

COUNCIL MEETING 19TH SEPTEMBER 2024

STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC

Public (item 7)

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| 1. Michael Coffey – <i>read by Niels Steinhoff</i> | Sydney Road Liveable neighbourhood scheme |
| 2. Sarah Toy | Sydney road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme |
| 3. Robert Stone – <i>read by Christine Harrington</i> | Sydney road Liveable Neighbourhood scheme |
| 4. Susan Charles, Corston Parish Councillor | Accessible planning |
| 5. David Redgewell – <i>did not attend</i> | Public transport issues |
| 6. Matt Cooper | Demonstrating climate leadership – food for thought |
| 7. Iris Gerosa | From Brazil to Bath tackling the ecological emergency |
| 8. Anthony Simpson | Climate solutions – the elephant in the room |
| 9. Chad Allen – <i>did not attend</i> | Tell the truth! |
| 10. Martin Farrell - <i>read by Philip Fawkner-Corbett</i> | Planning policy and implementation |
| 11. Gracie Allen | Rights of Nature motion – the Youth voice in Nature |
| 12. Alison Harper | Rights of Nature motion |

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from	Matthew Thomas
<p>My name is Mathew Thomas - I've been a resident of BaNES for over 25 years. I'm sure all councillors will share my concerns about the almost daily news reports of extreme weather events, for example this year's Spring was confirmed as the hottest on record by the Met Office. I am particularly interested in how BaNES council is planning to address one of the biggest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, which are embedded in our Food-System. There is overwhelming scientific peer-reviewed evidence and data that meat and dairy production are one of the most significant contributors to climate breakdown, and the biggest cause of biodiversity loss. A 2018 Oxford University study stated that the biggest change we can all make to reduce our environmental impact is to adopt a plant-based diet, and a new Oxford University study published in July 2023 shows that the environmental impact of a meat-diet is far higher than one which is plant-based.</p> <p>Progressive councils elsewhere in the country are leading the way, by ensuring that all food and drink provided for their council meetings and events is plant-based by default. You might be aware of Oxfordshire County Council's decision to serve only plant-based food in council meetings and events, with city councils in Cambridge and Exeter following suit among others. As animal agriculture accounts for more emissions than the entire transportation sector globally, do you support an initiative for BaNES to transition in-house events to plant-based food for any catering, internal or external, to make changes in-line to those made by other climate leading councils? And of course to ensure to support our local food producers. After declaring a Climate Emergency, this really is the logical and necessary next step. It's a very small step and easy to implement, but one which will have a big impact, and it would be inspiring to see this happen here in Bath. So, I put it quite simply, that, regardless of whether you are personally a vegan, vegetarian, or flexitarian, do you agree that BaNES council should lead by example on the climate and ecological emergency and as a key step, simply agree to serve only plant-based food & beverages, at the very small number of internal council events that are catered for each year? This, in conjunction with the council run "Pomegranate" canteen in the Civic Centre Offices in Keynsham to also transition to a fully plant-based menu by 2025?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p>B&NES Council does not have any catering at its full Council, Cabinet or committee meetings. Sandwiches and tea/coffee used to be provided before full Council, but this ended with the pandemic.</p>			

The Council does not provide any 'in-house' catering at its other buildings. All catering is provided by the operators of these buildings (e.g. Searcy's at the Bath Pump Rooms, Better at the leisure centres) or by concession holders (e.g. a local business runs a small café in the Keynsham Civic Centre) who will make commercial decisions on what menus they provide – but this will include vegetarian and vegan options. Individuals and organisations holding events at Council-owned venues (e.g. the Guildhall) make their own arrangements with outside caterers.

P	02	Question from	Nicolette Boater
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Page 5 of the 2024 Climate and Nature Progress report states that “Participants mapped initiatives already underway as well as the challenges and opportunities to further the approach in our district” at the 3rd October 2023 Doughnut Economics Workshop held in Bath Abbey. On the 10th January 2024 Cllr. Warren circulated Workshop participants with a report on this event the Council had commissioned from Carra Santos (a Doughnut Economics Action Lab registered consultant) that highlighted “considerable potential for ‘The Doughnut’ to be the basis for shared vision uniting interconnected interests” but also identified significant ‘Challenges, tensions and barriers” that would need to be addressed in order realise this potential. Given the Council’s much publicised intent to incorporate a Doughnut Economics approach into its 2020-24 Corporate Strategy, Local Plan update and Economic Strategy, what progress has the Council made over the last year in overcoming the challenges, diffusing the tensions and navigating the obstacles to doing so (and especially those identified in the report it commissioned)?

Answer from:	Cllr Paul Roper
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Since the Doughnut Economics workshop held at Bath Abbey on 3rd October 2023, the council has created a new Sustainable Economy service that brings together inter-connected agendas, including climate and nature, the economy, business and skills, with the aim of increasing collaboration across workstreams and ensuring a single direction of travel for the future of the economy. The programme of work under the Sustainable Economy service includes supporting and promoting sustainable businesses and alternative business models across the district, including for example B-Corps and community energy companies. This autumn the council will be holding a series of community conversations across the district, inviting more of our communities to engage with and share ideas on these and other topics related to climate, nature and the future economy, with the aim of further developing our programme of work based on the principles of Doughnut Economics.

P	03	Question from	Nicolette Boater
<p>Following the adoption of its Economic Strategy and associated partnership approach to its delivery in January 2024, what progress has the Council made in;</p> <p>(i) formalising partnerships arrangements commensurate with the Economic Strategy’s ambition, whilst also</p> <p>(ii) developing governance mechanisms that enable and empower participation from all of the diverse communities, organisations and businesses in our district (rather than just the “anchor institutions” featured in pages 3 and 4 of the Economic Strategy) so as to ensure that the Council’s renewed commitment to “Giving People a Bigger Say” really is an underpinning Core Policy?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul Roper
<p>Our Economic Strategy can only be delivered by developing and deepening our partnership working with a wide range of organisations, businesses and communities.</p> <p>As well as work with the anchor institutions as referred to in the question, and reflected in the launch of our Civic University Agreement in May of this year, our Future Ambition partnership arrangements include a number of theme groups. These cover the key themes within the strategy and involve a range of stakeholders including third sector and business. These theme and governance arrangements will continue to evolve in the light of new UK government policy and in particular its agenda for growth. More information can be found at www.futureambitionbath.com.</p> <p>Recent and upcoming activity to engage diverse stakeholders and residents in our Economic Strategy delivery includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of our climate and nature theme, we are undertaking a “community conversation”, focusing on the voices and experiences of Bathford, Bathampton, and Batheaston residents. The event will bring the community together to share concerns, explore solutions, and learn about local initiatives, leading to meaningful action for the community and informing the Council’s forthcoming refresh of our Climate & Nature Strategy, which contributes to a Greener Economy. In relation to the housing theme, Curo and the council held our area’s first Housing Summit on Tuesday 9th July, which attracted more than 100 people and which highlighted the need to address our area’s high housing costs and below-average earnings. 			

- Under the connectivity theme, the Bath Digital Festival saw a theme of digital inclusivity, identifying the need to tackle local digital inequalities and to ensure all Bath and North East Somerset residents get access to the benefits a digitally connected life can offer. Including a specific workshop on the Economic Strategy 'Digital doughnuts in Bath'.
- University of Bath chaired a Inclusive Innovation workshop to explore what inclusive innovation means in B&NES and how collective action can move this element forward.

Presentations and discussions around the Economic Strategy and the Business and Skills Plan at the B&NES SEND group, B&NES Targeted Recruitment and Training Management Board and the Youth Forum.