

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CABINET

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday 13th November 2025

Present:

Councillor Kevin Guy	Leader of the Council, LD Group Leader, Member Advocate for Armed Forces and Veterans
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Mark Elliott	Deputy Council Leader (non-statutory) and Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Joel Hirst	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Strategy
Councillor Lucy Hodge	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Delivery
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Matt McCabe	Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Communications and Community
Councillor Paul Roper	Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset

40 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

41 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

44 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

45 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 22 questions from Councillors and 17 questions from members of the public.

[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]

46 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Cllr Dine Romero – Adoption West (*a copy of the statement is attached as an appendix to these minutes*).

47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CABINET MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th September 2025 and of the Special Meeting held on 25th September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48 CONSIDERATION OF SINGLE MEMBER ITEMS REQUISITIONED TO CABINET

No single member items were requisitioned to Cabinet.

49 SINGLE MEMBER CABINET DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE PREVIOUS CABINET MEETING

The Cabinet agreed to note the report.

50 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES

No matters were referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

51 GREENER PLACES PLAN FOR BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET 2025-2035

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the report, moved the amended officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The Greener Places Plan aligns with Natural England's green infrastructure standards.
- It updates the 2015 Green Space Strategy.
- The Plan aims for 30% of land in Bath and North East Somerset to be positively managed for nature by 2030.
- It seeks to embed nature-conscious practices across all council operations.
- This moves beyond isolated green spaces to interconnected, larger ecosystems and emphasises nature's role as humanity's life support system.
- This will enhance quality of life, mental health, and urban cooling and supports active lifestyles and healthier environments.

- The Council works with landscape-scale partnerships (e.g., Bathscape, Chew Valley Reconnected) and engages with the West of England Nature Partnership.
- The Council also collaborates with developers and social housing providers.
- The Local Plan consultation could yield 200 hectares of accessible green space alongside 27,000 new homes.
- The Greener Places Plan will have statutory influence on development standards as it will be linked to the Local Plan.
- It will provide an evidence base to prioritise funding, especially in deprived areas which have less green space.
- Cllr Warren thanked partners and officers for their contributions to biodiversity and policy development.

Cllr Matt McCabe seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The document sets out the kind of environments we should be building in terms of the natural world and biodiversity. It is an important piece of evidence for the emerging Local Plan.
- When we look at biodiversity net gain the document can give some evidence in relation to place shaping within the area.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the Greener Places Plan for Bath and North East Somerset and the accompanying five-year Investment and Delivery Plan 2025-2030.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, to make textual changes to the Greener Places Plan prior to its publication.

52 ANNUAL CLIMATE AND NATURE PROGRESS REPORT 2025

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- 2024 saw record rises in atmospheric CO₂ and methane, intensifying global heating.
- The UK experienced four heatwaves this year during its hottest summer on record.
- The COP30 in Belem, Brazil highlights insufficient global commitments, risking 2.5°C warming.
- The International Court of Justice suggests that climate reparations may be due from non-compliant nations.
- Renewables are accelerating globally, but climate denial from major emitters like the US poses challenges.
Bath & North East Somerset Council continues to lead among similar local authorities on climate and ecological action.
- Carbon emissions in B&NES have halved per person over 20 years.
- B&NES Council is ranked top among small provincial unitary authorities in the UK's climate action scorecard.

- The Council has added 15 electric vehicles to the council fleet; £10M has been budgeted for electric waste/recycling HGVs.
- We have secured funding for the first new national forest in 30 years with Forest of Avon partners.
- Rooftop solar panels have been installed on Bath Sports and Leisure Centre.
- There are planned upgrades for Carrswood Adult Day Centre and Keynsham Civic Centre with solar/heat pumps.
- Decarbonising buildings and transport remains a major challenge.
- We are collaborating with the West of England Combined Authority to promote walking, cycling, and public transport.
- We are supporting retrofitting of listed buildings via the Green Heritage Homes project.
- £4M has been budgeted for further building decarbonisation.
- We are exploring hydroelectricity at Pulteney Gate to power heat pumps in historic buildings.
- There is a proposed increase in the Biodiversity Net Gain requirement from 10% to 20% in the new Local Plan.

Cllr Joel Hirst seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council has developed strong partnerships and is taking action on the council-owned estate and vehicle fleet.
- Across the authority emissions are down by 46% since 2005.
- In B&NES we continue to have lower emissions per capita compared to the rest of the South West and England averages.
- Decarbonising of transport remains one of our biggest challenges – we are slightly ahead in B&NES in Ultra Low Emission vehicles – but we need to do much more on EV chargers and more on supporting our bus network to get passenger numbers back to pre-Covid levels, with WECA support.
- We need to deliver the new railway station at Saltford.
- We are seeing high demand for cycle hangers, which are very popular across the authority.
- In terms of the ecological emergency there is much to celebrate including:
 - The delivery in green infrastructure projects.
 - Tree planting in places like Rush Hill open spaces, Pennyquick.
 - The Bath River Line project.
 - The Somer Valley Rediscovered greenspaces.

Cllr Paul May welcomed the progress that has been made and the engagement of local communities in this work.

Cllr Matt McCabe highlighted the adaptations unit work and the installation of charging units so that the fleet can switch to electric vehicles.

Cllr Kevin Guy acknowledged the progress made and was pleased to note that the Council is a forerunner in this work.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the progress made in tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies during 2024-25, as set out in the attachments to the report.

- (2) To approve the Annual Climate & Nature Progress Report before presentation of the report to Council on 20th November 2025.

53 ESTABLISH A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP (LLP) FOR THE REGENERATION OF THE BATH QUAYS RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PLOTS

Cllr Matt McCabe, Cabinet Member for Built Environment, Housing and Sustainable Development, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- There is an affordable housing crisis across B&NES, we have 6,000 people on the waiting list, 500 of whom, at any one time, are in crisis.
- The market is unable to deliver affordable and social housing in the quantum we need.
- Given this situation, we signed up to the Housing Mission Delivery Board's cross-party Housing Accord. In doing so, we committed the Council to take an innovative and collaborative approach to delivering more affordable housing. The aim is to find greater efficiencies in delivery that allow us far more opportunities to invest in, particularly, Social Homes.
- Advice provided from Bishop Fleming concluded that the most efficient model for the Council and Aequus Group is to incorporate a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) for the development of the Bath Quays North site.
- The primary purpose in forming the proposed LLP is to:
 - regenerate the Site which has stalled following the demise of its development agreement with Legal & General;
 - increase housing supply; and
 - to promote the development of energy efficient homes.
- Any profit created by the regeneration of the site, which is subsequently received by the Council should be used to either further regeneration activity in the Council area and/or provide additional subsidy for social housing on future sites.

Cllr Lucy Hodge seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council is again stepping in to address a market failure and build new homes where possible on brownfield sites. Through use of our own building company, Aequus Construction Limited, the Council is focusing on developing two sites north and south of Bath Quays Links to deliver around 160 new homes – all EPC A rated.
- An LLP is a business structure which in this case will create a separate legal entity around the development. This then sits outside the Council to mitigate risk and associated costs. The sort of risks we are thinking about are typical to any city construction site, for example increasing construction costs (due to delay or materials inflation), archaeological discoveries, and occasionally unexploded munitions. There is a cost implication to setting up an LLP which is justified here by the scale of the development.
- The LLP will allow these two developments to be brought forward to deliver about 160 new energy efficient homes in the city centre, helping to regenerate the area whilst mitigating any risk to the Council. It also reduces the Council's

tax liability which will enable continued investment in the provision of social housing on future sites.

Cllr Joel Hirst stated that there has been a market failure to provide affordable housing, especially for young people. The Council has a responsibility to innovate to provide new homes.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To agree to the establishment of a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) between the Council and the Group.
- (2) To approve the proposed membership agreement of the LLP set out in Attachment 1 of the report.
- (3) To delegate to the Director of Capital & Housing Delivery the authority to take all steps necessary to form the Limited Liability Partnership for the regeneration of the Bath Quays North plots 6 & 7 and Bath Quays south (collectively referred subsequently as the Site) in the proportions provided for in attachment 1 of the report.
- (4) To agree to loan the LLP the Site development costs.
- (5) To agree in principle to the use of the existing Aequus Development Loan Facility and the Aequus Working Capital Facility by the LLP.
- (6) To delegate to the Director of Capital & Housing Delivery in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources and S151 Officer authority to transfer the Site to the LLP.
- (7) To delegate to the Director of Finance (S.151 Officer) in consultation with the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, the power to approve the Full Business Case to develop the Site and enter into a loan agreement with and take security for the loan from the LLP.

54 CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) LOCAL AUTHORITY ASSESSMENT - ADULT SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillor Alison Born, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- We took our Adult Social Care (ASC) services back in house in April last year and the CQC inspection process started two weeks later. The inspection report was published in January with a rating of “requires improvement.”
- Authorities whose services are assessed by the CQC as inadequate or requiring improvement are assigned a Care and Health Improvement Adviser to help support the development of an Improvement Plan to address areas of concern. As we are committed to ensuring that we provide a good service for our residents, the ASC team has engaged actively with our Improvement Advisor, to develop a programme of transformation for our services.

- The Plan has nine priorities delivered by 15 projects, with progress overseen by a monthly Programme Board that include representation from across the Council, ensuring broad ownership of and support for the Plan.
- Work is ongoing with residents and staff to shape services delivery, a new operational structure has come into place and there is significant improvement in access and reductions in waiting times, better use of data and technology to drive efficiency and improvement, and investment in the workforce.
- A further update will be provided in six months' time.

Cllr Paul May seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the summary of progress towards the Adult Social Care Improvement Plan which highlights the main themes and action for achieving a Good CQC rating.
- (2) To agree that a further update report on the progress against the ASC Improvement Plan is submitted to Cabinet in May 2026.

55 ADOPTION WEST CONTRACT

Cllr Paul May, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- Adoption West is a Teckal Company which is jointly owned by six Local Authorities (the four former Avon authorities (B&NES, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset) plus Gloucestershire and Wiltshire councils).
- Current arrangements are due to expire at the end of February 2027. There are three possible delivery models. These are: continuing with Adoption West; a local authority-hosted service; or working with a voluntary adoption agency.
- The clear recommendation is to continue with Adoption West as our preferred model. This is regarded as the optimal and only practicable solution, based on:
 - Adoption West's record of effectiveness, including governance, oversight and partnership working
 - the opportunity to consolidate and build on progress to date
 - the opportunity to innovate and weather challenges from a secure base
 - minimising disruption and distress for children, families and staff
 - lack of evidence to support moving to an alternative delivery model and clear risks of change
- Adoption West has been a very successful organisation. It has a Good Ofsted rating, "overwhelmingly positive" service user feedback, and performance indicators which match or exceed national averages.
- Since 2019, Adoption West has delivered over 500 adoptions and is providing ongoing support to about 2000 families.

Cllr Alison Born seconded the proposal and noted that Adoption West is providing a good service and value for money.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To agree, in principle, to continue with Adoption West as the council's preferred option for their regional adoption agency (RAA), beyond February 2027.
- (2) To delegate to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to work with key stakeholders and partners (including adoptive family representatives) to further develop Adoption West, taking account of the matters set out in paragraph 11.1 of the report.
- (3) To bring a further report to a future Cabinet meeting once this work is completed setting out revised proposals for Adoption West beyond February 2027.

56 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Bath and North East Somerset, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The Council went through a thorough peer review by the Local Government Association in July this year. This was its first review since 2019.
- The Council was assessed against five criteria:
 - Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
- The results of the Peer Review highlighted our strong leadership, outward-looking approach, and commitment to making a genuine difference. We can all be proud that B&NES Council has been recognised for excellence across a wide range of services following the review.
- It also identifies areas where we can go further—particularly in tackling local inequalities and strengthening strategic planning. These are important challenges, and we welcome the opportunity to improve.
- The draft action plan recommends eight actions to undertake within a specific timeframe and some of these actions are already underway.

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the proposal and made the following points:

- The Council should be proud of the outcome of the peer review. However, there is no room for complacency, and we can always strive to do things better.
- A key theme that came through was the need to address more publicly some of the inequalities in the district. There are many ways in which we seek to

address inequalities, but they haven't been consolidated into an overall plan which we have been able to communicate.

- As a mature administration we should not be fearful of outside scrutiny from a critical friend team or of embracing their recommendations.

Cllr Kevin Guy thanked the peer review team for their comprehensive report and stated that they would be welcomed back next year for the follow up visit.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the draft action plan.
- (2) To agree to a follow up visit in Summer 2026 to help the council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress made in response to the review's recommendations.

57 QUARTER 2 CORPORATE STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- The report provides an update on a selection of performance indicators which have shown movement over the first half of the year.
- There has been good performance in waste and recycling, as well as compliance with air quality goals and positive trends in social care.
- However, there have been challenges, particularly in areas where the council has less direct influence or where there is influence of national trends, such as the district-wide greenhouse gas emissions or households in temporary accommodation.

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the proposal and made the following points:

- The Cabinet should review what is being measured and what plans are in place for the areas where we are not hitting our targets.
- For example, as set out in the peer challenge document, some further work is needed around inequalities and how we promote this work.
- The Key Performance Indicators need to continually evolve in the light of challenges such as the peer review.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To note the findings of the performance report and to consider any follow-up actions or information requirements.

58 2026/27 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- There are many challenges over the next five years, in particular the unprecedented level of uncertainty due to the government's ongoing "fair funding" review.

- Due to this uncertainty, we must base our entire Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) on assumptions and modelling rather than on confirmed figures.
- The MTFS models the following:
 - A projected budget gap of £8.9 million for 2026/27 - and further gaps of over £10 million in each of the following two years.
 - A cumulative funding gap of £38.6 million over the next five years (2026/27 to 2030/31), even after accounting for planned savings and income generation.
 - Estimated reductions in central government funding of £13 million over the next three years - broken down as £4 million in 2026/27, £4 million in 2027/28, and £5 million in 2028/29 - and that is purely because of the anticipated impact of the “fair funding” review.
- The modelling suggests that Bath and North East Somerset will be a net loser from the new system.
- This uncertainty comes on top of sustained inflation, rising demand for social care and continued pressure in Children’s Services.
- We are taking a prudent and proactive approach by maintaining unearmarked reserves of £12.6 million to manage in-year pressures and unforeseen risks.
- We are also reviewing all capital spending to ensure affordability and alignment with our strategic priorities.
- We are also investing in transformation and prevention – including digital transformation, new ways of working and early intervention in social care.

Cllr Lucy Hodge seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council is operating in an environment across the board of increasing pressures, leading to difficult decisions.
- Local funding per resident remains, on average, 19% below 2010 levels.
- We are aiming for a balanced budget but there is a gap which needs to be addressed by trying to find new sources of income, growth and difficult decisions about savings to the extras we want to deliver.
- The administration will continue to demonstrate sound financial leadership and to steer our way carefully through these challenges.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

To approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

59 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING, CASH LIMITS AND VIREMENTS – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2025

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, moved the officer recommendations and made the following points:

- The report provides a detailed overview of our financial position at the mid-year point and is a vital part of our commitment to transparency and sound financial management.
- The current position of the 2025/26 Capital Programme is a forecast spend of £106.2 million against a budget of £146.4 million, giving a variance of £40.2 million.

- Of this variance, £39.6 million (the vast majority) is anticipated to be rephased into future years, reflecting the reality of project delivery timescales and the need to align spend with actual progress on the ground.
- At the end of September, the Council is forecasting a £2.4 million overspend against the revised revenue budget. That is after the use of £9.8 million in budgeted contingencies and £1.5 million from the pay and grading reserve.
- This position reflects the continued challenges facing local government nationally, including rising demand for statutory services, inflationary pressures and the ongoing impact of pay and grading reviews.
- Children's Services has a forecast overspend of £6m. This continues to be driven by high-cost residential placements for vulnerable and complex young people, increased demand and continued reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies.
- Adult Social Care is forecasting a net overspend of £1m. The main drivers are increased demand for residential care, and home care, as well as pressures in learning disabilities services.
- Heritage Services are facing a £2.3m shortfall, primarily due to lower than projected visitor numbers at the Roman Baths and associated retails and catering income.
- There are also pressures in the Corporate and Commercial Estate as well as in Waste and Fleet Services.
- While the capital programme remains on track overall, the revenue budget continues to be under significant pressure. Directors are actively developing mitigation plans to bring the budget back into balance by year-end.

Cllr Paul Roper seconded the motion and made the following points:

- It is very difficult to manage demand-led services such as Children's Services.
- Heritage Services have not yet seen the return of the Asian and USA market and visitors are not spending as much as they have in the past.
- We are seeing some signs of improvement in our High Streets with regeneration.
- There is still room for optimism as Bath is a great city, and various projects have been undertaken or are underway such as:
 - Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
 - Midsomer Norton High Street renewal
 - Radstock Regeneration Programme
 - Milsom Quarter Masterplan
 - Bath Quays North
 - Fashion Museum

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the 2025/26 revenue budget position detailed within the report (as at the end of September 2025).
- (2) To note and approve where required the revenue virements listed in Appendix 3(i) of the report.

- (3) To note the capital year-end forecast detailed in paragraph 3.32 of the report.
- (4) To note the changes in the capital programme including capital schemes that have been agreed for full approval under delegation listed in Appendix 4(i) of the report.

60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the item, moved the officer recommendation and made the following points:

- **Borrowing Position:** At 30 September our borrowing stands at £278 million, which is well within the authorised limit and operational boundary approved by the Council. We have not undertaken any new long-term borrowing in the first half of the year, reflecting our strategy to minimise costs and maintain flexibility.
- **Investment Performance:** Our liquid balances were at £41.8m primarily invested in highly secure counterparties. The average return achieved was 4.19%, which is above the benchmark and reflects the continued high-interest rate environment.
- **Compliance:** All treasury activity is carried out in full compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's own Treasury Management Strategy. All the prudential indicators remain within approved limits.
- **The Council's treasury management remains prudent, compliant and aligned with strategy.** There are strong investment returns while maintaining flexibility and managing risk.

Cllr Paul Roper seconded the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

- (1) To note the Treasury Management Report to 30th September 2025, prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Code of Practice
- (2) To note the Treasury Management Indicators to 30th September 2025.

The meeting ended at 7.50 am

Chair _____

Date Confirmed and Signed _____

Prepared by Democratic Services