

Statement to BANES Council 22/05/25

Good evening Councillors, I wanted to start by thanking the council and you all for the work you do. As a student at the university of Bath, I am profoundly grateful for the work this council puts into ensuring that Bath remains an amazing place to work, live and study for all. As a student I wanted to particularly highlight the value of easy access to heritage sights as well as the U1, the U2 and the U5, all essential services for students living in this city. It remains a pleasure to have lived and worked for the last 4 years in a city that is so hospitable for us all, and failing to acknowledge the work you all put in to not only maintain it but also to make it and the surrounding communities an even better place would be churlish at the very least.

I wanted to also congratulate Cllr Guy on his recent appointment as the first rotating Deputy Mayor under Mayor Godwin. The previous metro mayor's term was a failure in almost every conceivable way, and I hope this early display of bipartisan co-operation will be reflective of the rest of her term. She made much of her ability to work with the national government to gain the financial resources that are desperately needed in many parts of our area and I hope those become available in time to resolve some of the challenges we face. While I'm sure there have already been discussions about how our local communities can be improved through co-operation between BANES and WECA, I wanted to raise awareness on a few points that people living here have made when discussing their local areas.

I know the council has spent much time and effort trying to reduce congestion across Bath. Much of this congestion comes from young families seeking to drop their children off at school. I know that 'Independent Travel to School' is a key goal of this council, but a number of parents with children in school here in Bath have cited the continuously increasing costs of bus tickets as a key motivation in driving their children themselves, taking up valuable road space. If lower congestion is the goal, then making bus travel for schoolchildren cheaper is an obvious place for WECA to start, especially now they have ceased plastering the former mayor on the side of their buses!

The other point I'd like to briefly make is the importance of road maintenance. When I spoke at the cabinet meeting in February, I welcomed the expansion of the road cleaning crews, but more money is needed to fill in potholes and damaged pavements across the region. I met one elderly resident from Westfield (May Tree Drive) who showed me a picture of the substantially damaged pavements outside his home, and he expressed frustration that the council had not got the resource to fix the issue. In a time of ongoing cuts, I applaud the council for doubling their investment in footway repairs this year, and I urge both WECA and Westminster to step up with more money as well.

Thank you for your time councillors.