

Statement to Climate and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel – 23 Oct 2025

Today you have items on the Local Plan, Movement Strategy and Climate and Nature Progress report. So sustainability is central.

I spoke at your March meeting on flood awareness and emergency planning.

Though not minuted, in reply to a question I noted B&NES's Flood Risk Management Strategy runs from 2015 to 25 so expires in two months. This is a statutory requirement under the Flood & Water Management Act so I'm surprised to have seen no reference to a new one.

2015 is long ago in thinking on climate change, flood risk and climate adaptation.

Today's Climate & Nature report refers often to climate adaptation – almost only with reference to energy.

When it refers to flooding, the report speaks largely about nature-based solutions but these would have small-scale impact and no immediate relevance to areas at risk from flooding now.

Where is the plan for areas at significant risk of flooding that need adaptation now?

Why does this matter? We have a ten year old policy requiring openness, raising awareness and community emergency planning. Yet at the same time, as an unparished community at risk, we've had to fight for key information on flood risk and planning in our area: we've been excluded from knowing how our own evacuation will be impacted by a mass evacuation from a large new venue on our doorstep, whilst an uncorrected Flood Risk Assessment for it consistently understates flood incidents in the last 25 years– including routes that are not just access to the venue but routes kids walk to school, students walk at night to accommodation and many more. So how can we plan properly?

Flood Risk and Emergency Planning needs to be given much more weight than it is in the report AND the wider policies it's supposed to support.

Turning to sustainable transport, there are many points of concern in the Movement Strategy but I'll stick to one. The Strategy's limited to Bath – or rather in reality to residents who live in Bath. A few examples:

- The Strategy says on business travel plans: “by working closely with businesses, we have the opportunity to reduce car dependency for commuting and business journeys.” This is not new but not working!
 - B&NES recently indicated acceptability of a major venue Travel Plan that fails B&NES transport policies in numerous ways.
 - One of the city's Unis has just consulted on a draft TP that's opposed in key respects to Uni access proposals in B&NES MS consultation and falls way short of what one would expect based on the Transport SPD.
 - How is it possible that we have a new NHS orthopaedic Centre of Excellence with no bus route passing it and buses from areas the centre serves 5 to 15 mins walk away for fit individuals?
- And yet again there is little aspiration in the MS to drive up use of existing Park & Ride sites by the numerous drivers who drive right past these sites into central Bath.

B&NES Net Zero targets on transport are not capable of being met by a relatively small cohort of people with some of the lowest car ownership levels in B&NES. If we want to achieve the targets we need to if, we need policies strong enough to apply to all, not just the easy targets.