



Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.57 pm

Councillors:

Peter Crew (Vice-Chairperson)

Marc Aplin
Nigel Ashton
Mike Bell
Mike Bird
Christopher Blades
Steve Bridger
Peter Bryant
Peter Burden
Mark Canniford
Ashley Cartman
Annabelle Chard
Andy Cole
Jemma Coles
John Crockford-Hawley
Ciaran Cronnelly
Stuart Davies
Oliver Ellis
Catherine Gibbons
Jenna Ho Marris
Nicola Holland
Clare Hunt
Patrick Keating
Sue Mason
Hugh Malyan
Stuart McQuillan
Ian Parker
Robert Payne
Bridget Petty
Lisa Pilgrim
Terry Porter
Michael Pryke
David Shopland
Luke Smith

Timothy Snaden
Mike Solomon
Dan Thomas
Helen Thornton
Joe Tristram
Richard Tucker
Annemieke Waite
Roger Whitfield
Hannah Young

Apologies: Councillors: Wendy Griggs (Chairperson) Caritas Charles, James Clayton, Tom Nicholson, Marcia Pepperall and Martin Williams.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services) and Carolyn Fair.

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Officers: Lucy Shomali (Director of Place) and Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager).

COU Vice-Chairperson's Welcome

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The Vice-Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being livestreamed. He noted there was an option for members to join via Teams and whilst they could participate in the debate, they would not be able to vote nor counted for attendance purposes.

COU Public Participation: Robert Thackeray, local resident - overgrown shared footpaths

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Robert Thackeray addressed the Council on shared cycle and footpaths which had become unusable due to overgrown vegetation. He noted particularly the shared pathway approaching the Junction 21 roundabout which meant that cyclists were obliged to use the road instead of the cycle path. Overgrowth on shared pathways was forcing cyclists, those with pushchairs and pedestrians to share narrow spaces and asked that he be contacted about the council's plans to maintain the pathways.

The Vice-Chairperson thanked Mr Thackeray for his address and referred it for action to the relevant Executive Members.

COU Public Participation: Rebecca Robinson, local resident, school crossing in Banwell

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Rebecca Robinson addressed members on danger to children posed by the road located by Banwell Primary School due to the volume of traffic, size of vehicles and frustrated drivers and the poor visibility of the crossing outside of the school for both drivers and pedestrians. She presented a petition of 196 signatures to the council asking for a flashing school sign warning of the presence of a school.

The Vice-Chairperson thanked Ms Robinson for her address, received the petition and added that it would go forward to officers and the Executive Member.

COU 80 Public Participation: Alan Rice, local resident - standard of private rented accommodation

Alan Rice addressed the Council on the matter of tenants' complaints about poor standard of rented accommodation which could result in the eviction of the tenant in some cases. He asked the council to look into the process of issuing "Informal Complaint Agreements" rather than "Emergency Works Notices" to landlords and tenants and the outcomes as a result of this. He also asked that the council set up a pathway for tenants living in poor accommodation that brought together Building Standards, Homeless Prevention and Home Choice.

COU 81 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

Councillor Ellis declared an interest in the Avon Fire Authority report as an employee of the authority and would absent himself at this point of the meeting.

Council Chard declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Taxi Licensing Policy and would absent herself from the meeting at this point.

COU 82 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 19 September be approved as a correct record.

COU 83 Banwell Bypass Gateway Decision Stage 2

Councillor Bell presented the report to members noting that the July report to Council had agreed the additional funding required as part of the council's Capital Programme. He informed members that the agreement with Homes England required a two-stage delivery programme with an informal break clause and the council was now at that point. Stage 1 had been largely completed and the report sought approval to go to Stage 2. He noted that final confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Orders were awaited, and he anticipated this would be completed shortly.

Councillor Bell highlighted details of the report to members and explained that the contract was a "target cost" contract where the contractor would be paid for the actual cost of the works and a percentage fee. It also had a "pain/gain" mechanism which incentivised the contractor to deliver to the actual cost of the works and within the target budget. This would encourage all parties to work collaboratively and share risks and rewards. He added that the report was a significant milestone in the project as if agreed, it could then proceed to the construction phase. He proposed an amendment to the second recommendation which was to include "subject to the Deed of Variation being finalised and signed".

In debating the report, members expressed their thanks to the project team in reaching this phase of the project as a number of authorities had exited their Housing Infrastructure Fund agreements with Homes England due to funding issues. They noted the cross party and cross administration support for the

project during a number of years and highlighted the work of ward members who had balanced the competing needs and views of residents, Additionally, the influence of the public on the scheme design was highlighted.

Motion: moved by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Canniford and

Resolved:

1. To award the stage 2 New Engineering Contract (NEC) Option C Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) for the detailed design and construction of Banwell bypass and all associated infrastructure to Alun Griffiths Contractor Ltd (AGCL) Company number 01493003

2. To approve the project team to progress with stage 2 of the contract between NSC (North Somerset Council) and Homes England subject to the Deed of Variation being finalised and signed.

COU 84 Youth Justice Committee Report

Councillor Gibbons invited the officer and author of the report, Mike Rees, to present it to members. She noted it was his last report to Council as he was retiring and thanked him for his work on the plan before members and his work in driving this area forwards over many years.

Mr Rees introduced the report and the Youth Justice Plan and explained that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a duty on local authorities with social services and education responsibilities to ensure the availability of appropriate youth justice services in its area and required other bodies to cooperate in ensuring service provision. The Act also required the preparation of an annual Youth Justice Plan. Mr Rees explained that the Youth Offending and Prevention Service was established in April 2000 and had developed to provide a range of services to prevent offending and reoffending and address the needs of victims.

He went on to highlight areas of the report and details of the Plan to members and noted the challenges in sustaining the range of services given available funding but that North Somerset Council could take encouragement from the strong position of the Youth Offending Service in the range and quality of services offered as a part of children's services whilst recognising the challenge to sustain this.

In discussing the report, members noted Mr Rees' passion and knowledge of the topic of youth justice and that he was regarded as pre-eminent in his role. They added that the community and council would miss his expertise and warmly applauded his contribution.

Motion: moved by Councillor Gibbons and seconded by Councillor Petty and

Resolved: that the Council approved and adopted the Youth Justice Partnership Plan 01/04/23 – 31/03/24 and agreed to submit the Plan to the Youth Justice Board.

COU Corporate Parenting Report

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Councillor Gibbons gave a verbal update to members on the role of Corporate Parenting and how all members were a corporate parent. She noted that the next Corporate Parenting Panel would take place on 23 November to which all members were invited and updated members on information on the current numbers of children in care, aspects of their care and key challenges they were facing including finding sufficient placements for children coming into care and the recruitment of foster carers and social workers. She updated members on the recent Care Leavers' week including the positive impact of obtaining free bus travel for care leavers across the region.

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)

86

In introducing his motion, Councillor Shopland asked that alternate wording he had agreed with Cllr Burden be moved as the motion in the hope of not requiring an amendment debate:

Motion: Moved by Councillor Shopland and seconded by Councillor Burden

"In the light of rising sea levels and recent storms, that this council write to the Environment Agency expressing our concern with the Agency's lack of routine maintenance on structures and waterways. And that we ask the council representative on the Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committee to report to the next Council on the important works in the district that the Agency will no longer fund."

Seven members indicated their support for a debate on the Motion.

In discussing the motion, members expressed their concern over rising sea levels and the impact on the North Somerset area. It was also suggested that the appropriate Policy and Scrutiny Panel responsible for Climate Change, or possibly a working group thereof, be tasked with preparing a report around flooding risks for North Somerset Council, and that consideration be given to writing to appropriate bodies regarding funding for flood risks.

Following discussion, it was

Resolved: that in the light of rising sea levels and recent storms, this council write to the Environment Agency expressing our concern with the Agency's lack of routine maintenance on structures and waterways. And that we ask the council's representative on the Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committee to report to the next Council on the important works in the district that the Agency will no longer fund.

COU Question Time (Standing Order No.18)

87

Oral questions were directed to members concerned and the summary notes and topics involved are contained in Appendix 1.

COU Vice-Chairperson's announcements

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On behalf of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson noted that she had hosted the Weston Carnival reception at the Winter Gardens the previous week and over the weekend had attended the Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. He added that the Chairperson had requested that members also be reminded of events happening around the world currently.

The Vice-Chairperson noted the death of Lord Cotter, former Member of Parliament for Weston-s-Mare.

COU Leader's announcements

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The Leader noted that the Governance Review undertaken four years previously was to be reinvigorated. Councillors Cartman and McQuillan had been asked to look at the governance and decision-making structure of the council and decentralise decision-making opportunities to members and communities across the authority area. He encouraged members to feed into the review with their thoughts.

COU Chief Executive's announcements

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The Chief Executive expressed her thanks to Carolyn Fair, Interim Director of Children's Services who would be leaving the council with the appointment of Claire Shiels as the new Director of Children's Services and who would be joining in January.

COU Forward Plan dated 2 November 2023

91

Resolved: that the Forward Plan dated 2 November 2023 be noted.

COU Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report

92

None.

COU Reports and matters referred from the Executive - dated 18 October 2023

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None.

COU Reports and matters referred from the Policy/Overview and Scrutiny Panels other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

94

None.

COU Reports and matters referred from the other Committees other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

95

Licensing Committee 31 October 2023

LIC6 Mid-year report for the Administration and Enforcement of all Licensing Regimes

Councillor Chard left the Chamber before members considered the report.

Councillor Davies introduced the item informing members that the licensing regime was supported by statutory and local policies and the latter were reviewed in line with statutory requirements. Both the Taxi Licensing and Sex Establishment Policies were due for revision. He added that the Licensing Committee had considered the draft revisions in March which was followed by a public consultation process. The Licensing Committee considered the submissions at its meeting in October and having taken note of responses, the final draft of the policy had been agreed and the recommendation from the Licensing Committee was that both revised policies should be adopted by the Council.

Motion: moved by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Solomon and

Resolved: that the draft Statements of Principles as amended and agreed by the Licensing Committee be adopted.

COU 96 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto

(1) Avon Fire Authority

Councillor Ellis left the Chamber before members considered the report.

Councillor Malyan asked Councillor Tucker about the implications of the apparent cuts to front line posts within the fire service and the potential increased risk to North Somerset residents. He asked whether the decision would be considered by the AFA Board with a view to reversing it if the budget settlement proved to be better than anticipated.

Councillor Tucker replied that much would depend on whether the Minister allowed the Fire Authority to raise the maximum precept and that the retirement projection would also feed into the equation. He added that the decision would come back to the Authority when the final budget was set early in the new year.

(2) Police and Crime Panel

The Vice-Chairperson explained that no report was available as former Councillor Hogg was due to provide one after the September meeting but had resigned as a councillor before providing one.

(3) West of England Combined Authority

Councillor Ashton explained that no report was available as North Somerset members had been advised incorrectly, they could not attend the first meeting of the new municipal year; the second meeting had been inquorate and the third due to take place later in the month had been cancelled due to an audit day.

COU 97 Appointments to Outside Bodies 2023/24 (Council)

Councillor Bell advised members that after consultation with Group Leaders that Councillor Davies was proposed as the replacement appointee for the Council on the Police and Crime Panel and that the appointment to the Bristol Airport

Consultative Committee would take place after the result of the by-election for Wroughton ward was known with delegation of the appointment to Group Leaders. He further advised that Councillors Thornton and Burden were proposed as appointments to the Local Access Forum after consultation with Group Leaders.

Resolved: that the appointments and delegation to Group Leaders as proposed be agreed.

COU 98 Draft Municipal Calendar 2024/25

Resolved: that the Draft Municipal Calendar for 2024/25 be noted.

COU 99 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)

None.

Chairperson

**North Somerset Council
Council Meeting 14 November 2023
Question Time (Agenda Item 10)**

Question 1

From Councillor Petty

To: Executive Member for climate, waste, and sustainability – Councillor Annemieke Waite

Motion on flooding and communication with the Environment Agency

Councillor Petty asked whether the Executive Member had any comment to make on the motion on flooding and communication with the Environment Agency,

Councillor Waite thanked Councillor Petty for her question and Councillor Shopland for his motion. She agreed that the issue was a genuine concern for North Somerset Council which required sea defences to protect neighbourhoods. She added that rising sea levels as a result of climate change were predicted to be an issue for North Somerset from 2040 onwards and to mitigate the risks, the council worked closely with the Environment Agency in a number of ways including the recently published Local Flood Risk Management the objectives and actions of which were adapted directly from the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Erosion Flood Risk Management Strategy for England. She noted that the planning for the risk was to be found in part g of the strategy. North Somerset Council was also a member of the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee led by the Environment Agency. This committee had an important role in protecting communities from flooding and coastal erosion by helping the Environment Agency and other partners understand local issues and balancing local and national priorities. North Somerset Council would host the next committee meeting in January where local efforts and sea defence projects would be showcased. The Environment Agency managed some defences in North Somerset with the council managing others. The council had a proactive programme of management of its sea defences and works were planned in Weston-s-Mare and Clevedon to sea wall to deal with tides and storms. She added that there was a pilot project to protect the sand dunes in Uphill which councillors were invited to view. Many future decisions were taken with the Environment Agency on the management of flood risk but there was more to do.

Question 2

From Councillor Keating

To Executive Member for Highways and Transport – Councillor Hannah Young

Roadworks on A370 and A38

Councillor Keating noted the roadworks on the A370, A38 and Brockley Coombe were creating significant difficulties for residents in getting into work. He asked the Executive Member how works had been planned at the same time on two significant routes from the south of the district to Bristol. He asked how this could be avoided in

the future to prevent the south being blocked from the north of the district.

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Keating for his question and responded that she appreciated the works had caused difficulty for residents in the area. She added that the works were separate with the work on the A370 relating to the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with routine maintenance works to the north of Brockley Coombe. National Grid were carrying out works on the A38 and Downside. The National Grid works were intended to take place earlier in the year, but the works had been delayed as much as possible to avoid the summer period. She noted that the council had been working closely with National Grid on the issues and with ward members and added that these works were extremely urgent to replace aging power cables which had been leading to power cuts for residents. The BSIP improvement works allowed National Grid to carry out works on Downside which otherwise would have resulted in two separate road closures. A number of changes had been made since the start of the works to increase traffic flow and the network manager had been speaking with National Grid on a daily basis. They had succeeded in obtaining additional resources to manage the traffic lights and bringing forward the end date for the works. She hoped that with additional measures and resource that the end date for the works at Brockley Coombe could be similarly brought forward. She added that improved communications to residents would be considered in the future but noted that there was a huge amount of work planned on the area's road network which would result in more disruption as investment was made. This would not just be as a result of works planned by the council but would involve other agencies too. She encouraged residents to consider how to manage their journeys going forward and that the council could provide resources to assist in this.

Question 3

From Councillor Bridger

To Executive Member for Highways and Transport – Councillor Hannah Young

Impact of heavy rain on highways network.

Councillor Bridger asked in light of the impact of heavy rain on the area's highway network, how much had been received by the council in the current financial year from the Department for Transport (DfT) for road maintenance; how did this compare with previous years and does this reflect what the council needed to meet the scale of the challenge.

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Bridger for his question and added that she would follow up her answer with a written response. She added that the DfT Spending Review had allocated a fixed annual budget between 2022-25 to invest in highways maintenance. Details of the allocated funds could be found in Executive Member decision DP498. In 2020-21 funds totalled £7.48m; 2021-22 £5.99m; current year £6.89m of which £0.89m was from the government's pot hole fund. The council had received a share of the £200m national budget announced which was a reduction on previously allocated amounts. In 2020-21, the council allocated capital of £1.25m to cover the funding deficit and increased this to £2.5m for 2022-23 and 2023-24 but the council could not yet confirm whether this was sustainable at any level for future years. Regrettably, decisions had had to be taken on which roads to

maintain with many local roads in a state of managed decline. Over previous years the council had been successful in applying for additional national funds for a range of projects which allowed the council to undertake resurfacing works and address drainage issues at the same time.

Question 4

From Councillor McQuillan

To Executive Member for Highways and Transport – Councillor Hannah Young

Kingcott Mill Farm Park Home – review of bus stop location and road speed.

Councillor McQuillan asked the following question of Councillor Young “I would like to highlight the situation faced by residents of the Kingcott Mill Farm park home site on the Clevedon road on the outskirts of Long Ashton. The residents of this site feel unable to access bus services safely due to the speed of the traffic on the Clevedon road and the lack of a safe crossing point. They also feel speeds are too high for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians navigating the very narrow pavements. This leaves them feeling isolated and reliant upon the car.

We met earlier in the year and agreed that North Somerset council should engage with relevant landowners and, in parallel seek further advice from highways officers as to options – such as moving the current bus stops using BSIP funding or reviewing speed limits. On behalf of residents of Kingcott, can I please ask for an update on progress?”

Councillor Young thanked Councillor McQuillan for his question and responded that she had engaged with officers in the hope of moving the bus stop. The BSIP programme relied on not needing to purchase land or enter into negotiations to do so, so it was not possible for this to be made part of the BSIP. She had asked officers if the issue could be addressed outside of the programme but there was currently no budget to purchase the required land or associated legal work needed to move the bus stop to private land. The issue of speed reduction needed to form part of the Highways Scheme requests and work was ongoing to prioritise these. Councillor Young would provide a separate written update to Councillor McQuillan.

Question 5

From Councillor Smith

To The Leader – Councillor Mike Bell

Review of Clevedon BID

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Bell ““I'd like to build on Cllr Shopland's question in the last session, I promise it is not about flooding and, after speaking to business owners. Firstly, has the leader got any updates relating to ongoing review of the Clevedon BID particularly around the timeline?

Secondly, can he justify why the council used its dominant vote, from a building which it is vacating, against a significant number of businesses to prop up a failing system?”

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Smith for his question and responded that the public review was scheduled for 20 November to update residents on the

independent review of the scheme. The review of the report and next steps would be considered at the meeting and further discussions were being held in the council as to how to approach the findings.

In terms of the BID matter, Councillor Bell referred Councillor Smith to his response given at the last Council meeting and that the council had acted on the advice of officers in line with the established protocol regarding casting its vote as a ratepayer through BID processes as was done with the Weston-s-Mare BID. The same process as always had been followed and concerns regarding the BID process had been referred to the Secretary of State. He believed the council had acted appropriately and responded to concerns, but the matter was now out of the council's hands.

Question 6

**From Councillor Joe Tristram
To Executive Member for Highways and Transport, Councillor Hannah Young
and Executive Member for spatial planning, placemaking and economy,
Councillor Mark Canniford**

Crossing at Banwell School

Councillor Tristram asked Councillor Young the following question "At the beginning of this meeting Council heard from Banwell school parent Rebecca Robinson about the dangerous state of the Zebra crossing outside the primary school. This situation has gone on since the last crossing supervisor retired in 2018. My predecessor Karin Haverson worked with Banwell Parish Council to get a solution but didn't manage. She and the parish clerk spoke to several officers and ended up going in circles. Sadly, the Banwell School parents have lost faith that our council thinks their children's safety is important. I know this isn't true, but I can see why they believe it. I'd like to hear from the executive members for transport and place what they can offer to regain the residents' trust".

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Tristram for his question and replied that she did not underestimate the impact this issue was having on parents in Banwell and across the wider district. For Health and Safety reasons there were no longer school crossing patrols due to national guidance and workplace liabilities. She had been exploring options with the highways team who have suggested a solution which could be implemented in the financial year incorporating road painted signage, but this was not followed through as the parish council did not feel this would address concerns. The parish council has identified that a flashing sign was required which was proposed to be sited on church owned private land. She added that the planning aspects of the proposal needed to be resolved and that the private land would require planning permission. She would investigate further whether there was any way to avoid the need for planning for the school crossing element and would work with the ward members to find a solution. In terms of council processes, Councillor Young noted that there were currently 400 active requests across the district and several hundred ideas sent in as part of the Active Travel consultation. The transport and highways teams had been working improving processes and making them more transparent. Ward members had access to a dashboard also available to town and parish councils which showed those proposals which had been allocated budget and, in the schedule, (45). The maintenance programme would be added in time to the

dashboard. The remaining schemes not currently allocated in the schedule were going through a prioritisation process which had been shared with the relevant Scrutiny Committee and those selected would be allocated budget in the new financial year.

Question 7

**From Councillor Pryke
To The Leader Councillor Mike Bell**

Repairs to The Avenue in Clevedon

Councillor Pryke asked the following question of Councillor Bell “For the last 6 months I have tried to get either an Officer, Director, or the appropriate Executive member to work with myself and residents to get some urgent repairs to The Avenue in Clevedon. At the very least a member of the Highways team to visit The Avenue in Clevedon. The Avenue has a number of major potholes and really needs some TLC.

Will the Leader take up my issue with the Highways team and inform me when a member of that team will visit this road and the outcome of this visit”.

Council Bell agreed to do so.

Question 8

**From Councillor Ellis
To The Leader Councillor Mike Bell**

Backwell Lights A370 bus lane

Councillor Ellis asked the following question of Councillor Bell “A bus lane replacing the left-hand lane will cause huge tail backs which will hinder buses getting to the bus lane, have cars idling that would normally use the left lane to go straight on but instead be stuck behind cars waiting to turn right creating greater pollution, adding greatly to journey times, and annoying most people.

Cllr Bell has stated we need to look at the lights to increase capacity. Every assessment on the lights has said that it is at over capacity. Losing a lane will drastically increase traffic issues.

The situation at present is that councillors universally rejected it, but it is going to consultation. A councillor asked if the plans were going to be changed via email, there was no answer.

He promised this council will consult. The consultation I have been told is open to everyone, but only people in Backwell are being informed and invited to the drop-in session. This will drastically affect people in Nailsea, but no plan is in place to inform them and let them have their say. Q1. Who is setting the policy, the council, officers, or councillors? Q2. Will he guarantee that Nailsea will be given the same drop-in session as Backwell, in Nailsea and the people of Nailsea being informed? Not just an area with a small population.”

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Ellis for his question and added that he was aware of the correspondence from local ward members and that officers had been working with the Executive Member for Highways and Transport to address concerns. He added that the team were working as far as capacity allowed to deliver engagement sessions. He was aware of a recent engagement session where only one local member attended so he would encourage all ward members with an interest in the scheme to come to the organised sessions. He added that it was the Council which set policy and it had set a policies to support both the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Active Travel. Councillor Bell committed to engaging with residents in Nailsea when there were Bus Service Improvement Plan schemes proposed for Nailsea. For the scheme proposed in Backwell, he felt it was entirely appropriate that there was a public facing event in Backwell. This did not exclude those from other areas with an interest in the scheme who could also attend. The same response to the question had already been provided via email and the event had been widely publicised in the area via the council's social media and website which confirmed that the event was open to everyone with an interest in the scheme not just those living in Backwell

Question 9

From Councillor Aplin

To Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Councillor Hannah Young

Queensway Speed Action Group

Councillor Aplin asked whether Councillor Young would be willing to meet with the Queensway Speed Action Group and himself to discuss the issues of speeding and accidents on the Queensway.

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Aplin for his question and whilst she was not aware of the request or issue would be very happy to meet with Councillor Aplin and the group.

Question 10

From Councillor Petty

To Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Councillor Hannah Young

Engagement with Backwell community and surrounds regarding bus improvements

Councillor Petty asked Councillor Young whether the engagement process was genuinely seeking opinions from the community of Backwell and the round; that the final design and project had not been committed given that residents have seen that a contract has been granted; that local ward members continue to be consulted, will have the opportunity to review the comments from the community and that a full safety audit will take place to review the potential impact on other junctions in the village before any work takes place.

Councillor Young thanked Councillor Petty for her question and confirmed that the final design and project had not been committed to even though the Design and Build contract had been awarded. She went on to explain the two aspects of the contract and noted that the design phase did not commit the council to the build phase. She added that the consultation and engagement were genuine. She noted that the proposed scheme was very contentious which is why the council wished to hear from residents on the potential impact before committing to a scheme. A previous question had suggested that a lane would be removed for cars increasing congestion at the Backwell junction. She agreed that the proposal currently would close Dark Lane to traffic but that the proposal and modelling would decrease congestion as it would change the traffic light phasing and improve traffic flow along the A370. However, the design had not been committed to and local engagement with residents was sought to decide whether it made sense to proceed with the change. A safety audit would take place at the design stage with a full safety audit to follow if the scheme was delivered

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