

# Corporate Strategy Appendix B:

## Responses from Councillors and MPs

### Contents

1.	Councillor Donald Alexander .....	2
2.	Councillor Clive Stevens .....	3
3.	Councillor Gill Kirk .....	5
4.	Councillor Brenda Massey .....	10
5.	Councillor Mark Weston .....	10
6.	Councillor Ruth Pickersgill .....	11
7.	Charlotte Leslie, MP .....	12
8.	Karin Smyth, MP .....	14
9.	Green Councillor Group .....	15
10.	Lockleaze Labour Party Branch .....	21

## **1. Councillor Donald Alexander – Engagement and Democracy (item 11)**

With reference to item 11, I would like to open the discussion by suggesting that any attempt to enhance the level of engagement of the City Council with the public needs to start with an honest look at the complexity of the Council's organisational structure. 6 months into being a Councillor, I, and many other new Councillors, are still struggling to know who does what. It's almost completely fanciful to think that members of the public are going to fill these chairs until we face this issue head on and restructure the Council with visibility as a clear objective. Thank you.

Cllr D Alexander

## 2. Councillor Clive Stevens

Corporate Strategy Consultation 2017/18 – 21/22 – Feedback

Appendix 2 - CAPITAL PROGRAMME – personal comments – Cllr Clive Stevens

Page | 1

Capital expenditure is an investment for the future. So what kind of future do we want for the people of Bristol? In my view we should aim for a thriving, healthy, sustainable city where everyone has an opportunity for personal growth; so a fair city, fair in all senses of the word. One where people who live, work or study here can say “I live in Bristol” and the reply will be “you are fortunate”, a city that engenders pride but without arrogance and brings well-being without extreme inequality.

Clearly Bristol’s council faces serious long term challenges; a drastically changing funding model for local government, and acute spending pressures linked to demographic population change and the need to mobilise self-help like never before. Nevertheless, if we are to deliver the better future for Bristol that we all aspire to, the investment decisions made today must support not hinder these objectives.

The actions necessary to get from here to there are well known; better transport, more housing, a successful economy, access to life-long learning and the ability for people to prosper and find an individual meaning for their life whether through faith, business, care, knowledge, produce, arts... no one should be “just getting by” (unless they want to!), we need to be a city of opportunity for all.

The capital programme is inevitably inherited from the previous mayor but that means the lifetime of this new program will also stretch well beyond 2020. Capital should be invested in four areas: to save the Council costs, to earn income for the Council, to provide an environment for good growth and to provide a social good.

Investment in adequate schooling goes without saying, here are specific comments on projects within the themes identified above, with special attention to tier two and three:

Invest capital to save Council costs:

- 1) Adult social care is getting more expensive and any investments that help improve productivity, care and get people back on their feet are the right thing to do. Schemes T102, T201, T205 are a start but it is pretty unambitious and I suggest a group to look at pulling together these and adding other investments to deliver a coherent package.
- 2) Housing is getting more expensive (to rent and buy) and a significant % of Bristol’s population are just a few zero pay checks away from being homeless. Housing 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> year students would take pressure off some markets. Building higher density brings a more sustainable community as well as the quickest way for more residences. Schemes T128, T123, T116, T103 and T104 are all important contributors but similarly more can be done and needs to be done.

Invest capital to earn the Council revenue:

- 3) Transport as we know is a problem, T107 is for residents’ parking which can be run to earn revenue; schemes T301, T308 and T309 need more priority as should schemes for workplace parking charges and a clean air zone (neither of which are in the plan).
- 4) Expanding and earning revenue from the operations centre is supported, T113.

5) Energy, schemes T118/T120 and T311 regarding renewable energy generation are supported. T310 should be rolled in as a package with Bristol Energy Company so buying energy and efficiency become a new business model.

Invest capital to encourage good growth in Bristol

6) There don't appear to be any capital schemes that encourage good growth; business rate payers would be justified in saying "what do we get for our rates"? A capital program to encourage good growth in the city is urgently needed. Good growth being activities that don't cause much harm to people or the environment and ideally bring personal growth to individuals (self-confidence, esteem...). Reskilling, training (to ensure Bristol has a good pool of talented employees to support business) also the arts, local foods and crafts, quality care, high tech especially capitalising on leading universities, these are all examples of good growth.

Invest capital to provide a social good

7) Transport infrastructure (sustainable transport) schemes T121, T203, T204, T302, T303, T304, T305, & T306 make a good set of initiatives but only one is actually funded at the moment (T121 – legible city, better signage for walking). These schemes not only are socially good but also bring other benefits.

8) Museums and Libraries provide a huge social good but need reinvention for our digital age.

In summary the Capital Programme has some "good stuff" in it but it is bitty, it needs pulling together to become a strategy for the future and then it becomes more obvious which projects need pulling forward and which can be put back. I would expect that the extra private sector house building which has brought the Council tax surplus will also bring a CiL surplus and enable a faster investment programme than this one.

Questions remain: Are there enough officers left to make this happen? And how much will be taken from us by the metro mayor?

This is a personal response by Councillor Clive Stevens

### 3. Councillor Gill Kirk

#### Statement 1:

Why we must defend and ensure a future for Bristol Community Links Day centres and drop-in centres for people with learning difficulties, physical and sensory impairment and dementia:

I would like to make this extra submission regarding the section of the corporate strategy relating to People directorate, the item on services (drop-in and day centres) provided by Bristol Community Links in which it is suggested other providers may be sought.

I believe that these services are essential to maintain, preferably by the council but if not then by another provider. They offer vital support to the most vulnerable sections of the community who are already impacted by cuts to services such as ESA, and benefit cuts.

I would like to ensure we have clarity on the overall costs of these services as service users pay charges (according to income) but I am not sure if these come back to the same budget as they are recouped through social care?

Having researched the service they provide, and visited the BCL day centre/drop-in at the Beacon Centre, (central) I have seen the level of support they provide at relatively low cost and the added value they achieve through staff volunteering extra time and commitment out of hours.

Regarding the drop-in centres, in Knowle park (south) Muller Rd (north) and Beacon centre (central) I am convinced that they are an essential preventative service that support extremely vulnerable people with learning difficulties to maintain a level of independence and ability to work. They also offer specialist dementia support services such as Sporting memories, and act as a hub for many other organisations to become involved and offer service users a wide range of services, (including Princes Trust, public health and wellbeing services,)

The BCL central is based in a multi purpose building and provides a safe, inclusive, environment, and support for its service users to develop peer support, access staff support, integrate into the wider community, learn social and life skills to be able to run their own lives, hold down jobs and find work. service users travel independently to use these services so transport is not a cost and the 3 BCL hubs are needed so that service users can access them independently within their own geographical areas. They are not encouraged to attend every day but to use the drop in as a 'support' network to enable them to get out in the wider community, living more independently. The drop in staff link up with job centre staff and are also trained job coaches themselves, so are able to understand the pressures and requirements of people with LDs getting into employment and managing benefit interviews and are therefore able to offer the needed support, without which some service users would not cope with these pressures.

It is by far the best outcome for people with Learning Difficulties (LD) to be independent and in work, better for their own wellbeing and far less costly than their becoming dependent on council services for more costly support. They are enabled to do this by the support they get from these drop in centres.

The day centres at Lanercost (North) the Old bristol 600 (South) and the St George Service (central) are also well used and relied upon, providing an essential service for older people with LDs and people with dementia, those with autism and challenging behaviour. BCL work hard to offer person centred planning so the service users are enabled to participate in different activities and interact with the community, they are also the only service where carers do not have to stay to supervise and therefore get a break themselves. They are run by care advisers on a grade 5, not a hugely expensive resource, and multi skilled care workers/drivers on a grade 6 add extra flexibility. The central day centre reaches an area of high ethnic diversity and 30% attendees are of BME, so they are addressing health inequalities gaps in this community, helped greatly through the diversity, cultural understanding and local connections of their staff. They run (particularly in central) in areas of deprivation where there is less social capital, less voluntary and community resources and therefore they are providing a hub where no other exists.

I want to highlight the strong connection between Learning difficulties and dementia with research showing that 50% people with Downs Syndrome over 60 develop dementia. The blend of skills needed for supporting learning difficulties and dementia that these staff have is a vital source of expertise, and much needed in the field of dementia care and developing dementia friendly communities. The staff are very open to bringing members of the community in for social activities such as dominoes, that are popular in this area, and to develop the strong community links they already have.

We misunderstand if we think day centres are all about people stuck in one room all day watching TV. They are supportive social hubs, and Bristol Community Links has made amazing progress in making day care services more outward looking, integrating vulnerable people with their communities and acting as social hubs, reaching out to their neighbourhoods, building on the opportunities of informal contacts, offering volunteering opportunities and intergenerational work with young people, especially on the central site which is next door to City Academy. They play a co-ordinating and enabling role that specifically serves the most vulnerable residents in our city.

Because of this co-ordinating, neighbourhood-focussed role, I see an important role for BCL centres in the future, promoting wellbeing and social prescribing for these hard to reach service users with complex needs, helping us achieve a more inclusive and dementia friendly city. They have a 'natural link' with public health in this sense and maybe this could be a source of funding in the future. They most definitely address health inequalities. They are in fact a vital 'preventative', support and enabling service.

We cannot afford to lose them, as the most vulnerable people will lose out and the city will pick up further costs if people with learning difficulties lose the support they need to maintain independence, and people with dementia and their carers lose vital support and respite.

#### Statement 2:

1) Manifesto commitments on reducing inequalities and early intervention Services within People Directorate are crucial to the mayor's manifesto commitments, of making this a fairer, less unequal city, where we support the vulnerable and where resources are invested in early interventions and prevention of problems rather than addressing systemic problems further down the line. This is particularly true of children services where we must remember Marmot's top priority for reducing inequalities, 'give every child the best start', and also our firm commitment to corporate parenting and ensuring better outcomes for Looked After children. Children centres were promised protection in the manifesto and are proven to improve life chances of children from the most disadvantaged families. Attempts in other parts of the UK (eg Swindon) to cut Children Centres and target these services to only the most disadvantaged families have met with failure because that approach brings with it stigma and the people who most need the services will not access them. The universal reach of children centres is necessary to allow more targeted work within them. (proportionate universalism) We must be very careful that we do not cut in one area such as Childrens Centres only to find the council is picking up the (probably greater) costs in another. We must look carefully at statistics, and understand them better. For example falling numbers of Looked After children can mean a large number of children with complex needs just below the threshold for going into care. There is limited capacity in social work to cope if more children go over that threshold, therefore the need for Childrens centres in managing and containing complex needs is greater and good value for money in the longterm. Please see the appendix, item 11 for my more detailed proposals for Childrens Centres.

2) Maintaining statutory services, adult social care, children services, and elements of Care Act 2014 relating to support for carers especially young carers. The People directorate has to deliver essential statutory services so the direction of travel to becoming an 'enabling and empowering' council may be harder to achieve realistically within this directorate, without causing negative impact to service users who inevitably are the most vulnerable citizens. The largest part of People budget, and therefore overspend, is adult social care. This part of the budget is subject to pressures beyond the control of the council. Rising demand for care, cuts from central government, improved minimum wage for carers, a failure by government to address long term social care funding or to provide extra resources for the NHS to be able move money across to councils to invest in social care to relieve pressure on acute health services. (2020

is too late for this money to come) No new money is coming from the government to cities such as Bristol and the only solution put forward by government in this 4 year term has been for councils to raise their council tax, impacting on poorer residents and still failing to close the funding gap. Our statutory responsibility for children services and child protection also needs sufficient resources to allow social workers to have manageable caseloads. We also have to recognise responsibilities imposed on councils by the government to offer carers assessments and to support young carers.

3) All possible efficiency savings in adult social care have already been made. I have sat on People scrutiny for nearly 3 years now. I believe every possible effort has been made by the directors and officers within People directorate to improve efficiency in delivering adult social care and there is simply no fat to trim. There are arguments to be made about whether commissioning care is the best model (rather than in-house services) but while commissioning is the system we have, that is all we can work with. I have seen and scrutinised the measures implemented to save money, through more efficient commissioning, and through changing the way we work with care providers, and the sensible attempts to achieve economies of scale. ( eg providers offered long term contracts for reduced rates, and home care providers are asked to work on maximizing service users's independence to reduce demand for care) However, necessary economies of scale sadly involve some compromises on quality and experience of services by service users. In addition there is a tipping point whereby the hourly rate we pay for care does not cover the care providers' costs and they will not be able to fulfil their contracts with us and in future will not want to take them on. We pay less for care per hour than our neighbouring authorities which means Bristol providers pay less to their staff and cannot recruit and retain sufficient care staff. I believe that tipping point has already been reached and we risk providers backing out of contracts or not wanting to renew them. The adult social care 3 tier model promotes greater independence , self care and 'help when you need it', but this shift in approach relies on other support from the NHS and voluntary sector, social prescribing and more resilient communities. It will not reduce demand for care overnight and should not be expected to. It is recognized that not all social care needs are currently met and this is resulting in bedblocking in acute hospitals. (50 cases reported in November 2016) lack of care is placing more pressure on families and informal carers whose own health will deteriorate.

4) Why we must address the social care crisis head on. This intractable problem of the national social care crisis and how it is experienced here in Bristol must be named and faced head on because it risks destabilising the rest of our People services financially. It means the only way to make efficiency savings is to cut other essential services affecting the vulnerable, the elderly, disabled, parents of disabled children and other carers. This is something that goes against all we stand for and all we came into local politics to do. The other way of saving is by increasing charges for services on a means tested basis and this appears to be central to the strategy for People services. It is regrettable, and will also have a negative impact but may sadly be the only choice we are left with

5) Taking urgent action and working more robustly with the NHS Before we look at cutting other essential People services as a council we must be more forceful as a council in defending the essential role we play in preventative health and supporting vulnerable people through social care and other services. If we are unable to fulfil this role, the impact will be felt in the NHS, more mental health crises, more emergency admissions, longer hospital stays, etc. Bristol needs to have strong representation nationally through Marvin and our MPs, to lobby for an integrated National Health and Care service, and to drive forward a cross party commission to address the long term funding of social care. We also need stronger influence locally with our health partners. This is a crucial window of opportunity as our Sustainability and Transformation Plan is being developed and scrutinised over the next few months, and our local authority must have a strong voice in these discussions, to let our health partners know exactly which services will be lost if no new money comes into local authorities, and how this is likely to impact on them. Therefore we need to use all the contacts with the NHS and CCG that we have within Marvin's city office, our Health partners, the Health and Wellbeing Board, and People scrutiny to take this on with the utmost urgency. It is essential that the Mayor is enabled to set the agenda for H and WB board meetings to ensure these matters of urgency come to the top of the agenda, and we do not use those vital meetings with necessary partners together in the same room, for circulating reports on less urgent matters. Can our health partners pick up some of the work councils have done in supporting vulnerable people? They may have to, or the

services will disappear. We also need to be very open and honest with our citizens about why the governments direction of travel on local government funding, and health and social care policy, has led us to this predicament.

6) Co-production As we move forward under these financial pressures, we need more than ever to put co-production at the heart of service planning. It is essential to involve service users in our decision making and to be open and honest about where our resources must be directed and how services might be delivered differently. This will take a lot of trust and relationship building but service users will have the best knowledge and experience about the services they rely on and if we are an enabling and empowering council rather than delivering everything ourselves, this culture change has to involve the citizens most affected.

7) Monitoring contracts and using statistics As we are using a commissioning model I think much greater work needs to be done to monitor contracts and ensure we are measuring outcomes on the right criteria. So we need to understand better what gives genuine value for money and particularly what gives 'social value' so that we are supporting small and medium size enterprises, allowing social enterprise to flourish and not giving out contracts to national or international private profit making companies (particularly in the care sector) based simply on lowest cost. Do we have the right expertise within the council to do this well? If not we should look at the skills we need to get the right blend of commercial expertise and social value. Are we measuring the right things, how is deprivation measured? Do we have the right data to understand variations in deprivation, that can exist in pockets within wealthier areas, and do we understand factors such as house prices/ gentrification that can distort data relating to deprivation. We need to listen more to local members and residents to understand our communities' needs better. We also need to collect better data, such as numbers of houses of multiple occupancy, so we understand factors such as the student population who use services but do not pay council tax. Then we need to find ways of universities, for example, making a contribution to the city for services their students use and benefit from, so that all sections of our community are contributing and cuts and savings do not just fall to the most vulnerable. Could we also charge more council tax on empty properties as a deterrent to them remaining empty during a housing crisis?

8) Localism/one size does not fit all With commissioning I would like to see more awareness of how organisations work locally. This is linked to my previous point on monitoring contracts and allowing for human relationships and social value to come into decision making. For example, with youth commissioning we may find that one organization is giving excellent outcomes and building strong relationships with young people and families in particular parts of Bristol, and it would cause major disruption to lose that. However another area might be developing close links or working well with another youth organisation. Can we ensure there is enough flexibility and local input (through neighbourhood partnerships, or whatever replaces them, and local councilors) to ensure that we don't wipe out years of good work and cause disruption to a community by abruptly changing providers. As we become an enabling empowering council we must listen to our communities and elected members on what works well in their areas, and get rid of cost-based, one size fits all, commissioning processes.

9) Transition from direct delivery to to external commissioning, If we make a painful decision not to continue providing a service can we ensure that if there is a recognized need for that service, we ensure someone else takes it over before we cease to run it. For example, day centres, run by Bristol Community Links. It may not be essential that the council itself runs day centres but they are essential services for the people who use them. We need to do the negotiating and identifying other partners (eg health/voluntary sector) to run these services and manage a transition, not cut their funding abruptly before new partners have been found. This will involve work with our health partners and service users. The same applies to school crossing patrols and meals on wheels, we must ensure that if communities rely on and need these services someone is found to run them and the council takes responsibility for that enabling and co-ordinating role.

10) Learn from councils who have done things well it is essential we learn from good practice around the country and judge what works well and what does not, likewise with Vanguard projects in the health



service, we must ensure we are networking and joining learning networks such as Kings Fund and organisations such as APSE (Association for Public service excellence) We must enable our elected members, directors and officers to interact with other authorities and to be constantly refreshing our ideas and learning what is possible. This is a cultural shift to openness, learning and professional development that should be encouraged.

## Appendix

11) Further notes on Childrens Centres: A case NOT to cut in 2017/18. Our manifesto says, protect Childrens Centres! I think it is short-sighted and destabilizing to impose a cut of 1.1million on Childrens centres, starting with 550k in 2017/18. They are our best intervention for addressing inequality and social mobility and are proven to work well combining early years support, child care and education, support and advice for parents on housing and support back into the job market. This is real value for money as it saves so much in long term costs, by making children from all backgrounds 'school-ready', preventing children and their parents from crisis, going into care or developing long term health problems. Childrens Centres also provide expertise and support to private, voluntary and independent settings (PVLs) where in fact a large proportion of disadvantaged children have placements, and also where the needs of more affluent families (particularly post natal depression and other mental health issues that are no respecters of 'class'!) are likely to be picked up. The input of Childrens centres leads to consistently high standards across nurseries, voluntary early years groups and childminders in Bristol, that we should be extremely proud of and should not jeopardise. However there is room to integrate Childrens Centres more closely with health services as well as early help/ early years education. I believe that Childrens Centres can extend their hugely important role further by bringing across health staff to co-locate in Childrens centres, and making them a base for public and child health, midwifery, health visitors and family nurses. Better co-location would save costs, use the skill mix better, and enable family support workers to carry out universal preventative work, creating a cross agency family support model. Childrens Centres would then have the ability to extend their services to provide family support through the child's primary school years, especially where already attached to or working closely with primary schools. This family support model through out a child's school life is one of the best ways to improve childrens mental health, a key priority in the Mayor's manifesto. But I do not believe Childrens Centres can achieve this extension of their service if their funding is cut by 550k this year 2017/18. They would be spread too thinly to be able to manage this transition and to offer family support at primary school level as well. But given at least a year (or more) with support and facilitation for this co-location model to develop, we could be sure of bringing more money into Childrens Centres from the NHS/ Public health. Childrens centres would help meet Public health outcomes and therefore should receive more money from the NHS/ public health budgets at least in rent, with colocation. We can also look at more money being paid by neighbouring authorities who use Childrens centre services in Bristol and opportunities to deliver childrens services across the CUBA authorities. We should also review whether Public Health should move from Neighbourhoods to People and have the necessary Public Health funding move across to support Childrens centres. Many councillors, including myself, feel that our directorates are still too silo'd and with childrens and public health the two directorates should be working more seamlessly, or ideally move public health into the directorate that deals with the rest of health, education and childrens services (People). This seems the obvious place for it. There is also a case for moving Neighbourhoods money that has to this point gone to Neighbourhood Partnerships, towards Childrens Centres, especially where they are not funded by schools, and this money, if held in a central pot, could be directed to the areas that need it most, rather than spread out equally over poor and wealthy areas alike, where the wealthy areas spend it on 'nice to haves' but poorer areas are having to lose essential services! There does not seem any logic in closing Childrens Centres as places will be required for a rising child population needing early education places. I believe we should maintain their investment but encourage them to extend their services and model of family support to improve outcomes as children get older and move through their school life. The costs will be saved in the long run, which can be demonstrated with best use of evidence and statistics in cost avoidance. I have some concerns about the relationship between Early Help and Childrens Centres which I would like clarification on. It centres around how Early Help will be funded. If there is no council funding available, will schools be expected to commission services from Early help, or will money be taken out of the Childrens Centre budget for Early help? If so, it could jeopardise the running of Childrens Centres in their current form. This might counteract

the good work that could be done , as mentioned above, by co-locating and joining health with education in Childrens centres.

We have two statutory frameworks which can potentially be brought together, under the Childrens centre model, the Healthy Child programme and the Early Years Foundation Stage.

By aligning Health and Early Years services, we would make best use of our combined resources, and save money in 3 main ways:

- 1) By delivering services that are valued by families, and accessed by disadvantaged families because they are accessible, non-stigmatising, respectful and trusted.
- 2) We would avoid gaps and duplication of services
- 3) By identifying children and families in need at an early stage, strategies can be put in place to prevent the high financial and emotional costs of later intervention.

With Early help more focused on targeted interventions to 'troubled families' and in safeguarding issues, I am concerned that they would shift the emphasis from Childrens Centres as a universal and positive early intervention service to one 'targetted' mainly to troubled and deprived families, thereby carrying a stigma and making Childrens Centres a less trusted service.

#### **4. Councillor Brenda Massey**

Can I support Gill's comments on Day Centres in particular? Having seen the Lanercost Road one in action, I know that they are providing a range of activities there, and when it was re-opened it was very interesting to see the skills that the people attending the Centre were being encouraged to learn. As an example, all of the items offered for lunch that day for the visitors had been prepared and cooked by the users, and were of a really high quality. They disappeared very quickly!

#### **5. Article by Councillor Mark Weston, published on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016**

<http://www.bristol247.com/channel/opinion/your-say/politics/mayors-urban-parishes-threaten-potential-pauperism>

By now, readers may be aware that Bristol City Council has begun a major public consultation on its draft Corporate Strategy for the next five years. This contains various proposals on how the authority intends to close a £92m budget gap in its finances.

This document raises a number of interesting ideas but one in particular has caught my attention, and against which I am firmly opposed, concerning 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".

Now, I appreciate that one of the advantages of such bodies is that these miniature councils may enable the preservation of a local service or public amenity (which might otherwise be lost due to lack of funding) thanks to their ability to raise additional council tax on residents within their borders and unlike with the city council the tax increases are not capped.

At the moment the council is limited in how much it can put up council tax to two per cent with an additional two per cent rise if this is earmarked for social care. Parish councils face no such cap and can increase their rate by an unlimited amount. Last year alone, more than 60 parishes more than doubled their share of the local council tax bill.

Whilst this might be superficially appealing to council officials - if only because it maintains their spending power - in my view, the disadvantages of such a measure greatly outweigh the case for such a reform in our city.

Firstly, this revenue-raising tool is effectively a form of double taxation because cash-strapped councils will inevitably devolve responsibility for some services onto a parish (but not the resources to pay for them). This will result in households essentially paying more in council tax only to receive less in return.

Secondly, I believe that this will actually further inequality on our city. Wealthy areas will be able to levy a fairly small precept and maintain standards, however poorer areas would have to levy some fairly eye popping increases in order to be able to afford the same provision. Alternatively, the council might decide to provide more subsidy for poorer communities and withdraw almost entirely from seemingly well off areas – if so this would again be unfair and merely compound the issue in argument one of double taxation.

Thirdly, as mentioned before, unlike council tax, where any proposed increases are currently capped by government at four per cent (including two per cent social care uplift) before requiring approval by referendum, this restriction does not apply to a parish precept. This is palpably unfair and a potential hostage to fortune for future eye-watering, inflation-busting rises which taxpayers have to pay.

Fourthly, how will these parishes be resourced? There is already a healthy scepticism about creating further tiers of local government. Another level of bureaucracy, paid for by the taxpayer with the ability to charge us more taxes – sounds delicious!

Fifthly, we have no idea where the boundaries will be. Will they match the neighbourhood partnerships? Will they cut across communities? How many will there be? These are pretty basic questions and yet the consultation has no answers.

In another part of the mayor's outline consultation document, we are told that the authority is looking to "reshape [its] approach to civic engagement and local empowerment and reform of the Neighbourhood Partnerships".

Here, there is no doubt that changes to the way councillors interact with communities is overdue. The 14 partnerships have not evolved as hoped or promised and are very costly to run. So, it may well be that some or all of these could be replaced by the mayor's urban parishes. However, for all the reasons given above, I do not believe this is an appropriate or acceptable way forward.

Historically, previous consultations on plans to raise extra money from citizens have not gone down well in Bristol – remembering here Labour's ill-fated referendum on the council tax in 2001. Voters were asked which of four options they preferred: no rise, two per cent, four per cent or a whopping six per cent rise. More than half of residents voted for a freeze instead of any increase at all.

I suspect once people are made more aware of the implications of introducing such additional political tiers, this latest effort will suffer the same fate and be roundly rejected. Any conversation on paying more tax is likely to be nasty, brutish and short.

## **6. Councillor Ruth Pickersgill**

I would like to express significant concerns at the proposal to change the way Community Links Centres for people with learning difficulties, dementia and/or physical impairments are run. The consultation mentions closing 'one or no more' centres, combining with other services or relocating drop in services.

These services support some of the most vulnerable of our citizens. All who use the three drop-ins have learning difficulties, many also have dementia or mental health issues. These are examples of good practice and should be protected. They use a person centred approach and support people to stay safe and be included in the community. As other public sector services are closed, and the Government cuts benefits and penalises disabled people through benefit cuts and bureaucratic employment systems, these centres support people to deal with whatever comes up in their lives and enables them

to live independently. This might be help with bills and budgeting, support into work (staff are also trained as job coaches), help with personal relationships and safeguarding and independent living skills. They enable around 100 people each day to continue to live independently, while so much of their other support is reduced. Proposals to close any are not acceptable, (there is only one in North, South and Central) and to relocate would be unhelpful as they are successful as they link in with other community activities on site (e.g. at the Park in Knowle) and provide opportunities for inclusion that are not available to many of the service users otherwise. This is an example of a small investment preventing people moving into needing high level support and high cost services.

The day centres are all that is left of what was an expensive range of support across the city 20 years ago. They are attended by people with the most complex needs (dementia, learning difficulties etc) who would be unable to go anywhere without the transport and specialist escorts provided. They enable people to stay well and access a vast range of community activities, and use person centred planning to support their well being and are an example of 'social prescribing for the most vulnerable'.

I am particularly concerned that there are no cuts to the services in the Central area (as this has been suggested). They are really appreciated by the service users and are culturally sensitive and inclusive (over 30% of service users are BAME and the staff group are diverse). It would be wholly inappropriate to expect them to travel to centres at Knowle West or Lockleaze, as part of their role is establishing inclusive local community activities.

Disabled people have borne the brunt of the Government's austerity measures and there is plenty of research to show they have been disproportionately affected by the cuts. This means, that even more than before, they need the sort of flexible support Community Links provides. To contract it out is unlikely to save money, as they are based in relatively cheap community venues with low staffing levels and any organisation would have to maintain staffing levels and the costs of salaries and staff training etc would be unlikely to be cheaper, and yet the expertise we currently have in the workforce would be lost.

It is essential that there are not closures or drastic cuts to these services and Easton ward needs to continue to host a drop in and day centre service as those living in the central area are already disadvantaged and there are very few alternative services available, and none that have the level of expertise required to support this to live independently.

## **7. Charlotte Leslie, MP**

### **Neighbourhoods**

- Urban Parishes: Will adding an additional layer of bureaucracy help reduce costs and improve services? Whilst I recognise the Councils' financial constraints may regrettably necessitate Council tax increases, Urban Parishes may simply provide for a further regressive tax increase via the back door.
- Bringing Council funded services together which currently offer advice to people separately is a good idea. But has thought been given to bringing third sector organisations like Citizens Advice and Avon and Bristol Law Centre in to create a coordinated effort and ensure services do not overlap unnecessarily?

### **Place**

- I support proposals looking at creating mixed use council owned buildings to allow people to access services in the same place. However, the council could also look at generating additional revenue by allowing private sector enterprises to rent such spaces. For example, in the case of libraries, this could involve opening some of the floor space up as coffee shops or book stores, increasing library footfall and generating revenue at the same time.

- Given that the Council spends 19 per cent of its expenditure budget on staffing costs, has BCC looked at the possibility of sharing back room staff with other councils? Councillor Gollop has some very interesting ideas in this area which could be given consideration.
- I very much welcome plans to extend MetroWest and to create a new business case for the new stations and for a Henbury loop over the next year. I would however implore the council to also conduct a wider 'Economic Case' for the loop, which would take into account all the economic benefits that improved connectivity would bring. Lack of fare collection on local branch lines should also be recognised and factored into the business case. Failing to do so may simply cost more in report financing whilst returning the same unfortunate and counter-intuitive answer as before.
- I was pleased to read that the Council is working in close partnership with bus operators to secure firm commitments to delivering an integrated ticketing system. I would however urge the Council to go further and insure that local bus and MetroBus services encompass contactless ticketing. This is essential if people are ever to be persuaded to leave their cars at home.
- Whilst I of course support the drive to improve Bristol's public and private housing stock and efforts to reduce fuel poverty, the proposal to achieve this through 'Warm Up Bristol' has not worked well to date. I have received many complaints from constituents about this program and I am also aware that this issue has taken up a substantial amount of Councillors casework time too. A better form of delivery must be achieved. Could some of the £4m underspend from the scheme also be used to fix problems caused to contractors operating under the scheme?
- Parking at Blaise Estate should not be charged. This will force more cars onto residential streets and discourage people from visiting Blaise museum, reducing the viability of the site.
- Although I welcome the drive to build 2,000 more homes by 2020, Bristol could lead the way in pushing to ensure Hybrid Homes which reduce energy wastage, bills and fuel poverty. This should be particularly important when constructing the proposed 800 new affordable homes where inhabitants' incomes are likely to be low.

#### People

- The proposal to hold a 'Mental Health Summit' to establish a 'Strategy and Action Plan' is long overdue and I would like to play an active role in bringing together other regional MPs, the CCG, BCC, and the PCC to help ensure this happens.
- I was also pleased to see early intervention in mental health was also mentioned, especially for children and young people.
- I welcome the review into the location of neighbourhood air pollution monitors and the drive to improve air quality. I hope that Avonmouth will be a top priority in this regard and also that evidence of the impact of the 20 mph speed zones on air quality in the city will be measured.
- I support greater local health powers to increase local control of health and care spending. The higher the level integration between the NHS, public health and care services the better.
- I note that BCC wishes to develop a "Healthy Weight Strategy to galvanise action to reduce obesity through increased levels of physical activity". If this includes supporting initiatives like helping to get a Community Gym in Avonmouth off the ground it should be welcomed.
- I was also pleased to see that BCC will be working in partnership with Sport England to encourage physical activity
- I was concerned to read that the Citizen Service Points in Southmead and Ridingleaze will be closed and replaced with a centralised service at 100 Temple Street. It can be very difficult and expensive for constituents in these areas to travel into town. Has BCC looked into the possibility of maintaining a service in the new Lawrence Weston hub and Greenway Centre respectively to help reduce costs?
- Reduction in Early Help Services, including funding for Children's Centres, should also be avoided. These are vitally important for supporting vulnerable families.

I would be very grateful if these thoughts could be given due consideration.

## 8. Karin Smyth, MP

I am writing to you following the publication of the Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy and the ongoing associated consultation. I welcome the opportunity to comment on these plans, I appreciate the honesty and transparency with which you have approached the very severe financial issues facing the Council. I hope that many residents of Bristol have taken the opportunities which you have made available, both online and in person, to comment on your detailed proposals.

You and your colleagues are facing some extremely difficult decisions in the coming months, seeking to cut £92 million in spending as a result of the inherited budgetary shortfall, increases in demand for services, and the huge cuts in government funding since 2010. As you are aware I am a member of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee, and I quote below a section from its report on Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities, published in January 2015:

Over the period 2010–11 to 2015–16, central government will have reduced its funding for local authorities by 37% in real terms. This equates to a reduction of 25% in “spending power”, a measure of local authorities’ total income for services, taking into account not only government funding but also local council tax receipts.

We are seeing a huge level of government-imposed cuts, and you will know that I have challenged Tory councillors and Bristol’s Tory MP, Charlotte Leslie, to use any influence they have to press Theresa May to provide more money, I trust you will be doing the same. Sadly they have, to date, remained silent.

There can be no doubt that responsibility for the scale of cuts forced upon our city lies squarely with the Tory government in Westminster.

However, as the city’s elected local representatives it is of course our collective responsibility to ensure Bristol emerges from the implementation of these cuts in a way which most closely aligns with our Labour values.

As you will know my constituents have higher rates of ill health and disability than other parts of the city, more of my constituents receive Tax Credits, Personal Independence Payment and Employment and Support Allowance than elsewhere. Almost half of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city are in Bristol South, two of these in the Hartcliffe area are ranked in the 100 most deprived in all of England.

This means my constituents have already been hit hard by national government decisions, including the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the recent Welfare Reform & Work Act 2016. They also have a far greater reliance on services provided through Bristol City Council, including social services, housing and other support.

There is also a high reliance amongst my constituents on public transport, especially buses, and I know there are real fears that potential cuts to subsidised and community bus services will lead to genuine difficulties in accessing health facilities and employment.

What my constituents need now is to understand what services they can expect from the Council in the coming years as you look to make these savings by 2022. Last week’s Government announcement on social care will bring further pressure and will not reduce the anxiety felt by many families over the level of care they will receive in the future. Whilst I greatly appreciate the work that has been undertaken so far, and that to date some significant savings have been identified for the entire period of the Corporate Strategy, it is my understanding that they do not currently meet the shortfall in first year of the medium term financial plan.

My constituents need clarity from you, so that together we can all have confidence in our city's future. They need to know as soon as possible from where the remaining millions will be found, therefore I would be most grateful if you could share your latest thoughts on this with me.

I want to offer you my full support as you endeavour to protect the most vulnerable people in Bristol, many of whom live in the Bristol South constituency.

## 9. Green Councillor Group

We are writing in response to the consultation on the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022. Our response is split into two sections:

1. the funding crisis facing local government and the need for national opposition;
2. specific responses to the proposed savings outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022;

We have responded in two sections because, while we know there is a very real need to input into the current proposals put forward in the Corporate Strategy, we also believe cuts of this scale are going to cause untold harm to Bristol's essential public services.

We have shared our specific feedback on the Corporate Strategy proposals as well as some of our wider suggestions for changes to local government financing and the need for an end to the austerity agenda. We believe Bristol should be playing a leading role in putting forward these alternatives; thereby developing a joint campaign to oppose local government cuts by working with other cities, networks, unions and progressive parties.

We welcome your recent statement criticising the government funding announcement, but we also need further bold action and leadership. We therefore call on you to consider carefully the suggestions we have made and take all possible measures to oppose local government cuts, which will cause devastation for the services that the people of Bristol rely upon.

### **The funding crisis facing local government and the need for national opposition:**

We are currently facing an assault on Local Government funding which will prevent Bristol City Council from providing all but the most basic services for the people of Bristol. This is a crisis for all of us who rely on the services that the Council provides.

The proposed cuts outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022 will impact on the local traffic schemes that help to keep our children safe as they walk to school, slash invaluable funding for those about to be made homeless and reduce youth services that our young people need. To balance its books, the Council will be forced to cut services that older people and those with disabilities rely on – from day service provision to carer bus passes. Cuts will affect how the Council maintains our parks, our libraries and our streets, and will reduce the 'social glue' that binds our city together.

But it doesn't have to be like this. These cruel cuts to our services are a choice being made by National Government – to dismantle our public services instead of focusing on raising money by closing tax loopholes, reforming our finance system, bringing "good growth" to our economy or increasing tax for the top 1%. As Greens we do not believe that the public sector, and those people who rely on the services it provides, should be punished for the mistakes made by politicians and the financial sector which led to the financial crisis. Local government services and social care are being abandoned while National Government remains committed to the ever spiralling costs of replacing Trident, building a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, or building HS2, which have a combined cost of way over £100bn.

Bristol City Council has already suffered savage cuts – we have seen over £170 million of cuts over the last 6 years. Despite this, the Council still faces a budget gap of £90 million plus over the next five years. The proposals put forward in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022 paint a grim picture of how the funding cuts will affect services in Bristol. This will be exacerbated by the funding crisis being faced by the NHS, education, social care and local policing. We do not see how it will be possible to implement further

funding reductions on this scale without dismantling many of the services that Bristol relies upon – trying to do so is increasingly a case of ‘rearranging the deckchairs on the Titanic’.

Austerity is a downward spiral – as you cut the state you reduce job quality and tax revenue leading to less money available for investment, which in turn cuts the state further. Cuts on this scale are also likely to affect the future of Bristol and whether it will remain a vibrant, thriving city that businesses will want to be based in by 2020. For businesses to thrive, Bristol needs good infrastructure as well as skilled, productive employees who live securely in homes they can afford and good public transport networks to get to work.

The attack on the services that many of our most deprived communities rely upon is unjust and must be stopped, and we are calling on our city leaders and all those who oppose the cuts to say enough is enough. The 10 Core Cities outside London are home to almost 19 million people and contribute more than a quarter of the combined wealth of England, Wales and Scotland – that’s a strong voice if these city leaders choose to work together and use it. It’s an even stronger voice if cities join with an alliance of progressive political parties and networks to unite in opposing further cuts. The benefits of this approach can be seen in a recent report by Local Government Association

ii. The current chosen path is not inevitable, and it must not go unchallenged. We believe Bristol should be taking a lead in exploring and calling for alternatives to local government cuts including:

Unallocated business rates should be used to help ease the adult social care crisis – The £2.4bn of unallocated business rates collected from local government should be used to provide real additional funding to address the social care crisis, as supported by UNISON

iii. We must call on the Government to stop playing games with people’s lives and use these unallocated business rates in the communities in which the rates were collected.

Cities should not have to bear the brunt of cuts – Bristol is not alone in facing hard times, but the pain is also not being evenly shared across the country with many Conservative authorities tending to suffer less brutal spending cuts. Figures from the Institute of Fiscal Studies show that in the West of England, 70% of spending reductions have been borne by Bristol City Council, three times more than by neighbouring authorities. Whilst Conservative shires like Hampshire and Surrey have seen cuts of just 1%, and the City of London has even seen a slight increase, England’s major provincial cities have seen an average cut of 28%<sup>iv</sup>. The Core Cities – which include Bristol – have seen £1.4bn worth of annual spending removed from their budgets. Without effective opposition this Government will continue to impose damaging cuts, as recent news on school funding demonstrates.

Bristol should receive its fair share of infrastructure spending – Infrastructure spending is also not fairly distributed across the country, with London and the South East receiving the lion’s share. For example, the South West receives just £219 per head of transport infrastructure spending in comparison with £1,869 per head in London<sup>v</sup>. As a large and growing city, Bristol badly needs investment in infrastructure if it is to continue to thrive in the coming years, so we call on the Mayor to make it a priority to lobby National Government for Bristol to get its fair share of infrastructure investment.

Public appeal for those on higher rate tax to help fund libraries and other services – The Autumn Statement saw a tax cut for top earners, reducing the number of people who now fall in the 40% tax bracket. At a time when our frontline services are being devastated, we believe cutting taxes to top earners is immoral. While local government cannot change National Government policy, we could start a public appeal here in Bristol asking those on higher rate taxes who are getting their taxes cut to voluntarily continue to pay this into a specific fund for libraries and other services that the whole city relies upon.

Working with the Local Government Association (LGA) – The LGA has already outlined many detailed suggestions for ways in which funding to local government needs to be changed in their submission to the Autumn Statement. These include ensuring reforms to business rates effectively benefit local authorities, such as allowing councils to use additional business rates to address the £5.82bn funding gap before any additional responsibilities are considered. Important savings could also be made locally, for example if local authorities could retain 100% of Right to Buy receipts or the 2p levy on fuel was



allowed to be used to maintain local as well as national roads. We would like Bristol to play a leading role working with the LGA to call for sensible changes to local government financing to be changed.

Specific responses to the proposed savings outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022:

In addition to outlining our opposition to the national austerity agenda and our hope that the Mayor of Bristol will take a leading role in opposing it the Green Group we have highlighted below our response to some of the specific proposals outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2017-2022. This includes feedback, concerns, suggestions and other alternatives that we wish to be considered.

#### General comments

Funding for objectives – There are many creative suggestions put forward in the objectives for each section in the Corporate Strategy, including some detail on how these would be achieved and which key performance indicators would be used to measure success. We would, however, like to know how much each of these objectives will cost, how they will be funded and how they fit into the wider budget savings.

- Business efficiency savings – We note that almost 60% of the Corporate Strategy's proposed savings are for 2017/18 and that 60-75% of those first year savings are defined as 'business efficiencies'. The corporate plan does not include much detail on exactly what these business efficiencies will be. We request a full breakdown of the proposals for these business efficiencies, including to what extent these will include job losses and how these differ from the second phase of the 'Single Change Programme' that was being developed under the previous Mayor. We would also like to know how this change process will be managed, what the involvement of democratically elected representatives will be and how this process will be properly resourced and coordinated to ensure joined-up thinking.
- High predictions for income from business rates and council tax – The Corporate Strategy uses Council Tax predictions based on an annual rise in council tax of 3.95% every year. The overall income predicted from Council Tax is higher than the previous Mayor's predictions, as it is based on a 40% higher prediction of new homes being built. We sincerely hope that the equivalent of 900 extra band B homes will be built every year as predicted, but would like to know what contingency plan is in place if for any reason this is not achieved. There is also considerable difference between National Government predictions for Bristol's Business Rates income and those predicted in the Corporate Strategy. Last year, Bristol's Business Rates income grew by approximately £2m, which is far lower than the year-on-year growth predicted in the Corporate Strategy. Given the impact of Brexit and the changes to small business rates, what is the contingency plan if these predictions turn out to be too optimistic?
- Continue to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme – We are pleased that there are no current plans outlined in the Corporate Strategy that put the Council Tax Reduction Scheme at risk. The scheme helps households on low income pay their Council Tax, something which is essential given that our current Council Tax system is so regressive, meaning that poorer residents in the city proportionally pay more of their income than the richest. Green councillors have been active in successfully campaigning for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to be protected over a number of years, and wish to emphasise that this must be a continued priority in the years to come. This is especially relevant given
- that the Corporate Strategy predicts that overall (with the inclusion of the adult social care precept) Council Tax in Bristol will rise by 3.95% every year between now and 2022.

#### Cuts to services for disabled and older people

- Review dementia care home provision – It is predicted that in Bristol the number of people living with dementia will increase by a third over the next 30 years, something that will exacerbate the existing social care crisis. While it is important that dementia services are reviewed, it is also essential that the Council continues to provide a good service for the growing number of people suffering from dementia. Those who cannot afford to pay for dementia care must continue to receive the services they need. As the number of people living with dementia increases, and social care and NHS services become more stretched it is hard to see how it will be possible for the Council to spend less money on dementia care over the coming years, while continuing to provide the services that those with dementia need.

- Removing carer bus passes – Companion Bus Passes provide carers who assist elderly or disabled people who cannot travel alone with free bus travel. Removing these bus passes means that carers would have to pay for their bus passes. This is something we oppose and would like to see removed from the proposals as it will make it harder for disabled and older people to get about, increasing isolation in our communities. It also denies carers – who are often on a low income – access to cheaper travel.
- Day care services for adults – The Corporate Plan includes proposals to combine or close Bristol Community Links Centres. When combined with potential withdrawal of transport, this could lead to older and disabled people having to travel further for services at the same time as there is less transport provision to get there. We request more information on whether the Council has talked to those who would be affected to find out whether such a change would impact on their ability to access these services.
- Withdraw reimbursement for concessionary travel – The council currently reimburses community transport operators who provide free travel for people who are eligible for concessionary bus passes – this includes people of pensionable age and people with disabilities. The Corporate Plan proposes removing this funding which we are concerned may severely impact some people who rely on this service. We would like to know whether the Council has looked at reviewing the criteria to ensure that this can be continued for those who need it most, rather than removing it entirely.
- Disabled bays – We are deeply concerned at the proposals to charge £200 for introducing disabled parking bays outside disabled people's homes, especially when combined with other cuts to disability transport budgets.
- Cuts to services for children and young people
- Recommission Bristol Youth Links – Bristol Youth Links provides a wide range of services for 13-19 year olds (and up to 25 with a learning disability) including advice on drugs, housing, sexuality, work and education. The proposed savings are extremely broad – between £900,000 and £1,700,000, and while there may be a need to review how youth services are provided, we would be concerned if this meant further cuts to youth services across Bristol. We would like more detail on what these proposed savings could consist of and how this could affect services provided to young people across Bristol.
- Review Early help services – It may make sense in some cases to combine some services for birth-5, 5-11 and 11-19 into the same building, but we would call for this to be looked at on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with service users, to ensure that frontline accessibility is not compromised.
- Cuts to other social services
- Local Crisis and Prevention Fund – We are extremely concerned by proposed cuts to the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund. This fund provides vital one-off financial support for citizens who are on the edge, to help them pay for food or a utility bill or buy furniture after leaving temporary accommodation. People can only ever apply once, and we know from talking to people who have applied that it can be the difference between tipping them into homelessness or not. Cutting this service is not just wrong, it is also economically illiterate. It costs the Council far less to pay a small one off grant to prevent people from falling into crisis than it does to help them once a crisis has escalated.
- Library cuts – We are concerned about proposed cuts to the libraries, which are a much loved resource across Bristol. We would like to know how the Mayor's proposals for library cuts differ from that of his predecessor and exactly what they entail.
- Housing, homelessness, planning and green spaces
- Homelessness – Homelessness has more than doubled in the last year and the Council's budget for preventing homelessness has already seen a 20% reduction between 2011 and 2015. While we welcome recent announcements on moves to prevent homelessness, we have concerns about proposed budget cuts to temporary accommodation and other services for the homeless at a time of growing need. Those on the streets must have access to a safe place to sleep and help accessing appropriate services, as well as affordable housing and jobs for the longer term.
- Pest control – There will always be a need for pest control services in Bristol, and we do not see why this has to be run by a private for-profit company to be effective. We would question why a council-run pest control department can't continue to offer these services in a reputable way across the city,

both in public health priority cases where the Council provides the service for free, and in smaller/domestic cases, where the Council's services could be hired for a fee, raising much needed revenue.

- Parks – Green spaces are crucial for both physical and mental wellbeing, and highly valued by local communities. Parks are the green lungs of the city, places to exercise and relax, places for families, carbon-sinks which also help to cool the city, a home for wildlife and a key part of the city's ecology. Parks are a part of what Bristol is. The future wellbeing of the city relies on them and they are part of a resilient future. We wish to know how the Council plans to work with local communities to ensure that these much loved facilities are well maintained.
- Planning enforcement – Proposed cuts to planning enforcement is very worrying. Planning enforcement within the Council is already extremely stretched, and it is hard to see how any further cuts to this service could be made without the Council becoming entirely toothless in enforcing planning conditions. Planning enforcement is important if we want our city to continue to be a pleasant and exciting place to work, live and play in the future, and a place where businesses will want to relocate to.
- Expand discretionary licencing – We support the proposal to extend landlord licencing to ensure landlords provide minimum standards in their rented properties.

## Transport

- Parking charges at Oldbury estate, Blaise Caste and Ashton Court – We support an introduction and an increase in fees for parking at key tourist points across the city, especially as this will generate desperately needed income at a time when the Council is struggling to pay for frontline services.
- Cuts to 'lollipop people' – Safe routes to school are crucial if parents are to feel safe encouraging their children to walk to school. Last year, we saw Labour, Tory, and Liberal Democrat parties vote down a Green amendment to help fund safer routes to schools. The Corporate Strategy proposals suggest replacing lollipop people at school crossings with 'alternative methods' but does not explain what these methods are. We call for further information on what these alternative methods would be and how they will ensure the safety of our children when walking to and from school.
- Reduction of subsidised bus routes – The council subsidises certain bus routes where the private company cannot make a profit but the route provides an important transport link for local people, particularly those least able to get about easily. While there may be a need for some of these routes to be reviewed, the halving of this subsidy will lead to the end of routes that provide a lifeline for people who need to get to local shops, healthcare facilities or other parts of the city.
- Stop funding the freight consolidation centre – Air pollution leads to 300 premature deaths in Bristol every year, with many more people suffering from wider health complications. This is why taking action to reduce the air pollution in our city must be a priority. A freight consolidation centre should help to keep the number of delivery vehicles in our city down by providing a single place for delivery. If this scheme is not being used enough, we would call on the Council to review why not and explore other options such as making it mandatory for shops and firms with high levels of deliveries rather than abandoning it altogether. We would also like to know why the Council does not use this service for its own deliveries.
- Local participation, community and energy
- Neighbourhood Partnerships – Neighbourhood Partnerships have varying degrees of effectiveness and local community input across the city. At their most successful, Neighbourhood Partnerships can enable local communities to actively participate in improving their neighbourhoods. Volunteers can provide a large multiplier of officer time and effort, small grants and local traffic schemes are instrumental in enabling change at a local level. The future of a resilient Bristol will depend on community engagement and active participation. The benefits of wellbeing grants, for example, on projects such as the excellent 'Playing Out' can act as a catalyst for increasing community cohesion, increasing pride in an area and encouraging people to both work with and cooperate with each other. While not all Neighbourhood Partnerships currently work effectively, those enacting any changes should work with the local community to improve the way in which these partnerships work, not merely strip them of their funding as is currently feared will be the case.
- Remove funding for local traffic schemes – There is a real need for local traffic schemes, for example to improve road safety around schools. The more local community involvement there can be in

designing and implementing these schemes the more effective they will be. In some cases funding for local traffic schemes has led to excellent new traffic schemes that are based on good evidence and sound design and are highly valued by the local community. In other cases there have been challenges with implementing local traffic schemes, but this is due to problems with financing the implementation or not enough money being available for a successful scheme, not because local people don't badly want

- better local traffic schemes. We are concerned that just removing these grants would not only make it much harder to improve local traffic problems, but also spell an end to an important community-led approach.
- Police Community Support Officers – Police Community Support Officers have made a significant contribution to community policing in the last few years. They are perhaps the nearest we have to 'bobbies on the beat' and make a significant contribution over and above the direct roles they have.
- Energy infrastructure company – While we understand there may be some logic in setting up an energy infrastructure/service company, we need clarification on the relationship between this and the Bristol Energy Company. This should include information on how the two would be set up to ensure they work closely together and share costs. To be effective there is also a need for a continued commitment to capital funding, so that the Council can continue to apply for grants to retrofit houses that rely on match-funding. Without investment it is not possible to provide energy and therefore cost savings for our tenants and users across the city, or for the city to meet its carbon reduction commitments.
- Raising revenue and taxes
- Local tax in-house enforcement team – We would welcome more information on exactly what this team would do, and would hope the focus would be on working to reduce the number of cases that end up going to court and helping to identify problems early.
- Reduce third party payments – The consultation suggests further consideration of the Council's third party payments to deliver services including sports contracts, trees, waste and Voluntary and Community Sector grants. While reviewing our contracts at regular intervals is prudent, we would like to ensure that the Council is cautious if pushing for reductions in contracts that may have negative impacts in the longer term. The Council's Social Value Policy and toolkit must also continue to be central to all contracts. A balance between cost and quality is essential to ensure that the Council provides good quality services for the residents of Bristol, as well as the added benefits of the social and environmental outcomes we need. This change could have a significant impact on how services are delivered, so we request more detail on how this proposal will remain consistent with the Social Value Policy and what the likely impacts are.
- Use of Council assets – Bristol City Council has many assets, and we would welcome further analysis on whether these could be used more effectively or more imaginatively to raise revenue. Ideas to be explored could include loans of valuable art to wealthy individuals or businesses, potential sponsorship of trees, statues and other public benefits or looking at temporary conversion of any unused Council buildings.
- Workplace parking – We support the introduction of a workplace parking levy and would like to suggest that this is included in the Corporate Plan. This would both help fund sustainable transport improvements and act as a disincentive to private motor car use, which contributes to air pollution, climate change and congestion across the city. In Nottingham over £9 million was generated last year through their workplace parking levy, and other councils such as Cambridge and Oxford are considering introducing similar schemes.

#### Culture

- Reduce funding to Key Arts Providers – A key commitment within the corporate plan is for Bristol to be a 'leading cultural city making culture...accessible to all'. We know that arts funding is often used in areas of deprivation like Barton Hill to work with the community and provide education and training. We would like to know how any cuts to this service will be made without affecting local arts schemes that help to make culture more accessible across the city. We are also aware that arts projects generate a significant return – each pound spent brings a return of many more, and the cultural sector of the city is a significant local employer and generator of wealth for the city as a whole.

- Review museum opening hours –Museums are important for bringing tourists into Bristol. Their funding includes earned income (from shop, café, donations, etc.) and grant income as well as local government funding. Any review should look at all funding streams to our museums and how they can be maximised, not merely focus on opening hours. It is important to be conscious of the tipping point where reduction of museum opening times would actually reduce both earned income (due to lower footfall) and grant funding (due to falling beneath a minimum hours criterion).

iWealth contribution of the Core Cities: <https://www.corecities.com/about-us>

iiLocal Government Association submission to the Autumn Statement:

<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/7991192/LGA+submission+to+the+Autumn+Statement+2016.pdf/ae76f5e3-7a8a-49a1-aeb0-67c4fcf61fef>

iii UNISON call for unallocated business rates to be used for Social Care:

<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/press-release/2016/11/the-chancellor-should-use-2-4bn-in-unallocated-business-rates-to-ease-the-social-care-funding-crisis-says-unison/>

iv <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/8780>

v Unfair distribution of transport funding: <http://www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/transport-secretary-urged-to-close-1-600-per-person-london-north-spending-gap>

vi Dementia care in Bristol <https://www.bristolccg.nhs.uk/your-health-local-services/help-and-support/dementia>

vii Increase in homelessness in Bristol and cuts to homeless

services: <http://www.emmausbristol.org.uk/homelessness/homeless-in-bristol/>

## 10. Lockleaze Labour Party Branch

The huge cuts that Bristol City Council are discussing would devastate many services, harming everyone and especially the most vulnerable. Services are already severely under-funded and over-stretched after years of being slashed – which has already led to the closure of many of the most vital ones.

These harsh cuts are being imposed as a result of drastic reductions in central government funding – which is causing similar issues all over the country. Bristol City Council should speak out loudly in opposition to this slashing of budgets, working with unions and service users to highlighting its disastrous effects and campaign against it. In doing so Bristol City should work with other Labour Councils and unions nationally to oppose government austerity and ensure that all councils receive enough funding to meet local needs.

The council has sought to present many of the proposed changes in a positive light, but however they are implemented such huge budget reductions will be incredibly harmful. The only way to protect our much-needed services is to be vocal in exposing the destructive affects of these attacks to them.