

Cabinet

B&NES Council

6.30 p.m. Thursday 12th February 2026

Firstly, I would like to say where would the Council be without the thousands of skilled and dedicated officers across our service areas and teams? Our senior management team including our Executive Directors and Service Team Directors work well in partnership with the Lib Dem administration, to ensure B&NES is well-run and makes no risky investments. I have a firm belief that B&NES overall has fine and sound financial management.

Having firstly been elected last century, I have seen various financial challenges facing local government. But nationally these current challenges are overwhelming for many Councils. The rising costs and demand especially for social care, matched by dwindling grants and central government funding cuts.

Is the Fair Funding formula going to be the nail in the coffin for local authorities up and down the country?

When they say Fair Funding, who is that for? The government's formula is taking over £12.5m over three years away from our Council here in B&NES. Surely, a fair review should leave no council worse off!

Thinking about these issues, and what my residents in Timsbury are facing, I surveyed them before the last local elections. And I had about 400 responses with clear priorities around pedestrian safety, reducing traffic speeds, and cutting through-traffic through our community.

Thanks to the current administration, the Cabinet and a range of Officers across Services and Teams, I have been able to develop plans for various schemes and then secure the funding to address the issues that my parishioners wanted me to prioritise.

Many people in Timsbury before my election complained that nothing ever happened in Timsbury. But this year some of them have complained too much is happening. The preceding two budgets allocated over £300k for various pedestrian safety schemes, various reductions in speed limits on rural roads around the Parish, resurfacing of the pavement on Southlands Drive, and some new street lighting. More recently, in my latest survey, residents told me that the priorities had shifted slightly and they want more money spent on repairing pavements, still tackling speed and traffic, they were concerned about too much housing and overdevelopment in the village (vis a vis the local plan) and they wanted investment from WECA in our bus services to Bristol and Bath.

These survey results helped me guide my conversations with Officers and Cabinet members in recent months, as I've been trying to do my best as a strong advocate and champion for Timsbury.

I'm pleased to be able to read through the cabinet papers tonight and see that the budget this evening allocates over £200k for new capital investment in my ward.

Specifically, I welcome:

- £80,000 for pedestrian safety schemes.
- £50,000 for St. John's Road - resurfacing of pavements.
- £52,000 for Lippiatt Lane pavements.
- One which I've been working on very hard is the detailed design and land agreement works for a new pavement to connect Farmborough and Timsbury (£30,000). Cllr Sam Ross and I are doing our best to make sure we can develop safe active travel routes in NES and to make sure those people who live in Farmborough have access to their GP, the pharmacy and their shops which are in Timsbury.
- We're also getting a few more streetlights, thank you very much (£7,000).
- And we're also reducing some of our mad rural speed limits from 60mph down to 20 or 30mph (c.£10,000).

Obviously other areas of Timsbury need resurfaced pavements and roads! As I am sure other Parishes across North East Somerset and even in the city of Bath need this too.

Therefore, it's reassuring that the Lib Dem administration is also protecting and investing in frontline services, including road maintenance and keeping streets clean and safe, and most importantly for our most vulnerable residents.

Therefore, I'm already working on what investment I can bring to our village for the financial year, 2027/28!

Finally, I believe B&NES is doing a good job compared to many of the other councils in South West England which have some very scary choices to make in this budget round.

I know some local residents won't like the rise in council tax to the cap allowable, but I do believe that B&NES is spending its money wisely and we must remember we still have the third lowest council tax in South West England. Thank you very much for the investment in Timsbury.