

## CABINET MEETING – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### STATEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

1. Ed Browning – The Council's £10k cut to the "public convenience service" vs July's unanimous vote to prioritise better public toilets.
2. Rosa Kell – Public Transport Issues and Budget
3. Cllr Shaun Stephenson-McGall – Council Budget
4. Cllr Robin Moss - Discovery Cards

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - COUNCILLORS

<b>M</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Karen Walker
<p>The months of January and February are notoriously known for very low temperatures, relating to ice and snow. All major roads are gritted, but pavements are not. This Council Administration's manifesto asks residents to walk, cycle and use public transport. Why is there no funding to cover the cost of all pavements, rural and urban, to be gritted?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Lucy Hodge
<p><i>As the local highway authority, we take our responsibility under the Highways Act seriously and work hard to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along our roads is not endangered by snow or ice. Our current winter service already provides a strong level of protection, with gritting across 427 kilometres (38%) of our network—consistent with the approach taken by most highway authorities in England.</i></p> <p><i>We know how important safe pavements are to our communities, and we continue to look for ways to enhance our winter service in the future. At present, however, the additional equipment and resources required to extend gritting to pavements are beyond what is affordable. We will keep this area under review as part of our ongoing commitment to improving safety and accessibility across the network.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Karen Walker
<p>Over the past year, a poster has been placed around the Pond in Royal Victoria Park. It mentions damaged pipes and lining.</p> <p>This council has agreed to explore options and hopes to identify a longer-term water source for the Pond.</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member update us on the progress of a long-term water source for the pond?</p>			

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Sarah Warren		
<p><i>The ponds in Royal Victoria Park have experienced periodic drying and stagnation during dry years for many decades. Several assessments have been carried out over time, but the underlying issues remain complex.</i></p> <p><i>Historically, the ponds were fed by Victorian spring lines. These natural flows changed over many years before being stopped up following localised flooding caused by damage to the infrastructure. As a result, the ponds now rely solely on rainfall and surface run-off, which is insufficient to maintain water levels during increasingly dry summers, as seen in 2025.</i></p> <p><i>B&amp;NES and Wessex Water jointly commissioned a Feasibility Study to identify potential alternative water sources. The draft report, received in January and now reviewed by both partners, concludes that no single source is capable of sustaining year-round water levels. Instead, a combination of multiple local sources, supported by below-ground storage, is likely to be required. The report provides a shortlist of options for further investigation.</i></p> <p><i>Delivering a long-term solution will require additional feasibility work to test water availability and quality, followed by detailed design and construction.</i></p> <p><i>B&amp;NES officers are now working with consultants to scope the next stage of work, which is expected to include phased delivery of a restored water supply, storage infrastructure, cascade repairs and pond relining.</i></p>			
<b>M</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Joanna Wright
<p>Some Councillors have been asking questions to Officers about Council Tax Exemption for people who are terminally ill and have less than a year to live. We understand that;</p> <p><i>“Based on national identification rates and local death statistics, we estimate that between 62 and 94 residents in B&amp;NES could be eligible for the exemption annually.</i></p> <p><i>The lower estimate (62) reflects population scaling from Manchester’s expected caseload.</i></p>			

*The upper estimate (94) is based on the number of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims made under the Special Rules for End of Life (SREL) in B&NES.*

*Using the current Band D council tax rate in Bath of £2,265.80, the projected annual cost of implementing this policy locally could range from £140,480 to £212,985.*

*This is based on operating a similar scheme to that provided by Manchester City Council, which requires the resident to provide an SR1 form from a medical professional. A letter from their doctor is not sufficient.*

*There would also be administrative costs associated with running the scheme, which could be as much as £5,000.*

*Given the potential costs of the scheme, a decision to introduce this as a policy would probably require cabinet or full council approval and is not a change which officers or myself as the Chief Executive can introduce. Careful consideration would need to be given as to how this scheme could be funded, as the council's medium term financial plan includes an assumption of full council tax rises of 4.99% for 2026 and 2027, and there is no current budget available to fund the proposal. "*

Have Council Officers reached out to Marie Curie and the ICB on ways to initiate support on this proposal?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Mark Elliott

*Officers have not reached out to Marie Curie or the ICB at this point. The council continues to explore this suggestion through engagement with Manchester City Council, but it would be premature to approach other stakeholders at this time.*

*It is important that we learn from Manchester's experience in terms of resident engagement, overall cost, and number of applications and whether they would approach this issue in a different way with the benefit of hindsight.*

**M**

**04**

**Question from:**

Cllr Joanna Wright

Free car parking is available to all Councillors through MiPermit and 16 Councillors presently hold paper parking permits and do not use the MiPermit system. It would appear that car parking expenses are not mentioned within the documents on Councillors' Allowances even

though this could potentially form a substantial allowance, especially if the paper parking permits are used.

Who decides which councillors are offered MiPermit or paper parking permits? Have any new paper parking permits been given out since May 2023?

**Answer from:**

Cllrs Mark Elliott and Joel Hirst

*Access to parking to enable councillors to be able to complete their work for the council and the residents is important to ensure there are no financial disincentives to getting a broad range of councillors from as wide a range of back grounds as possible. The permits are only for use when engaged in council work. This is not considered an allowance.*

*All councillors are provided with access to a MiPermit parking account / paper permits to facilitate parking in accordance with the council's Corporate Travel Policy.*

*In July 2025, all 16 paper permits were reissued to their holder to ensure consistent use of updated secure stationery across active permits.*

**M**

**05**

**Question from:**

Cllr Joanna Wright

The MP for Bath has recently written about the issues facing blind people safely crossing roads in Larkhall Square Lambridge. What funds have been set aside to create a feasibility study on this important issue of supporting those most vulnerable in our community safely crossing roads to local shops, including a pharmacy?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Lucy Hodge

*A feasibility study to assess pedestrian crossing movements and road safety in Larkhall Square, Lambridge, is not included in the 2026/27 Local Active Travel Safety (LATS) Programme but two other schemes and new 20 mph speed limits are being delivered in Lambridge ward next year through this programme. This request will, however, be added to our list of potential improvement schemes and be evaluated for inclusion in the next LATS Programme.*

M	06	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>What were the total costs of support provided through the Welfare Support Scheme in 2024 and 2025. How many requests were received and how many were accepted in respective years?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>2024/25 - £206,134.78 support provided. 5606 applications. 5933 awards made including foodbank referrals, and 3460 awards excluding foodbank referrals.</i></p> <p><i>We always offer someone a foodbank voucher if they need help with food, even if they do not qualify for support under our local Welfare Provision scheme; for example, if they have spent all of their money on non-essential expenditure. Our Welfare Support budget is £190K per year, so we have to top this up with household Support Funding in 2024/25.</i></p> <p><i>2025 - £158,951.49 support provided as at 03.02.2026. 4331 applications so far, 4470 awards made including foodbank referrals, and 2507 excluding foodbank.</i></p>			
M	07	Question from:	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
<p>BANES used to have a Play Policy, but we've recently learned that this is no longer an active council document. When was this decision made and which councillors were involved in this? How does this impact young people particularly, but all people?</p>			
Answer from:			Cllr Paul May
<p><i>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council does not currently have an active standalone Play Policy. I am not able to comment on a historic, inactive policy that predates this administration. However, the Council remains committed to providing high-quality, safe, and accessible play</i></p>			

*opportunities across the district. While not governed by a dedicated Play Policy, the Council's operational and capital programmes continue to support the provision of good quality play facilities that meet the needs of local communities.*

*Play is a priority in the Council's capital planning. The Parks Asset Capital Replacement and Improvement Programme, outlined in the Community & Compliance Service Plan 2025–2028, dedicates funds to maintaining and improving parks and play spaces, promoting preventative asset management. This ensures ongoing high-quality play facilities as part of safe, attractive, and accessible public spaces for children and families.*

*The Parks Team manages, inspects, and maintains council play areas, carrying out statutory health and safety checks and overseeing repairs and replacements through our asset management system. This keeps B&NES play areas safe, inclusive, and effective.*

<b>M</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Saskia Heijltjes
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What budgets has the Cabinet Member requested on school streets for 2026/27 and what are the 5-year financial plans to put in place ANPR based school streets in B&NES?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Lucy Hodge
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*The funding for the School Streets programme is outlined in the following Single Member Decision which was agreed in November 2025.*

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s89167/E3630%20-%20School%20Streets%20Programme.pdf>

*The council is progressing proposals for four School Streets within 2026. They will be implemented initially through use of signage and barriers, and we will determine how successfully these operate before considering whether to use ANPR camera enforcement. Under national guidance relating to the enforcement of such traffic restrictions, we need to be sure that other methods of achieving compliance have not been successful before using camera enforcement.*

M	09	Question from:	Cllr Chris Dando
<p>We expect the Cabinet papers to include a report on public engagement on the budget consultation, as usual, but we will not have seen this by the deadline for my question. As this information might not be included in it, I would like to know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was the consultation response rate, and how is this calculated?</li> <li>- What percentage of B&amp;NES' total <u>social media / digital content</u> <i>during</i> the live consultation period was given to publicising the budget consultation, (a) by each platform (eg X, Bluesky, Instagram, Facebook etc), and (b) as a whole?</li> <li>- Looking at <u>all</u> communications publicising the consultation and encouraging public engagement, what percentage was hard copy (eg posters), Facebook, Instagram (and so on)?</li> </ul>			
Answer from:			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><b>Consultation on draft detailed budget proposals</b></p> <p><i>On Friday 12 December 2025 the council opened an <a href="#">online consultation</a> on its draft spending plans for the next financial year, 2026 to 2027. This was made available on the council's website and ran until 5pm on 19 January 2026. A <a href="#">press release</a> and social media messages encouraged residents to complete the consultation and the public were able to submit a hard copy by post.</i></p> <p><i>The consultation offered an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft growth proposals, budget pressures and budget rebasing. This was in relation to the council's operational spend on day-to-day services, known as the revenue budget. It did not include one-off spending on infrastructure such as transport projects, known as capital schemes.</i></p> <p><i>In response to last year's consultation feedback, residents were invited to share their views in a single text box rather than commenting on each proposal individually.</i></p> <p><b>Consultation results</b></p> <p><i>The council received <b>59 submissions</b>. Two responses were sent directly to <a href="mailto:budget@bathnes.gov.uk">budget@bathnes.gov.uk</a> and 57 of the responses were submitted via the online portal.</i></p>			

### Supplementary Questions

(1) How does the Council believe that 59 responses to a budget consultation gives them any mandate to take forward any of the proposals within the budget? This is about 0.03% of eligible adults within B&NES that have expressed a view. Do you believe that this is an adequate response?

#### Response

*It is a legal requirement to hold a consultation on the budget, but we cannot force people to respond to it.*

(2) What communication plan did you use to reach out to the population of Bath and North East Somerset and how can this be improved in future years should you remain the administration?

#### Response

*We did advertise the fact that the budget consultation was being carried out. Two press releases were issued, we sent it to all Town and Parish Councils, there was a wide social media engagement platform. All Councillors were asked if they could help to promote this to people to enable them to provide feedback. We are not the only Council who finds that when something is largely approved of, we receive very few responses. Had there been items within the budget that people were furious at then we would have received far more.*

**M**

**10**

**Question from:**

Cllr Liz Hardman

### **Bus service updates for councillors and B&NES' central role in the WECA transport authority**

As Cabinet reminds us regularly, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) is our transport authority. Luckily, that is not a far-away organisation - B&NES is at its heart. Our council is one of the three local authorities that run WECA and B&NES' Leader, Cllr Guy, is both the current Deputy Mayor and the chair of the Transport Board.

Will Cabinet agree to bring updates on bus service changes to all councillors twice a year, well ahead of the twice-yearly timetabling refresh? This could even be through both the Health and Wellbeing and the Climate Emergency Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

What are the upcoming bus service changes that will affect B&NES residents, and what work is B&NES doing to mitigate service losses, if any, given we have such influence within WECA?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Sarah Warren

*Thank you for your question. Under the West of England Combined Authority Order 2017, WECA is the statutory Local Transport Authority and is responsible for liaising with operators, receiving service registrations, and issuing formal notifications of bus service changes.*

*B&NES contributes to WECA's governance, but we do not hold the operational duties associated with managing or communicating service alterations. For this reason, it would not be appropriate for the Council to issue its own programme of service change briefings. We will, however, continue to ensure that information provided by WECA is shared promptly with Members and support clear routes for scrutiny where appropriate.*

*WECA holds the up-to-date information on upcoming service changes and is best placed to brief Members directly. B&NES will continue to use its role within WECA to advocate for the needs of our communities.*

Supplementary Question

(1) B&NES doesn't currently share updates with members regarding upcoming bus service changes. Could we have updates twice a year at the relevant PDS Panel meetings?

Response

*A response will be sent following the meeting, but this is a function of the Combined Authority.*

(2) Would you agree that B&NES should be doing more work with WECA colleagues to mitigate the possible loss of bus services, particularly to our rural areas, especially as Cllr Guy is the Chair of the Transport Board? It is important this year that when we receive our funding we look closely at our rural areas that have already experienced cuts to services.

Response

*There have been £6m of Government cuts compared to the previous three-year bus grant allocation. It is therefore inevitable that there will be cuts however hard we work alongside our WECA colleagues. A great deal of work is going on, and it is unclear what you mean by more.*

M	11	Question from: Cllr David Biddleston
<p><b>Council Revenue Potential – Homes Currently Occupied by Students</b></p> <p>If council-tax paying residents lived in the homes currently occupied by students, how much revenue would be generated?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>For 2025/26, as at the end of December 2025, the estimated total cost of Council Tax related exemptions for student accommodation within Bath &amp; North East Somerset is £10.019m, comprising £2.968m for Halls of Residence and £7.051m for Properties occupied only by students.</i></p> <p><i>These figures represent the total cost of these exemptions which is shared by the Council, The Police and Fire authorities and Parish Councils.</i></p> <p><i>The Council's share of these estimated costs for 2025/26 represents 80.5% of the total which is therefore £8.516m, comprising £2.523m for Halls of Residence and £5.993m for Properties occupied only by students.</i></p> <p><i>It should however be noted that any reduction in these mandatory exemptions would have an adverse impact in future on the Council's funding settlement. This is because any reduction in exemptions would have the effect of increasing the assumed Tax Base figure used by the Government in its Fair Funding formulae. An increase in the assumed Tax Base would increase the assumed amount of funding that the Council could raise itself through Council Tax which would reduce the amount of funding allocated to the Council from the Government. Due to the complex nature of the Fair Funding formulae, it has not been possible to estimate what the precise impact on the Fair Funding Settlement would be.</i></p> <p><u>Supplementary Question</u></p> <p>Given that student exemptions represent over £8.5m of lost income to the Council, has the Council made representation to Government regarding the impact of the high student numbers on our tax base. If not, might they consider doing so?</p>		

Response

*We did make representations when the Fairer Funding Formula was being put together during the consultation. The formula does take account of the available Council tax base. However, we don't know the detail as to how that has happened, it may be explained this week when the final settlement is published. We will continue to make representations regarding the effect of the student population who do not pay Council Tax to ensure that this is taken into account.*

<b>M</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Shaun Hughes
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Recently a resident requested to speak at this meeting to express his concerns and highlight the effect on his community of a liveable neighbourhood in Winfred's Lane, surprisingly the request was refused citing Rule 3.2.20.

Previous public speakers at Council and Cabinet have raised issues such as transport, environmental concerns, cuts to voluntary services, Bath Rec and resettlement schemes. Under the interpretation now being applied, many of these would likely have been refused, due to also fitting within the exclusion criteria of rule 3.2.20.

Therefore, I am concerned about the lengths this Council appears to be going to in order to prevent members of the public from raising legitimate fears and concerns about decisions that directly affect their communities. Refusing a public statement based on such a narrow interpretation of the Constitution risks undermining confidence in the Council's commitment to openness, transparency and meaningful public engagement.

Do you believe that this is the intended use of Rule 3.2.20?

Should we expect this rule to be applied to all requests to speak in future?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Kevin Guy
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*Thank you for your question. I want to reassure you that members of the public are very much able to ask questions or make statements at Council, Cabinet, and the relevant committees. In this case, the resident was provided with advice about the most appropriate meeting at*

*which their concerns could be raised, which is standard practice across all councils.*

*Decisions about whether a request to speak can be accepted must follow the procedural rules for each specific meeting, and each request is considered on its individual circumstances. Initial assessments are made by officers, and—where the speaker wishes—a further review is undertaken by the Chair of the meeting.*

*Because these decisions depend on the particular facts of each case, it would not be accurate to generalise from one instance or to assume how future requests might be interpreted.*

*I hope this clarification is helpful, and I want to reaffirm the Council's ongoing commitment to openness, transparency, and constructive public engagement.*

#### Supplementary Questions

- (1) Within the response it is stated that the speaker that requested to address this meeting was given alternatives. The alternatives were to speak at a call-in meeting, but it is not within the gift of a resident to request a call-in. Another was a judicial review, which is not affordable for the majority of local residents. Why was this rule applied to the resident to refuse to let them speak at the meeting?

#### Response

*Officers are tasked with having to “gatekeep” when statements are submitted and the Constitution provides for certain exclusions. In this instance the decision had already been taken so if the individual wanted to make effective representations these alternatives were set out. There has subsequently been a call-in and people have been able to register to speak at the PDS Panel meeting which will consider the call-in. If a decision not to allow someone to speak is challenged, then this is referred to the Chair of the meeting (as happened in this case) and the Chair upheld the original decision.*

- (2) Using the narrow interpretation of this rule, if it were applied consistently most public speakers would have an alternative to speaking at the Cabinet or full Council meetings. So practically all public speakers would be told to find an alternative way to address these meetings. How many times has this rule been applied within the current administration?

#### Response

*Anyone is allowed to come along and speak at meetings. In this instance the individual wished to attend to lobby the Cabinet regarding a decision that had already been taken.*

M	13	Question from: Cllr Robin Moss
<p><b>BATH UNESCO STATUS</b></p> <p>In November, replies to my Cabinet question revealed that (1) the council doesn't talk to UNESCO about planning policy, but that this is done by the DCMS and (2) no formal assessment of the benefits of otherwise has been done of the World Heritage status of Bath.</p> <p>We also learnt that "The Great Spa Towns of Europe (GSTE) is a serial inscription comprising 11 historic spa towns across 7 European countries, which includes Bath. If the City of Bath inscription was lost, the GSTE would also be lost and all the other towns included in this inscription would also be lost. Therefore, the responsibility is both profound and shared."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What work is B&amp;NES doing to ensure that DCMS understand the threats to our local communities of UNESCO inscriptions and related tourism, while complying with WHS calls for local management systems which promote community viability housing affordability?</li> <li>• What work has BN&amp;ES done to ensure it follows UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach which explicitly frames heritage cities as places that must integrate housing, social needs, development pressures and climate resilience?</li> <li>• Is B&amp;NES saying that it's keeping hold of UNESCO status for the sakes of the other Great Spa Towns of Europe, even though many believe this is harming local people by increasing the scarcity of affordable housing, and harming the viability of the non-tourism economy?</li> </ul>		
Answer from:		Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>Consistent with all other World Heritage Sites globally communications go through the State Party (DCMS) to UNESCO.</i></p> <p><i>There is currently no specific data for Bath in relation to the value or benefits that World Heritage Site status contributes, however Historic England have stated that the heritage sector generates £26 billion annually to the economy along with other benefits relating to contributing to community and visitor well-being. The UK National Commission for UNESCO undertook research which concluded that World Heritage in the UK contributes £151 million annually to the economy along with other benefits including to community well-being.</i></p> <p><i>The City of Bath 1987 WHS inscription and the GSTE 2021 are separate inscriptions and therefore considered separately, and if one was</i></p>		

*lost this would not automatically result in the other also being lost.*

*The Historic Urban Landscape initiative encourages holistic heritage management. This guidance and method for heritage management has been employed in the city since the first inscription and continues to be the case i.e. the careful holistic management of balancing local needs with those of WHS.*

*There is an awareness that being part of the GSTE serial inscription means that there are wider implications arising from decisions made locally, and this is a necessity of being part of the GSTE and promotes and builds positive, cross-national boundary collaboration.*

#### Supplementary Questions

Is it possible to see the work that has been carried out by the Historic Urban Landscape Initiative?

As there appear to be no statistics directly about the status of the World Heritage Site as a driver for people coming to visit Bath, can we try to collect this data through our visitor surveys, as opposed to just people coming to see Bridgerton sites for example?

#### Response

*Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) is a UNESCO initiative that provides a framework and guidance for the holistic management of development in historic towns/cities esp. World Heritage Site cities. There is no specific related work stream that can be reported on. The link to the guidance can be found here - <https://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-727-1.pdf>*

*Visit West and/or Heritage Services would be best placed to undertake visitor surveys to collect data regarding their reasons for choosing to visit Bath, and if UNESCO WHS status informed this choice.*

**M**

**14**

**Question from:**

Cllr Robin Moss

#### **Graduate Retention in B&NES**

The April 2025 update to B&NES' Strategic Evidence Base reports that "economic growth in B&NES has not kept pace with England and West of England (11% vs 50%/55% respectively from 1998 to 2021)" and that "Growth in B&NES is the lowest of all the local authorities in the West of England as well as amongst our statistical neighbours."

The West of England Combined Authority Growth Strategy, published in September last year, says 51% of students graduating in local

universities stay. The latest publicly available figures for non-local, working (not studying) graduate retention for BNES suggests only 13% stay here to work after graduating.

What are the latest figures, and what actions is the Cabinet taking to improve the appeal of the district for the very many students who move here to live while studying?

Sources:

*B&NES' Economic Strategic Evidence Base, April 2025, page 3,*  
<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SEB%20Economy%20Apr25.pdf>

*WECA Growth Strategy, September 2025, page 21,* <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Growth-Strategy-Web.pdf>

*Briefing on Graduate Retention in Bath & North East Somerset Bath & North East Somerset Council*  
<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s17612/App%204%20Final%20Briefing%20on%20Graduate%20Retention.pdf>

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Paul Roper
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*A response will be provided following the meeting.*

<b>M</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Sam Ross
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The Clean and Green team alternates months, with one month in Bath and one in North East Somerset to undertake much-needed cleaning. North East Somerset is a much larger area with different challenges. How is this important team being fairly resourced across B&NES and how is the team dealing with extra capacity at key dates e.g. autumn, when leaves litter our public highways?

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Mark Elliott	
<p><i>The Clean and Green team is resourced to cover Bath and North East Somerset through a structured monthly rotation programme. The 16 outer Bath wards are covered by three teams, with a dedicated rural villages team to ensure timely responsiveness to local priorities. The primary focus of their work encompasses FixMyStreet reports, deep cleaning tasks, and seasonal operations, including intensive leaf clearing in autumn and scheduled weeding in summer. Additionally, there is an established litter picking programme for main roads, covering all key strategic routes across the district. Mechanical sweepers are active in rural areas throughout the year, performing routine clearance of debris from gutters and leaf removal during the autumn season. The Clean and Green teams provide additional support for routine cleansing services as we strive to maintain consistent cleansing standards across Bath &amp; North East Somerset.</i></p>		
<b>M</b> <b>16</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Cllr Sam Ross
<p>If we want to lead by example and encourage staff and councillors to use the Park &amp; Ride (P&amp;R) rather than driving into the centre of Bath to work or attend meetings, how is B&amp;NES going to ensure that using the P&amp;R is as simple a process as parking using MiPermit or paper parking permits?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Manda Rigby	
<p><i>Payment for the P&amp;R service may currently be made directly to the operator via mobile App, or on the bus directly using cash or card payments (including tap on and tap off), with parking for service users provided free of charge. Council staff and officers can claim expenses incurred for travel in accordance with the corporate travel policy.</i></p> <p><i>Our aim is to ensure that the Park &amp; Ride remains a cost effective, convenient, and reliable travel option, supporting sustainable travel choices and reducing congestion and pollution in the city centre. This includes the provision of a trial extending the operating hours of the service until 11.30pm six days a week supporting all people working and visiting Bath city centre.</i></p>		

<b>M</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Cllr Sam Ross
<p>In the Local Active Travel Safety Programme 2026/27, Farmborough is the only area where a feasibility study is proposed instead of implementing speed-limit changes on local lanes. Can the Cabinet Member explain why Farmborough has been treated differently from all other areas, what specific factors necessitate a feasibility study in this case, and whether this represents a firm commitment to subsequent delivery if the study supports intervention?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Lucy Hodge
<p><i>The area covered by the request for 20mph speed limits in the Farmborough Ward includes a wide range of both C class and U class roads extending across a substantial geographical area. These routes vary significantly in character, ranging from built up village sections to very rural stretches with minimal frontage activity. Because of this diversity, it is considered that it would not be appropriate to move straight into a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process without undertaking detailed feasibility work.</i></p> <p><i>National guidance, specifically Department for Transport Circular 01/2013: Setting Local Speed Limits is clear that speed limits should be evidence led, appropriate for the character of the road, and ideally self-enforcing. The guidance emphasises the importance of considering mean speeds, road environment, and driver expectations before introducing a lower limit. Applying a blanket 20mph limit across such a varied network without robust assessment risks creating areas where the limit may feel inappropriate to drivers, potentially leading to non-compliance or undermining the wider credibility of speed management.</i></p> <p><i>A feasibility study will therefore allow us to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Assess existing speeds across the various road types</i></li> <li><i>• Evaluate the suitability of 20mph on a location-by-location basis</i></li> <li><i>• Identify where the greatest community and safety benefits can be delivered</i></li> <li><i>• Avoid unintentionally creating compliance issues where the environment does not support lower speeds</i></li> <li><i>• Ensure any subsequent TRO is justified, proportionate, and supported by evidence</i></li> </ul>		

*This approach is not intended to delay progress but to ensure that, given the magnitude and variety of the area under consideration, any changes introduced are effective, enforceable, and beneficial in the right places. Whilst it cannot be guaranteed that further funding would be available for delivery, it has been our standard approach over recent years to follow-up feasibility studies with appropriate funding to implement the findings of the study.*

*With regard to the extent of the study area, the feasibility work relates specifically to the routes outlined in the original Farmborough, Clutton and Chelwood submission that was put forward. As part of the feasibility, the precise limits and road sections being assessed will be confirmed so that there is clarity on the scope.*

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - PUBLIC**

<b>P</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Brian Webber
<p>There is a need for more housing, especially smaller dwellings for older persons within walking distance of shops and other services. Would the small area of little-used open space (owned by the Council) near the Bethel in St John's Road, Bath, be suitable for such a development?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The Council has developed an Asset Review framework and is reviewing all assets, including whether land can, if appropriate, be used for housing. This land is yet to be reviewed.</i></p>			

<b>P</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Brian Webber
<p>The Council's highway maintenance team work admirably (in all weather conditions) to carry out pothole repairs at times which will minimise disruption to traffic. But I wonder whether the Council prioritises speed and economy over effectiveness. The material used seems much inferior and the edging not as well sealed than in the past, and consequently the hole reappears too soon. Is this the case?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Lucy Hodge
<p><i>Thank you for the acknowledgement of the good work of our highway maintenance team. Unfortunately, due to many years of underfunding from central government like many highway authorities the deteriorating road condition makes it more susceptible to the impacts of bad weather, particularly during the winter. During periods of peak demand for the filling of potholes, to allow us to address as many potholes as possible, we do adjust our approach to filling these defects. We are using specialist materials suitable for use during wet and cold conditions to achieve longevity of repair and we have equipment that generates zero waste and reheats and seals adjacent materials. The challenge is to prioritise and fill as many defects as we can, with available resources to try and keep the highway networks as safe and serviceable as possible.</i></p>			
<b>P</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Anne Coghlan
<p>How many council houses in B&amp;NES have been bought in the last 5 years, please specify between council properties and social housing?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The Council has bought one former Council house in the last 5 years which is being used as social housing.</i></p>			

<b>P</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Anne Coghlan
<p>What revenue has been made from sold council homes in the last 5 years, please specify between council properties and social housing?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>The Council has not sold any Council Homes in the last 5 years, though does receive income from Right to Buy sales of former Council Housing transferred to Curo. In the last 5 years this has totalled £5,602,052.56</i></p> <p><i>2020/21        1,121,908.64</i></p> <p><i>2021/22        1,583,664.23</i></p> <p><i>2022/23        1,296,488.71</i></p> <p><i>2023/24        491,209.90</i></p> <p><i>2024/25        1,108,781.08</i></p> <p><i>2025/26 to quarter 3 = £782,827.01</i></p>			
<b>P</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Anne Coghlan
<p>Exempt accommodation (or Supported Exempt Accommodation - SEA) refers to specific types of supported housing in the UK, often run by charities or housing associations, that provide care, support, or supervision to vulnerable people (like homeless individuals, domestic abuse survivors, or ex-offenders) and are exempt from normal Housing Benefit caps, allowing higher rents to cover the extra support costs, though it's facing scrutiny for potential misuse and poor conditions.</p> <p>How many "exempt" accommodations" does B&amp;NES provide?</p>			

<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Mark Elliott	
<i>Currently there are 137 schemes across the council area providing supported/exempt accommodation and we have 408 residents living within these schemes and claiming Housing Benefit.</i>		
<b>P 06</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Ross Turmel
The present Residents' Parking Zone (RPZ) Policy for B&NES has a current blanket of operation for 7 days a week, 8am to 6pm. This one size fits all, does not fit with all RPZ requests. How does B&NES consult on the need for differing permit times in local areas?		
<b>Answer from:</b>	Cllr Joel Hirst	
<p><i>Giving residents good travel choices is a key political priority of the Council. In addition, one of the corporate priorities of the council is "To listen to and work with residents to act on their concerns". Through the work on RPZ programme and all the other workstreams we continue to deliver on these principles.</i></p> <p><i>Current resident parking schemes across B&amp;NES operate 7 days a week, from 8am to 6pm, as this ensures consistency for residents and commuters helping to ensure improved compliance and access to kerb space for residents.</i></p> <p><i>Early engagement is undertaken with local communities where schemes are proposed to ensure that the views of local people and local issues are considered as part of the co-design of any proposals which are progressed to formal consultation. In line with the Residents Parking Scheme strategy, a 7-days a week scheme is an appropriate starting point to begin this community engagement.</i></p>		
<b>P 07</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Ross Turmel
The Council's Being our Best programme sought to ensure pay was on a fair footing across B&NES. Presently the social workers are in dispute		

with the Council over pay, as it would seem that social work managers are being paid the same as practitioners. What is the council's response to the fact that the Council is already paying a lower amount to staff than other local authorities?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Mark Elliott

*The aim of the Great Jobs workstream of the Being Our BEST programme, was to ensure roles were described accurately, to check and ensure equity across all roles and to review our pay and grading policies and structures. This included moving over 3000 staff onto new role profiles and uplifting the pay for over 60% of these staff. It is correct that the roles of Senior Practitioner and Deputy Team Manager were matched to different role profiles that through job evaluation put them on the same grade in relation to the level of work undertaken. It recognises that the focus of the Senior Practitioners roles is one where there is a high level of expertise and the focus of the Deputy Team Manager shifts to one of management and leadership. We have very recently undertaken a pay benchmarking exercise for our children's Deputy Team Manager and Team Manager roles as at January 2026. Benchmarking our salaries against other local authorities in the West of England shows that our pay range is competitive and broadly consistent with the market mid-point for comparable roles.*

**P 08**

**Question from:**

Ross Turmel

Please can you let me know why B&NES have not produced the Parking Services Annual Report to date? Please let me know when this annual report will be published?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Joel Hirst

*The council is delayed in its production of a Parking Services Annual report for 2024/25 due to vacancies in key roles. Following the successful appointment to these roles the 2024/25 Annual Report is expected to be published later this financial year.*

*It should be noted that local government finance and in particular B&NES Council through the fair funding review are under significant financial squeeze from central government however B&NES council continues to deliver on commitments with an amazing officer team who are doing the very best in challenging financial climate in local government.*

<b>P</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Dominic Tristram
<p>Due to the increase in housing numbers the Planning Enforcement team are expected to carry out more work. The team does not currently have a dedicated administrative support for the Planning Enforcement Team. Dedicated admin support would improve efficiency, speed up responses, and ensure timely action on planning issues, ultimately benefiting the community. Will the cabinet member request admin support for Enforcement in the budget?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Matt McCabe
<p><i>Workforce planning and capacity is acknowledged an important consideration for the service taking into account growth in the District. Where additional resources are sought it will be targeted to where it is most required service wide and there are various areas of demand. There is an ongoing review on staffing requirements for the planning service including the enforcement team. Consideration must be given to balancing the needs of the service with the benefits and costs to the Council of additional staff.</i></p>			
<b>P</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Dominic Tristram
<p>BaNES does not currently have any funding to install new bins, only funding to replace damaged bins. What's the impact of this on delivering the council's corporate strategy priorities and climate emergency goals?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Mark Elliott
<p><i>To effectively manage our existing resources, we focus on optimising litter bin servicing routes. Historically, we have managed capacity and demand through a "remove one out, add one" approach. However, we remain open to reviewing requests where there is a clear need. Our litter bin network is periodically reviewed to ensure the bins are positioned in the areas of greatest need, this has become increasingly important with the growth of new developments across the district. Going forward, we plan to enhance support for the litter bin network via use of our Clean and Green teams.</i></p>			

<b>P</b> <b>11</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Dominic Tristram
<p>In the year 2024/25 the Council spent £52.59m on Children's Services. In 2025/26 the budget was £40m, with an estimated expected total spend of £46m. Please can you explain the decrease in spending year on year and how this has been achieved?</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllrs Mark Elliott and Paul May
<p><i>The like-for-like budget comparison figure for Children's Services, excluding the £9.9m, in 2024/25 was £36.5m, and the actual expenditure by year end was £42.7m.</i></p> <p><i>For 2025/26 council set a budget of £40.7m for Children's Services (£4.2m higher than the £36.5m from the previous year). As set out in "Revenue &amp; Capital Budget Monitoring, Cash Limits and Virements – April to December 2025" (item 16 on this Cabinet meeting agenda) Children's Services are currently expecting to overspend this year's budget by £7.4m. (For reasons set out in the report.) So, they are expecting to spend £48.1m when comparing like-for-like to the £42.7m figure from 2024/25.</i></p> <p><i>However, it is worth noting that in the reports to this cabinet meeting the Children's Service budget for 2025/26 is reported as £31.2m, with an expected year end expenditure of £38.6m. This is still the same £7.4m overspend, but both figures are significantly lower, primarily because the £11.5m "Home to School Transport" (H2ST) budget has moved from Children's Services into the Sustainable Transport Delivery portfolio. So again, whilst the figures reported look lower, but there has been a real increase in both allocated budget, and actual expenditure. It is just that H2ST is now reported in the Sustainable Transport Delivery portfolio instead of the Children's Services portfolio. (These movements between portfolios – known technically as "virements" – are always reported in the quarterly reports to cabinet for transparency.)</i></p>		
<b>P</b> <b>12</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Benazir Jatoi
<p>How many council properties has B&amp;NES sold since 2019, please specify between council properties and social housing?</p>		

<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Matt McCabe
<i>The Council has sold 26 properties since 2019. No information is held on Social Housing.</i>		
<b>P</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Benazir Jatoi
<p>How is the Council listening to health advice on ventilation to prevent the spread of disease?</p> <p>Background: At some council meetings, the windows are kept wide open, stating that this is for health reasons. Advice for educational settings is as follows:</p> <p>“The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has recommended the use of air filters in schools. The most suitable types to use are: High efficiency filters – high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters are no less than 99.97 per cent efficient at capturing human-generated viral particles associated with SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19), according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; Ventilation in Buildings; update 2 June 2021, ultraviolet-based devices.”</p>		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllrs Mark Elliott and Alison Born
<i>A response will be provided following the meeting.</i>		
<b>P</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Question from:</b> Benazir Jatoi
Who asked for the air purifiers in the Guildhall chamber, and how much did they cost?		
<b>Answer from:</b>		Cllr Mark Elliott
<i>At a Council pre-meeting on 20 November 2025 with the Chair of Council and the Chief Executive (CEO) the matter was discussed</i>		

*and approval given by the CEO to investigate the efficacy of HEPA filters and the potential to reinstate an existing air extraction system.*

*Historically the Guildhall Chamber had an air extraction facility installed in the 1950s. Facilities Management were asked to look at re-instating this. A motor is housed next to the lift that operates that system and a new motor is being manufactured to make that system work again. A drawback of that system is that it draws air from the chamber but in doing so it also cools the room. That is not problematic in the Spring/Summer months but is relevant in the Autumn/Winter period.*

*Facilities Management have therefore sourced and purchased two air purification devices at a cost of £2056 excluding VAT.*

<b>P</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Grace Wiltshire
<p>The motion in November 2025 on Stop Profiteering from Service Provision to Children, see <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=89392">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=89392</a> raises the issue of profit caps.</p> <p>How many private equity-backed SEND providers actually deliver services to children in BANES, and what profits are they making locally?</p>			
<b>Answer from:</b>			Cllr Paul May
<p><i>As you know, this Council passed a motion to lobby the government to end profiteering by private companies in the provision of care and education. Our motion is supported by national information. Information on how many B&amp;NES-commissioned providers are private equity-backed and on their profits is not held by the Council.</i></p>			
<b>P</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Question from:</b>	Grace Wiltshire
<p>Some children with EHCPs have what's called an EOTAS or EOTIS package; Education Other Than At/In School. How many</p>			

children in BANES have an EOTAS/EOTIS package? What's the average funding for an EOTAS package?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Paul May

*We have 98 statutory school-age students, year 11 and below, who receive education outside of the school setting.*

- *14 CYP are education other than at school (EOTAS); school setting deemed not appropriate under Section 61 of the 2014 Children and Families Act.*
- *84 CYP are provided with alternative provision, under Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act.*

*We also provide education packages for children for 50 post-16 young people.*

- *16 CYP in years 12-13*
- *34 CYP years 14 and above*

*Package costs vary significantly; packages for children of statutory school age are more likely to cost up to £50k.*

*However, the total average cost of what we spend on all of these young people is £21.8k.*

**P 17**

**Question from:**

Grace Wiltshire

The Clean Air Zone (CAZ) budget details are not in the 2026/27 budget papers. Not including details of how charges are being spent is challenging to understand. It is understood that once the CAZ has reached its objective, the system has to be dismantled. How does the Council intend to use the ANPR cameras etc going forward?

**Answer from:**

Cllrs Mark Elliott and Joel Hirst

*Addressing the climate emergency and clean air is a key priority for this administration.*

*The budget for each service area (cash limit) is provided in Annex 1 at a net budget level. We do not articulate how the net budget*

is broken down for each service area, or exactly how budgets are spent. The CAZ is no different to any service within the council in terms of the detail included within the budget papers.

We produce a high-level narrative about the financial performance of the CAZ in each year's outturn report. Last year's narrative can be found in para 3.16 in the following link: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s87935/E3579%20-%20Revenue%20and%20Capital%20Outturn%202024-25.pdf>

No decision has been made on the future of the CAZ infrastructure once the CAZ has achieved its objective.

We also publish an annual Clean Air Zone report, giving an update on the scheme and the positive progress we have made. The financial element of the report is contained in appendix 3 to this report (Note that the annual report relates to calendar years and not financial years).

Link to report –

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Clean%20Air%20Zone%20full%20report%202024.pdf>

Link to appendix 3 –

<https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Appendix-3-Financial-Summary-2024.pdf>

**P 18**

**Question from:**

Michael Coffey

Bristol City Council is currently consulting on changing their council tax reduction scheme so that if a change in income results in a change of less than £13 a month, they won't make adjustments to the CTR calculation:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/ask/find-consultation-engagement/consultation-engagement?id=257>

What action is B&NES taking on their Council Tax Support scheme?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Mark Elliott

*The Council Tax Reduction Scheme was last reviewed through Corporate PDS and approved by full council in the Autumn of 2023.*

*We will consider referring the matter to PDS to take a view again.*

**P 19**

**Question from:**

Michael Coffey

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) in B&NES are presently being advertised as full time roles. What possibility is there to make this role part time, and with the use of an electric bike instead of mopeds?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Joel Hirst

*Giving residents good travel choices is a key priority for the administration. This includes having an appropriate level of CEOs to support the parking arrangements for the Council.*

*We are committed to modern, flexible deployment of our Civil Enforcement workforce. While adverts primarily are for full time posts to secure core coverage, we will offer many flexible working options including part time roles as a council.*

*The use of e-bikes for enforcement is under review by the operational team and may be considered in the future, subject to relevant checks. The use of e-bikes would supplement but not replace our fully electric ANPR equipped mopeds and cars, which support the deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers across Bath & North East Somerset and are also used to help ensure compliance with parking restrictions where appropriate.*

**P 20**

**Question from:**

Michael Coffey

What has happened to the Housing Accord signed in July 2025 - which gave clear commitments to social housing agreed. Where are these houses in Bath Quays North?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Matt McCabe

*The Housing Accord provided cross party recognition (with the exception of one party) of the housing affordability crisis in B&NES.*

*Through the work of the Housing Delivery Board, we are working with all the anchor institutions in B&NES on a strategy to jointly lead interventions that address the lack of supply. This will rely upon significant government support which will start to flow in 2026 as the National Housing Strategy and 5-year Homes England funding programme for affordable homes is released and starts to flow. Bath Quays North will hopefully be one of the first schemes in B&NES to receive such funding to start to tackle the lack of affordable homes and we are currently working on submitting our business case for this.*

**P 21**

**Question from:**

Alan and Cindy Carter

**Co-production timescales and outputs**

In relation to the agenda item on the recommissioning of care and support services for adults with learning disabilities, autism and neurodiversity, it is welcome to see the Council's commitment to co-production. Please can Council confirm the timescales, key milestones and expected outputs of co-production, and how these will directly inform the final recommissioning framework and commissioning decisions?

**Answer from:**

Cllr Alison Born

*We are committed to embedding engagement and co-production in our commissioning approach. Services will be collaboratively developed with people who draw on care and support, their families, carers, and providers through workshops, focus groups, and ongoing feedback. This ensures a person-centred design shaped by those who use the services.*

*We are planning engagement and co-production with people who use care and support and their families. Opportunities will be publicised in late February/early March, with engagement beginning in late March. This will help identify priority areas for co-design, such as embedding personalisation, choice and control, and co-production in service delivery (e.g., through Individual Service Funds, also called My Support Money). We also recognise that individuals and their families might want to focus engagement on other areas important to them.*

*Individuals and families who have already expressed interest will be invited once plans are finalised.*

P 22	Question from:	Alan and Cindy Carter
<p><b>People with profound and complex needs</b>  How will the recommissioning framework specifically address the commissioning of care and support for adults with profound learning disabilities, non-verbal autism, behaviours of distress and complex health care needs, ensuring that specialist and bespoke provision is explicitly planned for, rather than incorporated within generic service models?</p>		
Answer from:		Cllr Alison Born
<p><i>People with learning disabilities and/or autism may need support with daily living and personal care, communication, maintaining their health and safety, building life skills and independence, developing social relationships and emotional well-being, and making informed decisions through advocacy and person-centred planning.</i></p> <p><i>Current services offer a comprehensive range of support tailored to individuals' needs and goals and include specialist support to meet complex needs. Support is provided across a variety of settings including community-based day opportunities, supported living (accommodation-based and outreach), supported housing and care homes that provide 24/7 personal care, support, and respite.</i></p> <p><i>We are looking to build on this diversity of person-centred support and care in the new commissioned framework, recognising and reflecting current and projected needs of B&amp;NES population.</i></p> <p><i>We are also developing local specialist housing for people with complex Learning Disability and autism in a site off Englishcombe Lane. This will increase local provision and will reduce the need for out of area placements.</i></p>		
P 23	Question from:	Alan and Cindy Carter
<p><b>Specialist providers and continuity of care</b>  What consideration is being given to the role of existing specialist providers currently supporting adults with the most complex needs, and how will the recommissioning framework ensure continuity, stability and safeguarding, particularly where changes in provider could present significant risk or distress?</p>		

**Answer from:**

Cllr Alison Born

*We value the work of our local providers and planned market engagement will involve both existing specialist providers and any other organisations interested in this commissioning opportunity, in line with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Light Touch Regime. In developing the commissioning framework, we will consider continuity and stability of care arrangements. This will be explored further with people who draw on care and support, their families, and providers during the engagement sessions.*