

**\*\* THIS AMENDMENT WAS LOST \*\***

**Council 25 February 2025**

**ITEM 8 – BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX**

**AMENDMENTS FROM THE GREEN GROUP**

**Revenue savings**

**Annex Revenue Growth Annex 2ii**

**1. Extend Free Bus Travel for Disabled People Before 9AM -**

Costs: £40k

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: More Enforcement Cameras – reduced from £120k to £80k

**2. Invest in Public Toilets Across B&NES - Report to prepare for Investment in Public Toilets Across B&NES**

Costs: £46K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements More Enforcement Cameras – further reduction from £80k to £34k

**3. Part-time Administrative Officer for the Planning Enforcement Team -**

Costs: £42K (Pro Rata)

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: More Enforcement Cameras – further reduction from £34k to £0

& Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Speed Indicator Funding – reduced from £40k to £32k

**4. Improve School Streets with Additional Funding - Design for the 4th, 5th and 6th School Street**

Costs: £50K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Investment – reduced from £65k to £15k

**5. Improve Cycle Parking Facilities at Bath Sports & Leisure Centre**

Capital Costs: £20K

Capital Funding from Bath Leisure Centre capital item reduction from £155k to £135K from Annes 5 iv CORPORATE ESTATE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2025-26

**6. RPZ for Lambridge**

Costs: £25K

Savings from: Reducing growth item in Annex 2 (ii) Funding Requirements: Highway Speed Indicator Signage £40K further reduction from £32k to £7K

## **7. Retraction of Paper Parking Permits for Councillors**

Costs: No cost

### **RATIONALE FOR PROPOSALS**

#### **1. Extend Free Bus Travel for Disabled People Before 9AM**

Bath and North East Somerset Council is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible transport system. However, the current restriction on free bus travel for disabled pass holders before 9am limits their ability to attend work, education, medical appointments, and other essential commitments.

A successful trial in Warwickshire showed that 22% of disabled pass holders benefited from all-day free travel, with over 12,400 early-morning journeys recorded in just seven months. This increased accessibility supported employment, education, and training while reducing reliance on costly alternatives. The estimated cost of extending the scheme was approximately £40,000 per year, covered within the existing budget.

Officers sought cost estimates from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Their response indicates that a regional rollout would cost around £160,000 per year while implementing the scheme solely in B&NES would cost an estimated £45,000-£55,000 annually. However, the actual cost may be lower, as changes in travel patterns are expected rather than a surge in additional journeys.

Expanding free bus travel before 9am for disabled residents aligns with B&NES' commitment to social inclusion and reducing transport barriers. The Council urges immediate action to fund and implement this extension, ensuring equal opportunities for disabled residents to access work, education, and vital services.

#### **2. Report to prepare for Investment in Public Toilets Across B&NES**

Public Toilets - the council presently has a budget spend of £330K per annum for public toilets. The management of the public toilets is currently under contract with Healthmatic until 2029. Presently there are few public toilet facilities, with the council's facilities being reduced and other private operators closing toilets.

The impact of visitor numbers in the city due to tourism and the Christmas Market is significant creating much demand for access to public toilets. In preparation for a new contract in 2029, a report is needed to undertake the real need across the city centre for more public toilets that are easily accessible to be created and financed through possible options, including having an attendant that charges and keeps the toilets clean?

Residents and visitors, particularly those with mobility issues, elderly people, women and parents with young children, without adequate access to essential services. The lack of public toilets is also a growing concern for tourists, as Bath continues to attract millions of visitors each year.

We propose a report on the real needs and cost of toilet provision with a detailed report in preparation for a new contract in 2029.

Cost for full time employee to undertake report £43K, including looking into the following issues:

- Upgrade existing toilets to meet modern accessibility and hygiene standards.
- Install new toilets in key locations with high footfall, including tourist areas, transport hubs, and parks.
- Ensure accessibility, particularly for people with disabilities, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness to provide safe, well-maintained facilities for residents and visitors alike.

In 2018, the council set aside funding for public toilet closures, but alternative schemes like the Community Toilet Scheme do not fully address the need for publicly accessible, clean, and safe facilities. With tourism and local footfall increasing, especially in Bath, investing in public toilets will improve the local environment, public health, and tourism experience.

### **3. Part-time Administrative Officer for the Planning Enforcement Team**

Currently, the Planning Enforcement Team lacks dedicated administrative support, which limits the effectiveness of qualified enforcement officers in their core duties. A dedicated administrative role would significantly improve efficiency by allowing enforcement officers to focus on critical investigative and compliance work rather than administrative tasks. This change would lead to faster response times, improved case management, and enhanced service delivery for residents.

The estimated cost of employing an administrative staff member (full-time) is £42,000 per year, comprising a £32,000 salary and £10,000 in employer national insurance and pension contributions, but a part-time role would be needed to cover the day-to-day administrative tasks currently being covered by enforcement officers. This funding would ensure that the Planning Enforcement Team is better resourced to meet its duties and support the timely resolution of planning enforcement matters.

By reallocating administrative responsibilities, the team will be able to handle cases more efficiently, reducing delays and improving outcomes for the local community.

### **4. Improve School Streets with Additional Funding**

Annex 2 (ii) of the proposed 2025/26 - 2027/28 Funding Requirements outlines a £87,000 allocation for the creation of three school streets. While this is a step in the right direction, it is important to note that last year, outside of the formal budget process, £250,000 was allocated from the Clean Air Zone fund for a single school street pilot.

We understand that initial engagement with all schools in BANES has taken place and we suggest 50K additional funding is invested in designing the 4th, 5th and 6th School Street. This additional funding would support the start of a delivery programme that is needed to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and ensure safer routes for children to walk and cycle to school. School Streets are an element that can be funded by the CRSTS and the projected underspend of this fund at WECA-level could be leveraged by having schemes ready to bid for funding.

## **5. Improve walking, wheeling and cycling facilities at Bath Sports & Leisure Centre**

While car park security improvements are important, investing in active travel infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists is equally essential, particularly in a busy facility like the Leisure Centre.

There is currently no safe pedestrian crossing from the set of steps to the main entrance to the set of steps to the other entrance, where many classes for children take place.

The current cycle parking facilities at the Leisure Centre are insufficient and do not fully accommodate the diverse needs of all users. One of the existing cycle racks is unsuitable for non-standard bicycles, such as tricycles and cargo bikes. Furthermore, access to some of the racks is problematic, particularly for individuals using these types of bikes. For instance, the "wiggly" stand is currently inadequate, as it only supports two standard two-wheeled bicycles and is positioned in an area with no dropped kerb. This configuration limits the practicality and accessibility of cycle parking, especially for those with mobility challenges.

To address these issues, we propose that part of the £20K allocated for car park security be redirected to:

- Replace the existing "wiggly" stand with Sheffield-style stands or other suitable alternatives that provide more space and security for all types of bikes.
- Install a dropped kerb to improve access to the new cycle stands, ensuring that cyclists, including those with tricycles or other non-standard bikes, can reach the stands safely and easily.

- Enhance pedestrian safety in and around the car park by creating safer walking routes and improving crossings, particularly between the main entrance and the trampoline park, where there are currently risks from drivers entering and exiting the car park.

Investing in these improvements will not only better serve the growing number of cyclists but also contribute to safer and more accessible routes for pedestrians. This proposal aligns with the council's commitment to promoting sustainable transport options, improving community infrastructure, and ensuring accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities.

## **6. Lambridge RPZ**

Following the Cabinet Project Lead for Highways attending a public meeting at New Oriel Hall on 19 March 2024, in which they stated that they realised the impact of the Walcot RPZ (zone 27) on Lambridge residents. It became clear that implementing an RPZ in Grosvenor or RPZ in Lambridge on its own would be detrimental to the residents of the other area, because they are adjacent and both experiencing a significant increase in commuter and visitor parking since the Walcot RPZ was introduced.

We therefore call for a Lambridge RPZ to be progressed at the same time as a Grosvenor RPZ.

## **7. Retraction of Paper Parking Permits for Councillors**

Bath and North East Somerset has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to providing leadership to achieve ambitious climate goals, including reducing vehicle miles by 25% by 2030.

Currently, 15 councillors in B&NES use paper parking permits, which allow unrestricted parking across the district. While MiPermit ensures accountability for council-related parking, paper permits pose a risk of misuse. HMRC could view the unreported use of these permits as taxable income, potentially creating compliance issues.

This amendment proposes an immediate retraction of paper parking permits for all councillors at no cost apart from officer time to train Councillors in how to use MiPermit on a mobile device or to declare expenses when using cash.