about the regular missed collections of household rubbish. The answer given by the Cabinet Member for Council Priorities and Delivery consistently states this is due to driver shortages. What Leadership role are you taking to ensure that this core function is delivered? Residents are starting to get very angry and see this as a basic service not being fulfilled by this administration.

Answer from:

Cllr Tim Ball

It would be useful to have specific detail so that individual issues can be identified.

- 1. There were a total of 200 missed collections of refuse reported in January across some 2 collection cycles (i.e. 200 missed out of 170,000 total individual collections) which was most likely to be the result of the increase in volumes over the post xmas catchup period.*
- 2. There were no driver issues reported during this period*

Other non refuse collections:

Since Xmas 2023, the daily missed collection reports have either highlighted missed collections due to capacity issues, vehicle breakdown or operational issues.

There have been a number of issues with missed/ late garden waste collections which are the result of 2 factors:

- The removal of one garden Waste round from January – March as agreed with councillors due to the requirement for in year cost savings*
- The mild weather resulting in an unexpected volume of garden waste when which compounded with the suspension of one collection round have put additional pressure on the garden service.*

There have been a number of narrow access recycling truck breakdowns since xmas which has been due to the age of the fleet (these vehicles are due to be replaced by Sept this year 2024).

We are not experiencing driver shortages at the present time.

M

14

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

On 19 January 2024 B&NES Council sent out a press statement which said: “A property owner who undertook unauthorised works to a Grade II Listed building has been fined following a prosecution by Bath & North East Somerset Council’s planning enforcement team.”*

If the Council commits similar criminal offences that is, to carry out work to a listed building owned by the Council without consent, will these offences be reported to the Police, and will a prosecution follow?

Answer from:

Cllr Paul Roper

The question put forward is a complex jurisdiction matter. It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building under Section 9

of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Those powers are delegated to Officers within the Council to prosecute. The Council would seek to work and cooperate with the appropriate agencies should the Council breach the legislation. The Council cannot comment as to whether any prosecution would follow. The Council endeavours to ensure that all due diligence is carried out with any work undertaken by Council Officers or by external contractors and places great importance on the preservation of its unique historic environment.

M	15	Question from:	Cllr Sam Ross
----------	-----------	-----------------------	---------------

The Children and Adults Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny panel on 15 January unanimously voted to delay proposed council budget cuts to not-for-profit sector services of some £802K until the consequences are better understood, was requested. The Council budget on the 20 February 2024 voted in favour of these cuts to services.

Julian House in Bath has stated, *"The human cost of these cuts is undeniable, and the ripple effects will impact every person living in B&NES – eroding community cohesion and economic stability, as well as putting the social services we all share under even greater pressure than they already are."*

What actions will the Council be taking to ensure that the most vulnerable in our community are supported by the budget decisions?

Answer from:	Cllrs Alison Born and Matt McCabe
---------------------	-----------------------------------

The budget savings will be phased over a two-year period so that the savings are made carefully, in a targeted way and in collaboration with third sector partners. Third sector partners will see no reduction in funding until we have engaged with them.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Grace Wiltshire
----------	-----------	-----------------------	-----------------

Please can you explain why Mount Road is getting a raised zebra crossing instead of a school street?		
Answer from:		Cllr Manda Rigby
<i>The development of the Mount Road Liveable Neighbourhood was a result of extensive co-design and engagement with the local community. We have taken the decision to prioritise the installation of a new zebra crossing as this was one of the measures identified during the co-design that would improve walking and wheeling in this area. This improved crossing forms one part of the wider Liveable Neighbourhood that has been developed.</i>		
P	02	Question from: Grace Wiltshire
Under a Freedom of Information request it has been ascertained that 16 councillors hold paper parking permits. As the council has declared a Climate Emergency and is demanding that all residents cut vehicle miles by 25% per person by 2030, how is the Council thorough elected memberships showing leadership on this issue?		
Answer from:		Cllr Kevin Guy
<i>Councillors may use a permit to park in B&NES-owned car parks and RPZ areas whilst using their car for official duties. This is of particular importance for evening meetings for example. However, Councillors will choose the most appropriate means of transport for each journey they make on Council business and will prioritise sustainable modes of transport and car-sharing. In addition, B&NES Council has embraced the use of virtual and hybrid meetings which reduce the need for business travel.</i>		
P	03	Question from: Grace Wiltshire
Regarding the paper parking permits, it's observed that two councillors received paper permits in 2023. Were all newly elected councillors given this option? If not, what determined which councillors were offered paper permits and which were not?		
Answer from:		Cllr Kevin Guy

All councillors were able to request a parking permit as part of the induction process after the May 2023 election. Councillors are strongly encouraged to use the MiPermit electronic system but if requested, councillors can be given a paper permit.

P	04	Question from:	Liam Kirby and Dominic Tristram
----------	-----------	-----------------------	---------------------------------

Radstock Town Centre finds itself under several inches of water due to rainfall with increasing frequency. Meanwhile, the arrangement of the centre as a circulatory road system prioritises the experience of drivers passing through over the safety and convenience of Radstock residents using the town centre on foot.

While the suggestions in the Regeneration Plan are welcome, could consideration be given to more radical efforts to significantly reimagine the town centre to address these problems?

For example, a bus gate, removing through-traffic on the street from Fortescue Road to the Frome Road roundabout, would do a lot to reclaim public space for the people of Radstock, and also create room for more ambitious blue-green flood mitigation infrastructure, "greening up" and tree planting.

Answer from:	Cllrs Paul Roper and Sarah Warren
---------------------	-----------------------------------

B&NES recognises and acknowledges the need to do more to improve conditions for active and sustainable transport within Radstock town centre. Currently, given its location at the confluence of two major A roads, the town centre is dominated by traffic. This can create a barrier to those wishing to walk, wheel or cycle as well as contributing to increased noise and poor air quality levels in the town.

As part of the new Local plan, we will build on the transport improvements set out in the Radstock regeneration plan. This will include a detailed investigation into how the highway network currently operates in Radstock as well as the options available and the improvements that can be made in order to make a step change in the conditions for those travelling via active and sustainable modes around the town.

P	05	Question from:	Liam Kirby and Dominic Tristram
----------	-----------	-----------------------	---------------------------------

With the projects at the Old Paint Works and Trinity Church now both looking to significantly improve the cultural offer in Radstock, there is a

great opportunity to seize the opportunity of growing a real creative scene in the area. House prices in the area are (relatively) low, so potentially attractive to creative professionals.

Could the ideas in Project 4 (Brownfield sites) be shifted more to use of spaces for creative pursuits (workshops, studio space, rehearsal space) over generic office/retail?

This could significantly reduce the necessary investment required to get spaces "up and running" compared to requiring full fit-outs for more commercially-minded use.

Answer from:

Cllr Paul Roper

It is great to see the Old Print Works Arts now open in Radstock, with the Trinity Church purchase by Radstock Town Council also progressing. This administration has supported both projects through our work on the Radstock Town Centre Regeneration Action Plan and associated grant funding.

The brownfield sites identified in project 4 of the Action Plan are predominantly in third party ownership, so ongoing discussions with landowners will be essential. They can come forward for a range of uses in line with town centre planning policies in place both nationally and locally including those mentioned, subject to viability and securing planning consent if/where needed. We have sought to test various options to see what might be viable through the Action Plan to actively encourage their reuse.

P 06

Question from:

Liam Kirby and Dominic Tristram

Radstock is generously served with cycle paths toward Frome, Bath, and Midsomer Norton, and is on National Cycle Route 24. It has the potential to be a real "hub" for cyclists - if you'll excuse the pun.

However, when cyclists arrive in town, they are presented with unclear, dangerous, and inadequate links between the routes.

While the wayfinding ideas in the Regeneration Plan will certainly improve matters, without safe segregated cycle routes through the centre to connect the paths, the town will remain a danger to cyclists and an impediment to improving cycling uptake.

At the November 2023 Full Cabinet meeting, the Council unanimously passed the Vision Zero Motion which advocates for safe speeds, street design improvements, behaviour modifications, and enhanced post-collision response to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries.

How will the council ensure that Vision Zero is implemented to ensure that those wheeling and walking through the centre of Radstock will be protected?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

Improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling in Radstock have been identified through our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which can be viewed [here](#). We are also currently developing our Active Travel Masterplan which will provide a framework for plans to improve active travel links across the district. We will continue to investigate future funding opportunities to implement the routes in the LCWIP and Active Travel Masterplan.

P 07

Question from:

Anne Coghlan

In Cabinet Paper E3502, it states that:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s80749/E3502%20-%20Heritage%20Services%20Business%20Plan%202024-29.pdf>

“The Service will use the carbon baseline work undertaken during 2023 to inform its ongoing response to the climate and ecological emergency. The actions required to achieve net zero by 2030 will be set out and costed during 2024.”

What baseline work has been undertaken and how will the 2030 deadline be achieved?

Answer from:

Cllr Paul Roper

We commissioned the Bath based firm 3ADAPT to work with us to deliver an assessment of the Service’s Carbon Baseline. This assessment is attached. We are now working with 3Adapt to develop an action plan to understand the measures we need to take to achieve net zero by 2030. As noted in the business plan this will be explored over the remainder of 2024 and the implications of this considered in the 25/26 Business Planning cycle. We are about to advertise for a staff member to lead on our environmental action plan work which will help move this forward with more vigour over 24/25.

P	08	Question from:	Anne Coghlan
<p>Mount Rd and Lyme Rd Liveable Neighbourhoods are highly unlikely to receive funding through CRSTS, because they do not follow funding criteria. How are Liveable Neighbourhoods going to be funded if CRSTS money doesn't come through?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>All of the Liveable Neighbourhoods submitted in the Full Business Case (FBC) will meet the funding requirements of the Combined Authority. We have secured the early release of CRSTS funding to implement an initial element of the Lyme Road/Charmouth Road LN. Any Liveable Neighbourhoods not included in this FBC will be considered for introduction using future funding as this becomes available.</i></p>			
P	09	Question from:	Anne Coghlan
<p>In the Budget it states that WECA funding for LoveYourHighStreet is being welcomed in many quarters in B&NES. Lambridge Ward has the thriving local shops of Larkhall Square where many traders are concerned by the threat of developments in the local area. What action will the council take to support "Larkhall Square" traders to ensure that this vibrant shopping quarter remains in place?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>Larkhall local centre is identified and protected in the B&NES Local Plan.</i></p> <p><i>While it is not currently one of the four local high street improvement pilot areas which form part of the current WECA funded Love our High Streets, it is possible that this scheme could be extended by the grant funders in which case we will look to prioritise funding to areas of need.</i></p> <p><i>If there are specific improvements being sought by the community, we encourage dialogue with us to see what funding opportunities can be identified to help deliver these.</i></p>			

There are additionally opportunities for traders and businesses in Larkhall to benefit from the Council's business support programmes more information can be found on our Business and Skills webpages

P 10

Question from:

Barbara Gordon

Could the Council confirm that any new EV charging infrastructure will not be placed on pavements?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

New public EV charging infrastructure (EVI) has so far been built by B&NES off-street in council car parks. As we move to building new public EVI on-street a minority may need to be located in the footway. However, we are setting specifications to ensure best possible pedestrian access in these circumstances.

More specifically, B&NES will be utilising the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund from HMG to roll out on-street residential EVI across the district at scale. In developing a technical specification for this EVI we have defined the primary location for the charging device to be in the kerbside carriageway. However, in recognition of the range of sites across the district and their varying localised context, we have identified a secondary option of locating EVI charging devices at the kerbside of the footway. In that case we have stipulated a minimum footway width needs to remain to allow footway user accessibility, in line with DfT best practice guide "Inclusive Mobility" (2021). Each EVI location will be reviewed by B&NES officers to ensure it is appropriate, meets specifications and provides accessibility for both drivers and pedestrians.

P 11

Question from:

Barbara Gordon

I understand that Councils can refuse planning permission if a development is likely to clash with provisions in 'emerging' Local Plans, even in locations where the plan has not yet been adopted. BANES states that in the currently developing Local Plan that:

'The Council has not undertaken the detailed further assessment that is required to ascertain the degree of harm of smaller non-strategic sites, such as some of the component land parcels of this previously proposed allocation. There will be other non-strategic sites in different

parts of the city too. The suitability of these sites and any other sites put forward as part of this consultation will need to be assessed as part of the preparation of the Draft Local Plan.'

Is it correct then that BANES council has the ability to reject developments in environmentally sensitive areas of the city?

See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/4-decision-making>

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

Planning applications for development are determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Local Planning Authority can apply some weight to policies in emerging Local Plans dependent on the stage of plan preparation reached, the extent of any unresolved objections and degree of conformity with national policy. The Local Plan options document is at a very early stage in its preparation and does not include policies. Therefore, only very limited weight would be applied to it in decision-making.

There are a range of policies in the adopted Development Plan (principally the Core Strategy, Placemaking Plan and Local Plan Partial Update) that will be used in decision making which relate to the scale, form and design of development in the city. These policies enable the Council, as a Local planning Authority, to refuse applications for inappropriate development in environmentally sensitive areas of Bath. Each application is determined on its own merits against these policies.

For information the section of the Options document that is quoted relates to the consideration of whether any smaller non-strategic sites on the edge of the city, including the lower slopes of land adjoining Weston, could be suitable for development particularly in the context of environmental sensitivity e.g. relating to impact on the World Heritage Site and its setting and the Cotswolds National Landscape. These sites will be considered very carefully in progressing the emerging Local Plan towards the next stage in its preparation.

We are transparent in terms of the sites/locations we have considered and why we have rejected some and not proposed them as options. The process is summarised in a Topic Paper (see link below). The Topic Paper refers to two main assessment documents that set out why we have rejected some sites i.e. the HELAA (Hosing and Economic Land Availability Assessment) and an Areas of Search Assessment

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Topic%20Paper%20Strategic%20Development%20Locations.pdf>

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/local-plan-options-evidence-base-draft-housing-and-economic-land>
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/document-and-policy-library/local-plan-options-evidence-base-strategic-place-assessments>