

Updated corrected response to question to Full Council 16 September 2025

From: PA To Leader Of The Council <leader.pa@n-somerset.gov.uk>

Sent: 27 November 2025 15:58

To: jogc@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk

Cc: Annemieke Waite (Councillor) <Annemieke.Waite@n-somerset.gov.uk>; Hazel Brinton <Hazel.Brinton@n-somerset.gov.uk>; Matt Lenny <Matt.Lenny@n-somerset.gov.uk>; Jessika Robinson <Jessika.Robinson@n-somerset.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: Request to speak at Full Council 16 Sept 2025

Good afternoon Jo

Further to your recent email to Jessika Robinson, please see below an updated corrected response to your question to Full Council 16 September 2025. The Note to the Minutes (rather than the minutes themselves) will be changed to reflect this as responses to public speakers do not form part of the minutes of the meeting.

Response to Jo Gower Crane jogc@bleadonparishcouncil.co.uk: From Cllr Annemieke Waite, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment

Question:

The speaker shared concern about how land use policies would be decided at WECA level and the centralization of strategic decision-making powers, including the potential for insufficient local consultation and diminished local influence regardless of a meaningful consultation. The Council had not yet declared a food security emergency as requested by a resident in July 2024. The speaker felt that the Local Plan land use policies sacrificed growing food locally, making it challenging to influence those decisions regionally should they not be protected by the Local Plan. The speaker raised that should the current government policies be fully implemented, 24% of farmland was at risk and food production could decrease by 39% in one generation. The speaker asked that the Council take policy action that matched the government's recognition that food security was a matter of national security. Additionally, she asked that food security was added to the environmental and climate change implications and considerations for decisions and reports.

NSC Response :

The decision taken at Council on 16 September was to start the process of seeking to become a member of WECA. The points made about land use policies are helpful and will be included as part of a wide range of discussion points with the Combined Authority, local residents and national government about what any North Somerset membership of WECA could look like and what benefits it should deliver. It is not yet clear what governance arrangements will exist around where and how decision making will take place and this will be actively debated over the coming months at Council and a range of partnership forums but there is no suggestion in any government proposals or precedents elsewhere that WECA would unilaterally determine land use policies or that policies at regional level would not also require significant local consultation.

National security risks, like food security, are managed through government policy rather than at local authority level. However, as set out in a reply issued in response to a question at the

Health and Wellbeing Board there are a range of ways that we work to improve outcomes connected to food and we will continue to focus on what benefits we can bring to our local communities.

Kind regards

Sue

Sue Bullock

PA to Leader of the Council & Cabinet Members (Tues-Fri)

Mandy Bishop, Chief Executive (Thurs/Fri)

North Somerset Council

Town Hall

Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

01275 884 127 / 01275 888 810