

CABINET MEETING – 14th November 2024

**STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC
AND COUNCILLORS**

1. Tim Spratt – Proposed Experimental Traffic Order affecting the potential closure of Winifred's Lane

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

M	01	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>The Bath Area Forum was suspended at the end of summer 2023. In October 2024, all councillors were informed about a new residents' engagement initiative called "Community Connect Conversations," with the first meeting held in Foxhill.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for Lambridge Ward. However, as the ward councillors for Lambridge, we have not yet been informed about this meeting as of 31 October 2024, despite the website stating that ward councillors would be invited.</p> <p>How will ward councillors be informed of this meeting, other than coming across it by chance on the internet?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Dave Wood
<p><i>The Council is currently embarking on a series of "Community Connect Conversations" with local residents in the city of Bath. The first conversation took place at St Andrew's Church in Foxhill on the 16th of October. The second was held at Bath City Farm on Wednesday the 5th of November. Upcoming sessions are at New Oriel Hall on the 19th of November and Love Weston Café in Weston on the 22nd of November. All Bath Councillors were notified about the initiative on the 1st of October 2024. A new webpage has been launched on the Council's website which will be regularly updated. Regular e-mail updates will be sent to all Councillors as and when the dates and venues are finalised.</i></p>			
M	02	Question from:	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>In the September Cabinet Questions, a question was asked about the new voting system in the Council to which you answered "The purpose of replacing the outdated AV system in the Chamber was to improve the user experience and accessibility by replacing the microphones, speakers and visual solutions. This also applies for those attending in person or watching our webcasts. This was an</p>			

operational decision that was procured in accordance with contract standing orders with no express requirement for an EQIA.”

If no assessment was deemed necessary, does this account for the fact that some councillors with severe sight impairments feel humiliated and hindered because they cannot see the buttons or colours? Given the age demographic of the council, should sight issues have been considered? What actions will the council take to support councillors with impairments in voting?

Answer from:

Cllr Kevin Guy

All councillors are encouraged to speak to Democratic Services to discuss any additional support they require to fulfil their role, including voting.

In regard to using the new electronic voting system, the following support is already available to councillors, as appropriate:

- *Large print versions of the voting instructions have been produced and are available to councillors*
- *Table magnifiers, magnifying the voting buttons by up to four times, can be organised via Democratic Services (and have been supplied when requested)*
- *Officers are also on hand in the meeting to provide further additional support as required.*

M

03

Question from:

Cllr Joanna Wright

Play equipment was removed from Little Park in Lambridge in a recent single-member decision, based on the understanding that other parks nearby had play facilities for children. One of these parks was Alice Park, which has not received any funding for play equipment from the council.

Given this decision to remove local play areas, should the council now allocate a budget for play equipment in Alice Park?

Answer from:

Cllr Tim Ball

The Single Member Decision (dated 31/03/20), recommended:

Re-purpose two play areas (at Parry Close and St Saviour's in Bath), replacing conventional play equipment with natural play opportunities and landscape improvements – this has been completed.

- *As Sole Trustee, the Council funds Alice Park Trust's annual operating deficit.*
- *Operational costs for Alice Park Trust include maintenance costs for its play equipment.*

The Parks Capital budget is reviewed annually to ensure all locations are assessed for improvement works, in line with a needs-based approach, for which Alice Park will be considered alongside other areas.

M

04

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

B&NES P&R charges £3.70 for a return ticket and does not offer single fares. These return tickets are only valid for the day of purchase, but the P&R car parks are open 24 hours, allowing overnight parking. If someone wants to park overnight, they must purchase two return tickets for £7.40, which seems unreasonable. Why is the council not offering a more sensible pricing option for those who need to park overnight?

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The Park & Ride service is designed to support sustainable, short-term travel into Bath, contributing to reduced city centre congestion and improved air quality. Parking at the Park & Ride sites is provided at no additional cost to bus users who return on the same day, with only a £3.70 return fare for the bus service. This approach encourages the use of the Park & Ride as an alternative to driving directly into the city, thereby helping to limit vehicle trips and reduce environmental impacts.

For those who park at the Park & Ride but do not utilise the bus service, a modest parking fee applies to support operational and maintenance costs. Non-bus users pay £1 for up to three hours or £2 to park until 23:59 on the same day. This fee structure ensures affordability for those who wish to park without using the bus, while still contributing to the upkeep of the facilities.

While Park & Ride car parks remain open 24 hours to offer flexibility, the service and pricing structure are primarily designed to support single-day travel, aligning with the Council's broader sustainable transport objectives.

M

05

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

In the recent press release on changes made to proposed parking charges it states:

After considering the feedback it received, the council is amending its proposals affecting car parks in Midsomer Norton and Radstock, where two hours of free parking will form part of the changes in implementing charging, also with a reduction in the hourly rate from what was initially proposed. The new charges will be introduced from January 2025, after the peak holiday period.

Over the next two years, what measures will B&NES Council undertake to monitor any negative impact this decision may have on local businesses?

Answer from:

Cllr Manda Rigby

The introduction of emission-based charges aims to improve air quality by incentivising motorists with more polluting vehicles to not bring their vehicle into Midsomer Norton or Radstock town centres and to consider more sustainable alternatives instead. Whilst the charges themselves may not in isolation be sufficient to change a person's behaviour, they will increase awareness of and help make the connection to existing vehicle and travel choices, their impact on air quality and people's health, particularly the health of vulnerable groups that are more severely impacted by poor air quality. Charging mechanisms are an established tool for encouraging the turnover of spaces in car parks, ensuring spaces are available for visitors.

A wider programme of regeneration schemes is underway across Midsomer Norton and Radstock, which will deliver a package of improvements within the area to support local businesses.

We will continue to work collaboratively to understand community concerns and ensure that measures implemented within these regeneration schemes meet the needs of the community and encourage the community to actively engage with public consultations to help us deliver changes that people need and want in their local community. Further information on the latest public consultation is available on our website at <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/have-your-say> where people can currently find information about the consultation to IMAGINE

Midsomer Norton, to ensure it continues to be a vibrant place.

M

06

Question from:

Cllr Sam Ross

Beyond corporate audit, what review mechanisms exist for the cabinet, council, committees, and planning processes? How does the council ensure that lessons learned from decision-making are effectively captured and applied to improve future practices and decisions?

Answer from:

Cllr Kevin Guy

There are several review mechanisms which help ensure transparency and accountability across the council's decision making:

- 1. **Policy Development and Scrutiny (PDS) Panels:** The panels have statutory powers to scrutinise decisions made by Cabinet, both before and after implementation.*
- 2. Cabinet decisions can be "called in" for review by the relevant PDS Panel if there are any concerns about the decision making process or its outcomes.*
- 3. **Council meetings:** Full Council meetings provide a platform for discussing and reviewing major council policies, ensuring a democratic review process.*
- 4. **Planning Processes:** Planning committees provide the forum to scrutinise planning decisions, where councillors review applications, consider public and expert opinions and decisions, ensuring decisions comply with local and national planning policies.*
- 5. **Public Participation:** Residents can participate in council meetings, submit questions, and provide feedback on various issues, including planning applications. This ensures that the community's voice is heard in the decision making process.*

The council uses several mechanisms to ensure that lessons learned from decision-making are effectively captured and applied to improve future practices:

- **Corporate Strategy and Priorities:** The Council's Corporate Strategy outlines key priorities and principles, including a commitment to ensure our decisions are informed by evidence. The strategy guides all council activities and decision-making processes.*
- **Review and Evaluation:** Regular reviews and evaluations of policies and projects are conducted to assess their effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. This includes post-implementation reviews and scrutiny of our performance framework.*

- *Public and Stakeholder Feedback: The Council actively seeks feedback from residents and stakeholders through consultations, surveys, and public meetings. This feedback is crucial for understanding the impact of decisions and identifying lessons learned.*
- *Documentation and Reporting: Lessons learned are documented and reported through various channels, including council reports, strategy documents, and performance reviews. This ensures that knowledge is shared across the organisation.*

These mechanisms collectively help the council to learn from past experiences and improve future practices, ensuring better outcomes for the community.

M	07	Question from:	Cllr Robin Moss
<p>Press and cabinet reports refer to 1,300 jobs being created by the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) project. Please can you detail how this figure has been calculated?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul Roper
<p><i>The job numbers are calculated based on the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) Employment Densities Guide which takes the proposed uses from the Local Development Order (LDO) illustrative masterplan and provides an appropriate assumption of the number of jobs that each use type would provide on the site based on the floor areas.</i></p>			
M	08	Question from:	Cllr Lesley Mansell
<p>Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding – administered by the transport authority (WECA) - funds a wide range of B&NES’ bus fares and services – Birthday month free travel, free travel for care-leavers, WestLocal local services and the WestLink on-demand service. It also funds a local fare-cap of £2 for adults and £1 for children, which is unrelated to the national bus fare cap. This is known as ‘fare package 1’. BSIP funding expires in March. Birthday fares have been granted another year of operation.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member inform the public where they have got to with the following areas of public concern:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How they will work with WECA to bridge the potential ‘cliff edge’ and loss of all these services which especially benefit vulnerable 			

people, job seekers, and those in rural areas after March and whether BSIP or other funding can be found (e.g. with investment in school buses, SEND bus transport, employer schemes)?

- 2) Which bus services will be lost to which B&NES residents (e.g. children, care leavers, under 21s) at the end of BSIP, in which parts of the district, and when?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) holds primary responsibility for the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme as the Transport Authority for the region. The Department for Transport awarded BSIP funding directly to WECA, alongside North Somerset Council, enabling WECA to administer the BSIP policy, programme, and associated initiatives, including fare packages, supported bus services, and other schemes that impact residents across Bath and North East Somerset.

Given this arrangement, I would advise that you direct your queries to WECA, as they are best placed to provide comprehensive and current information on the future of BSIP-funded schemes. This includes details on programmes such as the Birthday Month Free Travel, care-leaver travel concessions, supported bus services, WESTlocal routes, the WESTlink on-demand service, and the local fare cap.

Supplementary Question

Radstock residents report that they are left isolated and socially excluded, while care leavers, who we have a corporate responsibility for as looked after children tell us they are struggling. This local authority is represented at the WECA table and clearly, I am more than capable of writing to WECA. However, it is not within my gift to negotiate with WECA, so please explain who has the role to negotiate with the Combined Authority and what will they do to raise these issues to ensure that services continue to be provided, particularly in North East Somerset, and where is B&NES in regards to ensuring that the bus service doesn't go off a cliff edge next year?

Response

Cllr Guy and I raise these issues with the WECA Mayor and his staff on a regular basis (approximately several times a week). Following the delegation of bus service improvement plan monies at the WECA Committee to a single director at WECA the Mayor has not been open to discussions or suggestions from B&NES or any of the other unitary authorities as to how that money is spent. So perhaps you might like to

Speak with your Labour colleague and get this resolved for us.

M

09

Question from:

Cllr David Biddleston

B&NES “expenditure over £500” transparency data shows B&NES paid significant amounts in Jan-March this year to several mainstream private schools. <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/expenditure-over-ps500>

With the exception of £41,000 to KES Pre-Prep, the schools don't appear on this list in the April-June data. The amounts paid by B&NES in Jan-Mar '24 are:

- King Edwards pre-prep for 3-7 year-olds £21,085
- King Edwards £11,722
- Kingswood Preschool £80,543
- Monkton Combe £13,463
- Royal High £38,700

- 1) Could the Cabinet Member advise how many children are covered by these payments and what are the payments for?
- 2) If particular educational needs were being met by these mainstream private schools in Jan – March, it would be instructional to understand why the costs were not repeated in April-June?
- 3) Finally, we are keen to be reassured that private schooling is paid for by the local taxpayer for children in need from any background. To that end, which wards are these children from? If it's not possible to say, please share what percentage of them come from low-income families (defined as a household earning less than 60% of the local median income).

Answer from:

Cllr Paul May

The spend pattern at the 5 schools listed is shown in the attached summary. This shows the spending at each school by the Local Authority in the 2 quarters of 2024. The summary has been annotated to explain what the spend at each school was for and the significant majority of the spend relates to the Nursery Education Grant payable to all providers who are registered within B&NES scheme. The funding is provided in line with our published formula, which makes additional payments to children from deprived backgrounds. Payments were also made to the schools who had registered Ukrainian pupils as part of the Homes for Ukraine grant.

A few schools were paid sums related to personal budgets for pupils with SEND.

Every placement decision made by the SEND statutory team is a balance of meeting a child/young person's needs and the effective use of public funds. Decisions are made by a multiagency panel, which includes colleagues from health, social care, therapies and schools.

There are a very small number of rare cases where the only school that can meet a child or young person's needs in an independent school, and in these cases the LA will consider whether funding a place in an independent school is the most cost-effective way to meet needs. There are also a small number of cases where we are instructed to fund independent school places by a tribunal.

Each of these cases is reviewed at key stage transfer and a decision is made whether to continue to fund that place or if a most costs effective solution can be found.

<p>M 10</p>	<p>Question from:</p>	<p>Cllr Saskia Heijltjes</p>
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Every October marks Black History Month, a time to recognise and appreciate the contributions of Black individuals to society. At the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, Cllr Wright raised concerns about the lack of press releases from B&NES Council regarding this important month.

Between 1 and 21 October 2024, Bath and North East Somerset Council published:
 37 posts on renewable energy and energy-saving measures
 11 posts on breast cancer

1 post on James Baldwin

0 posts on X and Instagram regarding Black History Month or related topics (slavery, racism, colonialism, etc.)

The last post on X that included the word "black" was dated 17 November 2023 and was about the NHS Organ Donor Register. You can view it here: [https://x.com/search?q=black%20\(from%3A bathnes\)&src=typed_query&f=live](https://x.com/search?q=black%20(from%3A bathnes)&src=typed_query&f=live)

B&NES has actively promoted other campaigns related to specific dates in October of this year, such as World Mental Health Day, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Stoptober (stop smoking campaign), and International E-Waste Day.

This paragraph was included in the weekly e-news on 17 October 2024, "During October there have been events across Bath and North East Somerset to celebrate Black History Month. These have included marking the 70th anniversary since His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, Emperor of Ethiopia, returned to his home in Bath and was awarded the Freedom of the City."

What events were held across B&NES to mark Black History Month and how were they advertised to residents by the Council? How will B&NES ensure better communication regarding Black History Month in the future?

Answer from:

Cllr Dave Wood

The council shared a wide range of materials this Black History Month through our social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and X. We find that using our own social media channels in this way offers flexibility as new events come forward, as well as using our social media reach (our X channel has over 23,000 followers) to effectively publicise events.

This sharing included posts from our own libraries https://x.com/bnes_libraries/status/1842203018541809784 as well as information about partner events such as at Fairfield House https://www.instagram.com/p/DAk9XCbinYN/utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA== and from Avon Fire and Rescue <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/uzwgGgf1zpspPpKF/?mibextid=WC7FNe>

Bath Spa University also hosted an event with council involvement from Heritage Services during Black History Month called Changing Narratives of Bath's Heritage, reflecting the 'Reclaiming Narratives' theme this year.

It should be emphasised that our commitment to race equality must not be limited to one specific month of the year and the council has also highlighted its commitment to tackling inequalities through its Race Equality Charter for Schools and also through its Inclusive Leadership Pledge.

We regularly review our communications approaches and will take feedback into account when planning for next year's Black History Month.

M	11	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
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A survey was sent out to all schools in BANES in spring 2024 asking whether they would be interested in taking part in a School Street pilot. Please share the list of 19 schools who responded positively.

Answer from:	Cllrs Sarah Warren and Manda Rigby
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Bathwick St Marys, Chandag, Farrington Gurney, Freshford, Mulberry Park, Newbridge, Peasedown St John, Saltford, Shoscombe, St Andrews, St Mary's Timsbury, St Philips, St Stephens, Swainswick, Two Rivers, Welton, Westfield, Weston All Saints, Widcombe

M	12	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
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In a response to questions at the Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel the Council has informed members that "This calendar year 25.1% of EHCP's have been issued on time".

How many times have BANES been taken to tribunal for issues regarding EHCPs since 2019?

What is the total cost of these legal proceedings for BANES since 2019?

Answer from:	Cllr Paul May
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2019 *Data not available*

2020 *Data not available*

2021 *Data not available*

2022 *26 appeals lodged. In 23 cases an agreement was reached prior to tribunal. In 1 case the court found against the council. In 2 it found in favour of the council.*

2023 *21 appeals lodged. In 16 cases an agreement was reached prior to tribunal. In 2 cases the court found against the council. In 3 it found in favour of the council.*

2024 (until Nov 2024) *39 appeals lodged. 15 of these have reached the tribunal date (others in process), of which 12 of these an agreement was reached prior to tribunal and 3 were found in favour of the council.*

Cost of the legal proceedings since 2019:

<i>Jan 2019 – March 2020</i>	<i>£35,179</i>
<i>April 2020 – March 2021</i>	<i>£44,930</i>
<i>April 2021 – March 2022</i>	<i>£31,961</i>
<i>April 2022 – March 2023</i>	<i>£34,767</i>
<i>April 2023 – March 2024</i>	<i>£46,535</i>
<i>April 2024 – November 2024</i>	<i>£22,907</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>£216,279</i>

(The response was provided within 5 working days of the meeting).

M

13

Question from:

Cllr Robin Moss

Following the recent question to Cabinet about s106 payments being returned to developers, has any CIL money been returned by BaNES to developers?

Answer from:

Cllr Matt McCabe

CIL contributions do not have any 'spend-by' time limit after which unspent money must be returned, and consequently BaNES has not returned any CIL money to developers.

M

14

Question from:

Cllr Robin Moss

Following the award of the Community Care contract by the BaNES Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to HCRG group, which includes a substantial BaNES cash investment & substantial BaNES officer time, what consultation took place with BaNES cabinet members, BaNES councillors & the wider BaNES community about this important local service contract?

Answer from:

Cllr Alison Born

Senior Local Authority representatives have been involved in the procurement process throughout as members of the Integrated Community Based Care Programme Board

Elected members were given updates through Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development Panel, but the ICB was not able to provide details due to the confidentiality requirements of the procurement process.

Engagement with the public had previously taken place on the Health and Care model and elements of Integrated Care Strategy. This gave the ICB a framework of priorities that fed into market engagement events with providers. Three market engagement events took place with 225 people in attendance overall, representing 69 providers.

People with lived experience were also involved in informing the priorities in key thematic areas such as Learning Disability and Autism, and Children's Services. People with lived experience were also involved in the evaluation of the bids, bringing their unique perspectives to the process.

The ICB had a legal duty to proceed to procurement because its existing contracts were ending and there was no scope to legally extend them further. Therefore, re-procuring the contract could not be subject to consultation as it is not optional.

As set out in the contract, the provider does have a responsibility to engage on its proposals as to how they will address the transformation priorities set by the ICB, and to coproduce its service redesign plans with the public.

Looking ahead, the ICB is actively considering how it can offer opportunities for involvement and engagement, working with HCRG to give people more understanding and awareness of the proposals for the future of community care across BSW. This will include working with service users, patients and wider communities to co-design services to ensure they meet the needs of those who rely on them.

M

15

Question from:

Cllr Eleanor Jackson

Given that on the one hand, 'prevention is better than cure' and that our young people, whatever their background, deserve the best youth services we can offer, and that on the other, need stability and a safe environment to develop their potential, would the cabinet members commit to re-commissioning the excellent Youth Connect South West, not just on the same terms as their present short term contract, but on a long term basis?

What steps would they take to ameliorate the isolation of and lack of facilities for young people in rural areas, especially the disabled and vulnerable?

Note: The Connecting Families Newsletter p 2 circulated on 7 November 2024 gives an insight into the work that can be done.

Answer from:

Cllr Paul May

We also value the excellent services provided by Youth Connect South West and other providers who deliver services for young people across B&NES. Youth Connect South West have successfully secured contracts with a range of organisations, in addition to their Council funded contracts, to provide youth services within more rural areas.

In relation to Council contracts, depending on the value of services to be procured, it is usually necessary to adhere to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which means running open, competitive processes which all appropriate providers, including Youth Connect South West, are able to participate in. This is a robust, transparent process, and the development of the service specification is informed by needs identified through the Strategic Evidence Base as well as feedback from current providers, wider stakeholders and services users, and within

an agreed budget envelope. Submitted bids are evaluated against key quality criteria which includes accessibility and inclusive approaches to ensure the provision will be available to those who need support where they are able to access it.

The contract length is determined at the start of the procurement process to ensure providers are aware and able to plan in future procurement activity.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC

P	01	Question from:	Dominic Tristram
The Council has a £300 million-plus contract with Volker Highways. What oversight did cabinet members have over this contract? How often is it renewed?			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<i>Following a compliant procurement process the Volker Highway Contract was awarded in 2019 for a maximum of a 10-year period, with an option to extend to the full term at year 7 in accordance with the contract. The works delivered under the contract are agreed and continuous oversight provided by Cabinet Members through the Council governance process. The contract for a term framework contractor for highways maintenance and improvement will be due for renewal in 2029, with the procurement process commencing in 2027.</i>			
<i>Significant contracts need to be procured at least two years ahead of end date. Demobilisation and Mobilisation of Contracts is very disruptive to service delivery and takes in the region of 12 months (6 months demobilisation and 6 months remobilisation).</i>			
<i>The contract was tendered under the New Engineering Contract version 4 Term Service Contract Conditions where it is clearly implied that extensions should be granted where performance is in line with contract performance measurements. The KPI performance on the contract</i>			

is excellent and this is a credit to both organisations working together. Although the KPI's represent operational performance they are owned jointly as it is in the interest of all parties to observe good performance. The challenges of both organisations are openly shared to drive improvement whenever possible.

This style of contract is very much a collaborative working contract underpinned by the spirit of mutual trust and co-operation. A lot of work has been done for the contract on collaborative working as one team to deliver essential areas of work for the Council around highway infrastructure management.

The Council's Corporate Strategy (as adopted at that time) will form part of the strategic procurement strategy to ensure that the Council's wider outcomes are fully aligned with the contractual requirements.

P	02	Question from:	Dominic Tristram
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In the contract with Volker Highways are cycling diversions specified as part of the contract?

Answer from:	Cllr Manda Rigby
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The Volker contract specifies National Code of Practices, this ensures the requirements remain current and in accordance with the most up to date codes or guidelines. Safety at Street Work and Road Works is the current Code of Practice for temporary traffic management. The code states "You must ensure suitable provisions are made for the safety of cyclists passing or crossing the works. Particular care is needed where cycle lanes or cycle tracks are affected by street works or road works because these routes may be especially popular with cyclists". When planning and delivering works, this is applied, however due to the dynamic nature of some reactive works there are instances where improvement have been identified and we work with Volker to review and where practicable implement improvements.

P	03	Question from:	Dominic Tristram
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What contracts are in place in B&NES with outside providers for over £10 million?

Answer from:	Cllr Mark Elliott
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All of the Council's contracts with external providers and contractors are published on our Contract Register which is in the public domain and accessible through the Council's website on its selling to the council page or directly through the following link - <https://procontract.due-north.com/ContractsRegister/Index?p=696a9836-1895-e511-8105-000c29c9ba21&v=2> . Depending on how you wish to sort and filter the information the list of all contracts at different values will be detailed there.

P	04	Question from:	Grace Wiltshire
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B&NES has previously supported a youth climate conference held by school students. Does B&NES support this event on an annual basis?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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B&NES Council is not involved in the organisation of the BANES Youth Climate Summit, but I was delighted to attend the event at Kingswood School in March 2024, to speak to students about active travel. Engaging children and young people in the climate and ecological emergencies is critical and we would be happy to continue to attend and support the event in the future.

P	05	Question from:	Grace Wiltshire
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Does the £30k budgeted for the School Street and pedestrian improvements for Swainswick School include the newly built pavement in front of the school? Are any additional measures planned?

From speaking with parents, we have learnt that many park on the new pavement, and there has been no communication to inform them of the new setup. Without a safe crossing from the pavement to the school, how can we ensure that children cross safely?

Answer from:	Cllr Manda Rigby
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The footway replaced a grass verge which was in very poor condition and difficult to maintain. The cost of constructing the footway was included in the £30k funding allocated to the improvement works from the Local Active Travel and Safety Programme. A short length of

additional guardrail is due to be installed, no further measures are proposed at this time.

The measures which have been introduced are standard traffic management and road safety interventions which have been introduced in the vicinity of other schools throughout the authority. The awareness of pedestrian activity associated with the school has been significantly improved, particularly for motorists who are unfamiliar with the area. This should reduce any difficulties experienced by parents and children when accessing the school from the new footway.

No vehicles should be parked on the new footway.

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

P	06	Question from:	Grace Wiltshire
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With the Western section of Scholars Way to be delivered, when will a safe active travel route up to the plateau be decided on?

The Outline Business Case to WECA says that the route up to Claverton Down is 'out of scope' subject to the citizens panel that was run in 2022.

"The routes from the city centre to University of Bath (Section 2, Purple Section) are currently the subject of a Citizens Panel process to make recommendations regarding a preferred route outside of the business case process."

Following on, when will an LTN 1/20 compliant route from the centre to Claverton Down be delivered?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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We recently consulted on our Active Travel Masterplan which sets out our ambitions for walking, wheeling, and cycling routes across the district. This included a route from Claverton Down to the city centre. Once the Masterplan is formally adopted, we will undertake a prioritisation exercise to determine which routes will be brought forward when future funding becomes available.

P	07	Question from:	Barbara Gordon
<p>The Annual Climate and Nature progress report included a case study of an electric bus service run by Big Lemon. Some councillors recently spoke to First Bus, the largest bus provider in BANES, who told us that the electrification of buses in BANES is highly problematic for several reasons, including the location of the bus depot.</p> <p>What work is BANES undertaking to support First Bus with the electrification of all buses in BANES?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>As the local transport authority, WECA will lead work with First Bus on the electrification of buses in BANES. This approach aligns with the government's funding model, which typically favours bids from local transport authorities (LTAs) for zero-emission bus schemes, as demonstrated by the recent ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas) funding. This setup enables LTAs to work closely with local operators, such as First Bus, to tackle area-specific challenges and to coordinate efforts to decarbonise public transport across the region.</i></p>			
P	08	Question from:	Barbara Gordon
<p>Who decides which flags are to be flown above the Guildhall? How has this been constitutionally decided?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Kevin Guy
<p><i>There is no specific reference to this in the council's Constitution. The decision to fly flags (in addition to the Union Flag, which is continually flown) is therefore made by the Chief Executive in consultation with me as leader and, as appropriate, with the other group leaders. Flags may also be flown following the adoption of a Full Council resolution- for example, recently, the UN Flag was flown on the UN International Day of Peace, following a motion agreed at Council in July.</i></p>			

P	09	Question from:	Michael Coffey
Scholars Way links up with the Entry Hill Liveable Neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the proposals as outlined in the Final Business Case (FBC) don't include a through traffic restriction, i.e. there's no safe cycling link from Entry Hill to Scholars Way. When will an LTN 1/20 compliant route be delivered from Entry Hill to Scholars Way?			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<i>We recently consulted on our Active Travel Masterplan which sets out our ambitions for walking, wheeling, and cycling routes across the district. This included a route on Entry Hill. Once the Masterplan is formally adopted, we will undertake a prioritisation exercise to determine which routes will be brought forward when future funding becomes available.</i>			
P	10	Question from:	Michael Coffey
On the 21st September 2024, a member of the public witnessed raw sewage in the River Avon being discharged. How does B&NES Council hold the Environment Agency and Wessex Water to account when such issues are reported?			
https://x.com/paulpowlesland/status/1837551142760599807			
Answer from:			Cllr Tim Ball
<i>We fully support the Environment Agency in its role as the agency responsible for tackling sewage pollution in our rivers. Since 2015, they have successfully concluded 63 prosecutions against water and sewerage companies for pollution offences securing fines of over £151 million. Anyone witnessing such pollution should report it to Wessex Water, but also the Environment Agency incident hotline Telephone: 0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service). In March this year the Environment Agency also launched a whistleblowing portal that allows water industry workers to confidentially report potential environmental wrongdoing by companies regulated by the Environment Agency. This intelligence will be used in their regulatory role to prevent, guide, or enforce where environmental harm is happening. Whistleblowing: reporting serious</i>			

wrongdoing to the Environment Agency: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-report-serious-wrongdoing-to-the-environment-agency>

P	11	Question from:	Michael Coffey
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I understand that Cllr Sam Ross recently asked Cllr Warren the following question:

“The aim of the Journey to Net Zero transport strategy for Bath was a 24% reduction of car journey and miles within Bath by 2030. What has been the progress towards this target since the launch of the strategy in May 2022?”

I am told the response from Cllr Warren was:

“B&NES has a number of automatic traffic count sites located across the district that monitor traffic flows on key routes, including those in Bath. Whilst these don’t capture every vehicle travelling within Bath, they are a good proxy in terms of what the general level of traffic flows are in the city. Comparing data from a number of key sites across Bath comparing traffic levels between 2019 and 2022 indicates a reduction in traffic of 1.14%.”

My question is - As there are 70 permanent traffic counts in Bath, could the full data by year for these traffic counts be provided?

Answer from:	Cllr Sarah Warren
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Thank you for your question. We are happy to share transport data from our permanent count sites. Please note that these data files are very large. To request the data, please email transport_planning@bathnes.gov.uk with as specific criteria on dates and locations as possible. This will help us provide the most relevant information for your needs.

P	12	Question from:	Kathy Beadle
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Who is responsible for ensuring that e-scooters are charged and ready for use? A resident recently experienced a malfunction while commuting, causing them to miss a train.

After submitting a complaint to the Department of Transport, no response was received. How does B&NES address these important failures in the e-scooter agreement?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

The service is operated by Dott, who are responsible for maintaining the service, including battery level. The vehicles should not allow a new hire if the battery level is very low, so there may have been a malfunction in this instance.

Customer Service for Dott can be contacted within the app, by email: support@ridedott.com or over the phone: 0800 048 89 93.

Council officers regularly meet with representatives from Dott and the West of England Combined Authority who manage the contract, and will share this feedback.

P

13

Question from:

Kathy Beadle

Residents are regularly contacting councillors on issues to do with overgrown plants on pavements. In some cases, these plants are causing a hazard to pedestrians. Fix My Street does not appear to prioritise these issues. How will this be addressed?

What preventative measures are planned to reduce this maintenance overhead?

Answer from:

Cllr Tim Ball

Fix My Street is monitored and reports actions. Overgrown vegetation from boundary planting will be assessed and where required the landowner is requested to cut back the vegetation. The Highway Authority will issue formal notice and implement enforcement action if the landowner refuses to cut back the vegetation. If the Fix My Street report identifies weed / plant growth on the highway Cleansing Services sweep and manage weed removal from pavements. The Council no longer uses glyphosate chemical weed killer. Weeds are removed either mechanically, or via a hot wash system which is more labour intensive than chemical methods and requires more than one treatment. There have been some recent breakdown issues with the hot wash machinery resulting in machinery being recalled to the manufacturer which has

caused a backlog, and we will now work through these reports on a priority basis.

P

14

Question from:

Kathy Beadle

In the September Cabinet questions, the response regarding anti-idling signage in Lambridge stated that the council has an anti-idling officer and campaign to raise awareness. It mentioned that suitable locations for signage were assessed in Larkhall, but there were no mounting points available.

However, anti-idling signs have since appeared on lamp posts in Widcombe, Bath. Does Lambridge not have lamp posts for these signs?

Additionally, how much money has been allocated from the CAZ funds for delivering anti-idling notices across Bath?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

B&NES anti-idling resources currently include large printed banners which are designed to be affixed to railings. There are no identifiable mounting points suitable for such a banner outside of the shops within Larkhall.

We currently do not have any signage or materials which are suitable for mounting upon lampposts - the requirements of which necessitate any installation to be above 2m to avoid presenting a hazard to highway users. We are currently evaluating options for purchase and design of signage which may be utilised for installation upon lampposts in the future. B&NES has not provided any anti-idling signage for lampposts in Widcombe and any installations here have not been undertaken by the local authority. Anti-idling engagement work forms part of the non-charging measures of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) and is delivered as part of our engagement and education work. To date £3,326 has been spent on printing & design works alongside £1,439 for purchase of signage and educational materials relating to anti-idling.

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

P	15	Question from:	Matt Cooper
<p>In response to statements from the public at full council and for cabinet questions, the council has said it doesn't provide food at meetings. The recent meeting in Batheaston on 8 October titled "Local voices for people and planet" provided food. Does the council provide food at events?</p> <p>https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/local-voices-for-people-and-planet-tickets-1013802609897?aff=oddtcreator</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Sarah Warren
<p><i>B&NES Council does not have any catering at its full Council, Cabinet or committee meetings, nor does it provide 'in-house' catering at its other buildings. In-house 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).</i></p> <p><i>Depending on the event, light refreshments may sometimes be offered to members of the public or organisations who have attended. At the meeting in Batheaston, light refreshments were offered in the form of tea, coffee, fruit, biscuits and some pastries – all of which were vegetarian.</i></p>			
P	16	Question from:	Matt Cooper
<p>BANES shared a post on X on 3 Oct 2024 showing leaflets promoting 3 free digital magazines, all on motoring. Who is paying for these flyers to be printed and distributed?</p> <p>https://x.com/bathnes/status/1841799369089003556?s=19</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Dave Wood

The aim of these digital magazines is to provide information and advice for new and learner drivers to improve road safety, in support of the council's Vision Zero Policy of no Killed or Seriously Injured (KSIs) on our roads. The funding for the flyers and publicising them came from the Road Safety Team's Education, Training and Publicity budget.

P	17	Question from:	Matt Cooper
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What support does BANES have in place to support schools to become an eco-school?

Answer from:	Cllrs Sarah Warren and Paul May
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The Department for Education Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy states that all education settings should have a Climate Action Plan - covering a broad range of topics including energy, transport, food, biodiversity, adaptation and resilience, climate education and green careers - in place by Dec 2025, with a named Sustainability Lead.

We are in the early stages of identifying the support that would be most appropriate and helpful for schools in Bath and North East Somerset to achieve this. As part of this, we are linking with the organisations and initiatives that are best placed to provide support, including those funded by the Department for Education (the Climate Ambassadors programme).

Once we've heard from schools about what they need, we will facilitate and signpost to the relevant places, including the Climate Ambassador's programme and Let's Go Net Zero Climate Action Advisors.

P	18	Question from:	Edmund Cannon
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Presently B&NES Council is flying the Ukraine flag on top of the Guildhall to support the friendship agreement we have with Oleksandriya. What other friendship agreements does the Council have and do they fly their flags?

Answer from:	Cllr Kevin Guy
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The Ukrainian flag is flown above the Guildhall as a symbol of solidarity and support for Ukraine following the illegal Russian invasion on 24 February 2022.

The council has also been involved in initiatives like the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which supports Ukrainian refugees by providing them with safe housing and helping them integrate into the local community, as well as establishing a friendship agreement with Oleksandriya City Council.

Following the decision of Council to terminate our friendship agreement with the Jiangxi province and City of Jingdezhen in November 2022, the council has one active friendship agreement, which is with Oleksandriya City Council.

P 19

Question from:

Edmund Cannon

Initially, the next round of bike hangars would be installed in summer of 2024, then September 2024 and now February 2025. Apparently, this was due to: "internal delays around technical approval for the sites and a change to the programme schedule". What was the cause for the internal delays around technical approval for the sites and a change to the programme schedule?

Answer from:

Cllr Sarah Warren

The council has a number of complex capital projects and earlier in the year introduced a new technical assurance process based on the learnings from projects delivered to date. The technical assurance process gives careful consideration with regards to street widths, vehicle tracking, impact on car parking, lighting, heritage and personal safety, which takes time to assess. The programme has been adjusted to take into account of the progress made to date.

P 20

Question from:

Edmund Cannon

The cycle lane on Keynsham High Street continues to be a problem with people falling over and injuring themselves. The bad publicity for the cycle lane creates significant reputational risks for any council trying to improve cycle infrastructure in the future. Will B&NES Council form an independent group to conduct a "lessons-learned" study so that future cycling initiatives do not go so seriously wrong?

Answer from:		Cllrs Kevin Guy, Manda Rigby and Paul Roper
<p><i>The council carried out further lining works to Keynsham High Street earlier this year, in response to public feedback and following a design review and a Stage 4 Road Safety Audit. Information from these reports will inform council services' work in preparation of any future schemes.</i></p>		
P	21	Question from: Tracy Carter
<p>The council has a responsibility to residents who claim Universal Credit in relation to reduced Council Tax. How does BaNES raise awareness of the schemes available to assist those on Universal Credit?</p> <p>The eligibility criteria, application processes, and income thresholds are managed by various government departments and local councils. With many individuals qualifying for reduced Council Tax due to Universal Credit, how many actually benefit from this scheme?</p> <p>The current system of independently administered and often discretionary schemes lacks coherence and strategic oversight. What steps is BaNES taking to improve awareness and access to these important resources?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>Entitlement to Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) is dependent on a claim being made to the council. In 2017 the council made changes to the rules of its scheme to treat a claim to Universal Credit as a claim to Council Tax Support, to maximise take up and to enable residents to claim this support automatically. The Universal Credit claims process includes a question which triggers a notification of household and financial details to be sent to the council's Benefit service to enable the Council Tax Support claim to be processed, so the resident does not need to complete a second claim form.</i></p> <p><i>Outside of this process residents may also contact the Benefit service and claim Council Tax Support directly, and full details of the process, including the online claim portal are easily accessible on the council's website.</i></p> <p><i>Access to discretionary support for council tax is through the Welfare Support scheme. The council has worked in partnership the Bath jobcentre for many years, and Work Coaches frequently refer residents to the Welfare Support team for help. This often happens after the</i></p>		

resident has claimed Universal Credit and has requested an advance payment, and whilst the work coach may not identify council tax as a priority issue, all Welfare Support officers are trained to check the status of the applicant's council tax account when contact is made, as this forms a key identity check and identifies early on whether the resident is in arrears and may require additional help with council tax.

Entitlement to Council Tax Support for residents on Universal Credit is relatively straight forward in B&NES; the amount of support offered depends on where household income falls within a specific range or income band. There are currently 5108 households on Universal Credit and LCTS as at the end of October.

In B&NES, the discretionary scheme for council tax for people in financial crisis is through the Welfare Support scheme. This is well publicised on the council's website, through the B&NES Livewell pages, and Managers from the service regularly visit key partners to promote the service and encourage residents in need to apply. This extends to staff working in the Council tax and Recovery service, who have been trained to refer residents to Welfare Support and to mediate contact if necessary.

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

P	22	Question from:	Tracy Carter
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Is Bath and North East Somerset Council undertaking a Cultural and Creative Strategy Review? If yes, who is undertaking this, and which scrutiny panel does it sit under?

Answer from:	Cllr Kevin Guy
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B&NES is reviewing its approach to Arts and Culture in-line with the aspirations set-out in the administration's manifesto. This is being led by the Head of Culture and Heritage Services. This issue would sit under the Corporate PDS Panel.

P	23	Question from:	Tracy Carter
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Is there a time frame for delivering S106 allotments in Lambridge due because of the building of houses in Beaufort Villas, Lambridge? The land set aside for this is on the left side leading down Deadmill Lane into Lambridge?

Answer from:	Cllr Tim Ball
<i>There are no active plans underway to create allotments at Deadmill Lane. The proposals were dependent on improved access and infrastructure which is currently not feasible given restricted funds and planning issues.</i>	
P 24	Question from: Pam Richards (Co-ordinator Protect our NHS B&NES)
<p>Protect Our NHS BANES was very concerned to learn that the community health services contract for the Bath and NE Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (worth £1.3 billion for up to 9 years) has been awarded to HCRG. We had hoped that this contract would be awarded to a consortium of NHS providers and not a private company owned by a private equity company. It also means another 2000 NHS workers will be transferred from the NHS to a private contractor.</p> <p>The procurement process has been shrouded in secrecy. The ICB has not followed the guidelines for consultation laid down in the Health and Care Act 2022 Act and our attempts to obtain information from the ICB and to persuade them to undertake meaningful consultation with stakeholders has only elicited feeble excuses. We are concerned that even partners such as local authorities have not been adequately involved in the process despite being directly accountable to their communities. Can you tell us –</p> <p>(1) What has been the involvement of BANES elected representatives in discussing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the contract’s scope of services, • the implications of the transfer of Better Care Funding, • the contract shortlist, • future performance monitoring? <p>(2) Has a full impact assessment of the decision been undertaken?</p> <p>(3) What are the sanctions in the event of a failure to deliver, and safeguards to protect services and staff against another takeover or sell off, as has already happened in B&NES?</p>	
	Cllr Alison Born

(1) Elected members were given updates through the Children's, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development Panel and regular updates on the Better Care Fund were submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). Better Care Fund monies will be spent in the local authority footprint, this is a requirement of the contract and will be subject to usual HWB approvals going forward.

The ICB was not able to provide details due to the confidentiality requirements of the procurement process. The ICB senior leaders with officers of the BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Authorities will oversee the performance of the contract. There are already robust measures in place to support the implementation of the transfer of services.

(2) A full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the impact of the ICBC Programme was completed under the direction of director of nursing and quality group. As it detailed matters within the confidential procurement and requirements of the tender document it was not published. It was shared at Integrated Community Based Care (ICBC) Programme Board, Financial Investment Committee and ICB Board which all include local authority representation as part of the approval process for the contract award. The EQIA is a live document and now transfers to HCRG during the mobilisation phase of the new contract.

(3). The transformation priorities include supporting new ways of working, improving health outcomes and improving people's experience of community-based care. These will allow the ICB to measure progress on delivering the transformation priorities and long-term improvements in services and support provided to people across BSW.

The details of the contract reporting mechanisms are being agreed currently. The delivery of the agreed outcomes and quality of services will be regularly monitored by the ICB and form part of the commission framework. There are must-dos within the specifications which link to overall outcomes to be achieved and set performance indicators to measure progress.

The contract has the standard safeguards and ability to issue notices etc. as per standard NHS contract should this be required.

Any existing staff that are transferred to the new provider under TUPE arrangements, would do so on the basis of their existing terms and conditions and pension arrangements. The ICB will continue to work in the best interest of staff to commit to parity of working arrangements. As you would expect, all staff will be treated fairly in line with employment legislation.

The new contract includes provisions should HCRG be purchased by another company. The contract cannot be transferred without the agreement of the ICB and there are safeguards set out within the NHS contract to ensure any such proposal to transfer a contract is agreed with the ICB.

P	25	Question from:	Barbara Gordon
<p>A CIL funding application for pedestrian crossing improvements on Julian Road at the junction with Marlborough Buildings and Cavendish Road has been agreed. As the crossing is located within the Lower Lansdown Liveable Neighbourhood area, can clarification be provided as to the route of funding chosen for this pedestrian crossing?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Manda Rigby
<p><i>These pedestrian crossing improvements meet the criteria for CIL funding allocation and build on a previous, CIL-funded, junction-improvement project.</i></p>			

Appendices

Appendix 1 – M09 – summary of spend