

B&NES Council declared an ecological emergency at the full Council meeting on 23rd July. This follows the earlier declaration of a climate emergency.

B&NES Council unanimously agreed at a full Council meeting held on 10th September its response to the Government's Planning Reforms consultation. One of the Government's proposals for reform would lead to a massive increase in the requirement for additional housing in the B&NES area. Current methodology entails an annual housing need of around 650 homes or 13,000 over 20 years. The revised methodology would nearly double the assessment of housing need in B&NES to around 24,000. No account would be taken over local context or delivery. If the new methodology is introduced, B&NES will no longer have a 5 year housing land supply. This is likely to lead to pressure from predatory planning applications, increased appeals and loss of local control.

*THE SITUATION under **current** methodology: B&NES Council has identified a supply of deliverable housing land for 4,528 homes between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2024. This compares to a five year housing land supply requirement (including 5% buffer) of 3,390 (Core Strategy requirement, calculated using the 'Sedgefield Method'). This amounts to a housing land supply of 6.68 years.*

Local Plan partial update – the “Call for sites” review period closes on 20th October. Suggested sites for housing and economic purposes can be submitted via a form on the B&NES web-site. This will inform the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) evidence base and also sites for renewable energy.

B&NES Council passed a motion proposed by Cllr Alastair Singleton supporting a private member's Local Electricity Bill being considered in Parliament. This bill is intended to remove barriers to local suppliers who wish to serve local energy needs with electricity from renewable sources.

B&NES has stopped using glyphosate as a means of controlling kerb-side weeds. Alternative methods are not very effective and can be expensive as well. Are Parish councillors content that we live with the kerb-side weeds which can always be removed by residents if they wish?

All planning applications for fossil fuel exploration or extraction; or for commercial infrastructure for energy generation using fossil fuels will be determined automatically by the B&NES Development Control i.e Planning Committee rather than by a single officer.

“Future mobility zones” - WECA has applied to the Department for Transport to take part in a 12 month e-scooter trial. Currently, all e-scooters are illegal to use. The trial begins on 18th September. Only e-scooters leased through WECA will be legal. It will remain against the law for anyone to simply buy an e-scooter and use it on the highway. Only those with a provisional or full driving licence will be able to rent an e-scooter from the WECA approved provider. The e-scooters will have a top speed of 15.5mph and weigh 55kg. Their speed in certain areas can be restricted even to zero (geo-fencing). Further information is being sought from WECA.

A4 Transport Corridor - WECA is proposing significant “improvements” to key transport corridors over the next 10 years (See The Week In edition 640 page 6). The A4 corridor is

the third priority out of eight. The focus will be on pedestrians, cyclists, and bus users. "Bus infrastructure improvements will help buses move more quickly through the traffic improving journey times and reliability".

First Group now has a "book my seat" service for the Brislington Park and Ride buses. Visit www.bookmybusride.com

There is significant remedial engineering work by John Graham Construction Limited for Network Rail taking place over several months on the railway embankment near Corston. The temporary closure of public footpaths will continue for 6 months from 11th September.

I reported on Fix My Street the extensive overhanging vegetation and brambles obstructing the footpath from opposite Corston Lane to the Globe roundabout. The status is "appropriate action scheduled for future works".

The Two-Headed Man junction has been re-surfaced.

There will be a 4-week informal public consultation/communication exercise around October regarding the proposals for the Pixash Lane recycling centre. This will be followed by a formal planning application.

It is possible that B&NES councillors in OTHER wards may not spend their share (£2000) of the ward councillor empowerment fund. The deadline is 30th September. Money unspent will go back into the pot for any councillor to bid for. Please think of any project in Corston that might benefit from funding should the opportunity arise.

The next version of the electoral registers is published on 1st December. All Corston Parish councillors can apply for their own copy (paper or electronic) of the electoral register for Corston Parish Council from Electoral Services, B&NES, Guildhall, High St., Bath BA1 5AW

Many B&NES staff continue to work remotely from home. Service levels remain generally high across most functions. It is thought productivity has increased in some departments with the new way of working. All floors except the ground floor of Lewis House in Manvers Street, Bath, have been vacated by B&NES staff. The vacated space is rented for one year by the University of Bath for teaching purposes to reduce the need for students to travel to the campus.

Casework continues.