

Corporate Strategy Appendix A:

Responses from Organisations

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1. Avon and Somerset Constabulary

Response received via the online survey for partner organisations:

We recognise that every public sector organisation is facing significant budget challenges and difficult decisions. We are keen to work together with Bristol to try and mitigate some of the impact in funding reductions and have been pleased at how we have worked together in the recent past. Some of the proposals will have a direct impact on the PCC and Avon and Somerset Constabulary - such as the proposed reduction in PCSO numbers, the reduction in funding for drug and alcohol services and the reduction in resources for Neighbourhood Partnerships. Such reductions are likely to have a negative impact on the individuals and communities we serve and increase the demand that the Constabulary faces

PCSOs – PCSOs undertake a crucial role in preventing crime and providing community reassurance. Communities greatly value PCSOs. We have worked with Bristol City Council and the Constabulary to widen the scope of PCSOs and jointly badge all PCSOs in Bristol and the Constabulary have provided a range of information to the Council to demonstrate the added value of the PCSOs. As such we would counsel against the loss of the additional PCSOs in Bristol. It is important to be clear that any reduction in funding for PCSOs would also see a commensurate reduction in numbers in Bristol as we are unable to find the funding to cover the additional cost, due to the challenging funding position we also find ourselves in.

Neighbourhood partnerships – these provide an effective mechanism for community engagement and involvement with a range of statutory organisations and the voluntary sector. We would counsel against removal of these in their entirety, whilst appreciating that some change may need to be made to their operation and overall funding.

Drug and alcohol services – any reduction in funding for these services will need to be carefully managed. We would suggest that resources need to be focused on problematic drug users and those going through the criminal justice process in the first instance as they provide the biggest threat to society and face the most acute health problems. It is obviously important that some resources also need to be focused on early intervention and prevention, so any reduction in funding for these services could be challenging. We would be interested to know the council's current thinking on the late night levy, as this could provide additional funding for tackling alcohol misuse.

Please see above - we are keen to work together as outlined. Opportunities to work more closely together would be welcomed. We are happy to consider involvement in the city office, feel that there is merit in working on the active citizens agenda and considering introduction of the late night levy. Seeking opportunities for further co-location in order to reduce the public sector estate and reduce costs would also be welcomed.

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We would welcome much greater involvement in the devolution discussions. This includes discussions regarding direct involvement for policing and community safety as part of future devolution deals. But could also include discussion as to what can be done more closely together across the devolution area in order to work more closely without being part of the formal devolution package.

CF7 - Reshape our approach to civic engagement and local empowerment and reform Neighbourhood Partnerships Not Answered Neighbourhood partnerships – these provide an effective mechanism for community engagement and involvement with a range of statutory organisations and the voluntary sector. We would counsel against removal of these in their entirety, whilst appreciating that some change may need to be made to their operation and overall funding.

Not RS1 - Recommission alcohol and other drugs misuse services for adults. Disagree
"Drug and alcohol services – any reduction in funding for these services will need to be carefully managed. We would suggest that resources need to be focused on problematic drug users and those going through the criminal justice process in the first instance as they provide the biggest threat to society and face the most acute health problems. It is obviously important that some resources also need to be focused on early intervention and prevention, so any reduction in funding for these services could be challenging. We would be interested to know the council's current thinking on the late night levy, as this could provide additional funding for tackling alcohol misuse.

RS11 - Reduce funding for Police Community Support Officers Strongly disagree
"PCSOs undertake a crucial role in preventing crime and providing community reassurance. Communities greatly value PCSOs. We have worked with Bristol City Council and the Constabulary to widen the scope of PCSOs and jointly badge all PCSOs in Bristol and the Constabulary have provided a range of information to the Council to demonstrate the added value of the PCSOs. As such we would counsel against the loss of the additional PCSOs in Bristol. It is important to be clear that any reduction in funding for PCSOs would also see a commensurate reduction in numbers in Bristol as we are unable to find the funding to cover the additional cost, due to the challenging funding position we also find ourselves in.

2. Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

There will be an immediate obvious resources impact in terms of PCSO numbers, should these be reduced, in addition to the potential knock on effects of a reduction in funding to services that assist in preventing offending such as alcohol and drug misuse services and youth services. Clearly the budget has to be reduced and how the remaining expenditure is focused on key areas of need will be critical. Collaboration between the Police and BCC is strong and further development of early intervention models and multi-discipline teams based in community hubs has to be explored. This would benefit both organisations and provide a more efficient and coherent service for citizens.

The current Neighbourhood Partnership structure is an excellent way for communities to come together and prioritise and tackle the issues that matter most to them. We would have concerns if this structure were completely removed but accept that some funding cuts may be required. A greater understanding of the future proposals would be very helpful.

CF11 - Recommission Bristol Youth Links Disagree

We agree that the service should be recommissioned but have significant concerns over the amount (20-35%) that will be removed from the budget moving forwards. The City has a growing number of young people and the average age of the Bristol is lower than the rest of the country and the need for effective youth and diversionary work remains particularly in the more deprived parts of the City. Bristol has a higher proportion of First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice system than other core Cities and the provision of effective youth work is essential in continuing to reduce this figure. The early intervention that this work enables should save money from all public sector agencies in the future.

RS1 - Recommission alcohol and other drugs misuse services for adults Disagree

Again a significant reduction in current funding and we would have concerns about the impact on entrenched problematic users and the knock on effect to criminal activity. Accepting some level of reduced funding may have to happen, a very focused approach is needed in this area.

RS11 - Reduce funding for Police Community Support Officers Disagree

Whilst we understand the need to make savings it must be stressed that any reduction in PCSO funding will see the removal of PCSOs within the City as the Constabulary cannot pick up any funding gaps. The PCSOs in Bristol are extremely popular and well respected within their communities and we receive regular feedback about the difference that they make. Much of their activity is focused on the most deprived parts of the City where they tackle low level issues and provide a strong visible presence. There are 112 FTE PCSO posts (as opposed to the 130 highlighted) in Bristol and as stated any reduction in funding would see this number shrink. However the Constabulary are working hard with BCC to identify other funding opportunities

3. Black South West Network

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
CF2	Recommissioning homelessness support services for adults and families	We will commission our accommodation based homelessness services to better align supply with demand and make savings from the current spend.	£500,000 – £1,000,000 (around 10% - 20% of current expenditure)	If there is a need to reduce the number of units, this will mean that it is more difficult for homeless people to find accommodation and lead to worse outcomes for homeless people. This will have a disproportionate impact on disabled people, BME people and Muslims, all of whom are over-represented amongst homeless people when compared with the overall Bristol population.
CF4	Reduced use of temporary accommodation	Our aim is to reduce the number of households placed in temporary accommodation (including emergency accommodation and B&B) by intervening earlier and preventing homelessness more effectively	£150,000	<p>People and families affected by homelessness are generally on lower income even though 40-50% of households include an adult who is working. Black and minority families are over-represented, linked to lower income but also to the lack of larger family housing in both the social and private rented sectors.</p> <p>Critical here is an understanding of how intervention will happen earlier, and how this will prevent homelessness? Which services will do this and how suitable are they for meeting the needs of the BME communities of Bristol?</p> <p>Single homeless people are less likely to be in temporary accommodation and more likely to be in supported accommodation because of their particular support needs and the 'priority need' test in the Housing Act.</p>

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
RS2	(Transport – Sustainable Transport) Supported Bus Service reduction	Proposed reduction (or removal) of funding for supported bus services	Based on 50% reduction in funding, equates to 900k p.a. from 18/19 (half year effect in 17/18)	<p>These citizens are spread around the city but are most likely to be from poorer communities who are more reliant on bus travel and where there is low car ownership. BME people are more reliant on public transport (Transport for London identified in 2015, 69% of BAME Londoners use the bus at least once a week compared to 56% of white Londoners, people of Black origin are more likely to use the bus compared with people of Asian origin therefore the differential between Black African and Caribbean Londoners and white Londoners is higher than 69%)</p> <p>This is likely to have knock-on impacts relating to social isolation, particularly for members of the BME community living in the predominantly white working class, out-lying estates – Southmead, Lawrence Weston, Avonmouth, Whitchurch, Hengrove, etc. It will also have an impact on people's ability to access employment opportunities, and other services and amenities that aren't available within walking distance.</p>
RS3	(Strategic City Transport) Removal of devolved NP Capitol allocation	Remove devolved NP funding that delivers local traffic scheme – this would have an impact on the delivery of local traffic schemes, approved 15/16 NP schemes, local CIL and S106 , local roads safety and cycling/walking benefits	£410k from 17/18	However the removal of this funding would remove the opportunity for local people to affect a local traffic arrangement and the community would feel that this would disadvantage people with protected characteristics because there is less opportunity to request a change. Therefore whilst hard to prove, it is likely that older people, younger people, BME people, women and disabled people would feel disadvantaged by a decision to remove delegated funding.

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
RS4	Transport – Remove companion concessionary rates	The sub-regional Diamond Card Concessionary Travel Scheme provides free travel for elderly and disabled people. The proposal is to remove the discretionary element of the scheme, removing companion passes for carers who assist disabled or elderly people who cannot travel on their own.	400k p.a.	Disabled people and older people could be negatively affected and women who are more likely to be carers. BME people are high users of personal budgets and are more likely to employ an assistant therefore this will impact negatively on some BME people too. This has a potential cumulative impact when taken alongside RS2 above
RS5	(Transport – Sustainable Transport) Withdraw provision of School Crossing Patrols	Withdraw elements of provision of School Crossing Patrols for Schools – 3 potential options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Option A - Remove SCP provision at sites with engineered crossing facilities - 17 sites. - Option B - 50% cut in provision – reduction of 40 sites. - Option C – 100% cut in provision – withdraw SCPs from all 80 sites. 	£68k-360k p.a. depending on option chosen	School crossing patrols ensure the safety of children walking to school alone and are also used for parents who walk their children to school (disproportionately women and people from some BME groups). It will impact on the safety of young children crossing roads and could discourage parents from letting children travel to school on their own which would affect working parents.
CF7	Reshape our approach to civic engagement and local empowerment and reform Neighbourhood Partnerships	We recognise the value of Neighbourhood Partnerships but believe there are more efficient ways to undertake this engagement role, and we will work to change the focus and scope of the NPs.	In a range of £275k - £825k (25% - 75%). The level of saving will depend on the approach taken.	There is a risk with significant funding reductions that it becomes harder to reach wider communities. The level of this risk/impact will be dependent on the model we move forward with. This is key to notions of inclusive decision-making and democracy. In a city where BME communities are already under-represented in the decision-making processes, the removal of mechanisms and opportunities for the BME communities to express their voice and engage with decision-makers will exacerbate marginalisation, hinder

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
				<p>working towards racial equality in Bristol, and lead to inappropriate decision-making in relation to the BME communities of Bristol.</p> <p>Critical to this is understanding what models will replace those being reduced/removed, and whether they are both appropriate and effective for the BME communities of Bristol.</p>
CF8	Citywide Approach to Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG)	Creation of a single city-wide approach to IAG, supporting early intervention and demand management. Within scope are all services currently commissioned from VCS, dedicated in- house advice functions (eg WRAMAS), and advice functions which form a part of some job roles (eg Support workers etc). It is likely to include the roll-out of the Better Care Programme commissioned on-line diagnostic tool.	Rough estimate of £800k, based on 10% saving of estimated £8M total spend.	<p>IAG tends to be used more intensively by more vulnerable groups, such as BME communities and disabled people, and some of these groups are less likely to use or have access to digital forms of contact and IAG, or not be willing to use them.</p> <p>Additionally, universal services such as the one proposed here tend to be designed to meet the needs of the universal citizen, which inevitably means that the needs of specific communities, such as the BME community are not adequately met. When this is the case with services addressing crises, the impact of inappropriate service design is more significant and more keenly felt.</p> <p>As this proposed service would feature early intervention, it is important to understand how it relates to the reduction in temporary accommodation placements in CF4 above.</p>

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
RS9	Reduce the number of council run libraries	There are currently 28 libraries in Bristol. We will be exploring options for a mixed model of library service delivery in the future. This would include community groups running local community hubs that include library provision, running some services from shared buildings and exploring alternative models for managing the remaining Bristol City Council owned libraries through a possible trust or Mutual or IPS organisation.	In the range of £720k - £2.2m	<p>At this early stage it is only possible to say that all current library customers and the citizens of Bristol will be affected as the scale of the savings proposed are significant and far-reaching. All groups of society will be affected and could have adverse impacts on those who use local libraries for services and access to information and technology. The level or implications of impact will be determined by the nature of the proposal and the libraries affected.</p> <p>If there are services for BME communities delivered from libraries, whether by the library service or by VCS orgs, for example, ESOL classes, what will happen to them in this proposal?</p>
RS10	End of Scaling back of LCPF	Local Crisis and Prevention Fund provides Emergency Payments and Household Goods to over 8,000 low income households in immediate or potential crisis, in the form of a non- repayable grant.	Range of £475k - £1.9m	<p>Any reduction would have a negative effect both on these households as well as other services who rely on it, especially those linked with homelessness and move on provision where this would otherwise be a barrier to acquiring often cheaper and more secure non furnished accommodation.</p> <p>Without knowing the current take-up of these grants by the BME community, it is difficult to accurately predict the impact. However, it is likely to be disproportionate, given the percentage of the BME population living in poverty is far higher than the percentage of non-BME communities.</p> <p>It is critical to understand how this may link into homelessness and how CF4 and CF8 above may worsen the situation for BME communities.</p>

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
CF11	Bristol Youth Links	Young people with protected characteristics are recognised to need some targeted services and this will be considered as part of the EqIA.	900K	<p>Some equalities groups may be impacted negatively if there is reduced service provision. Only when detail is known as to which services are affected can the impact be anticipated on people with different protected characteristics.</p> <p>This will have a major impact on the BME communities of Bristol. Services for young BME people were dramatically hit when Youth Links was first introduced; a further reduction in services will only worsen the situation for them. With youth unemployment, low educational attainment, victimisation and criminalisation of BME young people, and their representation in the criminal justice system already at worryingly high rates, and there already being very few support services for BME young people available, a £900k cut will disproportionately impact upon them.</p>
CF13	Early Help Review	Family centre model delivering integrated services from a range of settings including children's centres Services, schools and community outreach. Amalgamating management structures and closing some buildings.	£1.2m plus cost avoidance	<p>Some equalities groups may be impacted negatively if there is reduced service provision in some areas but we intend to work with the partners to ensure there are no gaps. Impact on BME parents, LGB parents, disabled parents, refugee parents, young parents, lone parents and grandparents would need to be considered when detail is given as to which centres could have the potential to be closed.</p> <p>This sort of support service is vital for families living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. BME families experience additional disadvantage due to systemic racism in society, so these services are even more important to them. The closure of centres supporting BME families will have numerous compound effects, particularly when the cut to other services above – transport, emergency</p>

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
				<p>accommodation, IAG, Youth Links, etc – are considered.</p> <p>Additionally, this reads like the development of universal service model, which, as previously mentioned re IAG, invariably leads to inappropriate services for BME communities. This will have a further compounding effect of the cuts</p>
CF17	Economy - Reduce Funding to Destination Bristol	Destination Bristol provides additional information for tourists and people visiting Bristol. Disabled people use the website to find out about access and families to find out about suitable activities for young children and for activities suitable for elderly relatives.	£57840 net cumulative saving each year from 2017 to 2021	Destination Bristol has worked with LGB businesses to promote Bristol's gay villages. Destination Bristol work with Broadmead businesses, and has built a solid base of BME businesses and BME led start-up businesses in the city centre. For people who find applications and web searches difficult, Destination Bristol does meet a need
RS15	Reduce funding to Bristol Music Trust	The council funds Bristol Music Trust with approx. £1m per year for the running of Colston Hall and the delivery of the music service. This proposal is based on Colston Hall opening a more efficient venue in 2020.	£500,000	<p>Reduction in engagement activity - communities least engaged with culture currently will be hardest hit because targeted engagement could stop- young people, BME and those from lower socio economic groups hardest hit</p> <p>There is a question here about the degree to which BME communities access and utilise Colston Hall, and the degree to which it successfully engages with the BME community through its outreach work... The answers to these will condition the impact of the cuts, as far as the BME communities are concerned.</p> <p>There is a wider issue about access to the cultural capital of Bristol and how reduced funding may impact negatively on that, but this question is far wider than simply funding for places like Colston Hall and relates to other issues such</p>

Reference number	Proposal title	Proposal Summary	Proposed cuts	Significant negative impact
				as transport and poverty, but also cultural relevancy and sensitivity – the very name of Colston Hall being a point at hand for much of the BME community of Bristol.
RS16	50% reduction to Key Arts Providers (KAP).	To reduce the Key arts provider funding by 50% reducing the number of organisation we can support in the city and the levels of support they get	£500,000	<p>Reduction in engagement activity - communities least engaged with culture currently will be hardest hit because targeted engagement could stop- young people, BME and those from lower socio economic groups hardest hit</p> <p>With the attendant reduction of funding to Youth Links, this could have a major impact on BME young people who seek some form of release through art and music. Critical to understanding this impact will be information regarding who will lose funding, and who wont...</p>

4. Bristol BME Voice

Bristol BME Voice understands the need for budget cuts and the need to prioritise areas for savings, some of which will have huge impacts on BME communities. We also recognise intersectionality and that many of the proposals will affect most protected characteristic groups.

We are willing to assist the council in this process with promotion and messaging of new approaches to service delivery. However concerns remain about the impact on BME communities. We need to seek ways to work together with the BME VCS and communities to address negative impacts.

Where activity and actions are proposed it is essential that results are published, how actions had been met and, where relevant, baseline data is also available to measure progress.

Please see commentary below on some of the areas / issues highlighted in the strategy.

Pg 4: Must result in equality of opportunity and better life chances for all.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Fundamental for increasing life opportunities, chances and quality of life for BME communities in Bristol. Many people are especially vulnerable in terms of over-representation / under-representation in, employment, education, health services and the criminal justice system.

Pg 5: For example some services could be run by community groups instead of the council or we could invest more in preventative services so that less money is spent putting things right once they've gone wrong for people.

- Essential that this links with the VCS Prospectus / Impact fund, we will need to ensure the survival of, and an adequately resourced and thriving, BME VCS sector so that BME communities are more engaged in delivering quality services whether through a process of paid and voluntary activity.

Page 5:

- **We will build 2,000 new homes – 800 affordable – a year by 2020**
Would like a commitment that avoids either gentrification or ghettoisation among communities / in areas of the city.
- **We will deliver work experience and apprenticeships for every young person**
How will these be meaningful for many BME Young people? Some schools have better links with employers in certain industries (solicitors, barristers, estate agents, etc) over above schools in other areas of the city. The VCS would work with schools and businesses to develop stronger links with businesses that offer meaningful opportunities
- **We will put Bristol on course to be run entirely on clean energy by 2050 and introduce a safe, clean streets campaign**
More schemes required between the VCS and public agencies to help families save energy, issue digital energy use reading devices in homes.
- **We will be a leading cultural city, making culture and sport accessible to all**
BCC should work with schools to actively encourage VCS participation (grassroots arts providers) to support more accessible cultural activities; there is often a block in trying to develop collaboration / partnerships with schools.

Pg 6: BCC statement: We will meet these priorities by working with representatives from business, education, health, neighbouring authorities, the public sector, transport and the trade unions.

- No mention of the VCS

The council will no longer be able to provide all the same services, and it will be vital that everyone who lives in Bristol thinks about the actions they can take to help. This may include volunteers running core services to prevent them being removed.

- This can result in positive outcomes. It needs to be recognised that volunteering doesn't always just happen; in some cases it needs to be formalised, DBS checks need to be carried out, induction, training and supervision is required.

Pg 7: We will prioritise prevention and early intervention because we know that this approach can enable people to live more independently and can help reduce harm to our environment.

- This can result in positive outcomes; will need strategy on how to engage BME communities and other agencies, and use baseline information to gain intelligence and determine what is required at the early intervention stages.

Pg 8: We aim to unlock creativity and innovation and be confident that we are taking appropriately bold and ambitious steps in the short term.

- Would be useful to have more indication on what this means and how it will be done.

Pg 8: The Brexit decision brings uncertainty and a more complex environment in which to attract investment – it is essential that the council keeps abreast of the impact of leaving the European Union to ensure that the city's economy thrives.

- Would be useful to know how BCC can work with the VCS to engage those who voted leave and the core issues that they feel impact negatively on their lives. These need to be listened to and addressed as this also impacts on community tensions and cohesion.

Pg 9 (figure 3):

- Employees make up the largest budget of the spend yet diversity in terms of race is not evident in the makeup of council staff. Concern that under the cuts this will be even more reduced. Should have a plan for increasing BME diversity especially in senior and middle management. What strategies are there to address this given the shrinking budget?

Pg 12: People are also expecting more from the council and this doesn't match the resources we have available.

- Need to send consistent and clear messages out to communities that times have changed and we will all need a new approach to how services are delivered / received.

Pg 13: This is because prices keep going up, as does the demand for services such as social care and education, because we have a growing population. This leaves us with a gap of £92 million over the next five years.

- Is there a plan to spend in order to invest? Must do more to bring agencies including the VCS together to collaborate, get best value for money and save duplication of services.

Pg 16: over-arching:

Adding 'Social Value' to all the contracts it awards, for example by requiring contractors to provide a quality work experience placement for a young person

- This can result in positive outcomes – can there be targets for, or monitoring to ensure that these include meaningful quality work experience for BME young people; especially as some cohorts are often far removed from the job market.

Working through the Mayor's Women's Commission and Manifesto Leadership Group to develop a change programme to eliminate the gender, social deprivation and race pay gap

- Supported. Please include working with the Manifesto for Race Equality steering group and others to monitor progress.

Encourage private landlords to endorse and adopt the ACORN Ethical Letting Charter

- This can result in positive outcomes. Please publish the results and successes so tenants are more aware that this system exists and how it can assist them.

Through the auspices of the City Office we will:

Establish a partnership with business that will encourage all Bristol businesses to pay their employees the Living Wage

- This can result in positive outcomes. Would like a baseline so can measure success and publish good practice of those businesses that adopt this.

We will encourage organisations in the city not to use zero hours contracts

- This can result in positive outcomes. Would like a baseline so can measure success and expose businesses that use zero hours contracts.

Pg 16: Homes:

We are planning a business case for a new local housing company owned by the council, which will be another way of building new homes.

- Please consult on this and what communities would expect from the company.

We'll focus on preventing street homelessness in a new way – by involving multiple agencies and groups in a joint approach.

- This can result in positive outcomes.

There's always a tension between the need for homes and keeping what makes Bristol special in terms of green space and aesthetics. We will need to discuss having higher density housing including taller buildings in some places.

- Some areas of the city are already dense in terms of layout (spread and taller buildings such as Lawrence Hill), more taller buildings would make these areas even more cramped. Please consult widely.

Pg 17: transport: The Mayor has just announced a Task Group to examine the issue of the city's congestion and transport flow. Part of the consultation on this Corporate plan will ask people what options they think the Congestion Task Group should consider. All options are on the table.

- As well as more integrated transport system consider the introduction of travel cards to encourage more public transport use.
- Extremely concerned that the blanket loss of bus passes for carers will increase the isolation of those cared for as well as carers.

Pg 17: Neighbourhoods: We want to have a conversation about the possibility of people paying more Council Tax, on the understanding that a portion of this will directly benefit their own local neighbourhood, through for example setting up an Urban Parish. An Urban Parish can help residents have a more direct impact on decision-making and service delivery in their local area.

- This can result in positive outcomes: some NP areas are too big and for people to feel they have an active stake in the decisions made. Regardless of what comes in place of NPs there will need to be a process to ensure BME people / communities want to get involved in decisions that affect their communities and that they have real power to influence change. This will need some resource, whether financial or people (and whether delivered by local groups or whoever) to maintain engagement.

Pg 17: People/Education and Skills/Health and Wellbeing:

We are prioritising the basic infrastructure that we need the most, like schools. This may require us to reprioritise our other building or infrastructure projects.

- What is expected of Academies to generate income for some of this work?

Pg 18: Place: We need to protect the services that people value, but sometimes the buildings they are based in are costly to run. Rather than lose the services, we would like to look at mixed uses in

some council owned buildings, so that more services are based in the same place. This would be more convenient for people and has the potential to save services, but does mean we must move away from a preference on dedicating buildings like libraries and community centres for single services. This may mean more community hubs with mixed uses and more access to convenient online services, rather than retaining all our library and Citizen Service buildings.

- An inventory needed of what these assets are and where they are. Communities need to see the benefits of their running / owning community hubs.
- Good in principle and could be an exciting opportunity for communities but this will require community capital, volunteering, management, business skills, etc. This will require similar resources to running a community centre. Will need to consult on what community buildings can be used for and who will manage them (local people, local groups, etc?) for what purposes., i.e., if a café: how responsibility for income and revenue spend will be determined; if also a homework club: how ownership of the building will be determined.
- Due to lack of social capital in some BME communities; skills required will need to be sought, tapped into and utilised: training offered, risk management considered, etc.

Pg 18: Place: We are seeking more local control by asking the government to transfer specific powers and funding to a regional body which we'd be part of. This is known as devolution.

- Need to ensure decision-making in grassroots communities will still be a priority and that devolution doesn't end up offering another layer of decision-making that ends up dictating to communities. The LEP is a sub regional structure that BME Communities do not seem to be able to penetrate. We must ensure that the devolution structure improves / complements engagement and local decision making.

Page 18: Governance: Everyone in the city has the ability to help in some way, whether that is through responsible recycling, offering to drive an elderly neighbour to an important appointment, volunteering or promptly paying their council tax.

With less money available for our services, it is vital that everyone who lives in Bristol thinks about the actions they can take to help the council target scarce resources to the most vulnerable and those in greatest need. Without the support of citizens and local institutions, we will have to make further reductions to services.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Council must constantly assert this message. It must also recognise that those who are vulnerable can be taken advantage of. i.e. BME Elders living alone or who are not mobile may value support from neighbours but we need to ensure that measures are in place to avoid risks when informal volunteering takes place.

Page 19: Capital Programme

As a result we will need to prioritise our spending and choose the projects that have the highest return in terms of meeting our objectives.

- How are these decisions made, what consultation is there /will there be with BME communities at an early stage? Evidence is required of how this investment will create returns that will ultimately benefit BME communities, or areas of the city where a high percentage of BME communities reside.

Pg 22: Our Future – Education and Skills

- More partnerships with universities, business sector and the LEP required to increase aspirations of BME young people, and encouragement from educators so they are better prepared for the challenges of the 21st century and able to better contribute to Bristol's economy.

Pg 22: Only 56% of children in some areas have the chance of attending a good school compared with 99% in others.

Every organisation has a committed, skilled and diverse workforce

- Percentage of BME children in Bristol schools is increasing. Develop Positive Action programme with schools, universities and colleges to increase the number of BME teachers in Bristol's schools –this is often talked about but never actioned.

Pg 24: Through our Learning City Partnership, work together on new ways to collectively lead on Education & Skills.

- Need to seek ways in which this partnership can be better developed to have more traction in the city and increase involvement of BME communities and parents?

Pg 25: Implement Race Equality Toolkit in Bristol through Race Equality in Education Steering group

- This can result in positive outcomes – work with Bristol BME Voice and Manifesto for Race Equality group who will give support to this.

Pg 25: Develop Recruitment & Retention action plan

- Percentage of BME children in Bristol schools is increasing. Develop Positive Action programme with schools, universities and colleges to increase the number of BME teachers in Bristol's schools –this is often talked about but never actioned.

Pg 26: Widen participation from targeted groups and communities in Higher Education (HE)

- More partnerships with universities, business sector and the LEP required to increase aspirations of BME young people, and encouragement from educators so they are better prepared for the challenges of the 21st century and able to better contribute to Bristol' economy.

Pg 27: Develop a campaign to promote the uptake of Pupil Premium and breakfast clubs/out of schools clubs to disadvantaged families

- This can result in positive outcomes. Need to consider how to especially target BME parents. Also include plan for homework clubs and services (could be volunteer-led) offering one to one additional tuition in English, Maths and Science out of school.

Pgs 29/30/31: Our Health and Wellbeing

**We will work with the Health and Wellbeing Board to make it a leader of population health
Establishing a 'Live Well' Bristol hub – information, advice and sign-posting Roll out 'Making Every Contact Count' training Programme**

Strengthening Children's Public Health Services (targeted in areas of greatest need)

- More support required on promotion of health diets among older and younger BME Communities. Concern about diabetes, heart disease, mental health and obesity which are prevalent in our communities. Need multi-agency approach including media.

Pg 32: Assess the impact on the public's health when taking decisions on all major projects, strategies and programmes

- Undertake BME relevance reports and publish results, use as a baseline for developing services.

Pg 32: Holding a Mental Health Summit to bring all stakeholders together to establish what more can be done in the city

Pg 33: Work with the NHS to strengthen the capability of Bristol's Mental Health Services

- This can result in positive outcomes. A key element of the Bristol Manifesto for Race equality – we would support this initiative to particularly ensure a focus on race.

Pg 34: Support the roll out of the national diabetes prevention programme

- This can result in positive outcomes as prevalent in BME communities. More awareness needed working across a range of sectors nationally and locally.

Pg 36: Homes**Pg 36: We create the opportunity for all to thrive in mixed communities of their choice.**

- Concern about gentrification and ghettoisation. Must ensure that mixed communities have the infrastructure to support them and are able to realise community assets. Must avoid changing communities do not lead to more isolated communities that stokes community tensions, breakdown of community cohesion / hate crimes.

Pg 39: Produce the strategic business case for a new local housing company.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Must involve consideration of where / how housing is planned and how this meets needs of increasingly diverse communities in the city.

Pg 41: Endorse and adopt the ACORN Ethical Letting Charter.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Must involved BME experience in this both as tenants and as landlords. Need to reduce the vulnerability of tenants including refugee, asylum seekers and those on low income at the mercy of some scrupulous landlords.

Pg 42: Review of HomeChoice Bristol – review the allocation policy that determines which households are allocated social & affordable rented housing.

- More information needed about how BME communities are using the service and their successes in opting for relevant / adequate accommodation required to meet their needs.

Pg 42: Work with local communities to build homes using council sites which create more balanced communities.**Establish a Mayoral task force to understand and shape our response to the challenges of gentrification (OH9B).**

- This can result in positive outcomes. Must ensure that mixed communities have the infrastructure to support them and are able to realise community assets. Must avoid changing communities do not lead to more isolated communities that stokes community tensions, breakdown of community cohesion / hate crimes.

Pg 45: Our Transport**We want an affordable, low carbon, accessible, clean, efficient and reliable transport network to achieve a more competitive economy and better connected, more active and healthy communities**

- More affordable transport required. Integrated bus, train and ferry fares that include Bristol Bus travel cards.

Pg 46: Charge for advisory disabled bays and Keep Clear markings

- Will this be according to means / individuals' ability to cover these costs?

Pg 47: Remove Companion Concessionary bus passes

- Concern about increased isolation of carers /companions that will also impact on isolation of those who require the care. What alternative plans are in place to address this?

Pg 47: Withdraw reimbursements to Community Transport operators for concessionary travel

- Concern about increased isolation of those who require community transport. What alternative plans are in place to address this?

Pg 47: Reduction of subsidies for bus routes with low numbers of passengers

- Concern about increased isolation of those who rely on these bus routes. What alternative plans are in place to address this?

Pg 48: Revise operating times for Concessionary Travel

This proposal would remove free travel from 9–9:30am Mon–Fri and 11pm– 4am every day. These passengers will continue to have free travel outside of these hours, or can choose to pay the commercial fare.

- Concern about increased isolation of those who rely on these concessions. What alternative plans are in place to address this?

Pg 48: To have a fully integrated ticketing and journey planning system in place across all public transport, which improves bus journey times and reliability and enhances cross-city connectivity.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Will this include integrated travel cards?

Pg 49: Ask all councillors to work with their local communities to undertake a review of RPZs and 20mph zones in their areas and make recommendations on how they can be made to work.

- This can result in positive outcomes.

Pg 49: Allow Blue Badge holders to park in RPZ bays.

- This can result in positive outcomes.

Pg 49: Cabinet to consider RPZ policy report on permits and future schemes.

- This can result in positive outcomes.

Pg 50: Develop plans extend MetroWest including opening new stations and services.

- Consult with BME Communities on where these stations will be and on access to them.

Pg 50: Work closely in partnership with bus operators to secure firm commitments to delivering an integrated ticketing system.

Maximise use of the TravelWest website to provide comprehensive journey planning for the travelling public.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Also promote TravelWest through community hubs. Some vulnerable people often using public transport do not always have access to the web, such as a percentage of BME elders.

Pg 53: Neighbourhoods

We need to continue to tackle inequalities across the city and ensure that all communities have access to the opportunities offered by the city.

We need to engage more people in the civic life of the city and enable them to have the power and capacity to do things that are important to them in their neighbourhoods and in the city.

With reducing funding, we need to engage the people of the city in working with us to tackle local issues and supporting the need for people to change their behaviour....

- This can result in positive outcomes

Pg 53: Following the Brexit decision, we will work with partners to raise awareness and actively monitor community tensions and provide support to witnesses and victims of hate crime.

- Work with communities to develop understanding and tolerance, this includes how infrastructure is developed in neighbourhoods to support the development of diverse communities and how decision-making is enabled. Ultimately no community should feel isolated or discriminated against.

Pg 55: We recognise the value of Neighbourhood Partnerships but believe there are more efficient ways to undertake this engagement role, and we will work to change the focus and scope of the Neighbourhood Partnerships. The level of saving will depend on the approach taken.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Decision making in neighbourhoods must be more inclusive, diverse and relevant to each locality. Must seek better ways of getting people involved where they can see the relevance and benefits of their decisions being realised.

Pg 56: Reduce the number of council run library services.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Communities must be supported to realise their social capital, abilities to take on the running of libraries and other community hubs. This must be an approach that includes a diverse range of communities and not just replication of the small cohorts currently involved in neighbourhood decision-making, which is not reflective of the local demographics.

Pg 57: There are 130 PCSOs in Bristol, funded by the police, the council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. We need to consider the level of funding the council continues to put into the service which may see a reduction in Police Community Support Officer posts.

- Alternatively, encouragement needed for BME communities to take up roles in Avon and Somerset Police.
- Support the development of Neighbourhood Watch type schemes that will have relevance in communities.

Pg 58:

Support the Mayoral Clean Streets Campaign and develop community enforcement teams which will be integral to supporting it.

Bristol Waste Company will lead on encouraging people to change their behaviour eg: stop dropping litter.

Residents will be supported with their identified priorities in Neighbourhood Partnerships of tackling litter and fly tipping.

Support communities to do things for themselves through targeted investment.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Pertinent issue particularly in inner city areas.

Pg 59: BCC has signed up to the Women's Commission Zero Tolerance campaign. There is dedicated Public Health funding in place to support actions to tackle gender based violence.

- This can result in positive outcomes – particularly relevant; must consider issues of cultural sensitivities related to gender based violence among BME Communities; addressing taboo of reporting, specialist services required to support victims and prosecute / educate abusers.

Pg 60: Reform the approach to devolved decision making at the neighbourhood level. Developing the Neighbourhood Partnership model to best meet the needs of communities, elected members and the city including the consideration of Urban Parishes.

- Ensure processes are in place which encourage diversity and are representative of local communities, and people are supported in the governance processes. Innovative engagement plans required.

Pg 60: Make sure information about Bristol City Council services is accessible and widely available.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Consider ways in which information is widely accessible to all communities across the city.

Pg 62: People

Pg 62: The growth of our younger population is three times higher than the national average.

Between 2004 and 2014 the number of children aged 0–17 living in Bristol increased by 11,500 (14.3%). Projections indicate that the child population will increase by 18% between now and 2034.

- The increasing number of BME young people need to be considered in these stats and how the city is preparing to meet needs and required changes.

Pg 62: The gap between richest and poorest people is getting bigger, and in Bristol people in need are facing greater levels of inequality.

- Also need to consider this impact on different wards in the city. For instance Lawrence Hill, South Bristol and some of the North (Southmead and Lockleaze), where there are growing populations of BME communities. Need concerted plan to reduce life expectancy inequality.

Pg 62: There is greater demand on Bristol's social care system, as the health system struggles to cope with rising demand due to an ageing population, for example, an increased number of residential and nursing placements required.

- Increasing numbers of BME elders needing more care, culture of families looking after their elders is slowly diminishing due to current family lifestyles and specialist support required for elderly individuals. Prevention creates more demand on vcs services, such as black carers, Oscar, etc. Would welcome more exploration of this and integrated approach to address need.

Pg 64: Re-commission Bristol Youth Links

- Lack of specialist provision for BME young people in previous commissioning has created tensions and lack of credibility in BYL. Given reduced funding while there is increasing demographics of BME children and young people this needs serious consideration in the next consultation process and recommissioning round with the vcs to ensure targeting to specific need.
-

Pg 65: Agree the best future for the provision of Community Meals

- Ensure culturally appropriate meals are still a priority for communities who would like it and that they are aware of the range of choices.

Pg 65: Consider options for providing support to carers

- Understand need for cuts, would like to ensure that under any new priorities BME carers are not disproportionately disadvantaged.

Pg 65: Review dementia care home provision

- Understand need for cuts, would like to ensure that under any new priorities home care provision does not disproportionately disadvantage BME people who need the service.

Pg 66: Becoming all age friendly: whether WHO Age Friendly, Dementia Friendly, or Unicef Child Friendly, Bristol will be a city that is welcoming (City of Sanctuary) and a great place for people of all ages to live.

- This can result in positive outcomes

Pg 66: Being ambitious for the future: champion for children, offering the best start in life, Learning City, growing the future generation of city leaders, demanding the best for the children in our care.

- This can result in positive outcomes, due to higher percentage of BME young people in care; would welcome initiatives that demand the best for them.

Pg 66: Addressing inequality: doing all we can to make sure families do not live in poverty in a city of wealth and opportunity; ensuring nobody is left behind because of the circumstances of their birth.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Must address poverty; the wider impact of poverty increases need for other resources in the long run.

Pg 66: Ensuring we have different conversations with stakeholders, families, service users, based on our three-tiered approach:

- Three tiered approach: can information be framed in more accessible language for people, avoid: 'goal focused' 'highly individualised?'

Pg 67: 1) Getting involved early to reduce risks later - early intervention reduces the impact of problems later on.

- All areas outlined in the table relevant. Re the recommissioning of Youth Services: need more consideration of how you will work with young people, and particularly engage BME young people in the design of processes. Will this involve the VCS, schools – a joint approach – who will manage this?

Pg 68: 2) Promoting independence - supporting people to live as independently as possible in their community: Work with local communities and health and care services to develop community-based support

- How will this happen, through services delivered the by Bristol Impact Fund, or otherwise?

Pg 69: 3) Safeguarding the most vulnerable – fulfilling the statutory responsibility of the city to protect vulnerable children and safeguard adults: Work as part of our local Safeguarding Boards to keep children and young people and adults at risk safe from harm.

- Must ensure results on impact / outcomes for BME young people / vulnerable adults are published linked to designing relevant services that are planned / implemented to meet need. Closer monitoring of the Diversity plan.

Pg 70: 4) We will work together with the citizens of Bristol and our partners to make the best use of resources

- Proposed actions / activity taking place can result in positive outcomes.

Pg 73: Place

Pg 73: We want Bristol to have the communities, culture, institutions, businesses, and systems necessary for it to be resilient when faced with economic adversity and change. We want people to be able to build better lives in better places.

We need to ensure that as we enable this economic growth we do not increase the wealth gaps within Bristol whereby the city becomes increasingly unaffordable, unequal and loses its unique identity and diverse communities.

- Great overview of this thriving city. Agree with above statement: economic and health inequalities are unevenly balanced across areas of the city and need citywide, collective commitment this being addressed.

Pg 73: The economic challenge we face is to ensure that all of Bristol benefits from the economy and no one gets left behind.

- More required to encourage and support the growth of BME businesses and help for new start-ups among BME communities. Need LEP to give full commitment to this.

Pg 73: We must retain the primacy of the city centre as the core retail and cultural heart of the West of England.

- Need to be mindful that inner city areas on the verges of the centre and outer areas of the city do not lose out, and where there is economic growth in the centre, this has benefit across the whole city.

Pg 74: Climate change is now well understood to be a very real concern, from the impact of flooding to the overheating of our buildings and we must ensure we have the ability to adapt and mitigate, helping us to remain resilient to this significant change.

- Yes, collective, citywide approach needed to address this including more promotion and support for communities to get involved.

Pg 75/76: We have a number of major projects underway including building the Arena, Metrobus and the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone. To make sure we can deliver our priorities in a world with less money available and a growing population and demand for services, we will take the following action: Reductions:

- In principle, this could be a good plan but more detail on the projected reduction figures over the total 5 years required and the proposed returns of these institutions over the next five years.

Pg 77: The Arena Project Team will ensure both parties work to agreed targets, ensuring at the same time that there is a co-ordinated workstream and linkages are made with colleges, universities and schools to provide a supply of future labour to fill the jobs and apprenticeships we are targeting.

- Want to ensure that opportunities are available to BME young people (and adults) in this initiative and an action plan is in place to enable this.

Pg 80: Create and deliver an Economic Plan for the city centre which delivers an inclusive centre and enhanced retail offer

- Consider how the centre be made more culturally appropriate to attract people from BME communities to the area to make it a really inclusive and a diverse place to be.

Pg 81: Revise the Local Plan to meet housing, education and employment needs across the city

- This can result in positive outcomes

Pg 82/83: 3) We will ensure Bristol is on course to be run entirely on clean energy by 2050

Pg 82: We will tackle fuel poverty

- This can result in positive outcomes

Pg 82: We will continue the transition of the council to be fuelled by renewable energy by 2020

- This can result in positive outcomes

Pg 84-88: 4) We will ensure that Bristol maintains its thriving and innovative cultural life

- General comment: These initiatives can result in positive outcomes. Please ensure key arts providers are working closely with communities in a meaningful way and includes grassroots approach. Needs strategic co-ordination, clear information on who is working with who, publish results on the impacts partnerships have in terms of quality of life on individuals and communities. This should be evident in the Equalities plan.

Pg 91: Governance

We will also do more to be open, transparent and demystify the role and functions of the council for all.

- BCC could offer even greater information to communities about how it works, also make more opportunities to collaborate and work in partnership. Where relevant staff to be more present in communities; meet communities in their localities / community venues.

Pg 91: The council faces a number of challenges which significantly increase the gap between what it needs to spend and how much money it has available. This means that we need to think very differently about the ways in which we provide services and work with partners and the citizens of Bristol.

- Unclear if there is a BCC business plan for generating income?

Pg 93: Encouraging far more 'self-service' within the council, helping staff and their managers help themselves with less reliance on professional support services such as ICT, legal and HR.

- Understand saving but aware of percentages of BME staff undergoing HR issues; should not deter staff from pursuing their employment rights when they feel they are not being met.

Pg 94: 1): Bristol City Council becomes a model employer which sets an example to others in valuing fairness and diversity

- This can result in positive outcomes. Need clearer indication of how BCC can increase BME employee numbers given staffing cuts. Need clearer indication of how BCC can increase BME employees in middle / senior management.

Pg 95: Champion Equality & Diversity (Our Bristol 3).

Address the underlying issues facing Bristol in attracting BME candidates for senior positions within the Council.

Pg 95: Develop an Equality Charter which will apply to the City Council and any organisation that we commission, grant aid to or procure services from, to include governance, administration and delivery.

- This can result in positive outcomes. Work with the Manifesto for Race Equality Steering group and others to help deliver this. Monitor and publish progress.

Pg 95: 2) People are paid equally in real terms, irrespective of gender, social deprivation and race (Our Economy 2E)

- This can result in positive outcomes. Work already being undertaken by the Manifesto Strategic Leaders group on this.

Pg 96: Ensure City Hall is open and accessible to the public to sustain participation in decision-making.

- Promote the City Hall as a central Bristol destination that is open to all. Run more public and cultural events to attract more diverse people to the building, and regularly use as an opportunity to promote BCC services / ways in which people and groups can collaborate with BCC.

Pg 97: Renew our democracy and help people to avoid losing their right to vote within the rules set by the Electoral Commission.

- Work with the Manifesto for Race Equality steering group and other relevant parties to deliver this.

Pg 97: Bring greater clarity and purpose to the constitutional role of city councillors to ensure our elected members are representative of Bristol in all its diversity.

- Work with the Manifesto for Race Equality steering group and other relevant parties to deliver this.

5. Bristol Disability Equality Forum

Introduction

This consultation response is the result of electronic and face-to-face conversations with Disabled people (including young Disabled people), parent carers, adult carers, and equalities' community-led organisations. Whilst the final content is entirely the work of the Forum, we have sought to include issues raised by them.

We are very aware that the Council finds itself in an almost impossible situation; required to make swingeing cuts when its services have already been parred to the bone by previous central government funding reductions. We appreciate that these cuts make it inevitable that some unpopular decision will need to be made.

Consequently we approached this consultation in the full knowledge that some services for Disabled people and their families would be affected.

However, when we first looked at the consultation and started discussing it with others, it was clear that the change from providing informative draft EqlAs to providing largely uninformative Equalities Impact Relevance Checks (EIRC's), has substantially impacted the ability to provide an informed consultation response.

Conscious that the elected Mayor may not be aware of the impact this change has had, and aware of his commitment to open and transparent democracy, we wrote to draw his attention to this.

We were therefore very disappointed that, despite writing in the spirit of a critical friend to alert the Mayor to this, and to assist him to ensure there could not be a challenge to the consultation process, we didn't even receive a response. This is despite having highlighted (in the covering email) that the letter was urgent and time-sensitive.

Consequently, in the absence of key information, this is not the fully informed response we want to provide. We would therefore still appreciate receiving more detailed information (as requested in our letter) in time to be able to make statements/formulate relevant questions to raise when the Strategy goes to Cabinet and Full Council for approval.

1. Summary Findings¹

1.1 We welcome the elected Mayor's commitment to reduce the levels of inequality in the city and make Bristol a place "in which services and opportunities are accessible".

1.2 We recognise the elected Mayor has no choice but to make cuts, given the financial position the Council is in.

1.3 We also welcome the commitment to "a new strategic focus on building resilience in the Council and the city, together with a focus on intervening early before people's needs escalate."

1.4 We had hoped the elected Mayor would use his commitment to addressing inequality as the basis for decisions on where cuts need to be made, and where services need to be protected from them.

1.5 We are therefore very disappointed to see that the proposed cuts will significantly increase inequality in the city, despite the elected Mayor's commitment to reducing it.

¹ Please note that all quotations that are not specifically credited/footnoted within this document are from the Corporate Strategy.

1.6 Along with expressing concern regarding some of the proposed cuts, we have provided suggestions for alternatives – as the Mayor requested. Each of our suggestions would enable the Council to protect at least one of the proposed cuts that worsen inequality in the city, some suggestions would enable the Council to drop several of the proposals.

1.7 We are concerned about the minimal presence of Disabled people and their families within the listed aspirations and priorities, and dismayed to see (in the Appendix) that this is because they've been targeted to bear the brunt of the proposed cuts.

For example:

- a. the Strategy only prioritises the need to address child poverty and poverty in the most deprived neighbourhoods. It doesn't even mention Disabled adults, young people and children - despite recent research finding that **50% of Disabled people live in poverty** (i.e. over twice that of non-Disabled children);
- b. there is no mention of the need for the Council to address the primary barrier to Disabled people's employment – namely the attitudes of employers;
- c. Disabled young people are absent from the list of those the Council wishes to ensure get the good qualifications necessary to securing an higher education;
- d. there is no commitment to improving the delivery of timely and comprehensive EHCPs for Disabled young people, including those with significant 'special educational needs'².

1.8 We were further disappointed to see the Strategy only acknowledges the need to engage with the Women's and BME Manifestos, as though the other equalities' manifestos either don't exist or don't warrant serious consideration within the life of the Strategy.

1.9 We note that, overall, the impression given by the Strategy is that the Mayor is only committed to addressing inequality and disadvantage where it is specific to class, gender, ethnicity and non-Disabled youth.

1.10 As with national politics, you have decided that people and their families must bear the brunt of the cuts, those with more can thrive.

1.11 In doing so you have either ignored, or dismissed, cumulative impact that your proposals will have upon people and their families - both with regard to Council with regard to how they compound the substantial cuts government has already made³.

For example:

- a. Person 'A' has poor mental health leaving him unable to travel independently, or drive. When he was re-assessed, under the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) criteria, the assessment was undertaken at a quiet time of day in a venue close enough to home that he could walk.

“When equality and diversity is mentioned, all too often reference is only made to race, gender, and poverty, with faith and sexuality sometimes thrown in.”

specific to

Disabled so that

the Disabled cuts, and central

² See Appendix 2

³ See appendix Y for evidence to support just how big the cumulative impact upon Disabled people is.

This led the assessor to decide 'A' didn't really need support to get out and about, so he lost this element of his Disability Living Allowance (DLA) when transferred to PIP. The ESA assessor came to a similar conclusion, putting 'A' in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) category rather than the Support Group.

With the Council cuts, as proposed, 'A' would now find himself living on £70pw, with no companion pass to enable him to get out and about socially and to attend JobCentrePlus (JCP) appointments. As his ESA assessment says he doesn't need support to travel, JCP won't cover the cost of a carer's bus ticket and he can't afford it. This results in a worsening of his mental health and repeated ESA sanctions, leading to debt.

b. "Barbara" (real life case study; fictional name) secured a part-time job requiring travel from Henbury to Radstock and further afield, because she is employed to do outreach work. The distance between her home and workplace takes at least 2.5 hours **each way**, each working day.

She applied for Access To Work(ATW) support with transport but, as she could use public transport, they refused to pay the cost of her travel to and from work.

Recently she also lost her ESA, due to the assessor observing her in the waiting room and noting that Barbara "wasn't rocking in her seat" (the assessor actually said this to her), whilst disregarding medical evidence that Barbara has:

- Ataxia,
- hearing loss such that she can't communicate with non-BSL users unless there's good lighting, no background noise, and where she is facing the person,
- mental health difficulties and
- a visual impairment.

'Barbara' will now be regularly pressured by JCP to prove she has been actively seeking more work or face sanctions, and she won't be able to get to work in time because the Council has decided she can no longer use her concessionary bus pass before 9.30am.

She can't leave after 9.30am because even leaving at 7.15am means she doesn't start work until after 10am – so later starts aren't an option.

'Barbara' was already struggling to manage financially, causing her a great deal of stress. Now she feels she cannot cope with the additional anxiety of having to prove she's been looking for more work, as well as the loss of:

- i. £30pw/£1560pa as a result of losing her ESA, and
- ii. £7.50 per day/£1080pa (her travel to work costs, **excluding** her train fare) - as a consequence of the Council proposal to no longer subsidise concessionary travel before 9.30am.

This equates to £2640pa in lost income.

2. **Headline Recommendations**

2.1 **Generate additional funds by:**

2.1.1 Gaining a voluntary ‘salary sacrifice’ from the CEO, SMT and Service Directors, proportionate to their income, to demonstrate that they are not willing to protect themselves from cuts whilst making decisions that significantly and adversely impact others.

2.1.2 Replacing Residents’ Parking Zones with a citywide congestion zone requiring those working in Bristol but living outside of it to use public transport or pay to bring their car/vehicle into the city, whilst exempting those that live here. A Mon-Fri, 6.30am-2pm restriction of this kind would ensure people could still shop and socialise in Bristol without any additional costs that might tempt them to do these things elsewhere.

2.1.3 Instigate a ‘tourism tax’ on businesses that are not local or are very small (e.g. the national chains, international and multinational companies), that are running hotels, bars, restaurants and leisure facilities. This will off-set the costs of clearing up the city centre and supporting those features of the city that attract the tourists in the first place, such as our museums, art galleries, theatres, historic buildings, festivals, the harbourside etc.

If, as happened previously, local businesses agree and large ones don’t, let the large ones leave and have to pay full business rates on the properties they have vacated. They will then have to rent or sell the premises at an amount local companies can afford, or to a national business willing to pay the ‘tourism tax’.

Either way it will be a ‘win-win’ for local people and the Council.

2.1.4 Increase parking fines in place of existing transport cuts that specifically target Disabled people and their PAs and carers. Given the number of parking fines the Council must levy over a year, the increase would not need to be substantial.

2.1.5 Seek central government approval for new bye-laws, including:

- i. a bye-law enabling the enforcement of what are, currently, advisory parking bays;
- ii. a bye-law empowering the Council to take action against those who park on pavements (currently implemented by the police under the legislation covering ‘obstruction’).

If combined with actually enforcing the law regarding parking over dropped-kerbs, introduced about 5 years ago, this will both generate the additional income the Council desperately needs and make Bristol more accessible to all – as per the ‘Mayor’s Vision’ for Bristol.

2.2 Recognise and acknowledge the multiple and cumulative disadvantage experienced by Disabled people of all ages and commit to reducing them both as aspirations and priorities within the body of the Strategy.

2.3 Commit to including Disabled people of all ages within the focus on early intervention.

The likely side effects of several proposed cuts will be to increase demand upon services rather than decrease it e.g. the withdrawal of the companion pass for all, charging for advisory parking bays/keep clear markings will result in the social isolation of all Disabled people on relatively low incomes who require support to use transport.

2.4 Invest (in partnership with the CCG and other NHS bodies) in early intervention for those who become Disabled people, when that first happens.

The experience of many people who become significantly Disabled as adults, for reasons other than a critical incident resulting in long-term spinal cord or brain injury - such as a road traffic accident - is that a lack of pan-impairment peer support early on causes greater levels of depression at all stages and a greater/more rapid reliance on statutory services.

2.5 Replace the planned withdrawal of bus pass usage before 9.30am, and the companion pass in its entirety, with an income-generating increase in parking fines or a means-tested financial restriction as to who qualifies.

This need not be onerous or expensive – as some fear - as the vast majority of those that would qualify to have a companion pass will already be accessing a range of support (or be entitled to a Continuing Health Care support package/Personal Health Budget).

They will therefore already have been means-tested when determining their support needs as someone with an ongoing and life-limiting impairment.

Similarly, if the Council intends carers will have to pay for saving the Council the cost of PA support for a Disabled person, the carer is now entitled to a Carers assessment, which it plans to means-test anyway.

2.6 Fund training for those Disabled young people with a companion pass who have the potential to be able to travel without support, thereby reducing future need for a concessionary bus pass as well as increasing their independence.

Please note that this proposal comes from members of The Listening Partnership.

2.7 Reconsider the planned means-testing of Carer's Allowance and/or clarify what levels of income and savings you will discount.

Many carers of Disabled adults are of pensionable age. Given that their pension fund may have been invested in various ways, rather than kept in a standard pension fund (due to central government encouragement), to use the standard means-testing thresholds would eat into a pot of money that is intended to provide an income for each of their remaining years of life. You should therefore discount any monies taken out of a pension fund and invested elsewhere, and focus on their income.

2.8 Evaluate the impact of the Council's expectation that volunteers will run services for them upon the VCS. The VCS already provides many services that local people need but the Council does not offer, many of them delivered by volunteers.

The pool of potential volunteers is not infinite – indeed, the changes to the conditionality attached to unemployment benefits has reduced the pool considerably – so we need to know what the Council will do to ensure it doesn't reduce the level of volunteering in these services **before** it starts persuading local people to volunteer to run its own services.

3. Responses to Specific Proposals

3.1 Homes

3.1.1 IN1 Further licensing expansion. Expand discretionary licensing. Increase number of licensable properties

We broadly support this proposal, subject to the Council making it a requirement of the license that they meet all reasonable adjustments tenants require and do not reject tenants based on impairment-related needs that can be easily met through a reasonable adjustment or require no adjustment, which is what currently happens. This is evidenced by the experience of some Deaf people when seeking accommodation, of being turned down on a spurious "health and safety" excuse.

3.1.2 CF2 Recommissioning Homeless Support Services for Adults and Families

We applaud the proposal to create 50 more units for family occupation and, given the levels of Disabled

"I went to view a flat yesterday but, as soon as the landlord realised I'm Deaf, he said I couldn't have the tenancy. When I asked why, he said it was because I was a health and safety risk."

[Deaf Forum member]

people amongst those families the Council envisages

using them, strongly recommend that the units are physically and sensorily accessible. This will also benefit the BME families over-represented within the services as health inequalities indicate that they will have an increased need for such accommodation, even if that need is not immediate.

We also welcome the focus on prevention however, given the high levels of homelessness, we cannot see that more prevention work is possible if you are to cut funding – especially without information on what you will be asking providers to focus on and what to drop/reduce, it is difficult to give an informed response.

However we also note that:

- a. The Council has ‘put the cart before the horse’ by proposing a cut they state they don’t know how to achieve and before consulting on any reconfigured services, thus demonstrating that the need for a service has not been a significant factor when deciding what services to cut;
- b. as so many homeless people – especially rough sleepers – are also Disabled people/families we’re concerned that the proposed cuts will seriously impact them, above and beyond how it will impact non-Disabled people/families;
- c. there is so little accessible accommodation for Disabled people – particularly for those with physical and sensory impairments.

We therefore call upon the Council to:

- i. provide more information as to what outcomes you will be seeking from the re-negotiations;
- ii. ensure the 50 new family units to be created are all accessible;
- iii. seek greater NHS funding to provide homelessness-specific mental health support, to meet current and future need;
- iv. require your temporary accommodation providers to provide adequate levels of accessible accommodation, as a condition of getting any income from the Council;
- i. accept that the Council will have to adequately fund current need **and** prevention for at least two-three years, with a view to then reducing funding in line with the reduced demand that effective prevention work will produce - rather than cutting first and ‘seeing how things go’.

3.1.3 CF3 Reduce use of temporary accommodation

Whilst we welcome the commitment to prevention we are particularly concerned that the EIRC for this proposal:

- a. makes no mention of how already very busy Housing Officers are going to continue to meet need **and** increase prevention work;
- b. fails to answer the EIRC questions, notably the last question which states the officer completing the form must provide a justification for saying that a full EqlA is not required;
- c. fails to acknowledge the potential impact of other cuts upon this service e.g. the potential for the cuts to homelessness support services to increase demand for temporary accommodation.

Without this information it is impossible to make an informed judgement as to whether this is a proposal that should be supported or rejected.

3.2 Transport

3.2.1 CF4 Redesign Highways Information and Guidance delivery

[NB as there are two CF4s and no CF5, we assume this is meant to be CF5 but request you confirm this.]

We appreciate the demand that staffing levels make upon the Council's budget and, if the plans do include all that the EIRC recommends, would not object this proposal. This support is, however, conditional.

We therefore call upon the Council to:

- i. ensure the decision regarding **where** digitally excluded older and Disabled people can access the service is local to where they live, i.e. takes into account that cuts to transport and the proposal for a single, centralised Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service makes it entirely unsuitable for 'in person' visits;
- ii. ensure all information is available in **Easy English**, in addition to Plain English versions.

3.2.2 IN2 Charge for advisory disabled (sic) bays and keep clear markings

We feel that, as it stands, this is an unacceptable proposal.

Disabled people do not choose to need this type of provision; it is essential to their ability to get out of their home. Provision of advisory parking bays therefore provides the early intervention to prevent isolation that the Strategy purports to prioritise.

Furthermore, as it currently stands, you will be asking people to pay for something they cannot rely upon having access to.

Given that 50% of Disabled people are living in poverty⁴, the proposals to prevent use of bus passes before 9.30am and withdraw the companion bus pass completely will substantially impact upon Disabled people, leaving them even more dependent upon a car to travel and therefore triply disadvantaged.

We therefore call upon the Council:

- a. to reject the proposal to charge for advisory parking bays for Disabled people;
- b. to seek central government approval of another set of bye-laws (regardless of whether the proposal is adopted or not), including one that enables it to enforce parking restrictions (see Headline Recommendations section above);
- c. to implement any charge on a means-tested basis, should the Council decide to adopt the proposal anyway.

3.2.3 RS2 Reduction of subsidies for bus routes with low numbers of passengers

Again, the absence of any information on where the reductions will fall prevents an informed response to this proposal. For example,

- which bus routes will be affected?
- which areas along the bus route will be impacted?
- what constitutes a low number of passengers?
- will the reduction be focused on cutting funding at certain times of day or cutting certain routes completely? and,
- if both, which will be affected in which way?

We note that the total cost of subsidised bus routes equates to £1.50 per journey. Whilst this then results in a total cost of nearly £2m, it is a relatively small amount of money to ensure disadvantaged communities are able to work, especially as unemployment and low-income households cost the Council so much more.

However, without further information we cannot make an informed assessment as to whether the savings this cut will achieve justifies the impact it will have upon the current service users.

⁴ Disability and Poverty, New Policy Institute (funded by JRF), August 2016

3.2.4 RS3 Remove funding for local traffic schemes currently devolved to Neighbourhood Partnerships

As there is no information provided as to how the Council will save more than the cost of 1.5FTE staff by implementing this measure, an informed response is not possible.

We are therefore left to assume that this is primarily a cut in expenditure on traffic schemes rather than a matter of where decisions are made about which schemes are implemented. The title given to this cut is consequently somewhat disingenuous.

Whilst we do not support with each Neighbourhood Partnership (NP) receiving the same budget, regardless of need, we cannot support this cut without being given sufficient and relevant information upon which to decide.

3.2.5 RS4 Remove Companion Concessionary Bus Passes & RS8 Reduce Operating Times for Concessionary Travel

We are very concerned that these two proposals, along with the one below, will substantially impact Disabled people badly and more widely than the Council probably appreciates.

The people who have the companion bus pass have it because they cannot travel unsupported. Consequently, the Council is financially penalising those with an impairment(s) that prevents them developing the capacity to travel alone.

As Disabled young people have said:

- i. It would make it harder for Disabled people to get around carer as some people will get lost and travelling can often be scary confusing.
- ii. People are not always friendly to Disabled people;
- iii. People who have trouble communicating often have low confidence and this would make it worse, they just won't go out;
- iv. Disabled people won't be able to go out and meet people, go to the shops. It will stop Disabled people from being independent contributing to their community. In the end it will make them more dependent and needing more services.

"it can be horrible to ask for help when people don't understand you."

[Disabled young person]

without a and

college or and

These views are supported by the facts, and Disabled people's experience.

Motability figures (actual) show 45% of motability users will lose their eligibility for a motability vehicle when they are moved from DLA to PIP. This means that, by Oct 2017 (the date by which every working age adult on DLA will have been re-assessed) a further 162,000 people will have lost their means of transport.

By reducing the operating times for concessionary travel you will be ensuring that those residents of Bristol who lose their motability vehicle, through no fault of their own, will no longer be able to get to work.

There is an implicit assumption in the Strategy that everyone can get flexible working hours; this is as it generally only applies to those working for to large employers undertaking 'desk jobs'.

We therefore call upon the Council to:

- i. consider how much more expensive it will be SEND pupils' transport to school instead and to Disabled adults to become unemployed;

"The hours that are being planned for removal from Concessionary Travel are exactly the times when children/young people with SEND and their carers/escorts are travelling to school/college/work."

[Parent carer]

incorrect medium

to fund cause

- ii. drop these proposals, in favour of one of our recommendations regarding Council financing.

3.2.6 RS5 EIRC Reorganise how school crossings are patrolled

Whilst we understand the need to make savings we are concerned that this proposal will negatively impact young people's independence, as well as their safety.

We also note that it is likely to work counter to the Council's Health & Wellbeing Strategy as it will cause some parents to revert to driving their child(ren) to school, rather than letting them walk.

We therefore call upon the Council:

- i. if cuts have to be made, to select the first option given – to withdraw School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) where there are 'engineered crossing facilities'.
- ii. to consider the cost of providing additional support hours (for an independence support worker) to some children in mainstream schools who cannot reliably use such crossings e.g. children and young people with learning, cognitive or behavioural difficulties, including those labelled as SEND.

3.2.7 RS6 Withdraw Reimbursements to Community Transport Operators, for Concessionary Travel

We are very disappointed to see this proposal within the Corporate Strategy as, to us, it is a clear example of direct discrimination against Disabled people who have to use mobility equipment or need transport direct from their home. It is not their fault that private sector bus companies (and the public transport regulations) effectively prevent them from using bus/coach services.

Had the bus companies concerned done anything substantial to persuade government to change the regulations there would be a case for saying it is the regulations, not the company, that are causing the discrimination. However, our largest local operator has only ever acted to avoid prioritising wheelchair users' accessing the wheelchair space – usually by challenging all court decisions that they should.

We appreciate the Council is required to reimburse standard bus use of the concessionary pass but not community bus use.

However, by paying for concessionary travel on one set of services and not on the other, the Council will effectively be 'rewarding' those services that, in practice, mostly don't accommodate Disabled people with certain impairments (private sector bus companies) whilst 'punishing' those who mostly do (community transport operators).

As one group of parent carers' notes,

"If the Council no longer reimburses Community Transport operators for Concessionary Passes - and the social enterprises running them cannot cover the cost – how will the most vulnerable SEND children and their carers travel?"

This proposal is one of several that supports the view that the Council has 'benchmarked' its provision against other local authorities with the sole purpose of matching the 'lowest common denominator'; a less than fitting action for a city that aspires to be one of the best places to live.

Furthermore, it is extremely unlikely that the company doing the 'benchmarking' took into consideration the attitude towards Disabled people of those other local authorities' bus service providers. Disabled people know from personal experience that many other local authority bus services are much more accommodating and welcoming of wheelchair users – even where the same bus company is involved e.g. in Cornwall, where you will find wheelchair users in Bristol experience a lot more reticence to accommodate them than in Cornwall, even though First bus operate in both areas.

We would not recommend the suggestion below as a long term solution, because we want an accessible and inclusive public transport system, we believe it should be implemented in the short term, if the Council is able to.

We therefore call upon the Council:

- i. to investigate if they are able to introduce a levy on all the private sector companies operating in Bristol that don't, in practice, provide accessible transport so the Council can pay for community transport to 'fill the gap'. This would enable Council to make the financial savings it seeks without doing so at the sole expense of Disabled people.
- ii. if not able to introduce a levy, to persuade local bus companies to part-fund our community transport as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility policy.

3.3 Neighbourhoods

3.3.1 CF6 New Ways of delivering Parks and Green Spaces

The paucity of information regarding the terms and principles upon which any changes are made make it impossible to provide an informed response, e.g.

- no information on what savings are being referred to i.e. staff, maintenance costs, etc.,
- no indication regarding the level of responsibility the Council expects local communities to take on e.g. dealing with litter, &/or doing all the gardening, &/or dealing with the removal of 'dumped' items, &/or ensuring user safety etc.

Until such information is provided, it is not possible to make specific comments on this proposal.

We therefore call upon the Council to:

- i. provide the missing information;
- ii. commit to not letting parks/spaces fall into disrepair so it can then use lack of use as an excuse to sell the land off;
- iii. make keeping the parks/spaces accessible an essential requirement, however they are to be maintained and managed;
- iii. where there is a lack of local interest in taking on responsibility, to continue to take responsibility for the park/space and not use it as an excuse to declassify and/or sell the land off.

3.3.2 CF7 Re-shaping Neighbourhood Partnerships (NPs)

In a department that has been doing a great deal of learning about, and training of others in, asset-based community development, we cannot believe that the Council has no ideas about what it will replace NPs with, yet the EIRC fails to give any indication regarding the options currently being considered.

Furthermore, the prediction that, whatever the changes made, the Council will save at least £275,000 – and potentially as much as £825,000 – means these options must exist, even though they have yet to be consulted on.

Given the lack of any information, we can only state:

- a. we would welcome at least some of the Wellbeing grant funding being removed from local control so that it can benefit communities of interest as well;
- b. we would welcome a requirement for local councillors to actively include the perspectives of equalities communities when deciding what happens locally;
- c. we would welcome a decision that the amount of funding provided to NPs (or their replacement) is dependent upon local need, not population numbers.

d. we **would not** welcome a decision to effectively cut a range of services by reducing the funding for affluent areas without passing on additional funds to those areas where there is substantial disadvantage.

Without additional information it is impossible to respond further.

3.3.3 CF8 Citywide Approach to Information, Advice and Guidance

Whilst we appreciate the financial constraints upon the Council we are conscious of there being insufficient IAG services in the city, even before a cut in funding is considered.

We are also very aware that it is simply not possible for the vast majority of Disabled people to put together an effective application for PIP or ESA based on 'online' information - even if that online information is capable of giving clear guidance on how to phrase every different impairment Disabled people may have and its impact on an individual's daily life – which it won't be. Such benefit applications, along with those involving a potential liability for Bedroom Tax, simply have to be done in person if they are to be successful.

This is even before one takes into consideration that Disabled and older people are the most digitally-excluded people as well as being one of the groups most likely to need IAG services.

As an organisation, Disabled people are increasingly contacting us for support and information because the IAG is already groaning under the strain of trying to meet the need within existing budgets.

We therefore struggle to see where and how the 10% 'saving' can be found. However, we do recommend two actions that could reduce overall costs, albeit not as much as 10%.

a. Funding for someone to attend each ESA and PIP assessment alongside the claimant could reduce the need for appeals, which would both reduce Disabled people's stress and anxiety levels and reduce the need for (more expensive) IAG support to appeal a decision⁵. Unfortunately when, over the past two years, we've proposed the Council fund such a project they have shown no interest.

b. Jointly funding (relatively) low-cost Peer-led Drop-Ins (using both IAG and Better Care budgets) where they can get answers to myriad disability-related questions from other Disabled people e.g. "Where can I get a lightweight manual wheelchair so my son can push me up the hill to my house?", "The mobility shop has said it will cost £200 for new tyres and I just can't afford that. What do I do?", leaving the IAG services to focus on more complex enquiries.

3.3.4 CF9 In-house enforcement

We have no objections to this proposal, subject to the Council consistently offering support rather than implementing 'statutory fees', and subject to any income it does generate in this way going towards services for disadvantaged people.

3.3.5 IN4 Parking charges to Blaise, Oldbury Court, Ashton Court

We would support this proposal, in principle, if those on income-related benefits, or all Bristol residents, were exempted. Obviously the former of these would make better financial sense.

⁵ We have applied to the Council for a small amount of funding to continue the Peer Support at Assessments project we have started (using our own monies) that would provide such a service. This means the funding would come from an existing budget, so wouldn't involve additional costs.

Whilst Council officers' immediate reaction to this proposal is likely to be "it isn't practicable", we think it would be if the Council used the NHS charges exemption card to distinguish between who does, and doesn't, have to pay; ticketing machines could be programmed to accept them.

3.3.6 RS9 Reduce the number of council run libraries

As with much of this consultation, the lack of information prevents a fully informed response. Whilst we appreciate that a commitment to consult on a reconfigured service inevitably means there is less clarity at this stage, the Council could at least have indicated which approaches would save £720,000 and £2,200,000, respectively.

We are also disappointed to see the Council planning to make further changes to the library service after the recent amount of money and time spent on conducting a thorough consultation about, and implementing, their reconfiguration.

More broadly, this type of constant flux, throughout the Council, (where there is radical change every 12-24 months) is very expensive and unproductive. Our members, not unreasonably, want to know just how much all these changes, and the consultants brought in each time, has cost. They are also very fed up with being asked for their views, and sometimes appearing to be listened to, only to find that one or two years later the initial 'cut to the bone' proposals are raised again.

3.3.7 RS10 Local Crisis Prevention Fund

We struggle to make sense of the Council proposing this particular cut, given that the existence of the fund helps prevent homelessness and aid people to obtain more secure accommodation.

Without any explanation as to what the Council's rationale was when selecting this proposal, and no information as to what the Council envisages will replace it, it's not possible to provide an informed response other than that mentioned above.

All we can say is that, by causing the closure of the very VCSE organisations that offer such services alongside affordable furniture and furnishings, the proposal risks:

- i. increasing homelessness and unacceptable living conditions in the city, and
- ii. the loss of opportunities for homeless people and those recovering from substance misuse that many of these organisations also provide.

3.3.8 RS11 PCSO Review of service provision

Without further information about the demand placed upon PCSOs in different areas, we cannot really comment on this proposal.

We would however remind the Council and the Police that hate crime is an increasing problem in our communities so some research on the actual levels (as opposed to reported levels) in different parts of the city is needed **before** decisions are taken.

3.3.9 RS12 Removal of discounts for Council Tax on unoccupied and unfurnished properties

Whilst this seems a sensible proposal, it's unclear whether it would only apply to vacant unfurnished properties, or all vacant properties.

We therefore call upon the Council (if implemented) to ensure:

- i. It is made a condition of Council Tax that landlords cannot fund CT on unoccupied premises from the rents of tenants in other properties. The Council could enforce it by doing 'spot checks' of landlords' accounts to ensure this is not happening.
- ii. those in hospital or rehab for over one month remain eligible for a reduction in the Council Tax on their primary home.

3.3.10 RS13 Combine Citizen Service Points (CSPs) into a single, central, CSP

This proposal is simply a plan to cut all CSPs, with the exception of the existing CSP at 100 Temple St., rather than a plan to centralise CSPs.

Whilst any centralisation of services is less accessible for very many people on a low income or limited ability to travel, our primary concern regarding this proposal is that, in combination with all the proposed transport budget cuts and digital exclusion, we believe it constitutes discrimination against those Disabled people with mobility difficulties or who require support to travel.

3.3.11 RS14 Provide a different model of pest control for vulnerable people, via commissioning

The lack of **any** information regarding what exactly will replace the current arrangements makes it impossible to give any kind of informed response to this proposal.

3.4 People

3.4.1 CF10 Review provision of day services to adults – Community Links

We are somewhat confused about this proposal as we have received contradictory information regarding it.

The EIRC clearly indicates the alternative provision proposed will not necessarily be at a venue close to an existing day centre, whilst the Service Director for Adult Social Care assured us all alternative services/venues would be close to any day centre to be shut.

Consequently we cannot give a clear response as insufficient factual information provided means we couldn't clarify which perspective is correct.

However, we can say that we would be very concerned if what we were told by the Service Director was incorrect.

Many 'infirm' elders and Disabled people struggle to get out of their home and go beyond their immediate vicinity without some support. Therefore, services provided on the far side of an area from where they live are, effectively, inaccessible. This will particularly be the case if the Council insists on implementing its proposals regarding concessionary bus passes of all types on all forms of public transport.

It is also a false saving as social care recipients will have no choice but to demand their right to local authority support to engage with at least one of the following: Family, Friends, Faith, Hobby, Social activity, as part of their social care package.

Such an action – which, in the circumstances outlined we would have to advise our members to pursue – would probably cost the Council at least as much as they will save by discontinuing the companion bus pass or the use of a concessionary bus pass on community transport, without removing the reputational damage that transport cuts will prompt.

Disabled young adults have also expressed their concerns to us, as follows:

- i. Autistic people would struggle with the change so it's time for the Council to stop constantly changing their services;
- ii. The proposal would probably result in Disabled people having less care/insufficient staff-to-user ratios;
- iii. Some people could become isolated.

"It's like saying Disabled people don't matter."

[Disabled young person]

We therefore call upon the Council to:

- a. Ensure the alternative provisions proposed are as close to existing facilities as the Service Director assured us they would be; and
- b. Reject all the proposals regarding concessionary travel, that would affect both Disabled people and of their companions.

3.4.2 CF11 Recommissioning of Bristol Youth Links

We are somewhat confused about this proposal as the figures don't add up. The EIRC states that the total reduction will be £900,000, yet the figures provided only add up to £789,000. Our best guess is that the lower figure is the actual proposed reduction and that the officer incorrectly included a £100,000 increase in 'specialist services' as another decrease.

However, in the absence of adequate information it is, again, not possible to provide an informed response to the proposal, as it's entirely possible that this £100,000 **is** meant to be a decrease, not an increase.

We would be deeply concerned if this latter scenario were to be the case.

Disabled young people in Bristol sent us their views on this proposal, as follows:

- a. they already have fewer places to go to meet friends and socialise so any further closures would disadvantage them more than non-Disabled young people;
- b. Many schools and colleges are centralised so removal of local youth clubs would leave them without friends who live nearby or who use a service they can get to, leaving them socially isolated;
- c. This, in turn, would reduce their social development, further disadvantaging them in their future life – in addition to the multiple barriers they will face;
- d. They would lose the ability to:
 - i. take part in the volunteering experiences provided by their youth groups,
 - ii. take part in activities that develop life skills and contribute to building a sense of independence and a sense of self-worth;
- e. Youth centres have gyms and sports facilities so they would miss out on having a big space to take part in sporting activities, to run around in, and to let off steam.

This could also negatively impact their education and undermine their ability to cope.

3.4.3 CF12 Change the way reablement, rehabilitation and intermediate Care Services are provided in the city

Our understanding of this service, provided by those delivering it, is that a significant number of those using the service have some degree of dementia. If this is the case we are concerned that commissioning the service will result in unnecessary distress, especially for those with dementia, due to the constantly changing private sector workforce. This is based on evidence that suggests staff turnover within the Council's team of workers is significantly lower than among other providers.

We are also concerned that a commissioned service will result in the staff working to such tight time-slots that the service users' needs will not be adequately met, for example:

- i. rushing the individual to do something in less time that they need,
- ii. stress-related forgetfulness - such as forgetting to check a beverage is close enough to the service user for them to reach,
- iii. overlooking signs of unmet need/health concerns (due to insufficient time to notice) such as levels of hydration, whether the individual is eating enough, etc.

Finally, we are concerned to note that you have no plans for what a re-configured, re-commissioned service would look like and clearly state that you don't know what savings can be made, yet have decided to cut the budget by £600,000.

3.4.4 CF13 Review Early Help Services

On initial reading it appeared that this proposal would not affect the range and quantity of services, merely site them alongside other relevant services, thereby reducing building and management costs. However, upon reading the EIRC it appears the Council also intends to reduce services.

How much that represents is very unclear as the stated sum of "£1,200,000 plus cost avoidances" is meaningless – especially as we don't know what "cost avoidance" is being referred to, or how much it would save.

We would be concerned about any reduction:

- i. in services, at it would undermine the Council's intended focus on 'early help' as a means of cutting costs;
- ii. in frontline staffing, as it would leave Disabled and SEN children particularly disadvantaged as they, in particular, need higher staff/service user ratios to be able to thrive;
- iii. that comes before the Parent Carer Participation Forum's recommendations have had an opportunity to 'bed down'.

"Early Help (Family Support) is crucial as it provides a signposting and preventive function before families who have children/young people with SEND collapse in crisis."

[Parent Carer]

We therefore cannot support a reduction in services for families of Disabled adults or children.

However, if the proposal is limited to only saving money by co-locating Early Help Services alongside suitable, nearby, related services (and not schools) **in partnership with parents**, i.e. drops the reduction in services element, we would find this proposal a lot easier to support.

3.4.5 CF14 Agree the best Future provision of Community Meals

As with other services the Council informs us are not financially viable (see below), the first question has to be,

"What went wrong with the management of the service and the advice received regarding what rates to charge?"

It is only if there has been no management failure contributing to the loss that a proposal to reduce/cut the service is justified. No such information has been provided.

The EIRC states that, as the service is only provided to vulnerable people, "No particular group are identified as being more at risk than others". We would dispute that as, surely, those unable to leave the home, and those with conditions like dementia, will be particularly disadvantaged - if only because of the combination of having no access to cheap nutritious meals in a local cafe (for example) & no-one checking if they've eaten their meals.

"When I was reliant on ready meals (frozen and chilled) I became poorly nourished leading to weight loss, having no energy, and a worsening of my impairments."

[Disabled adult]

We are also concerned that this 'oversight'/prevention' element would not be provided for free by an external agency.

3.4.6 CF15 Review dementia care home provision – Redfield Lodge

This is a particularly difficult proposal to comment on as:

- a. part of the EIRC is missing and
- b. there is a rather large, unexplained, gap between what the EIRC lists as the considerations necessary to stop the losses the Lodge is incurring, and what is provided in the 'Could your proposals impact citizens with protected characteristics?' - where reference is made to plans for 2018 without indicating what they are.

We therefore request the following information before we are able to respond to this proposal:

- i. Is the proposal about increasing charges to bring them in line with private sector provision and reducing reliance on agency staff?
- ii. Is the proposal to commission an organisation to run the facility for the Council?
- iii. What are the plans for 2018 that the EIRC refers to?
- iv. Does it involve moving all people with dementia who are currently cared for by the Council into new Council-run facilities?
- v. If not, who is envisaged using the new facilities and will they be run as commissioned provision?
- vi. Why has the use of agency staff jumped from zero last year to over a quarter of a million pounds this year?
- vii. Was there a business Risk Management plan (re: staffing) in place and, if so, why did it fail?

3.4.7 CF16 Consider options for providing support to Carers

Whilst we are concerned about this proposal to stop a universal provision for those carers delivering a substantial amount of support, we are relieved to see that, if the proposal is adopted, the carers' allowance would at least be means-tested rather than completely withdrawn.

The Strategy rightly expresses concern about social isolation but without including the social isolation of Disabled people and their carers, despite both groups often experiencing high levels of social isolation. Yet, to means-test carers allowance (and the support it provides for) and to withdraw the companion buss pass, risks increasing the social isolation of both carers and the Disabled people they support.

This sends a message that the Council doesn't value what carers do and is unappreciative of the amount of money they are already saving the Council – even when one includes the cost of a universal carer allowance.

This is in addition to our concerns about:

- a) The likelihood that it will impact negatively on carers' health and wellbeing, which in turn is likely to impact the whole family (including the Disabled person they are caring for) if people have to choose between spending on a bit of respite for themselves or continuing to use what money they have to meet the needs of the rest of the family.
- b) The estimated saving of £50k failing to take into account the potential risk of people undertaking less caring themselves, thereby forcing those they support to turn to BCC for increased social care support to cover that shortfall.

c) The “Adoption of a RAS (that) will lead to a fairer, more controlled allocation of resources” when Adult Care social workers are telling us that the RAS software is not fit for purpose. We are therefore sceptical that the Council has evidence for this, or that a carers’ RAS will be effective.

We also ask you to consider the following points, raised with us by parent carers:

“Please remember that:-

- i. Once a couple have a disabled child, the stress can often lead to family break down, and many parent carers are single.
- ii. The needs of their child(ren) with SEND means that many parent carers have to give up work, and live on low incomes whether they get benefits or not.
- iii. Many of the extra expenses associated with having a Disabled child are costly, so the added expense of paying for a ‘service’ they or their child needs may be the last straw.
- vi. Many families have more than one child with SEND, so paying for each and every service multiple times would soon become unsustainable.
- vii. Other parent carers are looking for a BCC service not because they can't afford it, but because there is no other way of accessing the support they need or there are no other providers available. These parents could contribute financially, but they would still need the service to be provided by BCC (unless the Council successfully invests in stimulating the market).”

3.5 Place

3.5.1 CF17 Gradually reduce funding to Destination Bristol

It is difficult to comment due to lack of information, other than to say that we share the Equalities Officer's concerns – especially given all the money that has been spent, in partnership with Destination Bristol, to provide up-to-date and full information on accessibility in Bristol – and refer you to our proposal for a ‘tourism tax’ on local businesses.

However, a ‘tourism tax’ (see the ‘Headline Recommendations’ section above) could fund any areas of work Destination Bristol would have to drop without BCC funding.

3.5.2 IN5 Establishment an Energy Infrastructure/Service company

Again, there is no information to indicate:

- i. what makes this a new company,
- ii. how it will operate,
- iii. why there will only be “potentially an interest rate return on the associated loan”,
- iv. who is going to own the company,
- v. why the current company is getting £260,000 net revenue support and what it is for, and
- vi. why the new company won't need ‘net revenue support’?

We can therefore only call upon the Council to ensure (should the proposal go ahead):

- a. the Council owns the new company,
- b. the Council gets an income, as well as interest on any loans, and
- c. there's a requirement that the energy supplied remains both ‘green’/renewable and cheaper than the “Big 6”.

3.5.3 RS15 Reduce funding to Bristol Music Trust

This is an area where we see our proposal for a “tourism tax” providing at least part of the funding that previously came from the Council.

We would therefore support such a proposal **as long as** there is a requirement that the remaining monies the Trust receives from the Council are used to maintain the current level of provision for the most financially disadvantaged groups and those communities of people with protected characteristics.

3.5.4 RS16 Reduce funding to Key Arts Providers

Yet again, there is far too little information provided upon which to base an informed response.

We therefore request that the Council provide the following information, before making any decisions:

- a. which “key arts providers” the proposal applies to;
- b. which will get their funding reduced and which will lose all funding;
- c. where this has not been decided, upon what basis the Council will decide whether to reduce or cut the funding of each “key arts provider”;
- d. which budget will it come from i.e. the arts grants’ budget or another arts-related budget?

We would also want to see the Council ensure these providers can secure funding from elsewhere for their mainstream work and only use their Council funding to cater for the needs of the most financially excluded groups and those people with protected characteristics.

3.5.5 RS17 Reduce museums opening hours

Firstly we wish to point out that Mshed is currently closed on Mondays so it is unclear whether it would therefore be shut Monday-Wednesday throughout the year, or would start opening on Mondays for part of the year.

Before we can provide an informed response, we need to know: how much donations have increased by since BMAG installed an high profile ‘donation station’ in the main area, and how many/what proportion of the donations are made in a manner that enables it to claim back Gift Aid.

3.6. Health and Wellbeing

3.6.1 RS1 Re-commission alcohol and other drugs misuse services for adults

The findings of the Council’s own research⁶ states:

“Bristol has the highest estimated rate of opiate and crack users of all the core cities and the largest proportion of very high complexity clients which makes them more likely to be in treatment for longer and need specific support.”

Furthermore, the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) suggests that

“self-reported Class A drug use in South West of England and Wales is on the rise with a rate that has exceeded the national average since 2011/12. This amounts to 3.8% of the adult population in the area.....”

Given the increased levels of poverty in the UK (and particularly among ‘at risk’ communities in the city) we are likely to see a further increase, not a decrease, in demand.

In the light of this, to cut family support, youth services and substance misuse services would be to knowingly create a greater than necessary demand for all three services in the future, and create a higher reliance on expensive health interventions, or leave local communities to deal with the consequences.

It is difficult to say much more as there is no information provided regarding which aspects of ROADS will be affected by the cut, other than to say that:

- i. £1.1m is a substantial amount of money to withdraw from such services and,

⁶ ‘Bristol Substance Misuse Needs Assessment’, Safer Bristol Partnership, Sept 2016

ii. whilst we appreciate the final service will be subject to negotiation with those running the commissioned services, the Council must have things it definitely does/doesn't want cut as part of the contract, so why hasn't this information been provided?

However, despite this lack of information, we are aware that, whilst £1,103,000 is 14.33% of overall spend, we have heard that community based services have been told they face close to a 20% cut in their funding. We feel this is a rather large difference that should have been explained in the consultation paperwork.

We also call upon you to bear in mind that significant numbers of substance misusers have a dual diagnosis and consequently will also have been badly impacted by a range of central government, and proposed local government, cuts – creating a very substantial cumulative impact that will leave them needing more, not less, support.

4. Conclusions

4.1 We welcome the stated commitment to reduce inequality across the city but note that the Strategy will only worsen them.

4.2 We are concerned that the content in the main body of the Strategy disproportionately overlooks Disabled people whilst the cuts listed in the Appendix) disproportionately target them.

4.3 We are very disappointed that the Council has not used the commitment to reducing inequality as a guiding principle when considering where to make cuts.

4.4 There are alternatives to the cuts that the Council should explore thoroughly before making decisions.

4.5 Having provided some alternatives, we hope the Council will give them serious consideration.

4.6 We are very disappointed that the Strategy does not include any commitment to working to implement the Bristol Disabled People's Manifesto, especially given the specific commitment it makes to working on the Women's and BME Manifestos.

4.7 We don't feel the consultation qualifies as a proper consultation due to the lack of sufficient information upon which to base a sufficiently informed response.

4.8 The cumulative impact of the cuts upon Disabled people, their families and carers, is unacceptably high, even before one takes into account their interaction with previous local and national government cuts/service revision.

4.9 When proposing a number of the cuts the Council does not appear to have considered the potential for certain service changes/removals to result in it facing further (and/or greater) demand upon other budgets across the Council.

4.10 It is deeply disappointing that the Mayor has not committed to get the private sector to fund those elements of Council expenditure that they benefit from the most.

Appendix 1

Examples of the cumulative impact of cuts upon Disabled people include:

- a. Disabled people face an average 25% additional cost of living **before** any of the costs listed below, and up to 50% more for those receiving social care support.
- b. Many will lose the £30 disability premium associated with unemployment benefit for all but the very few in the ESA Support Group (54% of Disabled people are unemployed).
- c. The loss of the higher rate mobility allowance (for very many of them)
- d. The loss of housing benefit to cover their need for an additional room in their home – where renting – due to the Bedroom tax.
- e. The reduction in, or loss of all, their DLA income for many Disabled people when they are transferred to PIP – the bulk of which will be happening between now and October e.g. higher rate mobility is over £50pw, a large sum in weekly income to lose.
- f. The loss of their companion bus pass.
- g. The additional cost of £200 for an advisory parking bay for their carer, so they can be driven instead/as well.
- h. The cost of not being able to use their concessionary bus pass on community transport.
- i. A fraction under 4% increase in Council tax (if they are on a low income but just outside of qualifying for Council Tax relief) on top of all the other additional costs this budget will bring them.
- j. The loss of employment some will face when they lose their Motability Allowance.

All of this is additional to them already being the group in society most likely to be unemployed (over 50%) and most likely to be living in poverty (50% of them).

Appendix 2 - EHCP Case Studies – Bristol

These case studies were provided by Contact a Family within a very short timescale, to raise the Mayor's awareness. We thank both the parents and Contact a Family for providing them.

1. S1, Bristol

I'll try not to turn this into a rant and keep it brief, but our experience has been pretty appalling. When this is all over I would really like to try and contribute in some way to making changes towards the current EHCP process in Bristol.

My son, W is 8 and we applied for the EHCP as we've been looking at moving him to specialist school. He also has a lot of sensory needs and speech and language problems. We were hoping that after his assessments from various professionals we would see some provision in section F to address those needs.

We had an assessment from the EP and then were told it was too late to get any other professionals involved, despite attempts from us to move everyone along. We then paid to have independent assessments done (we've been paying for independent OT support for five years) so they could be used in the plan. The LA used the independent assessments, which clearly showed W's need for regular input from Speech and Language and OT, but failed to put sufficient provision in section F. Instead they have said that the school should provide all of the provision, despite the school not knowing how to implement it (we're on very good terms with the school by the way and they are

amazingly pro-active, they're just not trained OT and S&L therapists). During the draft meeting (which our independent OT and speech therapist came to) this was all pointed out and the LA's response was that without an NHS OT and S&L reports they wouldn't be able to put provision in.

We have so many examples of how the LA have dragged their feet, misinformed us (we were told for example that we wouldn't get any OT input because the core offer is only 4 hours of OT during W's whole EHCP plan. It's my understanding though that if the need is there the LA should provide it, it shouldn't be dependent on how many hours the NHS can offer) and been generally blocking us from getting a robust EHCP. We are now looking at a pretty flimsy EHCP plan that is not fit for purpose.

The one positive is that we have it so can move schools (hopefully). Our next move is mediation and then tribunal. At the tribunal I will have to represent myself as we don't the funds for a solicitor and even if we did I couldn't spend that money knowing that it could go on providing independent OT and Speech support for me son.

Generally I feel really let down by this process. It's supposed to enable our children to be fully supported and help them reach their potential - instead it's leading parents to nervous breakdowns.

If you need any other info I would be happy to contribute, something really needs to change with the way the EHCP process is done.

2. Z, Bristol

My daughter has SEN support but she has access to a t/a most lessons, she refuses to go to or do lessons. Needs things to be explain 3/4 times including use of visual aids, she has sensory issues and meltdowns. She also has extra help with maths and English and even though they have moved her into a nurture group she is still being taken out of maths and being given extra help. Even though she has access to t/a and resource base she's not a part of it.

She doesn't have an EHCP but school have said we can apply ourselves. My daughter is 12 in yr 7 and has been getting this support since she started school in Sept - even though they said it would only be temporary.

3. L, Bristol

P is 3 at nursery with no support. As I recently told you I worry for when she goes to school (advice given was to speak to nursery about getting EHCP started and contact SENDIAS service). Despite her needs we have been turned down for an EHCP, she has complex needs!!

4. S2, Bristol

I have twins who are 10 and both on the spectrum. One has just been diagnosed and receives no support at all and my other daughter was finally diagnosed last July after 2 years. I applied for an EHCP but was refused as my daughter didn't meet the criteria as the school at that point were not doing anything. Finally ASDOT got involved and my daughter now receives band 3 funding although the school are still not doing what they are supposed to be doing.

I have spoken with both the school and ASDOT to go back to the Council to apply for an EHCP as I think that my daughters' needs should be in writing so that the school actually stick to what they are supposed to be doing and also that anything that is put in place follows her to secondary school.

5. H, Bristol

I have repeatedly asked for my oldest to have an EHCP done but the school have said that he's fine and that it would be rejected if they applied. We are now in a situation where he has had many spectacular meltdowns which have resulted in 2 hospital admissions and the police being called to school. As a result of the meltdown at school he has now been permanently excluded. An appointment was made a couple of weeks ago for us to meet with the EP at school to start the process, it seems though that it is now too late. I strongly believe that if an EHCP had been put in place sooner he would not have reached the point of exclusion. I'm not blaming the school for this, I'm blaming the process.

6. T, Bristol

Have a son with Classic Autism, non-verbal and is smearing. The Social Worker came to do an assessment and said he doesn't fit the criteria for Direct Payments, but he has an EHCP. We have housing issues and need help with housing as well but the Social Worker was really useless.

Appendix 3 – Jargon-Buster

EqIA = Equalities' Impact Assessment.

EHCPs = Education and Health Care Plans.

BME = Black and other Minority Ethnic.

ESA = Employment Support Allowance,

CEO = Chief Executive Office. The CEO is the most senior employee within an organisation.

SMT = Senior Management Team (consisting of CEO and the four Strategic Directors).

EIRC = Equalities' Impact Relevance Checks – the replacement for Draft EqIAs.

BMAG = Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

Motability = An organisation that provides adapted vehicles and high-cost powerchairs/scooters to Disabled people in return for their higher rate mobility allowance.

Motability vehicle = the car/van/powerchair/scooter provided by Motability.

6. Bristol Dementia Action Alliance

I am writing this letter to you as Chair of Bristol Dementia Action Alliance regarding the city's Corporate Strategy. The views outlined below are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of fellow members of BDAA. I include several services delivered within the city that I feel are vital and are potentially at risk:

- The closure of Bristol Community Links sites (North, South and Central) and the North Bristol Drop-In Centre at Muller Road URC.
- An integrated National Health Service AND a National Care Service.
- Closure of libraries.

I appreciate that it is necessary to make substantial cuts in expenditure and that you may need to cut where you normally wouldn't however, I would like to make a plea for the three Bristol Community Links sites (North, South and Central) and their associated staff. I extend that plea to include the North Bristol Drop-In Centre at Muller Road URC and its team. The people working at these sites offer vital support to underprivileged people with ESN and other issues. If BCL closes, many people would have nothing, no place to go, no activities, no support, nothing. These services are a lifeline for many, providing support for many service users who, can at times, feel extremely isolated and we need to protect them. We should also remember that from a Dementia point of view all these sites are "Dementia Friendly".

I am also aware that there is a big issue with Adult Social Care i.e. "bed-blockers" (Not a very nice term to use about fellow human beings) and a growing older population requiring increasingly, additional funding. What we really need is an integrated National Health Service **AND a National Care Service**. No chance of that in the foreseeable future, unless (as a fellow trustee says) someone in a position of power (like a government minister or city mayor) has the courage to make it happen. There's a challenge for you!

So, what is the solution? Rather than one group play the "blame- game" and say that "so n' so is to blame", perhaps Bristol can adopt an idea recently shown on TV, whereby NHS and Social Services teams adopt a more joined up approach to delivering services and work closer together. Some other towns and cities already do this and as a consequence, patients can be moved from hospital to home more quickly in a more proactive, rather than reactive way, potentially saving money in the process and of course, improving the well-being of some of our most vulnerable people.

Can I also make a plea for libraries? We've already been through two recent consultation exercises on this and I believe the people have spoken on how they view the importance of libraries. As well as being a place to borrow books, go on the internet, complete CV's, run mother and toddler groups, memory cafes, libraries are "places of safety" for people with Dementia. Rather than closing libraries can we look to move more services into libraries, making them more interesting and appealing places to visit - a community hub.

7. Bristol Festivals

I have recently started as the Executive Director for *Bristol Festivals*, a membership organisation representing the City's diverse festival sector. In November, we held a Festival and Events Forum meeting with 27 organisations in attendance to discuss the Cultural Strategy with Andrew Erskine from Tom Flemming Consultants, we also discussed the current proposals for cuts to the KAP funding in the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022.

I felt that it was important to respond on behalf of the Festival and Events sector and have done so in collaboration with not only our members but also with other cultural organisations to contribute to the discussions around the future of culture in Bristol. We are very encouraged that the new BCC Corporate Strategy is ambitious for culture in the City and we want to work with you to ensure that Bristol is "a leading cultural city, making culture and sport accessible to all". We also want to work with you on developing the new Cultural Strategy which can underpin continued cultural development. Culture is the driver of city image and reputation. It builds social cohesion and well-being, it develops inclusion and creative talent, it attracts visitors and investors, and it underpins the creative industries which is the fastest growing sector in the UK and a vital part of Bristol's economy.

Bristol has built a reputation as a centre of culture and counter-culture. This has been developed through long-term consistent investment in a diverse ecology of arts organisations and festivals working in partnership with other agencies including Arts Council England. Despite lower levels of investment than other cities we have made that investment work harder than others through sustaining a diverse ecology of organisations. Our rich cultural diversity makes Bristol stand out – activist, contradictory, unorthodox, and independent, Bristol is highly distinctive. It is our culture which makes Bristol attractive as a destination for visitors and for businesses to set up and to stay. "Bristol is Creativity and Innovation" says Lonely Planet.

As a cultural sector, we want to work with the City Council to forge a stronger city for all the diverse people who work, live, learn and visit Bristol. We want to ensure rich cultural experiences for our young people as they grow up and take their place in the world. More than ever before we need people with creative skills and broad cultural empathy to sustain Bristol's social fabric and economic health.

Culture is vital to the health of our Society, the quality of our Education, and the innovation capacity of our Economy. This holistic contribution is a product of delivering cultural value which builds a sense of place, empathetic people, enjoyment and the capacity to inspire new thinking and behaviours.

We have a culturally vibrant city – we want to work with the City to sustain that vibrancy and build deeper inclusion and stronger international reputation. The world is becoming ever more competitive and we need to stand tall and work for our city projecting Bristol to the world and connecting local with global.

While acknowledging the scale of cuts which the City needs to make, Bristol Festivals members collectively agree that the current proposal for a 50% funding cut commencing April 2017 would be counterproductive. It would fatally damage the cultural ecology and result in a much bigger reduction in activity and employment due to loss of leverage from other funders. Culture is not only vital for the future of the city it is also very good value with a return of up to £20 for every £1 invested. Last year Bristol City Council culture investment supported 1,700 jobs and generated arts organisation turnover more than £55 million.

Festivals and events are a huge part of the cultural economy and in the last 5 years with stable support from BCC, we've seen the sector grow by a third, with the city now hosting over 50 significant festivals and events from a rich and diverse array of communities and cultures. – *See appendix below*

Whilst many of the city's festivals and events are not in receipt of KAP funding we support the request that any KAP funding cuts are implemented with reasonable notice so that individual organisations have time to plan and to develop strategies to mitigate the impact of funding cuts. Such immediate cuts could jeopardise the ability for cultural organisations to sustain agreements with other funders and therefore severely impact local partnerships and outreach activity that includes; providing vital reductions on hire charges and in-kind support in staff time to many of the city's under-resourced festivals and events.

This approach will enable the cultural sector to work with the City Council Arts Team to develop new strategies to deliver on the Corporate vision, alternative sources of income generation, partnership working and capital investment. Working together we can build a stronger more resilient sector.

I hope that these thoughts contribute to your discussions around the corporate strategy proposals.

8. Bristol Green Capital Partnership



Bristol Green Capital Partnership CIC
c/o Happy City Office
1st Floor Canningford House
38 Victoria Street
Bristol
BS1 6BY

5 Jan 2017

Dear Mayor Marvin Rees

The Board and I welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation that seeks to address the challenges that face our city at the same time as the financial challenges that face the Council.

Bristol Green Capital Partnership brings together more than 800 organisations across the private, public, voluntary and community sectors that share a vision of a green, sustainable city with a high quality of life for all. We enable our members to contribute to this vision, particularly in each of our five themes: energy, food, nature, resources and transport. We deliver projects that advance the vision through addressing multiple themes, such as Healthy City Week. We also lead, working to put sustainability at the core of strategic decision-making, such as encouraging our members to participate in the recent West of England planning consultation.

We have encouraged our members to respond to the corporate strategy consultation through our newsletter and social media channels. In addition to comments from our members on the specific priorities outlined within the strategy, we wish to highlight certain more general points:

Shared vision

There are many commonalities between the vision outlined in the strategy and our own, including leaving no one behind. To ensure a high quality of life all we need to bring environmental sustainability and social progress together, with inclusive and resilient growth that benefits all parts of current and future generations.

We strongly endorse the need to tackle climate change and air pollution, where the poorest communities in our city often bear the greatest burden, as the poorest nations do globally. We support improved public transport and any ways to make this more sustainable and attractive. The strategy's commitment to a carbon neutral and clean energy city by 2050, and a 55% by 2020 recycling target are all also welcome.

It is positive that these issues are in the strategy. But as social justice will not be achieved without environmental justice, city sustainability could be included among the overarching challenges and bold ideas and be more prominent in other aspects of the strategy.

Partnership philosophy

With our origins in a sub-group of the local strategic partnership, partnership-working is at our core. We have a well-established Partnership that can help enable, deliver and lead these efforts and reach out to the wider city.

The Council has been the keystone of Bristol Green Capital Partnership since at least 2007, when it brought together 12 organisations who shared the vision of our city as a green capital. The

Partnership worked closely with BCC and other partners on successive bids for European Green Capital. We were a vital element of the successful bid and supported activities during 2015 itself.

With a new board including key funding institutions, representation of our wider membership through two elected independent directors, and an independent chair, we have been carrying forward this good work in 2016 and beyond.

New delivery models

The consultation seeks input on new ways of addressing our common challenges. We support the emphasis on a Council that “enables individuals, communities and organisations to do things for themselves and for others” rather than necessarily delivering itself. Involving city community groups and institutions, facilitating links and collaboration, and amplifying success are at the very heart of what the Partnership is about.

Daily we witness Bristol’s incredible levels of energy and engagement through our work as we engage our broad and vibrant membership. Many of these organisations would welcome the opportunity to play a role in addressing these challenges, with appropriate support. We frequently provide support for Bristol City Council and other partners’ bids for external funding, leveraging the expertise and involvement of our membership. We stand ready to help on such bids in future.

The City Office

We have followed the innovation of the City Office – a model which shares many similarities with BGCP – with interest. We are keen to be involved in its development, offering support in areas where we can make a difference. For example, the Partnership is considering how it might contribute to the work experience challenge.

One year after the Paris climate agreement was signed, we would be interested to consider which environmental sustainability issues might be most appropriate to address through the City Office approach. One such critical issue might be air pollution.

9. Bristol Music Trust

Bristol Music Trust recognises the need for all sectors of the city to co-operate and work together for the common good and to find a way to balance the budget.

The consultation document proposes a cut of £500k to the BMT grant in 2020. This has been discussed and we confirm that the joint BCC/ BMT objectives for the Trust would still be achievable post 2020 subject to the Colston Hall transformation project taking place in the timescale and to the design that is currently agreed. It is also on the assumption that BMT is not expected to absorb any debt repayment that may be required to supplement the funds we have raised to develop the BCC owned building. The facilities of the new building will make the Music Trust significantly more sustainable, increasing our ability to generate trading income and will attract further external funding from Arts Council England, trusts and foundations and through our growing roster of commercial partnerships. BMT business planning has allowed for a £500k cut from 2020 but any further reduction in subsidy would seriously endanger the objectives for which BMT was established by BCC in 2011. BMT delivers the entrusted services for the city in a cost effective and dynamic fashion and that BMT can continue to make a strong contribution to Bristol's cultural, economic, tourism, education and well being agendas

10. Bristol Older People's Forum

At the Bristol Older People's Forum Trustee meeting on 8/12/16 I was mandated to submit a formal response on behalf of BOPF to the consultation on the Corporate Strategy. We have of course notified those members not online of the consultation, and obtained 50 paper copies which were circulated at a recent Open Forum meeting, for our members to use. I collected and brought many of them to City hall.

We do appreciate the letter which you sent backing BOPF's Manifesto, which you will recall has themes encompassing Safety, Transport, Physical and Mental Health, Care, Housing and Homes, Communication, Participation and Leadership, which of course broadly match council portfolios of Culture Transport, Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Environment, Education Skills.

The general consensus of the Open Forum was that the questionnaire we are being asked to complete was intricate, hard to understand, and lacked sufficient information in detail to allow people to make a really informed choice, but since this was all we had, we did our best rather than have the Council think that we were not concerned about the proposed cuts.

One of my main concerns is that no Equality Impact Assessments have been made. This is clearly concerning since it means that the Council is not fulfilling its equality duties. I do not think that doing these EIA's after decisions are made is the right way round, and may even be illegal!

I have waded through the massive Corporate Strategy document, and make the following points.

CF1: The Leisure Centre at Hengrove has a vital part to play in health and wellbeing; we must not re-finance by making it more expensive for people to be healthy.

CF2: Today I counted four people sleeping rough. There was no mention of HOW homeless people will be housed. What are the efficiencies being considered?

CF3: no comment- not enough detail.

CF4: Generating savings by putting more information online means more people unwilling or unable to use computers miss out on information, this is discriminatory. EIA?

CF7: Neighbourhood partnerships are unelected, self nominated, largely unknown to the population and in many cases ineffective. Money spent on them could be returned to health and social care, transport and environment.

CF8: Any single advice point must be easily accessible by bus from all parts of the city, otherwise people will lose out. Again, putting more information on line is discriminatory, especially against older people.

CF9: no comment- not enough details on enforcement methods.

CF10: Once again disabled people and their carers are being subjected to unwanted change. It is only a few years since the South Bristol Hub was revamped with a brand new sensory room. No-one likes change, but people with mental and physical disabilities in particular take time to be happy and confident, and to make friends. Closing one or more centres will upset people, cause them to lose circles of friends, may make their carers lives more difficult, and they have already had much unwanted change with the closure of School Lane Respite. Vulnerable people lose out every time.

CF11: Re-commissioning youth links means cutting services to young people who need all the help that they can get.

CF12: Re-ablement is supposed to help people return home which costs less than going into care. We should expand rather than cut these services.

CF13: Amalgamate service in fewer buildings, but don't cut fact to face services, and ensure people not on line are catered for.

CF14: Changing to other providers means losing the 'trained - to - spot-difficulties' staff who currently deliver meals. These staff prevent difficulties further down the road. Make sure other providers have trained staff.

CF15: Care costs, but people with Dementia have an illness so any full cost recovery should be supplemented by community health funding/NHS funding.

CF16: no carer should lose out or have life made more difficult. We should be grateful to them!

CF17: reasonable.

IN1: yes

IN2: People in possession of a Disabled 'Blue Badge' should NOT be charged 200£ for a parking bay. This will make disabled people poorer and may make some ,unable to pay ,have much more inconvenience trying to walk home from a parked car. Once again vulnerable people being made more disadvantaged.

IN3: reasonable to have one operations centre.

IN4: reasonable to increase parking fees at Oldbury Court

IN5: reasonable to explore energy company

IN6: reasonable to try to get more income for Bottle Yard Studios.

RS1: reasonable to re-commission drug/alcohol services provided they are local people with an understanding of the city, rather than outsiders.

RS2: It is essential that buses such as the Wessex 511, 512 continue to run since these are often the only way of getting up and down Bristol's hills for older and disabled people. Even though they only run once an hour, they give people the chance to get out, shop, see the Dr. etc. and as such prevent loneliness and isolation which saves the NHS money in the long run.

RS3: This money should go to subsidise essential bus services. as above.

RS4: Concessionary bus passes for companions of disabled people should NOT be removed. These passes enable people to leave home, as in RS3, thus keeping them healthier and in touch with the community. Many could not go by themselves. It is wrong to in effect punish people for being disabled or carers for helping a disabled person.

RS5: schools need patrols!

RS6: Transport is most important to older/disabled people to enable them to take part in the community, which in turn saves depression, and visits to the G.P. surgery. The small amount subsidising this service should be maintained.

RS7: no comment not enough known

RS8: Many' walking for health 'groups in the city start at 9.30 when the groups meet, because old people like me are at their best early in the day. Other people like an early Doctor.Hospital.Optician.Dental appointment for the same reason. Removing the bus pass between 9 and 9.30 will disadvantage all these groups. Once again the vulnerable are penalised.

RS9.Using Libraries as a community asset makes sense. Getting rid of libraries does not.

RS10: no comment not enough known

RS11: no comment not enough known

RS12.Yes! Empty buildings owners' should have to pay community charge. There was an empty house next door for almost 2 years because the developer didn't know what to do with it.

RS13:Putting everything into 100Temple Street will save money but will disadvantage people in Fishponds, Ridingleaze, Hartcliffe, Southmead and Lockleaze especialy those with poor bus services.

RS14: no comment.

RS15: no comment

RS16: no comment

RS17: Non citizens should be charged for using our Museums while remaining free for Bristolians.

RS18: no comment

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

T101: agree - more school places

T102: agree- aids and adaptations

T104: agree- affordable homes

T105: Metrobus. Many people think this is a waste of money and protested at its initial planning, but its going ahead regardless with subsequent upheaval!

T106: transport projects needed.

T107: no comment not enough detail

T108:The city needs transport but not enough detail given here.

T109: agree we need sustainable transport.

T110: We need libraries. Money well spent.

T111: We need parks but it is dismaying that in such a polluted city, removed trees are not being replaced.

T112: Yes to the long over=due Hartcliffe Recycling Centre.

T114: Yes to a new pool at Bristol Brunel site.much needed.

T115: yes to adaptations for disabled children.

T116:Yes to extra care housing.

Tier two

T201: Yes to more Dementia housing.

T202: Yes to school places.

T203: Yes to smart ticketing

T204: Yes to improvements to rail stations.

T205: All city walking /cycling environments should give priority to pedestrians as many are not mobile, have children, sensory impairments etc which means you can't get out of the way quickly. All cyclists should have a bell fitted to their cycle.

T206: Yes to new homes providing the majority are affordable/social housing

T207: no comment not enough detail

T208: reasonable to update Colston Hall

Tier three the wish list

T301: park and ride- yes.

T302: Ashley Down rail yes

T303: not enough detail to comment

T304: more help for pedestrians!

T305: yes to better bus stops

T306: yes to road safety

T307: no more parking schemes unless residents ask for them.

T308: yes to Severn Beach new platform

T309: not enough comment but seems reasonable

T310: yes to renewable energy schemes

T311: yes to Museums.

I hope this is helpful Mayor Rees, you have said that people should offer ideas to raise money to offset the cuts. We suggest Bristol is tourist friendly- *We could charge businesses benefitting from tourists a levy on heads/beds. *Nonresidents could be charged to enter museums.

*Chief Officers and senior staff including the Mayors and Mayoral staff should be prepared to take a pay cut/pay freeze as an example to the city.

11. Bristol Sisters Uncut

Context

Bristol City Council plans to cut £92m over the next 5 years (2017-2022) which include proposed cuts to vital services such as

- Housing including emergency accommodation provision
- Services
- Access to funding

Bristol Sisters Uncut are concerned about how these cuts will impact the safety and lives of women and non binary people and their children fleeing domestic violence and abuse, how the cuts will affect vital specialist services they need to access safety, including those 'indirect' services that ensure bridges to safety and their ability to build a life of safety.

See below for references to specific policy areas we have highlighted as of concern, please note Sister's comments in purple.

Page 105 CF3 Homes: Reduce Use of Temporary Accommodation

We plan to use less emergency accommodation because we'll be focusing more on preventing homelessness in the first place. This will reduce our current and projected overspend.

Survivors NEED access to emergency accommodation urgently, and are not within a context that the means the council can focus on 'preventing homelessness in the first place.' Note we assume they are not planning to spend their budget on tackling the root causes patriarchy and domestic violence. Considering there are only 36 refuge beds in Bristol and on average 2/3rds of survivors are turned away from refuges access to emergency temporary accommodation is vital. How will this work? Thresholds are already very high.

CF2 Homes: Recommissioning of Homelessness Support and Services for Adults and Families

We will look at new ways to support people who are at risk of homelessness or recovering from homelessness, by making efficiencies from our current contracts. This may mean people will have shorter stays in hostels and other supported services

Where will survivors go?

CF8 Neighbourhoods: Single City wide Information, Advice and Guidance Service

There are various advice services provided by the council and partners, offering people advice on all sorts of things such as money, tenancies and finding jobs. This would bring all those services together as one approach, doing it more efficiently and helping people get better information online as the first port of call

Survivors need access to specialist services with staff who have competency training in issues such as domestic violence, rape, trafficking as well as specialist services and staff to help black and minority ethnic, LGBTQ+, refugee and asylum seeking and disabled survivors. Generic services are inaccessible for many, traumatising and triggering when staff are not trained and unable to offer the right sensitive support. Generic services exclude the most vulnerable from accessing services and support.

CF9 Neighbourhoods: In House Enforcement

We would like to formulate an in-house enforcement team to collect local tax and overpaid housing benefit debts. An in-house team would be able to work with people to help them learn how to budget and manage repayment of debt in a considered way.

Many survivors rely on housing benefit in order to access safety and have limited financial access. They and their children are particularly vulnerable to debt and we are concerned about how this scheme will only serve to further traumatise vulnerable survivors. The way this policy will impact the most vulnerable, ie single parent families run by women is gendered and sexist.

RS9 Neighbourhoods: Reduce the number of council run library services

We will be exploring options such as:

- Community groups to run local community hubs which include library services.
- Running some services from shared buildings.
- Developing an alternative model to run the remaining Bristol City Council owned libraries as a Trust or a Mutual.

The level of savings will depend on the approach taken

Survivors in safe houses RELY on libraries to access housing benefit, welfare applications jobs, search for housing and other specialist services as most safe houses do not have internet and most survivors do not have laptops/computer access.

RS10 Neighbourhoods: Local Crisis and Prevention Fund

Each year the council provides £1.9m in financial support to citizens who need short term help to pay for food or utility bills or who need furniture to set up home after leaving temporary or supported accommodation. This proposal would reduce the fund by 25% and will mean fewer or smaller grants being made.

The options are:

- Cease funding altogether = Savings of £1.9 m
- Reduce funding by 75% = Savings of £1.425m
- Reduce funding by 50% = Savings of £1.950m
- Reduce funding by 25% = Savings of £0.475m

Survivors who have managed to leave supported accommodation to build towards a 'normal' life (some with children) are often without financial support or limited financial support, can't work, struggle to access work due to mental health / due to childcare responsibilities and are often in debt since leaving their situation of violence. This cut will massively impact survivors and their children's ability to survive. How will they be able to feed their children, heat their homes and avoid getting into further cycles of debt and potential homelessness.

IN2 Transport: Charge for advisory disabled bays and 'Keep Clear' markings

If someone is eligible we can provide a disabled parking bay and/or 'Keep Clear' road markings in residential areas outside of Residents' Parking Schemes. This proposal introduces a £200 charge per bay

RS4 Transport: Remove Companion Concessionary Passes

Companion passes are for carers who assist elderly or disabled people who cannot travel alone, providing them with free bus travel. By stopping providing these concessionary passes it means carers would need to pay for their own bus travel

RS6 Transport: Withdraw reimbursements to Community Transport operators for concessionary travel

Currently people who are eligible for Concessionary Bus Passes can use these for free travel with Community Transport operators. This proposal will no longer reimburse Community Transport operators. Community Transport operators would need to decide whether to continue offering free travel to Concessionary Pass holders.

We are concerned about how the above policy's regarding disability and access will impact survivors of domestic violence who have disabilities. Particularly their ability to access services, safety and how it will impact them financially.

12. Bristol Women's Voice

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Draft Corporate Strategy and the accompanying proposals for budget reductions.

We have consulted women's organisations and our members on their views on the document and have endeavoured to include the points made in the comments that follow.

Overview

We appreciate the extremely challenging situation facing the City Council in the face of an increased demand for services, increased costs, underachievement of previous budget savings and the changes in the way local government is financed.

The document itself is hard to follow. The statement by the Mayor on priorities at the start is then contradicted by many of the proposals for budget cuts outlined below.

While we welcome the attempt to give information we find both the length of the document and the lack of clarity about the affects of the proposals have made it difficult to respond to.

Public Sector Equality Duty and Equality Relevance Checks

There is an overall lack of detail and information within the Equality Relevance checks, For example, there is no indication that the impact to cuts to carers will have a disproportionate impact on women. By 2020 81% of the loss of income from tax changes and cuts to social security spending will have come from women.⁷ Women are the major losers from the loss of local government services both as employees and service users. The affects are even greater for BAME women.⁸

We are concerned that the council has not met it's legal duty to have "due regard " to the impacts on people with all the protected characteristics. Women are only mentioned 9 times across the whole document. The whole Strategy has not been assessed for its impact and there are only some sections that have got an equality relevance check attached to it.

The legal position established by the case of Brown vs DWP⁹ considers due regard to require the following:

- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy that will or might affect people with protected characteristics is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.

The Council is a signatory to the Charter for Equality for Women and Men in Local Life of Principle 5 of the Charter requires the signatory to take account of the gender perspective in "the drafting of policies, methods and instruments which affect the daily life of the local population..."

⁷ See 2015 response by WBG (<http://bit.ly/1QbC6lr>)

⁸ <http://wbg.org.uk/news/new-research-shows-poverty-ethnicity-gender-magnify-impact-austerity-bme-women/>

⁹ R. (Brown) v. Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2008] EWHC 3158 at paras 90-96

By failing to show the impact on women and those with other protected characteristics neither the councillors who will be required to take the decision on the proposed changes, nor the public are properly informed about the consequences and therefore cannot judge whether the Mayor is meeting his aim of achieving greater equality in the city.

Comments on individual sections

Education and Skills

We welcome the intention to ensure good quality work experience for all young people. However, there are two areas of concern around the draft strategy in relation to young women. Bristol Women's Voice have developed a young women's manifesto that is based on research speaking to young women across the city. They specifically identified as their top two concerns:

- 92% specified safety and violence against women and girls as their top concern in Bristol.
- 1 in 3 specified access to jobs and the economy as a top concern in Bristol. 40% specifically mentioned equal job opportunities, including gendered career paths and fair access to jobs.

1. Embed Bristol Ideal as part of education of young people

There is no mention in the Draft Strategic Plan of the Bristol Ideal. This is a well regarded initiative that has already been developed within Bristol City Council and should be embedded as a priority within the Education framework. The Bristol Ideal focuses on prevention and considering this is apparently prioritised in the Corporate Strategy, surprised and disappointed that this is omitted. It is paramount that boys and girls get their education they need on health relationships, consent, respect and equality as part of PSHE framework.

2. Embed Gender Mainstreaming in the city-wide Work Experience Initiative

There must be consideration paid to gender stereotyping in work experience initiatives;

- 20% females take A Level Physics
- 40% females take A Level Mathematics
- 99% of those taking Health and Social Care were female
- 3% apprentices taking Engineering were female

Further, funding and development in West of England LEP focuses on technology and STEM. There is also a skills shortage in these areas – work experience development for young people needs to consider the skills shortage and develop specific programmes that encourage women into technology and STEM industries. Considering that Health and Social Care sector is experiencing large cuts – this is a predominantly female workforce, and % of people entering this sector continues to be predominantly women. We recommend that Bristol City Council works with the Women's Commission Education Task Group to develop a tailored strategy around work experience for young women that addresses these issues.

Sustainable and Resilient Skills Base

Bristol Women's Voice acknowledge that it is critical to invest in infrastructure in order for Bristol to remain a core city, which will bring increased tourism and further investment for the city. However, there are two key areas of concern.

1. Beneficiaries of Job Creation are Men

The draft capital programme, focuses on the development of the arena, the Metrobus and home building. Whilst this creates jobs, these jobs are will be predominantly be for men. Women make up only 11% of the construction workforce and just 1% of workers on site.

2. Engagement of Young Women

It is paramount that any engagement with young people and the draft capital programme considers gender, diversity and intersectionality when considering engagement. There are many barriers for young women to engage with this programme, aside from the obvious barrier that construction is already gendered. For example, there are groups of women where engagement becomes even more difficult; teenage mothers, young women with a disability, and attention needs to be paid to ensure that engagement still happens with young women that are harder to reach.

Lastly, this section refers to strategies and plans from the Fairness Commission and the Race Manifesto and it has failed to include the Bristol Women's Commission's Strategic Action Plan and the Manifestos, produced at the request of the City Council by; Bristol Disability Equality Forum; LGBT Bristol; Bristol Multi Faith Forum; Bristol Older People's Forum and Bristol Women's Voice.

Health and Wellbeing

We welcome the acknowledgement that women live longer in poorer health. Further, that almost 20,000 children live in income deprived households, however there is no indication that the majority of those live in single parent families overwhelmingly headed by women.

The focus appears to be on mental health, alcohol misuse and weight and exercise, none of which mentions the specific impact on women. Women's experiences differ hugely to men's lived experiences and in order for priorities to be effective, Bristol City Council needs to recognise and incorporate these differences.

Over 45% of people living with alcohol misuse have experienced trauma of some kind, and the World Health Organisation estimates that 69% of women using mental health services in the UK have experienced some form of sexual abuse.

Homes

We understand that Bristol has a housing crisis, as housing is becoming increasingly expensive and in increasingly short supply. We are glad to see that the Strategy widely acknowledges that the city is suffering from a lack of affordable housing.

However, we are concerned that housing as a policy appears to be considered as gender neutral but it is actually gendered in multiple and complex ways. Many women's lives are still deeply affected by unequal power relations any by conventional expectations around domesticity and their responsibilities for care of children and the home.

The strategy looks at Homelessness, discussing the number of households in temporary accommodation and the number of rough sleepers in Bristol. However, these figures are not broken down by gender (or by any protected characteristic) and causes of women's homelessness are not mentioned. The violent breakdown of a relationship is one of the top four reasons for homelessness. It is not clear what provision is set up for women only services as part of this strategy, particularly with recent statistics showing that 54% people aged 16-24 experiencing homelessness were women.

Further, suggestions of reducing number of beds and changing the provision has to be accompanied with an increase in number of refuge bed spaces. Whilst prevention is prioritised, it is important to acknowledge that there may be an immediate shortfall whilst change begins. Only prevention will work if the cause is tackled and for women's homelessness, this is often violence and abuse. We know that in Bristol from October – December 2015, Next Link could not accommodate 35 women because the safe house was full. This will result in either returning to violent homes, shelters, which also have capacity issues, or homelessness.

Transport

The strategy details many change to Transport provision in the city. Bristol Women's Voice expresses concern over some of the proposed changes:

- Removing companion concessionary bus passes, resulting in carers paying for their own bus travel – this will result in many vulnerable adults becoming more socially isolated who are already struggling to make ends meet. Carers, which are predominantly women, will be disproportionately affected by this, as well as finding it harder to ensure continuity and quality of service when they are paying for this from their own pockets.
- Concessionary Travel removed from 9-9:30am – getting to meetings, appointments, caring for (grand)children will become increasingly difficult and expensive.
- Increase effort to encouraging cycling and walking – women's experiences have to be considered to allow for specific women's concerns, for example, around safety, and how women's use of public transport and own transport differs from men's experiences.

Neighbourhoods

The strategy is not very specific on many areas and so Bristol Women's Voice is concerned over the following:

- It is good that the strategy mentions gender-based violence, abuse, harassment and exploitation, but disappointing that it doesn't mention the Zero Tolerance pledge it has signed up to, and committed actions against.
- It highlights that it will be reducing 3rd party payments including grants to the Voluntary and Community Sector. This is particularly damaging to this sector as it will be up to the VCS that will be pick up the pieces from the other cuts impacting services and people across the city and the worry is that people will fall through the gaps.
- It mentions that the Neighbourhood Partnerships will change in focus and scope, although doesn't provide any further detail so it is difficult to comment further on this. However we have on going concerns about how ineffective existing Neighbourhood Partnerships are in representing all communities within their areas. We would like to see resources focussed more on need.
- It discusses how it plans to reduce funding for drugs and alcohol services. BWV is concerned that firstly, it does not mention the gendered understanding of alcohol and drug services. There was no mention of how these services will support men and women, whose experiences are vastly different. For example, alcohol abuse in women between the ages of 40-65 years typically stems from different roots than that of men e.g. abuse, low self-worth and lack of confidence. Secondly, the cutting of the drugs and alcohol services budget does not tie in with prevention and early intervention that has been promised as part of the strategy. There needs to be preparation work now for prevention to not have a devastating impact on the people accessing services. The impact of reducing drug and alcohol services will have a more costly impact on other services, for example, mental and physical health care, crime and families.
- It mentions that there will be changes to the libraries services but it is not clear where these reductions will occur. Libraries are critical for accessing education for low-income families, and therefore, it is important that a detailed EIA is undertaken to assess the impact that a reduction will have in the city.
- Citizen Service Points in Fishponds, Hartcliffe, Southmead and Riding Lease will close. On top of the cut to transport and the increasing costs, this will make it difficult for vulnerable people, particularly elderly and those with a disability to access the Service Point on Temple Street.
- We were pleased to see the Strategy incorporate the Zero Tolerance approach to gender-based violence, abuse, harassment and exploitation. However, we do not see this embedded into the Strategy or Action Plan on what they plan to do to tackle this. Further, the strategy mentions dedicated funding that has been provided. This funding runs out in September 2017, so for 4 out of the 5 years that the Corporate Strategy is designed for, most years will have no funding going into prevention work to eliminate gender based violence.

People

Bristol Women's Voice is concerned over the reduction of services for young people, as this is far removed from the idea of prevention and early intervention. Reducing services for young people does the opposite, and prevention work with young people is critical to instil health lifestyles early in adult life. Further, reviewing the Early Help Services is also problematic for similar reasons. The strategy does not detail which buildings may be closed, as this may exacerbate inequality for those families (of which women / mothers utilise to a greater extent). We also show concern at the non-gendered approach to working with Young People's Health and Wellbeing, as young women have different health and wellbeing concerns, particularly around violence, safety, mental health and body image / self-esteem. We encourage you to work with the Health Task Group of the Women's Commission who have undertaken research specifically into young women's health and wellbeing in Bristol.

We are also concerned about the cuts to day services and reablement, rehabilitation and intermediate care services and would wish to see a proper assessment of the impact these cuts will have on the already most disadvantaged residents of the city.

The strategy again provides a lack of detail in the changes that will occur to care services in the city. We are concerned about the impact this will have to our most vulnerable and would like to see further detail on how these changes will happen. We are also concerned as to how cuts to Care Services will meet Bristol City Council's objectives around safeguarding, early intervention and addressing inequalities that were highlighted as core areas at the beginning of the Corporate Strategy.

Lastly, the Strategy asks communities to pick up the pieces from the cuts when the voluntary and community sector is already very thinly stretched. This will result in more people living lower quality of life and exacerbate inequality.

Place

There are big developments being designed and built over the next five years and our concern is over the lack of consideration to the impact of gender, equality and diversity across the plans.

- The Arena and the Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Area KPI's do not segregate or capture whether the women will benefit from the development
- Invest in Bristol and Bath (IBB) will support aerospace, advanced engineering, business services, low carbon, creative and digital industries. There is mention of engaging with youth and BME unemployment within these sectors but no mention of engaging with women.
- The development of the Economic Plan does not mention gender or how it will take account of the different needs of women.
- We were pleased to see the BCDP continue to support Black History, LGBT History, Disability History months but disappointed to see no mention of its support to International Women's Day and women's rights, particularly when 2018 will see the centenary of women's suffrage, of which Bristol suffragists and suffragists played a large part.

Governance

Bristol Women's Voice wants to stress again Bristol City Council's mention of the rising demand for our services we would like to see a greater emphasis on the importance of challenging national government as to the severity of the cuts. The Strategy mentions "people expecting more" – we would like to see evidence of this expectation, rather than the exacerbation of inequality and the need for services rather than the expectation of more services.

We are pleased to see Bristol City Council's objective as championing Equality and Diversity however it is difficult to see how this is being done in relation to the current proposals.

We would like to see an effective cumulative assessment of the current users and beneficiaries of services including arts and culture and the impact of the proposed service changes and reductions, and those proposed to meet the funding gap to 2022. This also needs to take into account the impact of government policies on people who share protected characteristics. It is our view that this is the only way in which the city council can demonstrate how it is able to mitigate in any way the impact on the most disadvantaged citizens.

Suggested areas for increased income/savings

Households of students are exempt from Council Tax although the city has to provide services, including waste collection and disposal, for Bristol's large student population. This has a specific financial cost to the city that is not currently funded.

A small tourist tax could be levied by hotels in the city as is done by many other European cities which could help to subsidise cleaning and arts and cultural organisations.

The Core Cities should lobby central government on these issues.

Consideration should be given introducing a Congestion Charge or a levy for businesses with car parking spaces within the city centre.

13. Care Support Centre

The Bristol City Council (BCC) Corporate Strategy and its accompanying consultation document were discussed at the Bristol Carers Voice meeting on 12th December 2016, at which carer representatives were present. The carers shared their views, and those of other carers that they were in contact with, about the proposed plans to reduce expenditure on social care services, which will in turn affect carers. This document outlines the views expressed by the carers present regarding the strategy in general and specific points.

Carers are disproportionately impacted by cuts to public funding, as service users in their own right and as public services reduce for the people they support there is a resultant increased responsibility on them to provide more care, in order to "pick up the slack." Therefore, we would like to seek some assurance from BCC that support for carers will be protected, given that they save the local health and social care economy in Bristol in excess of £700m per year.' In other words if all the carers in Bristol decided not to provide care anymore, this is what it would cost to replace this. There is a sense of frustration amongst carers which was expressed quite forcibly at our Carers Rights Day event on 25th November this year, where several carers suggested that carers could go "on strike", or make some kind of public protest at City Hall about how cuts impact upon their caring roles, which they feel has not been considered. Since this meeting a number of carers have contacted us along the same lines and it feels that there is a 'groundswell' of disaffection from carers. One carer explicitly referred to the impact on those in long-term caring roles and the effect this has on their own mental health and wellbeing, which would only be intensified by budget cuts.

In response to a question from Councillor Campion-Smith, one carer said that the best support they had received from social care services was when they were taken seriously ill and at crisis point. In spite of the quality of service being excellent it was still difficult to organise. They felt that concerted efforts to make the process of organising social care services quickly and smoothly would be invaluable in terms of relieving pressure from the carer. Also they felt that the best support a carer can experience, more generally, is to be listened to. As part of the assessment process of the person they care for, carers must be listened to so that there can be a recognition of when a carer might get to breaking point or have to reduce their working hours. The most important thing is, therefore, to take a whole family approach during assessments in an attempt to meet everyone's needs.

Carers' specific response to the consultation document:

Carers were passionate about the need for BCC to involve them in budget cut decisions, as most are unaware of what takes place at local government level such as the Corporate Strategy. They felt that if carers were made aware of the implications that local government decisions could have on their own lives, they would be more likely to get involved in the consultation stage of planning. Carers felt that the consultation document was dry, impersonal and lacked any mention of disability or carers. Instead of the references to equality and diversity, an emphasis, with more appropriate language, should be placed upon how to make the city more accessible to all. Using language such as 'Corporate Strategy' which is usually associated with the private sector does not encourage engagement with the public.

CF10: Carers said that the proposal to reorganise Bristol Community Links was too soon after the previous reorganisation, when people have already had to adapt. They were also concerned about the implications for transport that centre closures would have. In addition under each previous review of day services Carers have had to pick up more caring responsibility and carers have said that 'this cannot go on.'

CF11: Young Carers and Adult Carers (caring for someone up to the age of 25 with a learning difficulty) will be impacted by the proposal to reduce the current amount of funding available for commissioning services for 13–19 year olds. The reduction in the number of sessions delivered will mean that young carers and adult carers are less likely to get a break from their caring role, which could significantly impact on their health and well-being, and have the same access to opportunities as that of their peers. Organisations that support these groups of carers will also have a resultant reduction in the support referral options available. The proposed cuts will inevitably affect the degree of accessibility of any future offer from the Youth Links

provider (i.e. area of cover and access). As accessibility is critical to ensure Young Carer engagement with services on offer, this will increase the level of impact on this group of young people.

CF12: Carers said that care packages break down more easily when they are home-based as you are dependent upon people coming to you. It can also be logistically difficult for reablement teams to cater to all service users at their requested times, based upon the distance necessary to travel between appointments. Carers linked this to the proposed reduction in aids and adaptations in people's homes from £3.1m to £2.4m each year, when waiting times are already lengthy and can push carers to carry out unsuitable activities like heavy lifting. Furthermore, one carer felt that if reablement staff see there is a family carer, they tend not to prioritise support for the service user.

CF14: One carer expressed concern that removing the community meals service will mean that vulnerable service users will no longer have someone 'calling in' to check on them routinely.

CF15: Carers were concerned about the move towards using private homes rather than in-house services for dementia care, where there have been difficulties and failings in the past, and regulations have not necessarily always been enforced. There was discussion about a recent ranking in the Bristol Post newspaper of Bristol care homes being the second worst in the country. {It was commented by the BCC representative at the meeting that this was based upon evidence that was not necessarily reliable.}

CF16: One carer said that the concept of financially assessing carers before they can access a break or support for themselves is wrong; especially in light of the amount of money they save the local economy. If the process of having a carers' assessment is to include means testing, carers will be less likely to come forward to seek help and support. A carer organisation present at the meeting confirmed this in saying that BME carers would be much less likely to ask for help if they thought they were going to have to undergo financial inspection.

IN2: Carers felt that if there are going to be charges for disabled bays, then there must be proper enforcement as too often people just ignore the bays and park in them anyway.

RS2, RS4, RS6 and RS8: Carers have told us that the changes to public transport, i.e. the removal of concessionary travel for carers, changes to the timing of concessionary travel and no longer reimbursing Community Transport for concessionary travel will affect both those carers who do not qualify for concessionary travel and all those that do, with regards to the changes in eligible travel time and reimbursement. To ask carers to pay for travel is another cost many may not be able to meet. Community Transport is often used by those with more complex needs and their carers, so those in most need will be severely affected by the changes, which is not seen as inclusive.

In summary and as stated earlier in this response, the cumulative impact on unpaid carers will be disproportionate and whilst we welcome BCC's ongoing commitment to implementing the Carers Strategy, it demonstrates clearly that there is a lack of understanding and awareness of the implications the proposals outlined in the Corporate Strategy will have on achieving this, and on the lives of unpaid carers in Bristol.

Caring situations will inevitably reach breaking point and the impact of this will be significant for health and social care and more importantly the lives of carers and the people they support.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss our concerns further with the Mayor, or a representative from BCC in due course.

14. Central Clifton and Harbourside Neighbourhood Partnership

We feel strongly that our Neighbourhood Partnership is an effective and efficient mechanism to ensure delivery against priorities of local residents and businesses. It has become an open, approachable and inclusive non-political environment that has removed previous barriers to getting things done. NP members focus on the delivery of projects that will make a difference towards delivering our jointly developed local plan. It is open to all. Participative decision-making and discussion is taken in an inclusive public environment.

We have spent the last five years developing this and we do not want to lose it. More appropriate would be to use CCHNP as a model to further develop those seemingly less successful partnerships throughout the city. The 'Neighbourhood Partnership' is so much more than a quarterly meeting.

Our Neighbourhood Partnership Environment comprises:

- Special interest groups on:
 - o Traffic and transport
 - o Wellbeing
 - o Environment
 - o Young people
- Project teams to deliver:
 - o Partnership wide tree planting
 - o Parks and green spaces improvements
 - o Library rethinking
 - o Community building provision
 - o Community information communication
 - o Waste reduction
 - o Clean streets
 - o Student engagement
 - o Public consultations on parks use
 - o Sports provision
- Quarterly Partnership meetings - covering all 3 wards
- Ownership of local decisions made
- Devolved budgets on wellbeing, transport, clean/green, CIL and S106
- Quarterly ward based Forums directly engaging 250+ people annually
- Newly formed community groups and the fostering of others
- Collaboration with, and access to council officers
- A local mechanism to encourage and develop volunteering
- Local plan to deliver against locally defined priorities

This Neighbourhood Partnership Environment has allowed and enabled the delivery of at least 30 projects throughout our area that would have been highly unlikely to have happened had the NP not been in place. It has increased the level of volunteering significantly within the partnership area. It will be an effective mechanism to encourage more in the future as BCC looks to enhance volunteer engagement in the coming years. We estimate that over 500 volunteer hours annually are directly attributable to NP activities. When the spin off projects are taken into account this figure is considerably higher. We are not saying that the NP environment is perfect and there are issues with extending the reach beyond the 'usual suspects' and the delivery of projects by BCC that have been funded and approved. This however is not a reason to throw them on the scrapheap, but to retain the best of them, understand the current limitations and improve on those areas. As chair of the NP I have personally put in a great deal of my time into making our NP successful. I would be sorely disappointed if the efforts of myself and numerous others, both members of the public and councillors would be to no end.

Our NP – devolved funding delivering local needs against local priorities by local people.

15. Creative Youth Network

Creative Youth Network works with young people across the West of England and holds part of the Bristol Youth Links contract with Bristol City Council but brings a further £3m a year from other sources to youth work in the city each year.

We work with over 3000 young people each year between the ages of 11-20 and a smaller number of younger and older people. Many of those using our services are amongst the most vulnerable young people in Bristol including those vulnerable to CSE, young people in and leaving care, homeless and those with mental health issues. At the Station (youth hub) we are the first port of call for many young people in crisis and offer interventions 13 hours a day, 6 days a week.

Response to the consultation

This response relates to the 'People' section of the document as this is the element most relevant to our work. However, clearly the cuts proposed across the Council will have a negative impact on young people in our city, reducing access to jobs and education, housing and education.

CYN understands that many of the cuts have been imposed by central government and are further stretched by increases in demand. Therefore our primary view is that the local authority should campaign tirelessly to highlight to central government that there is no more 'fat' in the system and that further cuts to Council services and funding will simply reduce the numbers and quality of support available to young people with the inevitable 'downstream' financial and personal costs to lives that reach a crisis point. Furthermore, the consultation document and mayoral statements set out the need for the VCSE to work with the local authority to leverage more money into the city. This is a laudable aim but one that has been ongoing for many years and the voluntary sector is already maximising funding from grants, central government, donors and the public. The expectation there is significantly more income to be gained is naïve and unrealistic. The local authority should be available to respond with the sector to income sources when they arise and have the ability to respond quickly as opportunities often require 6 weeks or less to put proposals together.

Running throughout the consultation document are the themes of diversity, inclusion and early intervention. Yet, the proposed cuts within the documents all relate to early intervention services. Youth links, early help, sure start, adult health and other services named in the document all contribute to the wellbeing of users. Youth work accounts for 2% of the Council Budget yet delivers support to over 6000 vulnerable young people. Youth workers provide activities, support into Education, Employment and Training, support in crises, reducing Anti Social behaviour and a range of other issues faced by young people. The *young Foundation* estimates each intervention with a young homeless person saves over £1,300 with the average cost of each intervention at only £32. Similar savings are replicated in getting young people into work saving £4300 each year for an unemployed young person at an average cost of £2000 per person.

CYN would recommend reducing the Youth Services budget by the minimum possible and instead act boldly to support early intervention services.

CYN would recommend a 'stepped' reduction over a number of years to allow for planning and fundraising.

Community Asset Transfer

CYN supports the proposal to transfer more LA assets into community ownership and has taken leaseholds on a number of properties already. We are also supportive of the 'dowry' proposal that has worked well in other Local Authority areas. Our observations and experience show that more substantial asset transfers (over several sites at once) work better by allowing the organisations involved to build a shared expertise and infrastructure.

Creative Youth Network is keen to get involved in finding solutions to the issues the city faces.

16. Disabilities equalities forum

Equalities Relevance Checks for the Corporate Strategy 2017-22

Consultation - People

CF10 – Review Provision of Day Services

It has only been about five years since I sat on the Scrutiny Commission that oversaw the setting up of the Bristol Community Links. Disabled people and their families were up in arms at the time, so to put them through more stress and uncertainty is not acceptable. Once again, a minority are being discriminated against. The whole idea of the hubs was also to cut down travel times. A change in venue could mean that people now have to travel further, learn new travel routes and potentially have to pay travel expenses. I think if the services are commissioned to an external partner, we need to make sure that none of them close, as it would not be acceptable to expect people to travel long distances in order to access their nearest centre.

CF11 – Re-commission Bristol Youth Links

The comment about less joined up services seems to be a backward move owing to what we are saying about working together. How will you make sure that this will not affect service users and will still be underpinned by the Social Model of Disability? Does the need for early intervention and prevention mentioned mean that the increased spend of £799K specialist services, a £100K increase will be spent in this area? It is not clear what these 'specialist services' are.

CF12 – Reablement Rehabilitation & Intermediate Care Services

How many agencies/providers have a proven track record in reablement, rehabilitation and intermediate care generally? Will the Council need to make sure agencies that it uses for reablement are different from those it uses to provide ongoing care packages, to make sure reablement agencies have no financial interest in not fully reabling service users?

CF14 – Best Future for the Provision of Community Meals

How can we be sure that an alert is triggered to Bristol City Council by a private provider if a service user is not at home? There would need to be some agreement in place first so that a vital link is formed between the Council and the private provider of meals to maintain the safety of vulnerable people. We would need to make sure staff are adequately trained in the needs of elderly and disabled people so they don't just drop the meal and leave, but make sure all needs are met re-accessing the food, the provision of cutlery etc., and reporting back if someone appears to not be eating the food so that safeguarding needs are maintained.

CF15 – Review Dementia Care Home Provision

The end of the proposal came to a sudden end and did not make sense. It needs re-typing. People with dementia are looking for stability and familiarity of staff which a change of care home will disrupt. Some of the residents may not be able to afford the increased charges. This will cause a great amount of distress to them and their families. It was only about six or seven years ago that BCC invested what must have been a significant sum of money in extending and upgrading this property. If the property is now to be considered for other purposes, could money be diverted from those services back into healthcare to make up for this loss?

CF16 – Providing Support to Carers

If carers become ill because of less support being given, it will surely put even more pressure on Health & Social Care. How can you know in advance of any assessments being done that charging carers for services will save £50,000? What are the costs of setting up a RAS to do this?

17. Fair Play South West and Bristol Women's Voice

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the equalities input to the Corporate Strategy consultation. This note follows up on the discussion we had on 18th November at the economy workshop around ideas for working with business and other partners to fill gaps in what the Council is able to deliver within its diminishing budget. The idea is inspired by the concept of the 'revolving infrastructure fund' (originally by the SWRDA and now by the WoE LEP), but in this case the infrastructure for investment would be social infrastructure and the source of funds would be businesses and other partners who could afford it.

What we propose is that the City Council establishes a 'Childcare Investment Fund' into which local businesses and other partners would donate a proportion of their expenditure on Corporate Social Responsibility projects and from which the Council would deliver high quality childcare which would be free to parents, or at least heavily subsidised. This would allow the Council to extend and enhance the rights to free hours of childcare to children below the age of 3 years and to more hours. It would also enable them to support the childcare sector through enhanced rates of pay which would raise the quality and sustainability of provision. This short term cost would pay back in the medium to long term in the following ways:

1) It would increase the 'school readiness' of children, enhancing their chances of development and social mobility through the education system, enabling them to contribute greater productivity into the economy in the longer term (see for example the recent report of the Social Mobility Task Force at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/569412/Social_Mobility_2016_Summary_final.pdf)

2) It would free more women to access work with decent pay and for longer hours, contributing to the local economy in the medium term. To gain the most from this aspect of the investment more employers need to enable more flexible and part time working in jobs with decent pay. These two policies between them would make significant inroads into the persistent gender pay gap which in parts of Bristol is much higher than the national average depending on where people live.

3) It would raise the productivity of women working in the sector, itself contributing to the economy and closing the gender pay gap, with almost immediate effect.

Our evidence for such claims can be found in a number of recent (and not so recent) documents, some specific to Bristol and the South West and some based on national research. For example:

a) Fair Play South West has published work which shows how the gender pay gap is influenced by where people live, their age and their occupation (see

<http://www.fairplaysouthwest.org.uk/manifesto/261-the-gender-pay-gap-and-how-to-eliminate-it>)

b) British Chambers of Commerce have called for free universal childcare (see

<http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/press-office/press-releases/bcc-time-for-action-on-high-cost-of-childcare.html>)

c) Women's Budget Group have shown how investment in free universal childcare will return almost the full cost in future years (see De Henau, J. (2016), 'Costing a feminist plan for a caring economy. The case of free universal childcare in the UK', in: Bargawi, H. Cozzi, G and Himmelweit, S. (eds) Economics and austerity in Europe. Gendered impacts and sustainable alternatives. New York: Routledge; see also presentation to FPSW event to be published, based on <http://wbg.org.uk/analysis/briefing-papers/investing-2-of-gdp-in-care-industries-could-create-1-5-million-jobs/>)

d) JRF work on social mobility hotspots (see https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/social-mobility-hotspots?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%203%20October%202016&utm_content=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%203%20October%202016+CID_d57baf1da16a29c2abe597e2a59c17c2&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Read%20story)

We recently held an event on the childcare conundrum which supported the idea of free universal childcare in principle but was aware that it is unlikely to be provided by national government with its current preoccupations and priorities. A report of the event will be presented to the Bristol Women's Commission, but in the meantime we believe the Corporate Strategy represents an opportunity to be innovative here in Bristol, perhaps using development in the Temple Quay Enterprise Zone as a pilot?

18. Learning Partnership West

Having studied at length the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 document published by Bristol City Council, we feel it appropriate to respond by detailed letter.

Naturally, LPW feels passionately about the security of front-line services for children and young people in Bristol, particularly those most disadvantaged, hard to reach, or experiencing challenges so severe they're being robbed of their childhoods or youth.

Equally, we recognise the extreme budgetary pressures facing Bristol City Council and have noted your desire to avoid 'crisis versus crisis' or 'headline versus headline' contests between Council services. We hope our contribution reflects the Council's ambition to use the Corporate Strategy to create a better and fairer city for the next four years and beyond, in the case of children and young people.

LPW believes the measures described below will produce better, more effective and more agile children and young people services (CYPS). While we are not in a position to precisely quantify the benefits, we contend our ideas will also deliver better value for money and significant cost savings to the Bristol taxpayer.

Our proposals fall into three bands – Direct Savings, Alignment and Collaboration.

Direct Savings:

- End BCC Quality Assurance role in CYPS and transfer to delivery providers
- End BCC Contract Management role in CYPS and transfer to delivery providers, which in turn manage sub-providers, including VCS providers
 - ☐ The IYSS data management system operated by LPW provides an effective and auditable measurement tool for contract management, including a wealth of information:
 - Currently holds details of all 8 – 25 year olds
 - Can be easily re-configured to incorporate 0-7 year olds
 - Records education history, employment and training status
 - Records all caseload interventions and outcomes
 - Already facilitates the management and reporting of all major contracts
 - Bristol Youth Links
 - September Guarantee
 - NEET tracking
- Cut 'Virtual' youth service and reintegrate into delivery providers
- Pursue CAT processes to reduce Council costs and increase the autonomy and freedom of delivery providers – e.g. adventure playgrounds, selected parts of council spaces
- Speed up the CAT process and mitigate against slipped deadlines

Alignment of Services – services grouped in one 'pillar':

- CYP services are aligned through a 'Whole of Life to 18' route, incorporating the City Council's 3 Tier principle and encompassing Early Help, Young Carers, Youth Housing, Youth Offending, September Guarantee, Bristol Youth Links etc, informed by the Children & Families Partnership's Strategy for Children, Young People and Families, 2016-2020
 - ☐ Continuity and coherence
 - A clear flow from birth to 18
 - Targeted interventions where necessary along this 0-18 flow
 - Targeted interventions for specialist groups
 - Children and young people from BME communities
 - CYP in care
 - Young carers
 - LGBTQ young people
 - Young people with Learning Difficulties or Disability
- Equality and Diversity
 - Targeted interventions where necessary
 - ☐ e.g. BME Young Carers

- ☐ Refugee CYP
 - ☐ Gypsy, Roma, Traveller CYP
- Ensuring support for populations of overlooked children and young people
- Effective CYP services lift up all
- Efficiency and Value for Money
 - One management structure
 - ☐ Covers all CYP support from 0-18 and to 24 for LDD young people, including all lead providers, who in turn manage all their sub-contracted suppliers and VCS delivery
 - ☐ Use IYSS system as data management tool

Design of all CYP services produced in collaboration between contractor (BCC) and service delivery providers, including VCS, and children and young people

- KPIs agreed from collaborative design and threaded throughout contract management and quality assurance processes
- Designs informed by the front-line experience and expertise of service delivery partners, including the option to refresh KPIs during contract lifetimes – if needs and the City change, one approach may become ineffective and need replacement by another, mid-contract
 - ☐ Bristol City Council
 - Commissions
 - Co-designs with service delivery providers
- ☐ Service delivery providers
 - Co-design with the City Council
 - Manage commissioned contracts
 - Deliver services
 - Monitor and quality assure services

Increase scope for delivery providers

- Pass whole of contract management, monitoring etc to service delivery providers
 - Service delivery providers have gained and learned efficiencies from front-line service experience
 - Now lessons have been learned from contract delivery and best-practice models established, significantly less hands-on management is needed from Bristol City Council
 - Service delivery providers are lean, learning and nimble, with small overheads that can be shared across providers (lead providers sharing resources with smaller providers [VCS]) – e.g.
 - Finance
 - HR
 - ICT
- Use strengths-based approach to fully exploit the knowledge, skills and cost-efficiencies embedded in service delivery providers' experience, to provide the most value for money
- Education and Skills
 - ☐ LPW supports the Council's approach to education and skills, particularly in regard to:
- Improving educational outcomes
 - LPW Independent School supports pushed-out learners through ALP provision
- Delivering good quality work experience and apprenticeships
 - Use West of England Business Initiative partnership
- Supporting the most disadvantaged families
 - Support from CYP service providers
- Engaging partners in developing effective city wide inclusive practice through the SEND partnership and Learning City Partnership Board

This is a general outline of where we think the most effective improvements to CYP services can be made, resulting in the best, most impactful delivery, targeted at those in most need, while also protecting the widest possible provision.

19. Rail Future

- Due to IT problems at Fishponds library yesterday afternoon I was unable to complete the Draft Capital Programme consultation submission form on behalf of South West Transport Network, Railfuture and Bus Users UK and as an individual member of TSSA.
- We support MetroBus project T105, Hybrid buses T106, T107 residents parking, Metrorail T108, bus shelters T109.
- We support Libraries for the Future T110 which could have cafes, citizen points and post offices.
- We support the traffic control and CCTV centre T113 which should include bus shelters and railway stations especially at Bedminster, Avonmouth, Shirehampton and Sea Mills working with the BTP, Network Rail and First Group.
- We do not see Portway Park and Ride scheme T308 nor T302 Ashley Down station as wish list items.
- We believe Bristol Museums should become Charitable Trusts T311.
- We support bus stop upgrades and bus lanes T305.
- We support the railway station improvement programme T204 including disabled access at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road and Parson Street.
- We support Smart ticketing T203.
- We support residents parking T307.
- We oppose RS2 reducing bus subsidies by £450,000 as this will affect orbital bus routes in the daytime as well as evenings and Sundays including routes 6, 7, 16, 17, 19, 36, 505, 506, 508, 515, 513, 514.
- We oppose the withdrawal of travel concessions RS4, RS6 and RS8.
- We oppose the withdrawal of PCSO's RS11.
- We are opposed to the closure of the citizens points at Hockey Lane, Hartcliffe, Southmead and Ridingleaze RS13.
- We welcome the reshaping of enforcement services for planning RS18.
- We question the investment in a new East Bristol swimming pool T114 in times of austerity when there is already a pool less than a mile away at Soundwell in the Mayoral Combined Authority.
- We support Temple Meads arena and station improvements T111 in conjunction with Network Rail/Skanska.
- Support light rail studies at t concept stage to integrate with the existing heavy rail studies.
- Concerned that the proposed local transport plan for Bristol could conflict with the Greater Bristol UA transport plan and could end up wasting public money.
- We believe that savings could be made in community care by retendering contracts.
- On housing the plan is light on regeneration of Stokes Croft, Old Market, Castle Park/High Street and Broadmead/Newfoundland Road where housing could be delivered.
- The Mayor's cleaner streets campaign was light on graffiti, fly postering and enforcement prosecutions.

20. Royal National Institute of Blind People

RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members throughout the UK and 80 per cent of our Trustees and Assembly members are blind or partially sighted. We encourage members to get involved in our work, and regularly consult them on matters relating to Government policy and ideas for change.

RNIB is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We are the largest organisation of blind and partially sighted people and provide information, advice and support to almost two million people with sight loss.

We are particularly concerned about Bristol City Council's savings proposals CF 12 to "change the way reablement, rehabilitation and intermediate Care Services are provided in the city" with the objective of achieving £1.2 million in savings. We would be pleased to meet with you to better understand how this will be achieved and the implications for rehabilitation and early intervention services for blind and partially sighted people.

We strongly support the council's intended priority of "promoting independence - supporting people to live as independently as possible in their community". Vision rehabilitation and social care support for blind and partially sighted people is vital in helping to maintain independence and reduced wider social and care costs.

Consultation response

This submission relates primarily, though not exclusively, to rehabilitation and social care.

Looking Forward

Bristol City Council has asked for views and comments on its budget and priorities for the coming years. We are offering feedback on our particular areas of interest and most particularly social care.

RNIB would be very concerned if there was a reduction in the amount spent on targeted services, including rehabilitation support for blind and partially sighted people, and for care packages.

The Care Act is clear that services and support should be made available to meet the agreed outcomes of an assessed need. Any decisions concerning the reduction or changing of services should be made based upon an understanding the needs of the population and should consider the impact that the removal of such services would have on the individual.

Rehabilitation services help people to adapt to their sight loss by providing skills and tools for independent living and mobility training. They are delivered by trained rehabilitation officers and supported by staff that have the skills, knowledge, and experience to understand the unique challenges of visual impairment.

Blind and partially sighted people should have access to rehabilitation services at whatever stage of their life they require support.

There is an urgent need to ensure that vision rehabilitation services get the right resources to 'See, plan and provide':

- See: everyone with a visual impairment receives a specialist face to face assessment.
- Plan: everyone has a plan in place, identifying the outcome of their assessment. The first two steps take place within 28 days of first contact with the council.

- Provide: any agreed vision rehabilitation support starts within 12 weeks of the person's initial contact with the council.

Rehabilitation support - an overview

What's happening now

The Care Act and associated statutory regulations and guidance, recognises rehabilitation support for blind and partially sighted people.

Currently most local authorities in England provide a structured programme of rehabilitation for blind and partially sighted people. However, there are a number of threats and challenges to the delivery and quality of rehabilitation services.

What should happen

Statutory guidance, underpinning the Care Act, focuses upon prevention and recognises the need for rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people. This means that there are a number of elements of a rehabilitation service which local authorities must deliver on.

The statutory obligations and recommendations for local authorities concerning rehabilitation are outlined below. RNIB supports these and we have also outlined areas of best practice.

Understanding local need

Local authorities should develop a local approach and understand and plan for local needs. They should also 'consider the different opportunities for coming into contact with those people who may benefit from preventative support, including where the first contact may be with another professional outside the local authority (paragraph 2.38).

- There are an estimated 11,270 people living with some degree of sight loss in Bristol. Of this total, 7,310 are living with mild sight loss, 2,500 with moderate sight loss and 1,470 with severe sight loss. By 2030, it is expected this number will rise by more than 25% to 14,130.
- A Certification of Vision Impairment (CVI) formally certifies a person as either sight impaired (partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (blind). Each year around 150 CVIs are issued in Bristol. The total number of people registered as blind or partially sighted in Bristol stands at 2,595.

Data from www.rnib.org.uk/datatool

Accessing rehabilitation services

Local authorities and hospitals should work together to ensure that people receive timely support when diagnosed. Statutory guidance sets out that a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) should be sent to the local authority within five working days (section 22.11). The local authority should make contact with the person within two weeks to discuss registration and arrange an assessment of rehabilitation needs (22.16 and 22.17).

We recommend that the assessment should take place within two weeks, so that from the point of certification a person should expect to be contacted and receive a rehabilitation assessment within five weeks.

Rehabilitation available when needed

Rehabilitation support should not be available just at time of diagnosis, people should be able to access services at any point when need presents.

We know that some local authorities currently only provide rehabilitation services for people if they meet existing assessment criteria. Statutory guidance states that from April 2015, rehabilitation services must be made available to all adults, irrespective of their eligibility for care support.

Therefore, RNIB is calling on local authorities to review their policies and to ensure eligibility criteria is not applied to rehabilitation services.

Rehabilitation based on needs

Rehabilitation services should be person centred, flexible and focused on the outcomes identified by the blind or partially sighted people as part of their assessment. For many people this will mean that they receive support for a period longer than six weeks.

Statutory guidance sets out that support should be provided to meet the needs and outcomes of the individual; that “a period of rehabilitation for a visually impaired person (a specific form of reablement) may be expected to last longer than six weeks” (2.61).

It goes further to state that reablement services for people with a visual impairment, which last longer than six weeks should not be charged for, given the clear preventative benefits of the service (2.61).

Therefore, we are calling on local authorities to ensure that rehabilitation services are available for longer than six weeks and free of charge.

Provision of aids and adaptations

The Care Act and Section 2 of ‘Preventing Needs for Care and Support Regulations’, legislates that local authorities must provide aids and adaptations up to the cost of £1,000 free of charge, for the purpose of assisting with nursing at home or aiding daily living.

Aids and minor adaptations which could support a person with a visual impairment include a white cane (and the replacement of tips), a talking microwave and other kitchen equipment, magnifying equipment, lighting or screen reading software for a computer. This is not an exhaustive list and other items which meet needs must be considered.

In line with these regulations, RNIB is calling on local authorities to put in place a policy that ensures blind and partially sighted people receive the aids and minor adaptations they require to support their independence.

Reorganising services

We appreciate that there are many demands upon limited local resources, and we support the Care Act in its recognition of preventative support. Guidance sets out that when considering the reconfiguration or reduction of a rehabilitation service that the local authority should consider the impact that changes will have on delivering preventative services (2.62).

Support for children with visual impairment

RNIB would be very concerned if there was a reduction in the amount spent on children’s sensory support.

Blind and partially sighted children have a lifelong disability which requires early diagnosis, swift intervention and ongoing specialist support in order that they can access the curriculum and learn on equal terms with their fully sighted peers. Without this children are at risk of poor outcomes across a range of emotional and social wellbeing indicators. The risks are even greater for children with vision impairment and another disability.

Blind and partially sighted children are capable of achieving the same range of attainment as sighted children. However, they require appropriate teaching and support in order to do so. Support is needed not simply for academic learning but also to teach children to get around independently and to develop appropriate social interaction and everyday living skills.

Specialist education services should be provided to support children with vision impairment and their families during early years, primary, secondary and post 16 provision. Access to services should be based on an assessment by specialist professionals of a child's functional vision impairment. Vision impairment is one of only three areas of SEND, along with hearing and multi-sensory impairment, where teachers are required to hold a mandatory qualification.

Vision impairment in children is not only a low incidence disability covering a wide spectrum of needs, but also these children are unevenly distributed across the population. Support for children and young people with vision impairment should therefore be provided through a unified and centrally managed service so that specialist support can be targeted most appropriately and cost effectively according to the changing needs of the pupil population. These services might be provided on a regional basis via consortia of local authorities.

Contact

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RNIB works with local authorities across the country to promote vision rehabilitation and share examples of best practice. Feel free to contact us on campaigns@rnib.org.uk if there is any way we can support you in this regard.

Our campaign website, www.rnib.org.uk/seeandplan also contains a range of materials to support local authorities, including our 'See, plan and provide' report and checklist.

21. South West Transport Network

3 Statements were received at the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 27th October 2016:

Statement 1: Saving money on Public Services

Response from:

David Redgewell

Ian Beckey

Jenny Rayget

We are concerned about the loss of PCSO. With the City and their work on the Transport Network Support First Group and Wessex Buses especially at times of anti social behaviour. In recent times Bust Service 51, Bristol City Centre to Whitchurch via Knowle and Hengrove. We wish to see full consultation with Passenger Groups over the proposals British Transport Police and the Port of Bristol Police. We must have a safe city region and transport network and community streets and bus network and bus station. We welcome a city wide in house enforcement team.

The centralised citizen service point at 100 Temple Street do not work for communities and is an old socialist model of local government. The council should follow North Somerset Council and BANES and set up community hubs. The Fishponds model is correct. With libraries and council offices in the same building. The Police should also move into Fishponds offices. The community hub should be in building alongside libraries with staff training to handle all council enquiries. North Somerset staff deal with council enquiries. Libraries ? issues and Police. The staff that remain within City Council should be trained in cross service skills. This will still save taxpayers money but provide front line services in communities. Libraries need to become council and public service community hubs. We would welcome longer opening times with swipe cards and book issue machines, CCTV and mobile security offices.

Reshaping enforcement for waste and traffic officers. In main local authority traffic enforcement officers would also report fly tips, pavement and footway blocked, pavement dog fouling. This is the case in many authorities. We need to join up enforcement services and save taxpayers money.

We would welcome a review in the number of middle management posts in the services and the reduction in the number of service directors with the city council. The number of service directors have been reduced to save money and protect public services to the community. This has happened in South Gloucestershire and BANES.

We would welcome a review of community parks and trusts but even the friends of parks groups require full time council or contacts to look after parks and garden. Saving could be made by retendering parks contracts or share maintenance with street care in South Gloucestershire. We would oppose cuts to neighbourhood partnerships as the work like Parish Councils in communities with other public services. Do the Police pay for community partnership work? or Fire Service. The partnership area could have a boundary review. The city council could Parish the city and set local neighbourhood council to run local services, such as parks, street cleaning, local libraries. Parish councils can still set budget.

Bristol Waste company should bid for market work, such as working for other public authorities, and private sector clean contracts, such as First Group, Bristol Airport, South Gloucestershire, BANES and North Somerset Council.

We must have full and open consultation, not just a line similar to the public transport review consultation and public meeting in and around the city.

Capital. Whilst supporting Speedwell new pool at this stage with saving, should we not look at closer working with South Gloucestershire on the Joint use of Soundwell Pool – Kingswood one mile away. Whilst keeping the project as a future target.

Support charging in the Parks Heritage estate, Oldbury estate, Blaise and Ashton Court, exempt blue badge holders, other parks could be considered.

Operation centre of emergency control could include services to other local authorities, NHS, housing associations and other public bodies.

These are a few views to start public consultation on neighbourhood services, libraries and information points, also provide public transport and information services. In Swindon the tourist information centre is in the libraries. Why not in Bristol.

Statement 2 – David Redgewell – Draft Spatial Plan meeting, 17th October 2016

Statement from SWTN to BANES Special Cabinet 19th October 2016 and Bristol City Council Place Making Committee - Draft Spatial Plan meeting 17th October 2016

SWTN are pleased to see the initial preliminary outcome of the draft spatial plan and would like to support the proposed public transport solutions, urban extensions and regeneration strategy.

With proposed urban extensions at Yanley Lane, Long Ashton and Withywood linked to a light rail and Metrobus extension to Bristol Airport this will allow for housing, employment, school and community uses in these settlements with a new station at Flax Bourton and an upgrade of Nailsea and Backwell station to serve the airport.

We welcome new developments at Churchill and a new bus link from Bristol Airport and regeneration in Weston-Super-Mare with an electrification upgrade on the rail corridor from Bristol.

Bristol - Yate

We support the new light rail and bus corridors with the reactivation of the closed Midland Railway route through Lawrence Hill, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Mangotsfield, Westerleigh and Yate and high density housing and urban regeneration developments especially at Lawrence Hill, Old Market, Staple Hill, Warmley and Kingswood. This would benefit Kingswood, Staple Hill and Warmley in particular. We also support the light rail corridor from Mangotsfield to Bath via Warmley and Bitton and new housing in the East Bristol area and Bath Riverside alongside Saltford and St Annes stations reopening.

North of Bristol we support housing on the rail corridor to Gloucester with Metrobus extensions from Bristol to Yate via the M32 and the Ring Road, M5 and Thornbury and support the upgrade of the railway line to Gloucester and Cheltenham using light rail on the Thornbury line. There should be new housing and employment in Thornbury, a new town and housing in Charfield with new housing in Wotton-Under-Edge, Berkeley and Sharpness especially with the opening of a new power station at Berkeley (the railway line to Sharpness being reopened using light rail). We welcome growth around Pilning, Hallen, Severn Beach and Cribbs Causeway using light rail and tram-train to connect to employment and shopping developments.

In South Bristol we support a light rail corridor from the City Centre, Temple Meads, St Phillips Marsh, Brislington, Callington Road and Whitchurch on the former North Somerset Railway corridor. This would allow housing development in Hengrove and Whitchurch with education and employment included. We would also like to see urban regeneration around Temple Meads, Old Market, Newfoundland Road and Castle Park.

With any extra housing there is a requirement for high quality bus services in the evenings and Sunday's with 15 minute frequencies on all routes in the daytime. The recent cuts have caused severe hardship in the Greater Bristol/Bath travel to work area and need to be reversed.

Historic Buildings

We think that the plans need to include regeneration of our historic buildings as we are very concerned about the continued loss of them in Bristol City Centre and Kingswood where there needs to be a stronger planning policy for protecting pubs in particular which in some cases could be used as small hotels and B&B's similar to the Wellington (Horfield Common). This applies to some pubs around Temple Meads like the George and Railway, Bell (Prewett Street) and the Grosvenor Hotel. The Cattle Market Tavern and Printers Devil should also be reopened to serve the new Temple

Quarter Enterprise Zone

Currently, it appears that many buildings are under threat at a time we should be investing in the surviving heritage around Temple Meads and the arena as a tourism quarter. We seem to be overwhelmed with student housing at the expense of family housing and LGBT and single people both in Temple Meads and Old Market. In the Kingswood area the Wesley chapels, the Chequers, Tennis Court Inn, Anchor Made for Ever and Cherry Tree public houses are at risk while in Fishponds the Farriers Arms is in poor condition and still occupied by squatters. In Bath the Mineral Water Hospital site is at risk.

There needs to be an urgent review of planning policies covering these buildings to prevent historic structures being lost or converted for inappropriate uses.

Devolution

Whilst we welcome the Devolution deal the issues about transport powers are a concern as to how it will be possible to operate and franchise a bus network that does not cover the four unitary authorities in terms of a franchise or a quality partnership where buses operate between UWE - Portishead and Clevedon would be outside the agreement. Similarly bus services through Hotwells, Clevedon and Weston would have to operate under the permit system under the Buses Bill or would require a separate quality partnership covering North Somerset by the new combined authority to cover North Somerset either as an advanced quality partnership or an enhanced quality partnership. It would also require a different agreement for a multi-journey, multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing scheme and North Somerset would still require referral to the Traffic Commissioner for services whereas the Metro-Mayor would have full control over the bus services through contracts or partnerships. Of course this would also apply to a Planning or Transport Commissioner.

On rail it would be very difficult to arrange improvements to services without the full Portishead line being in the deal as well as the line from Gloucester to Weston-Super-Mare. This would make station improvements very difficult or to seek rail powers for Metro-West within the franchise and Network Rail. Access for All programmes could be carried out at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Patchway, Pilning, Filton and Parson Street but this would leave the situation of station improvements in North Somerset outside the power of the combined authority. This would affect bus/rail interchange improvements at Weston-Super-Mare and Nailsea and Backwell and also electrification of the line between Bristol to Taunton.

If a new rail authority is set up as part of the combined authority, then while improvements could take place at Bath, Keynsham and Temple Meads, Filton, Patchway and the Henbury loop but North Somerset would remain outside of the combined authority area and rail investment programmes would still have to be agreed with the DfT. Similarly, decisions on housing and planning matters on South Bristol expansion or Weston-Super-Mare, Clevedon or Portishead and the MetroBus extensions to Clevedon and Weston would again be outside the control of any planning, transport authority commissioner or Metro-Mayor. Delivering a new interchange at Weston would be more difficult.

Currently, the Bristol Port and airport remain outside of the combined authority which makes improving public transport to Bristol airport and reopening the Henbury loop very difficult as the port is in three authorities - Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

We are also very concerned that both Bristol City Council and the Mayor and BANES Council are proposing to consult to reduce the evening and Sundays bus network by the September 2017. As a result the following routes are out for consultation :-

1 Broomhill - Cribbs Causeway
 2 Stockwood - City Centre
 5 Bristol - Downend
 6 Bristol - Kingswood
 7 Bristol - Staple Hill
 24 Southmead - Ashton
 36 Hengrove - City Centre
 50 Hengrove - City Centre
 51 Whitchurch - City Centre
 77 Thornbury - City Centre via Parkway and Southmead (all journeys)
 90 Knowle - City Centre
 505 Long Ashton - Southmead
 506 Southmead - Create Centre
 508 Shirehampton - Southmead
 511 Bedminster - Hengrove
 512 Totterdown local service
 514 Brislington local service
 515 Whitchurch - Hengrove local service
 No.7 Cross Harbour ferry

We are also concerned about links to railway stations and the loss of service 8 from Clifton Village to Clifton Centre and Clifton Down station, Weston Super Mare - Bristol Airport, Keynsham Chandag Estate and Park Estate, Southmead Hospital - Filton Abbey Wood station.

22. Unite the Union

Please accept this consultation response on behalf of Unite the Union in Bristol City Council. Page 9 of the strategy highlights the impact of national austerity policy very well, cuts of over £170m over the last six years. The Revenue Support Grant and Council spending continue to reduce in a City where people are living longer resulting in more complex care needs.

Page 15 refers to support services (Finance, HR and ICT) being modelled upon the best examples from the private and public sector. Why not explore the Legal model of providing these services to other public bodies and the private sector?

Page 17 acknowledges the congestion problems that exist. This has an impact on the local economy and private industry, Hargreaves Lansdown has historically expressed their frustration to local press. This issue requires a strategic response which I hope the Congestion Task Group will deliver.

Page 29 of the report identifies the importance of early intervention and prevention to improve life expectancy and quality of life. Health screening can make a significant contribution by identifying health conditions early when they are more easily treatable.

Page 37 highlights the social housing crisis very clearly with the statistic that 470 households are in temporary accommodation and 97 rough sleepers. I fear that a number of these placements are at considerable cost. As well as aiming to prevent homelessness in the first place should part of the strategy consider investing in more Council run temporary accommodation? Part of the response needs to work on building new homes, page 39 but from within the Council rather than a new local housing company.

The strategy acknowledges the congestion problems that exist in the City and methods to encourage public transport rather than car use for commuting have been explored before. Why do so many parents take their children to school by car? Page 47 makes reference to reducing bus subsidies on some routes will bring the viability of those services into question. If these services have to stop, will this make public transport a less attractive option for car drivers?

Page 48 raises school crossing patrol and a financial saving. These employees are predominantly women, working part time on the Living Wage. The children they protect when crossing on a daily basis are the cities future. Alternative methods of funding are acceptable but stopping their services is not.

Historically there were twelve Area Housing Offices that were based in local communities around the city. Page 49 refers to one Citizen Service Point at Temple Street which shows how much the face to face offer will reduce. Unite understands that personal interview is the most expensive customer service and channel shift is in place. However, there are areas of significant deprivation in Bristol which includes low levels of IT literacy. Those citizens need to see Council Officers who are sometimes a last resort. They will struggle to find the bus fare to get them down to Temple Street where they have regionally based enquiry points at present. The closure of Customer Service Points will disproportionately impact low income households in the city. There are numerous examples of staff changing people's lives for the better following interview in CSPs'. Any reduction in the current Crisis Loan provision will directly impact on the most vulnerable in the city. Elderly are not IT literate, don't have a computer at home and cannot access Council Services online. A decrease in the current face to face offer will also impact on those with mental health issues.

Page 64 refers to a reduction in youth service provision through Bristol Youth Links. This service has already been outsourced and was subject to an attack on staff terms and conditions shortly after transfer. The proposed significant saving of £0.9M to £1.7M will directly impact on young people. This may be a false economy with a corresponding increase in crime due to young people having nowhere to go. Youth services have been central to the fabric of working class life and remain both attractive and important to those they serve. How can young people gain essential life skills through online provision?

Another vital service is Community Meals, page 65. This service provides a hot meal to old people in their own homes. These citizens are venerable and not able to cook for themselves. The Council is a provider of last resort and should remain in house.

Page 75 of the strategy identifies savings from the funding paid to Bristol Music Trust for the opening of a more efficient Colston Hall. The saving identified does not factor in the capital investment required for the refurbishment.

Unite opposed the Arena when it was first planned. The justification that was given was that the boost to the local economy would repay the initial investment cost. One can question on how Bristol can afford a significant Arena investment when the Colston Hall has to be refurbished and there is no money to repair Bristol roads?

Page 106 makes reference to a redesigned reablement service and intermediate care offer. This needs to be fit for purpose in an environment of more complex care needs to avoid bottlenecks elsewhere in the public sector e.g. bed blocking in local hospitals

Page 110 Unite will always oppose the substitution of volunteers for paid employment in the Library service or other parts of the Council.

In order to fund these Corporate Strategy amendments which reverse the planned savings and reductions the strategy states that no stone will be left unturned. Through this process when considering staffing structure redesign and workforce development best practice should be demonstrated to create first class public services for the citizens of Bristol.

23. Unison

SUMMARY

Bristol UNISON represents over 2000 members in Bristol City Council and several thousand members in allied employers in the city. We have consulted with our representatives and members in the services affected by the corporate strategy proposals. It is our duty to first and foremost represent the interests of our members, but our members are also citizens, residents and service users in the community served by Bristol City Council so comments reflect that perspective as well as the views of members as employees.

UNISON opposes the austerity agenda and believes that cutting local services is a false economy. Our members have suffered the impacts of six years of austerity, seeing severe pay restraint, erosion of terms and conditions and large scale redundancies. We understand that austerity is imposed by central government, not the local administration and have previously made representations to the Mayor asking for actions to oppose this politically. We recognise that the Mayor has delivered on some of these requests but feel that he should continue to visibly lobby government with the leaders of core cities to secure funding and make the case against austerity.

The scale of the financial challenge to the council over the next 4 – 5 years is massive and to many of our members it is difficult to comprehend. This inevitably affects the level of engagement because it is so difficult to imagine what the council will look like in five years' time. In addition to the enormity of the challenge, the uncertainty around the financial arrangements for local government presents further difficulties in understanding what the impacts will be for our members above and beyond the proposals for immediate cuts in funding contained within the corporate strategy. Devolution adds another layer of complexity.

While the document contains some welcome and supported aspirations, the stated level of cuts in the short and long term makes it very difficult to see how these can be delivered. In that sense we believe the strategy is highly conflicted and this is likely to affect engagement as it will be perceived as simply about cuts and the positive messages ignored and undermined.

UNISON has offered a meeting with UNISON's head of local government finance and the mayoral team to explore some options around the approach to debt management in the council that has the potential to deliver significant savings. We hope that this meeting can be convened before the council embarks on a programme of cutting jobs and services.

We note that the strategy only deals with around £27m in savings for the short term. While the uncertainties outlined above partly explain the difficulties in dealing with the full financial challenge we would observe that the failure to provide even an indication of how the residual £65m can be saved is a major shortcoming of the strategy. We hope that there will be an early conversation in 2017 setting out the detail of this in a comprehensive way so that our members can be assured that the council has a plan to deal with the greater financial challenge.

This document responds to the overall aims of the corporate strategy as well as the specific proposals in service areas.

We ask the Mayor and elected members to give our responses due consideration.

RESPONSE TO THE OVERARCHING THEMES OF THE STRATEGY

The focus on equalities, clean air, congestion, homes and health is of course welcome. Similarly an emphasis on joint working with other institutions would seem to offer potential benefits. The support and engagement of local people is necessary to shape services, but we question whether community groups have the capacity to deliver services and whether they are able to be as accountable to the users of services as council workers. Similarly volunteers are unlikely to be able to offer the same level of service and in fact it is likely that the use of volunteers will reduce the resilience of public services, not increase it.

While an emphasis on early intervention is certainly a sensible direction, its effectiveness will be driven by the resources allocated. We note that funding for some key support services is being reduced or withdrawn and so it is difficult to see how this aligns with the stated desire for enhanced early intervention. The aspiration to reduce support services (back office) “dramatically” is likely to be counter – productive. We have seen these services already cut dramatically over the last few years. Further cuts are likely to result in unintended negative consequences. For example reducing the number of HR advisers increases risk of legal action against the council for poor decisions by unsupported managers. Similarly high quality ICT, legal and finance services underpin key aspects of the council’s work and should not easily be dismissed as “back office” functions that can be reduced with no impact.

Bold Ideas

Overarching

UNISON supports the points in the “Overarching” part of this section. We would observe that the council itself uses some “zero hour” (casual) contracts for some services. While this is sometimes of mutual benefit for the council and the worker, we would encourage the council to ensure that these arrangements are used appropriately and not to replace full employment contracts. We recognise that the council has started to address this issue, for example in the museums service.

Neighbourhoods

Proposals for urban parishes should not adversely affect the most deprived communities as this would be a form of regressive taxation.

Place

Co – location of council services is an interesting proposal but requires careful planning and proper investment. We note that previous similar proposals for libraries were not taken forward, resulting in a serious impact on our members. We look forward to seeing more detailed proposals about this idea.

BUSINESS PLAN FOR 2017 \ 2018

The business plan section contains a number of proposals that will result in savings from cutting staff. We remind the council of their duty to avoid compulsory redundancy and ask that voluntary redundancy is offered wherever possible.

We note that in each section there are a number of broadly welcome proposed actions (not savings) that are uncoded. We presume that the costs of these actions are contained within existing budgets but would welcome clarification.

Our Future – Education and Skills

We broadly agree with the aspirations and actions within this section. We would observe that the trade unions also provide education for our members and would welcome the opportunity to work with the council to help deliver learning inside the council and with allied employers. While recognising that this element of the corporate strategy is primarily outward facing, we would like to make the point that investing in training for council staff should be prioritised to deliver greater productivity and opportunity for staff in these difficult times.

Our health and wellbeing

UNISON is concerned about the reduction in funding for ROADS commissioning, both in terms of the impact on service users and the impact on our members delivering these services in ARA and BDP. However we can confirm that we have had useful discussions with Safer Bristol and commissioning managers in the context of the commissioning process. We welcome the council’s commitment to improving commissioning by adding social value, becoming a living wage accredited employer and adopting the ethical charter.

Homes

We welcome the aspirations of the council to reduce homelessness and support the building of new homes. We are concerned about the reduced budget for commissioned homelessness support services as this seems to run counter to the aspiration for supporting people at risk of homelessness. We would also observe that one important way of preventing homelessness is to ensure that high quality advice is

available to citizens on debt and money management. The council runs a well – regarded and efficient service (WRAMAS) which has been threatened by cuts in recent years. Proper investment in this service is likely to help greatly with reducing homelessness through early intervention and ensuring benefits are accessed to support people at risk.

Transport

Proposed actions on concessionary fares would appear to punish disabled people disproportionately. This is at odds with the council's commitments on equalities. We request a full EQIA for these measures. Similarly, reductions in subsidies for certain routes are likely to increase social isolation and reduce access to services and opportunity. The areas further from the city centre will be impacted by the reduction of council supported bus services, companion bus passes and subsidy of concessionary travel cards on community buses. This includes some of the most deprived areas and so the proposals risk entrenching inequality of opportunity.

Reducing funding for the freight consolidation centre would appear to be counter – productive in the context of a likely Clean Air Zone as a FCC could be a useful measure to reduce air pollution from heavy vehicles. Any re – organisation of school crossing patrols should be risk assessed so that the potential for children to be killed or seriously injured while crossing roads is eliminated.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Parks and Green Spaces

It is unclear how the potential savings figures have been estimated. They would seem to assume that community groups will take on significant elements of maintenance in local parks. No evidence has been provided that community groups have the capacity or will to do this.

Some of the poorer parts of Bristol already suffer with massive issues around fly tipping and lack of bins and bus shelters (due to vandalism). The parks are often the scene of anti-social behaviour such as frequent fires, riding of quad bikes and even a stolen car driven into a park and torched. In this context, community groups would be understandably reticent about taking on a park in an area with such issues without any specialist skills or knowledge of community engagement.

Further to this point we would point out that there is an ongoing and potentially higher risk of antisocial behaviour in the form of drug dealing, drink and drug taking and the health & safety risks from needle stick injuries if there the council 'presence' is reduced in local parks. This is particularly a problem in the inner city parks but may worsen and spread to other areas if funding and oversight is reduced for parks.

We feel that it's very unlikely that these savings could be made by relying on fund-raising external income or achieved via alternative delivery methods such as local ownership by community groups. This is because:

- a) Most parks or their community groups are not in a position to take over the complete financial and operational running of sites.
- b) Most groups want the council to own, pay for and carry out core maintenance with their volunteers adding to this, to improve site quality.
- c) Previous experience of local ownership of sites has not been successful, resulting in ongoing maintenance of the site by Bristol City Council although we no longer own it.
- d) This is a large proportion of the annual maintenance budget and it's not realistic that anywhere near enough land could be externally run and financed.

We feel that there is a lot more potential income to be generated from parks by events, expanding business & leisure opportunities, charging for certain uses, hiring facilities, car parking, and commercialising Blaise nursery, and this will be a large focus of the parks development team created to explore how to manage the budget cuts. The degree to which this meets the budget cuts is yet to be seen. The use of volunteers schemes (such as Park Work) and community groups could be expanded so long as it is in addition to existing staffing structures and not replacing core maintenance tasks for employees, and may help prevent the budget cuts having such a dire impact of park quality.

Professional opinion from our members in the parks service indicates that leaving the maintenance of parks to volunteers is likely to result in poorly maintained and potentially dangerous parks in Bristol, a city famed for the quality of its parks until now. Significant reputational issues would likely arise in this instance, not just for the council, but for the elected members in the relevant wards.

City wide IAG service

UNISON agrees with the consolidation of these services, but cautions against any cuts. Rather investment is needed to secure the upstream intervention that prevents costly outcomes such as homelessness.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Reforming neighbourhood partnerships can result in improved democracy and decision making through stronger scrutiny. However there will still be a need to engage with communities, and for properly trained and resourced officers to do this. Hence we do not believe there is real potential for savings here without weakening the council's connection with the communities it serves.

Libraries

Libraries have been the focus of austerity driven cuts for several years now, despite the acknowledged added social value they offer. The service in Bristol is seriously understaffed and library assistants do not enjoy the same benefits as the vast majority of council workers. A recent "temperature check" made for dire reading and showed that staff are depressed, angry and frightened for the future. Some of our members covered by the disability provisions in the Equalities Act have had to take grievances to get their reasonable adjustments.

The proposals in the strategy for libraries appear to be a resurrection of the "Libraries for the Future" scheme from 2015, albeit with a potentially higher level of cuts. A politically driven fudge arising from these proposals severely impacted our members working lives and incomes, resulting in a dispute and industrial action. These issues have still not been resolved and we still consider that we are in dispute with the council over the working patterns. Any future plans for the service must resolve our ongoing dispute. Libraries need to be staffed and run by trained and accountable people – they are a statutory service. We question whether volunteers can sustainably run a library service, particularly in deprived areas, where much of the population is struggling to make ends meet and cannot devote time to volunteering. The council needs to maintain a publicly funded and well-resourced library service in the city.

UNISON accepts the need to reform services from time to time, but this needs to be done with humanity, and not by making low paid and front line staff bear the entire brunt of any changes. UNISON needs to be consulted at the earliest stages of any proposed changes, not just at the restructuring phase when the decisions have been taken; otherwise there is a risk of further damage to industrial relations.

Centralising Citizen Service Points

It is not clear whether all the savings arising from this proposal are from disposal of buildings. It would be a mistake to reduce the number of customer advisors as demand for support is likely to continue to increase. More vulnerable people are likely to slip through the net if the CSP's become more remote from their communities. Additional travel costs will be incurred for deprived people and the service will become less accessible, potentially resulting in greater costs downstream. Impacts will likely be greater for disabled people and there is a need to assess this impact specifically.

Local Crisis Prevention Fund

The proposals to reduce this would seem to imply that fewer crises will be prevented. Hence costs to the council in dealing with the consequences of these crises are likely to increase. A full risk assessment is needed for this proposal.

PEOPLE

Youth Links

Whilst wishing to defend the youth service and supporting young people, the model of BCC supporting a diminishing service across the city does not demonstrate sustainable commitment to the young people. A more effective model would be targeting areas of significant socio economic need and endeavouring to

ensure long term commitment to those projects. With regards non-funded projects then supporting those schemes to identify alternative funding would be highly desirable.

Early Years Services

UNISON is broadly in agreement with move from building based provision to community bases. There may be further savings by combining with other BCC owned buildings.

The concept of prevention and endeavouring to create long term resilience is highly desirable. UNISON is in agreement with the family centre model approach and the suggestion of partnership working. The reduction in management costs by combining posts makes sense in terms of the service redesign; with the caveat the quality of the service would not be compromised.

Day Services

Bristol Community Links (BCL henceforth) is a service that works out of three buildings providing services for Bristol's community. The BCLs support adults with learning disabilities, people with complex needs and older people with dementia. Some service users have multiple disabilities and exhibit challenging behaviour. Because of the very complex nature of many of their users there are few other private services in Bristol that can provide such specialist support. The BCL staff have the training and experience to support these very vulnerable and very complex service users.

The BCLs have a good reputation for their person centred planning and have helped people to transition into other services as well as provide community and in-house services. Some service users have chosen to come to the links because they are said to have the friendliest staff.

BCL came out of a restructure in 2012 where services were redesigned to meet future needs. It was a difficult time for those service users and their families and they found the transition challenging. Families that support adults with learning disabilities, dementia or complex needs often feel they need future stability in the services they and the service user have chosen so they can have stability in their own day to day lives. Having a stable, reliable links service means they can concentrate on holding down a job or find respite for themselves if their own circumstances are challenging. The BCLs offer the sort of stability that promotes equality and inclusion for families where disability is a big factor in their lives. UNISON feels that these very vulnerable families could do without the instability that cuts, privatisation or re-commissioning would have.

The links have a community hub factor to them and that is one area where we think that changes could be made that could reduce the financial burden of the service on the public purse. At the moment some other services hire BCL rooms (such as the sensory room), local clubs use the halls for dances and a local college hires rooms to run classes. We think this community hub aspect could be expanded to make further use of the buildings for community use, foster community inclusion for users and increase income. The obvious option is to explore the buildings use by the local community and other groups. Accessible and useable space, with car parking should be at a premium. UNISON would suggest a business approach to the marketing of these buildings. Private hire arrangements tend to be costly and should be avoided. In addition the services should be targeting those with the greatest needs and should be the first option considered as opposed to commissioning external providers. Transport and service users getting to and from the centre should be further explored to see if this can be supplemented by community transport or individual arrangements.

Meals Service

This should be an enhanced service as opposed to just delivering meals. It could include welfare checks and potentially saving on money spent on meal preparation. Combining the service with other counties may assist with economy of scale.

Intermediate Care

Any approach to streamlining the service and enhancing the services is highly desirable. Closing the rehab centre in North Bristol may save money, however the need for rehab is maintained and the pressure is on for hospital discharge. This overall pressure on the service was created by a reduction in the hospital bed base which appears to be driven by NHS financial constraints as opposed to actual patient demand.

Carers

The suggestion of a unilateral reduction in the pooled budget by BCC would appear to be ill advised, as the NHS is the majority contributor. In addition unpaid carers supplement and support significant numbers of service users in the city and any reduction in support would appear to be counterproductive.

The concept of charging goes against the concept of social justice. As those who are wealthier inevitably contribute more to the system via higher taxation and to then penalise them is fundamentally unfair. Plus it is sending an adverse message to carers in general.

Dementia Care Home Provision

The full cost recovery would address an anomaly in the provision of residential care. Retaining the specialist home is highly desirable as the external markets costs increase exponentially. The use of the home and review of its function is desirable as it should supplement the extremely expensive specialist provision and act as a potential anchor or reference point for those costs.

PLACE

Museum Opening Hours

Museums have recently undergone a change programme to deal with historic overspend and inappropriate use of casual staff. This has entailed reduction in opening hours to 6 days a week for most locations. Further reduction of opening hours of M Shed and Museum & Art Gallery would likely prevent the City achieving required status as an Arts Council Major Partner Museum and detract from having a lead role in the Bristol Cultural Education Partnership (Arts Council lead national pilot).

The museums service have been successful in increasing income from its shops, cafes and events and this would appear to be a more sustainable and business – like model for funding than cutting opening hours.

Planning Enforcement

The proposed cutting of planning enforcement staff would create risk to the council by allowing breaches of planning conditions that could harm the urban fabric of the city. There is potential for dangerous and unsuitable development to occur. We ask whether this function could be self-funded by way of cost recovery from errant developers.

Bristol Energy Company

We question whether sufficient consideration been given to keep core council property energy management activity in-house. We would like assurances that the risk inherent in the volatile nature of “energy billing” market place has been properly assessed.

BCC has done much more than “explore” the setting up of this company already. The staff of the Energy Service have been aware of the plans for over 2 years and the recent business plan has been written in such a way as to discount any options for the ES other than becoming a Teckal Company. The option to stay within the Council is dismissed at an early stage of the document, which is essentially an options appraisal rather than a business plan.

There is an assumption that as BCC’s budget crisis has come into sharp focus, it is now the perfect time to argue that the Energy Service be turned into a Teckal Company to save the Council around £260,000 per year in staff costs and that this is a “done deal”. In addition the rather vague question which is in the on-line budget proposals has apparently gathered favourable feedback.

On paper, this looks like a good deal for BCC. Everyone within the ES is keenly aware of the need to maximise revenue generation, however whether or not the ES can “stand alone” and make enough to cover its operating costs without any support from BCC is debatable. There is also the question of what would happen to BCC assets such as the Severnside wind turbines (whose revenue is currently covering a sizable part of the ES costs) and photovoltaic installations at Avonmouth. If their ownership is also transferred out of the Council in some way at some point in the future then any saving made from ES wages could be minimal in comparison to lost revenue streams.

Previous projections for projects such as the setting up of Bristol Energy and Warm Up Bristol Schemes have proven to be somewhat overambitious and have led to targets not being met. Can we be confident in the Energy Service Business Plan figures vis a vis the viability of an Energy Infrastructure company? Much of the current Energy Service work is supported by European and UK Government grants. Whilst some areas, such as Heat Networks projects should be covered for the foreseeable future, projects such as Warm Up Bristol would be in a far more precarious financial position. Assurances given that the new company would be allocated grants after someone within the Council had applied for them needs to be fully investigated for veracity and feasibility.

On the whole, staff feel uneasy about the establishment of the Energy Infrastructure Company. Statements such as “It is being set up to fail”, “Future figures seem unrealistic”, “I’m worried about transferring BCC assets, they should stay with the Council, as they would be vulnerable if they came with us to be privatised” are quite commonly shared in informal conversation.

Energy Service staff are professional and highly motivated. We hope that the ambition to create an Energy Infrastructure Company to sit alongside Bristol Energy is based on sound financial figures rather than a desire to do so regardless of the consequences to said staff and the wider Council.

Investment Properties

The Council could sell off some Council owned ‘investment’ properties - particularly all those outside Bristol which are in Portishead, North Somerset.

The Council could revisit the lease arrangements for Long Ashton Park and Ride to ensure that it has control over the site and to be able to generate addition income from greater use, for example at weekends for sporting events at Ashton Gate.

GOVERNANCE

Model Employer

UNISON welcomes the commitment to living wage accreditation and creation of the Bristol Living Wage Partnership. We would like to be involved in the BLWP. We also applaud the refusal to work with companies guilty of blacklisting while noting that Balfour Beatty are engaged in works on the Metrobus scheme. UNISON welcomes the commitment to equality and diversity and would like to be involved in the development of an equalities charter.

Equal Pay

We welcome work to address the pay gap. UNISON has started talks with the employer about reform of the pay structure. We hope that this work will encompass the need to address the gender pay gap.

Ownership of efficient services by staff

Developmental opportunities are to be offered to managers in regard to financial management. This seems somewhat limiting both in regard to the staff targeted and the scope of the training. UNISON would like to be consulted on a training and development strategy for all staff so that the council continues to deliver good services by investing in staff.

Organisational Structures

In recent years, the council has been continuously restructured and a welcome emphasis has been placed on “spans of control” – ensuring that “deputy” posts aren’t created and that there are controlled and appropriate ratios of managers to workers. This principle was reflected in the recent third tier restructuring and pay rise for second and third tier officers. We are dismayed therefore to see the recent erosion of this principle, for example in ICT and HR where extra tiers of senior management are being inserted into the structures while experienced staff (e.g. HR advisers) are being made redundant. The council could legitimately be criticised for recreating a top – heavy organisation and unduly rewarding its higher paid officers while slashing services to the vulnerable.

A recent restructure in Admin and Business Support (ABS) led to around 86 staff taking voluntary severance. We now understand that too many staff have been released and that 24 vacancies remain in the structure for this service. This clearly raises concerns about the management of the restructure and the governance of the service given that public money has been spent on redundancies when posts have not been deleted. The fact that there is no single service director responsible for the service is clearly a weakness and we hope the council will address this. In terms of the vacancies that remain in ABS, we believe that these should be held for displaced staff in forthcoming restructures.

Consultancy and Agency Staff

Whilst we recognise that there are some legitimate reasons to employ consultants and agency staff from time to time, it is a matter of concern that spend on consultants in the authority remains high. Review of second and third tier pay was intended to reduce spend on “interim” managers and we feel that it is important to demonstrate that this has been achieved. We call on the council to regularly publish clear information on the current and historic spend on interim managers and consultants, detailing the reasons for the contract and the value added to the council’s operations to justify their cost to the public.

We are concerned that the role of the trade unions in reviewing spend on salary, agency and consultancy has been eliminated through the disbanding of the people panel. It is our view that the TU’s have played an important role in challenging additional costs in this forum and that the lack of scrutiny in the replacement process may lead to additional unnecessary costs.

Responding to the Staff Survey

We welcome the recent staff survey and have worked with the council to shape it. Its results should be used to support employees in the context of any restructuring arising for the corporate strategy. We note that there are 312 employees who go to work where they feel they aren’t treated with dignity and respect and question how much worse is this going to get when even more jobs are gone and even more pressure is put into those employees and their managers. We can anticipate much higher sickness levels due to stress and pressure of work and we would like assurances that the Council are taking this seriously and tackling it. Employees have access to the employee assistance programme but in line with the principle of early intervention, we call on the council to be proactive in ensuring that it trains and coaches all managers and team leaders in good employment practices to reduce impact on employees. This is especially relevant in the context of fewer HR advisers to support managers.

DEVOLUTION

UNISON has offered to meet delegates from each of the constituent members of the future Mayoral Combined Authority to explore the impact of devolution on public services and jobs. We look forward to a meeting in early 2017 as this issue is of interest to our members. We feel that devolution may offer some benefits in terms of funding but clearly there are issues of concern, including accountability, democracy and impact on jobs.

24. VOSCUR

Statement 1:

Voscur represents, supports and develops Bristol's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE). Many of our member organisations are working to tackle inequalities and address unfairness in the city amongst the most vulnerable communities. In addition to being a major employer, harnessing voluntary action, and bringing substantial resources into the city, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations contribute to building social capital and resilience, and help people to manage in these difficult times. The VCSE sector plays an important role in identifying and responding to emerging needs and bridging the widening gap between inequality in the city and services for people. We welcome the Council's proposal to "support a thriving voluntary sector, seek to enable the growth of local initiatives and encourage social enterprise" and the aim that this will lead to "local providers with unique abilities to reach vulnerable groups are working with local families." (p71)

Voscur recently facilitated VCSE sector input into a discussion of the Mayor Marvin Rees' Big Decisions, Tough Choices. We have also consulted with Voscur members through an online survey and direct discussions. This paper summarises the constructive points raised by representatives of Bristol's diverse VCSE sector. Voscur recognises the difficulties we face as a city, in changing demographics, and the scale and pace of change in this political environment. We understand the impact of six years of austerity and the difficulty of balancing the books while continuing to provide public services. Voscur firmly believes that, by working together to achieve the same aims, we can be resilient, survive, and thrive. We also believe that there are great opportunities to rethink and do things differently and Voscur is fully committed to working with the Mayor and Council to co-design and implement changes.

Recommendations

Our recommendations, which are grouped into (a) Improve the Strategy and (b) Moving the strategy forward, are as follows, with more detailed commentary below. We have not included suggested timings and would welcome further discussions with Bristol City Council so that we can work collaboratively to find solutions to the challenges ahead.

(a) Improve the Strategy

Recommendation 1 Doing things differently and cultural change:

Given the scale of the tasks ahead, new capabilities, resilience and focus will be needed. Without strong foundations and a good culture of positive risk taking, any changes are unlikely to release the necessary efficiencies. We recommend, therefore, that focus is given now to getting the right internal culture – and that one way to achieve this might be to undertake a psychologically informed review of the Council's organisational culture. This review will require input from VCSE sector service providers and those from other sectors and Voscur will participate to support this change. The subsequent plan to address organisational culture will need to include building up the capability, capacity and motivation of all council officers to follow through on the vision and deliver on the targets. Without addressing this matter, expecting such a cultural shift is ambitious and risks failure.

1 Psychologically informed environments (PIEs) are required in some commissioned services. A similar approach inside the council may help to address organisational culture.

Recommendation 2 Consultation process, managing the impact of change and risks of challenge:

Voscur would want to support the Council to manage the change process in the most positive way possible, and it is therefore important that an analysis of the impact of the proposed changes on all Bristol VCSE organisations and the service users that will be directly affected (by loss or reduction of income) is carried out. We request that the analysis includes details of how changes have been/are being actively and directly managed with affected community organisations and their specific services users (and not just the general public in the wider consultation). Where possible, Voscur will work with the council and VCSE organisations to support this process. Our estimate is that 45 VCSE organisations will be directly affected by the proposals.

Recommendation 3 Equalities impact and cumulative effects of changes: Voscur recommends the use of existing agreed methods to help assess the impact of change, and to plan for minimising any negative effects on particularly vulnerable groups. We would request therefore that:

- a. full equalities impact assessments are completed with expediency so that they can be considered alongside the consultation responses, prior to decisions.
- b. a cumulative analysis of the impact of changes on those with protected characteristics is prepared and considered, prior to decisions.
- c. a cumulative analysis of the impact of people in specific geographic areas (particularly areas that feature in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation), prior to decisions.

Recommendation 4 Community Assets:

- a. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Community Asset Transfer process to describe a strategic approach and make processes more proportionate, accessible and attractive to smaller community organisations.
- b. Consider the provision of a 'dowry' (i.e. capital fund) alongside CATs to enable reparative works so that transferred properties are in good condition (i.e. without ongoing liabilities). Such a fund could be delivered by social investment, which could involve council-VCSE partnership to manage the risks and no net outlay for council. Voscur would work to ensure that such an approach is inclusive, particularly to smaller, community organisations.
- c. Consider other ways to share the management of property-related risks.

Recommendation 5 Neighbourhood Partnerships: Undertake a review of Neighbourhood Partnerships that clarifies their remit, role and function, so that their effectiveness can be demonstrated against clear criteria, and/or their independence can be facilitated and supported, and different approaches and sustainability plans can be considered. Priority should be given to communities of deprivation, as it is clear that some communities are more asset-rich than others.

(b) Moving the strategy forward

Recommendation 6 Aspirations: Voscur would like to work with Bristol City Council to develop specific proposals and plans so that we can facilitate the involvement of the VCSE sector in co-designing services and managing change. We will contribute to turning the ideas into specific plans that involve the VCSE sector in design and in implementation.

Recommendation 7 "Some services can be taken on by communities or by the voluntary sector":

Voscur welcomes this openness and believes that VCSE organisations and communities are able to play key roles in delivering public services. Where there are opportunities for communities and/or the voluntary sector to take on services, Bristol City Council to work in partnership with the VCSE sector through Voscur to plan outsourcing and transition of services and ensure that through safe and transparent due diligence these services are well-governed, managed and delivered to the highest standards.

Recommendation 8 Co-location: Voscur and Bristol City Council to work together to develop co-location options, after which Voscur would actively support the VCSE sector to take up co-location opportunities.

Recommendation 9 Community Development: Voscur and Bristol City Council to continue to work together with partners to develop the community development practitioners' network in order to share learning and replicate models that bring additional resources to the city.

Recommendation 10 Commissioning and social value: Voscur, Bristol City Council and other commissioners to work together to develop a different approach to commissioning and procurement that shifts culture to 'how can we?' away from 'you can't'. We need to create a commissioning culture in which collaboration is the norm and creativity is actively encouraged. Bristol needs a new approach that recognises expertise exists in the provider market and that commissioners do not need to develop all solutions. Such an approach could implement the following:

- c. review the early stage (aspire) of project and programme development so that commissioners and providers work together to explore resource-efficient options to develop and design services.
- d. develop standard guidance on co-design and co-production so that our collaborative work leads to the best possible solutions for service users. The approach used in the co-design of the VCS Grants Prospectus should be further developed.
- e. use Social Value to require bidders (including business and VCSE sector) to work well with the VCSE sector.
- f. use new regulations (for example, reserved contracts) as a means to secure contracts with VCSE sector organisations that have potential to bring in additional funds (that cannot be secured by public or private sector contract holders).
- g. Voscur works to support the VCSE sector to be better at 'selling' or offering its Social Value to other bidders in collaborations. This will help to achieve charitable aims, help bidders win contracts and help city achieve Social Value.

Recommendation 11 Devolution: The strategy states that the Council will "work with businesses, neighbouring local authorities and our public sector partners to strengthen Bristol's devolution bid." It will also be important to work with Voscur and the West of England Civil Society Partnership, (which has a track record of cross-boundary working and successfully bringing investment into the region) to ensure that the value of the VCSE sector and its role in driving and supporting inclusive community economic development and good growth across the West of England is recognised and supported.

(a) Improve the Strategy

1) Doing things differently and cultural change.

"I am convinced that the wrong approach to manage reductions in funding is to simply keep trimming budgets. We need to develop an understanding of where we want the city to be in four years and beyond and ensure we have the council operating in a way that will get us there. There is a need to be certain about what services we must provide and those we want to keep at all costs. We have to reinvent the role of Bristol City Council in light of the available finances. It must maintain its leadership role and must continue to fight for good outcomes for people from the city. But we will have to work in new ways. This includes taking a strategic approach to identify what can be done better and more cost effectively, while also considering what could be managed or delivered elsewhere." (page 2)

Voscur and members strongly agree with this statement. We disagree with the 'salami slicing' and budget trimming that has been used to manage reductions in some publicly-funded services. We believe that such approaches are not strategic and result in an overall reduction in quality of services, without looking at the bigger picture. We agree with a longer term, strategic approach and will support the Mayor and council in such developments. We believe that there is an imperative to target limited resources to those most vulnerable and that the VCSE sector has a major part to play in fighting for and delivering outcomes for the communities of Bristol.

Although the consultation document mentions new values – "we will endeavour to be bold, caring, enabling, gracious, trustworthy" (page 4) – there is little else about how such important, change-making values will be engendered. People in the council (and other public sector and the VCSE sector) have experienced much change, losses and the prospect of more upheaval. We believe a critical success factor in current/future change is the emotional health of the workforce. Voscur agrees with the values but also believes that leadership skills and attitudes, courage, a trusting culture, an openness to innovation and a commitment to working in partnership are areas that need to be addressed inside Bristol City Council (and other public sector bodies) to offset the risk of retaining existing culture (and fears) and not enabling inclusive change to happen.

Over recent years, there has been much talk of doing things differently, of the council shifting from 'doing' to 'enabling'. Some progress has been made but there are also significant cultural issues within the council that prevent leadership, enabling and empowerment. Examples such as the council's approach to the High Court case with Missing Link, and recent Compact advocacy cases indicate there is further work to be done on Bristol City Council's organisational culture.

Recommendation 1: Given the scale of the tasks ahead, new capabilities, resilience and focus will be needed. Without strong foundations and a good culture of positive risk taking any changes are unlikely to release the necessary efficiencies. We recommend, therefore that focus is given now to getting the right internal culture – and that one way might be to undertake a psychologically informed review² of the Council's organisational culture. This review will require input from VCSE sector service providers and those from other sectors and Voscur will participate to support this change. The subsequent plan to address organisational culture will need to include building up the capability, capacity and motivation of all council officers to follow through on the vision and deliver on the targets. Without addressing this matter, expecting such a cultural shift is ambitious and risks failure.

Psychologically informed environments (PIEs) are required in some commissioned services. A similar approach inside the council may help to address organisational culture.

2) Consultation process, managing the impact of change and risks of challenge

Voscur members have raised concerns about the corporate strategy consultation process, for example:

☐ The design is complex throughout. The online system also only allows the user to comment on 3 of the proposals for cuts under each of the 3 sections, yet there are around 10 proposals in each section. This is a serious limitation."

☐ General feedback is that the consultation is not accessible – either digitally or via paper format. Of the people who came in today [one of the drop-in sessions] only one was confident taking away the consultation papers and providing a response in writing. This supports our suspicions that it's simply not fit for purpose for those wishing to express a view."

☐ We are extremely concerned at the style, complexity, and lack of support to facilitate citizen engagement with this consultation. Residents simply do not possess the time or skills to thumb through a 120 page document and 12 page response form."

In some cases, community hubs have organised their own consultation events so that local people were enabled to respond to proposals that will affect services in the area.

☐ Around half the residents [that we engaged] felt that the proposals were quite unclear and at times ambiguous. For example, a level of cuts was often proposed with no reference to the size of that budget, or any indication of a baseline."

In addition, Voscur is aware that some engagement with community organisations about proposed reductions appears not to have followed established protocols. Examples:

☐ A community organisation was asked (June 2016) to provide an impact assessment of the loss of 100% funding and alternate council provision of those services. Upon challenge to the fairness of the process, the idea to change funding was subsequently included in the Corporate Strategy consultation.

☐ An organisation that is directly affected by a proposal (RS6) has had no direct contact with Bristol City Council about that proposal.

Bristol City Council's standard process for managing change (end or reduction) in funding for community organisations is described in the Decommissioning Policy. Furthermore, the council is committed to the Bristol Compact (which describes managing change) and must follow the government's Best Value Statutory Guidance. It is noted that, in the above examples, these protocols appear not to have been followed in these ways:

☐ Best Value Statutory Guidance requires specific consultation with directly affected service users prior to any decision to change funding. It then requires at least three months' formal notice of any change.

☐ Decommissioning Policy requires a 'decommissioning impact assessment' which arises from discussions between community organisations and their contract/relationship manager. Such discussion would lead to a

documented understanding of the impact of proposed changes (on service users and workforce) and clearly described mitigations of those risks so that change is effectively managed.

We are concerned about the processing of the proposed changes to funding in the Corporate Strategy consultation, particularly those changes due to take effect in-year or in 2017/18. We are seriously concerned that the changes will affect many community organisations (we estimate at least 45) and will have a detrimental impact on their service users, workforce, ability to effectively manage change and organisational viability. Whilst community organisations understand that changes are needed, there is a need to follow established protocols – this will help to avoid multiple, resource-demanding challenges to funding decisions in the near future.

Recommendation 2: Voscur would want to support the Council to manage the change process in the most positive way possible, and it is therefore important that an analysis of the impact of the proposed changes on all Bristol VCSE organisations and the service users that will be directly affected (by loss or reduction of income) is carried out. We request that the analysis includes details of how changes have been/are being actively and directly managed with affected community organisations and their specific services users (and not just the general public in the wider consultation). Where possible, Voscur will work with the council and VCSE organisations to support this process. Our estimate is that 45 VCSE organisations will be directly affected by the proposals.

3) Equalities impact and cumulative effects of changes

Voscur notes that there are no equalities impact assessments associated with the multiple and complex changes proposed in the Corporate Strategy. We are concerned that the impact of changes on people, communities and organisations is not understood and, importantly, is not being considered to inform decisions or implementation.

While we can see that there are many equality impact relevance checks (which indicate the need for full equalities impact assessments in many cases), there appears to be little information available at this stage that could help Bristol City Council understand which proposals will have unacceptable or minimal impact on vulnerable people.

Voscur also notes that there is no mention of the cumulative impact of changes on some communities. The equalities impact assessments should be analysed to assess the cumulative impact of all changes on those with protected characteristics – this is not mentioned in the consultation documents. By reviewing the relevance checks, we can see that specific equalities groups will be directly affected by individual proposals, including these examples that will impact older people:

- ☐ CF10 Review of provision of day services to adults
- ☐ CF12 Change the way reablement, rehabilitation and intermediate Care Services are provided
- ☐ RS2 Reduction of subsidies for bus routes with low numbers of passengers
- ☐ RS4 Remove Companion Concessionary bus passes
- ☐ RS6 Withdraw reimbursements to Community Transport operators for concessionary travel.

In addition to all of the above, these examples will also impact disabled people:

- ☐ CF2 Recommissioning of Homelessness Support Services for Adults and Families
- ☐ CF8 Single citywide Information, Advice and Guidance service
- ☐ IN2 Charge for advisory disabled bays and 'keep clear' markings
- ☐ RS3 Remove funding for local traffic schemes devolved to Neighbourhood Partnerships
- ☐ RS8 Revise operating times for Concessionary Travel.

We are also aware that the combination of some proposals has potential to disproportionately affect some geographic communities. There is no mention of an assessment of the combined impact of changes on specific areas. We are concerned that the cumulative impact will disproportionately affect people in areas of the city that experience more disadvantage than others, as per the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. We know that such communities have access to fewer services and opportunities. If some changes are applied universally across the city, then it follows that people in disadvantaged areas will be more affected by such changes (as a greater proportion of services will be affected). The scant detail provided in the consultation

does not allow us to understand if such consideration is being made. For example, people in Hartcliffe may be affected by many changes, including:

- ☐ Funding to the CATT Bus: RS6 proposes to end the reimbursement of concessionary fares; general funding of community transport is included in the VCS Grants Prospectus' Bristol Impact Fund – the outcomes of which will not be known until March
- ☐ CF1 Hengrove Leisure Centre refinancing – impact on South Bristol residents
- ☐ CF13 Review Early Help services (Family Support) mentions closing some buildings – it is not clear if this means Children's Centres or if it is across the city
- ☐ RS4 Remove Companion Concessionary bus passes – likely impact on carers especially those on outer areas of Bristol
- ☐ RS8 Revise operating times for Concessionary Travel – likely impact on elderly and disabled people especially in outer areas of Bristol
- ☐ RS10 Local Crisis and Prevention Fund – adverse impact on homeless people and people living in poverty
- ☐ RS13 Centralise Citizen Service Points – closing in Fishponds, Hartcliffe, Southmead and Rodingleaze. Negative impact on areas of deprivation, particularly impacting in combination with changes in transport concessions.
- ☐ CF3 Reduce Use of Temporary Accommodation – more likely to impact on areas of high deprivation where homelessness rates are higher.
- ☐ CF6 New Ways of Delivering Parks and Green Spaces – deprived areas have fewer assets to participate in this new model.
- ☐ RS1 Reduction in funding for ROADS – may impact more in deprived areas where these issues are more prevalent.

Should all of these changes be implemented, the impact on the Hartcliffe community will be comparatively more detrimental than that of less isolated, less disadvantaged communities. The same point applies to other areas of deprivation.

Recommendation 3: Voscur recommends the use of existing agreed methods to help assess the impact of change, and to plan for minimising any negative effects on particularly vulnerable groups. We would request therefore that:

- a. full equalities impact assessments are completed with expediency so that they can be considered alongside the consultation responses, prior to decisions.
- b. a cumulative analysis of the impact of changes on those with protected characteristics is prepared and considered, prior to decisions.
- c. a cumulative analysis of the impact of people in specific geographic areas (particularly areas that feature in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation), prior to decisions.

4) Community assets

Community organisations are interested in working more efficiently. Community Asset Transfer has the potential to support community organisations to be more efficient (spending less on rents for example) and providing hub services in their communities. However, the CAT process and its reputation (of being a way to offset liabilities) are barriers to some community organisations. Voscur believes that the process should be streamlined, a new process promoted and that community organisations should be supported through the process. The governance bodies (normally volunteer trustees) of some organisations are reluctant to take on additional risk of property liabilities – this needs to be addressed. Voscur is keen to be involved in a review and rethink about Community Asset Transfer.

Recommendation 4:

- a. Undertake a comprehensive review of the Community Asset Transfer process to describe a strategic approach and make processes more proportionate, accessible and attractive to smaller community organisations.
- b. Consider the provision of a 'dowry' (i.e. capital fund) alongside CATs to enable reparative works so that transferred properties are in good condition (i.e. without ongoing liabilities). Such a fund could be delivered

by social investment, which could involve council-VCSE partnership to manage the risks and no net outlay for council. Voscur would work to ensure that such an approach is inclusive, particularly to smaller, community organisations.

c. Consider other ways to share the management of property-related risks.

5) Neighbourhood Partnerships

Voscur agrees with the proposal (CF7) to reshape the approach to local engagement and democracy. We understand differences across the city require different approaches and we are working closely with Neighbourhood Partnerships to support their operation and development. For example, we are facilitating Greater Bedminster Community Partnership and St George's Neighbourhood Partnerships to establish separate legal entities that allow local governance, economic development, co-ordination of local priorities and bringing in additional funds. We believe that, by increasing the independence of organisations delivering NP functions, the council investment in NPs can be phased out as other funding solutions are achieved.

Recommendation 5: Undertake a review of Neighbourhood Partnerships that clarifies their remit, role and function, so that their effectiveness can be demonstrated against clear criteria, and/or their independence can be facilitated and supported, and different approaches and sustainability plans can be considered. Priority should be given to communities of deprivation, as it is clear that some communities are more asset-rich than others.

(b) Moving the strategy forward

6) Aspirations

In the specific proposals (Appendix 1), which will require more detail to implement and to achieve successful outcomes, there are many instances of general aspirations, such as 'exploring', 'considering' and 'encouraging'. We are concerned that, without more firm commitments, detailed rationales and cases for change, the critique of the previous administration (page 2) will continue to be the reality.

Recommendation 6: Voscur would like to work with Bristol City Council to develop specific proposals and plans so that we can facilitate the involvement of the VCSE sector in co-designing services and managing change. We will contribute to turning the ideas into specific plans that involve the VCSE sector in design and in implementation.

7) "Some services can be taken on by communities or by the voluntary sector"

Indeed, it is likely that the city will become increasingly dependent on social action and the voluntary sector to deliver services that had previously been considered state provision, or core Council services. To realise the aspiration of increased social action in communities and volunteering in community organisations, more planning and collaborative work will be needed. Voscur believes that social action and volunteering are important solutions. We also believe that such things do not just happen, that support is needed and that quality (of experience and of contribution) is important. Voscur is fully committed to supporting individuals to be active in their communities and to supporting community organisations to provide high quality local services. We do this in several ways:

☐ Increase the sustainability of the VCSE sector by providing business planning, income generation and fundraising support.

☐ Facilitate collaboration and partnership working.

☐ Provide the skills, knowledge and expertise to ensure that local VCSE organisations are well governed, volunteers are well managed and supported, and that compliance issues such as safeguarding, health and safety and equalities are considered.

☐ Develop and manage specific projects that a) match skilled professional people with community organisations, b) provide support to people to move them into employment and training through volunteering opportunities, and c) link individuals to social action opportunities.

The development of social action needs to play to the strengths of the VCSE sector, including leverage (the sector's ability to build on public investment and draw in additional funding). Voscur has taken the lead in developing an action plan for this process: we facilitated an initial workshop for VCSE leaders to begin the development of a 10-year citywide VCSE vision linked to a 5-year action plan. Its priorities are likely to include: Page 10 of 12

- ☐ Relationships: working with other sectors more effectively (expectations, protocols) particularly the business sector to agree a mutually beneficial approach
- ☐ Social investment: sustainable future finance through prevention, enterprise and using long-term leverage investment from BCC to bring in external funding
- ☐ Coordination: better use of data and intelligence to coordinate services and increase impact
- ☐ Collaboration: including better coordination of public bodies (BCC, CCG) coordinating clients to use social enterprise services (leading to better outcomes, reduced public spending and improved sustainability) and to avoid competition for volunteers.

Recommendation 7: Voscur welcomes this openness and believes that VCSE organisations and communities are able to play key roles in delivering public services. Where there are opportunities for communities and/or the voluntary sector to take on services, Bristol City Council to work in partnership with the VCSE sector through Voscur to plan outsourcing and transition of services and ensure that through safe and transparent due diligence these services are well-governed, managed and delivered to the highest standards.

8) Co-location

The Corporate Strategy includes the idea of co-location of services and mixed uses of council buildings (page 6). Voscur agrees that this is a sensible approach and that many community organisations will be interested in sharing space. We anticipate that organisations with public-facing services delivered in community settings could collaborate with council-run services in the sharing of premises in new community hubs. Such arrangements could support community organisations (for example, with lower rent) and could support council-run buildings to stay open (for example, by sharing reception desks or by sharing opening/closing responsibilities). Co-location of public and VCSE sector services could also result in higher footfall, which would have a beneficial effect on service efficiencies. Voscur has recently worked in partnership with council libraries to develop social action opportunities, including volunteering, active citizenship and community hubs.

Recommendation 8: Voscur and Bristol City Council to work together to develop co-location options, after which Voscur would actively support the VCSE sector to take up co-location opportunities.

9) Community development

Voscur welcomes the recent collaborative approaches to community development across the city – for example, the community development event and sharing of training. It is good that efforts are being made to join up peer practitioners – we see that approach as crucial to continuing to deliver outcomes through the tool of community development. Voscur's members are actively involved in this agenda, often with no public funds. For example, one community organisation in south Bristol has formed a local group of older people supporting each other and making things happen with a small investment from two funders. Examples like this one could be developed further, potentially bringing in other funds and reducing the need for direct council spend.

Recommendation 9: Voscur and Bristol City Council and partners to work together to develop the community development practitioners' network in order to share learning and replicate models that bring additional resources to the city.

10) Commissioning and social value

Bristol's VCSE sector has been involved in commissioning and delivering public service contracts for many years. Some organisations thrive in commissioning processes, but others – particularly smaller, local, equalities organisations – report that they are excluded. Voscur believes that such trusted organisations have much to offer in effectively delivering services in their communities.

A recent report³ states that central and local government are using "shockingly complicated and inappropriate contracting and commissioning processes to secure vital public services" and "the experiences of small charities taking part in commissioning processes reveal a system in crisis which leaves charities threatened with closure and the future of public services, including homelessness, domestic abuse and mental health support, at risk".

3 'Commissioning in Crisis, Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales. December 2016

Whilst highlighting major challenges faced by charities, the report recognises that commissioners themselves are under pressure operating with smaller budgets and fewer staff. Despite this, and in many cases they claim, it is the commissioning processes themselves adding cost, inefficiency and complexity. The strategy states (p71) – "we will support a thriving voluntary sector, seek to enable the growth of local initiatives and encourage social enterprise." To achieve this we will "embed our Social Value Policy in our commissioning and develop good practice examples." The outcome will be that "local providers with unique abilities to reach vulnerable groups are working with local families."

Voscur welcomes the Bristol Social Value Policy and recognises the potential to do things differently so that smaller organisations become included and win public service contracts. We also believe that there are other options (for example, reserved contracts; innovation partnerships; negotiations; lot management) available to commissioners that would allow more creative processes and the inclusion of smaller community organisations. Such options, if used in collaborative discussions between commissioners and providers, have the potential to lead to most resource-efficient solutions. It may be, for example, that negotiation takes less time, has less impact on service users and providers and achieves successful solutions, compared with the default competitive tendering process that is most commonly used.

The inclusion of VCSE providers in the delivery of public service contracts will serve the community (by maximising the effectiveness of public funds) and strengthen links between VCSE organisations and contract holders (predominantly business sector). In turn, that will mean VCSE organisations are more sustainable and less reliant on grant funding.

Recommendation 10: Voscur, Bristol City Council and other commissioners to work together to develop a different approach to commissioning and procurement that shifts culture to 'how can we?' away from 'you can't'. We need to create a commissioning culture in which collaboration is the norm and creativity is actively encouraged. Bristol needs a new approach that recognises expertise exists in the provider market and that commissioners do not need to develop all solutions. Such an approach could implement the following:

- c. review the early stage (aspire) of project and programme development so that commissioners and providers work together to explore resource-efficient options to develop and design services.
- d. develop standard guidance on co-design and co-production so that our collaborative work leads to the best possible solutions for service users. The approach used in the co-design of the VCS Grants Prospectus should be further developed.
- e. use Social Value to require bidders (including business and VCSE sector) to work well with the VCSE sector.
- f. use new regulations (for example, reserved contracts) as a means to secure contracts with VCSE sector organisations that have potential to bring in additional funds (that cannot be secured by public or private sector contract holders).
- g. Voscur works to support the VCSE sector to be better at 'selling' or offering its Social Value to other bidders in collaborations. This will help to achieve charitable aims, help bidders win contracts and help city achieve Social Value.

11) Devolution - Ensure we maximise the opportunity of devolution and the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) to enhance and drive the good growth of the city. The strategy states that the Council will "work with businesses, neighbouring local authorities, and our public sector partners to strengthen Bristol's devolution bid." (p.80) It is also important to recognise the value and role of the VCSE sector across the West of England in driving and delivering community economic development and good growth. Voscur, with its partners in the West of England Civil Society Partnership recently secured £5.8m investment into the West of England Works programme. This will enable community organisations to support people furthest from the labour market to access volunteering, training and employment

opportunities. Additionally, Voscur is a partner in a West of England EU growth fund initiative (co-designed by local partners) that will support social entrepreneurs and community enterprise.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are accountable for £7.5bn of public funding yet there is little opportunity to involve local people in decision making. LEP boards rarely include VCSE representation or similar independent thinkers, resulting in a traditional approach to economic growth. There is a danger that devolution will also create decision making processes that are lacking accountability. NAVCA and Locality have produced five principles of devolution, the first being that devolution needs to be based on inclusive growth. Others include the need for better involvement of people and communities in decision-making. The VCSE sector can help bring about a shift in power from national and sub-regional decision makers, to grass roots, and plays a vital role in giving people, often those overlooked by the state, a voice.

Recommendation 11: The strategy states that the Council will “work with businesses, neighbouring local authorities and our public sector partners to strengthen Bristol’s devolution bid.” It will also be important to work with Voscur and the West of England Civil Society Partnership, (which has a track record of cross-boundary working and successfully bringing investment into the region) to ensure that the value of the VCSE sector and its role in driving and supporting inclusive community economic development and good growth across the West of England is recognised and supported.

VOSCUR statement on volunteering

Voscur represents, supports and develops Bristol’s Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE). Many of our member organisations are working to tackle inequalities and address unfairness in the city amongst the most vulnerable communities. In addition to being a major employer, harnessing voluntary action, and bringing substantial resources into the city, voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations contribute to building social capital and resilience, and help people to manage in these difficult times. The VCSE sector plays an important role in identifying and responding to emerging needs and bridging the widening gap between inequality in the city and services for people. We welcome the Council’s proposal to “support a thriving voluntary sector, seek to enable the growth of local initiatives and encourage social enterprise” and the aim that this will lead to “local providers with unique abilities to reach vulnerable groups are working with local families.” (p71)

In 2013, Voscur merged with Volunteer Bristol and has, since that time been managing the Volunteer Centre, and providing face to face and on-line volunteer brokerage services – linking people to community organisations and social action initiatives. This work has been funded through an investment of £29,000 from the Council’s Community Investment Fund, and has enabled Voscur to lever in funding from other sources in order to provide specific services currently including supporting people in recovery to access supported volunteering places, matching skilled professionals with community organisations, and a volunteering scheme that supports people with dementia. The Volunteer Centre provides training and good practice resources for volunteer managers, and offers a regular Volunteer Organisers’ Forum. The £29,000 annual funding for this work has been absorbed into the Bristol Impact Fund, because a decision has been taken that Bristol no longer needs a Volunteer Centre.

We want to take this opportunity to again register our concern at this decision, particularly as the corporate strategy proposes that “some services can be taken on by communities or by the voluntary sector”. Volunteers currently play a major role in the city, and we agree that it is likely that the city will become increasingly dependent on social action and the voluntary sector to deliver services that had previously been considered state provision, or core Council services.

We are concerned that without a Volunteer Centre to provide the services described above, there will be no central volunteering ‘clearing house’, no oversight of good practice in volunteer management, and no champion of volunteers’ rights in the city, at a time when there is potential for those rights to be undermined.