

SCP Statement for full Council Meeting, 17th July 2025

B&NES, in supporting a Student Community Partnership, is leading the way in the UK. No other city has this length or level of partnership working across all their higher education institutions, students' unions and local authority. The SCP was set up in 2002 when there were 8000 students in the city to both celebrate and mitigate the impact that this number of students would have on a city the size of Bath. Today the number of students is over 31,000 approaching a third of the population.

A team of three staff based in Oldfield Park work across the eight partners to improve the relationship between students living in HMOs in the city and long-term residents. The SCP also offers a vehicle for partnership working on sustainability, safety for young people in the nighttime economy, river safety and addressing issues around housing quality and safety in the rented sector.

The benefits to B&NES include:

- increased and direct engagement with residents and students to address any issues that arise through door knocking campaigns over 20 – 22 weeks per year. (Most University cities run these for 1 -2 weeks twice a year.) Councillors will be interested to know there are students now living across all 15 Bath wards and may be moving further afield into other B&NES wards. We visit all wards with students during the Moving In campaign to encourage community cohesion and give information on handling waste and recycling and minimising noise and any potential ASB. Councillors are welcome to join us for these campaigns.
- Councillors in Oldfield Park and Westmoreland have seen a huge decrease in complaints about students. Councillors in other areas can (and do) refer issues to the SCP team for quick resolution, particularly in Southdown, Twerton and Widcombe and Lyncombe.
- improvement in the presentation of HMOs in Southdown, Oldfield Park and Westmoreland (resident comments)
- Community Warden does daily rounds across six wards of Bath for proactive and quick resolution of any visible issues.
- SCP Initiatives which have a direct financial benefit to B&NES eg Pack for Good campaign (BHF red donation banks). The current campaign figures are showing donations have doubled compared to this period last year – the total raised so far for BHF through bags of donation is £92,175 and 49.16 tonnes has been saved from landfill – this equates to a landfill/recycling saving of £54,000 to B&NES. **The work that has been done on this campaign over the last decade means B&NES support the SCP at minimal cost and in most years have made a net gain by funding the SCP.**
- positive publicity for Councillors and the city eg [Students urged to donate – not dump – end of term unwanted items - BBC News](#)

- significantly reduced demand on central services particularly Neighbourhood Services including the Waste and Environmental Protection teams and Council Connect. Collaborative working across the partnership to address resident complaints and support effective and quick resolution.
- partnership working to identify and resolve issues – eg Vape recycling and introduction of safety initiatives, eg NeverOK into city clubs, interactive river safety map and links with Bath's River Safety Group.
- Increased direct engagement with students for councillors through the Student-Councillor Forum set up in Autumn 2024 and held twice a year.
- Increased insight and support for council initiatives which involve students – eg introduction of RPZ in Section 28 and then support for Councillors in dealing with complaints in neighbouring areas.
- increased profile for Bath as sector leading as the SCP achieves national recognition.

Current Challenges

The SCP has a small staff but are achieving national recognition for the work we do. Securing funding is a continual challenge - two of the staff are on temporary one-year contracts as each year we need to apply to B&NES for support for their posts. Losing the current staff will jeopardise the work we do. In a four-year period we have lost two Community Warden postholders. The funding we need to keep the SCP is not committed beyond July 2026 nor in a core budget.