

**CITY COUNCIL
18 MARCH 2014
QUESTIONS ASKED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
FOR WRITTEN REPLY (CPR10)**

PQ01 ROSALIND BEAUHILL TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

PLANS FOR NUCLEAR DISASTER

"In an interview in the Bristol Post recently the head of Bristol's Civil Protection Unit, Simon Creed, stated that legislation means that his team must soon draw up a plan for dealing with a nuclear disaster. Bristol's proximity to Hinkley Point power station to the South, and even closer, Oldbury power station in the North, means the city needs to be able to deal with a threat as severe as Fukushima. Simon acknowledges that there would be a mere 40 to 50 minutes to evacuate the whole city. He also acknowledges the impossibility of doing so.

Q1 With the River Severn at continually increasing levels of flooding and the recent earthquake, surely this matter is sufficiently grave for the City Council to take an active stand in opposition to government plans to build new nuclear reactors on both of these sites.

Q2 We ask that the Council takes this question of our city safety very seriously and begin making representation to central government immediately."

A1 & A2 I take these matters extremely seriously and referred to these dangers when receiving the Resilient City award from the Rockefeller Foundation two weeks ago. However under current legislation, the duty to prepare an off-site emergency plan for a licensed nuclear site rests with the Local Authority in which the site is located. For Oldbury, that is South Gloucestershire Council, for Hinkley Somerset County Council. However we shall co-ordinate with both Councils.

The current requirement is to have comprehensive arrangements in place, including evacuation, for the 'detailed emergency planning zone' (DEPZ) – out to 4km around the site, and outline arrangements, which do not include evacuation, for the wider 'extendibility zone' – out to 15km from the site.

Bristol is outside both the detailed emergency planning zone and the extendibility zones for both Oldbury and Hinkley and so Bristol City Council is not involved in the preparation of the off-site emergency plans for either site. However, Bristol City Council does have general emergency plans and arrangements in place that include warning and informing the public and evacuation arrangements.

Following the disaster at Fukushima, there was discussion as to whether the regulations governing emergencies at nuclear sites whether these regulations should change. Currently they have not. However, the lessons learned from Fukushima, including the risk of earthquakes, tsunamis and floods, have been embedded in the Health and Safety Executive's Generic Design Assessment, which must be satisfied before new nuclear power stations are built.

In the Bristol Post article Mr Creed did not state that new legislation will require Bristol to produce a plan for dealing with a nuclear disaster but did make a general point about the difficulties involved in evacuating a densely populated area at short notice.

You also asked that the City Council oppose the plans to build nuclear plants at both these sites. In 2010 Bristol City Council objected to the inclusion of the Hinkley Point and Oldbury sites as potentially suitable for the deployment of new nuclear power station in the Government's then draft national policy statement. In January 2013 the Council made representations to the Infrastructure Planning Commission objecting to the proposal for the Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station and I have been consistent in making my position crystal clear.

PQ02 MICHAEL OWEN TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME

Q1. When did The Mayor make public the full text of his reply to Dawn Primarolo MP's letter on RPZ, and is the response available for inspection?

A1 Correspondence is not made available to the general public as a matter of course but I am very happy to publish my response.

Q2. What is the present capacity in each of the Bristol Park and Ride Schemes, and what will be the level of capacity scheduled for 2014, 2015, and 2016?

A2 The weekday spare capacity in our Park & Ride sites is 800 parking spaces at Long Ashton, 300 at Portway and 450 at Brislington with plans to increase these numbers.

Q3. Given that a part time worker, working a shift of 4 hours a day, for 5 days a week for 40 weeks, now faces parking charges of c. £800 per year. Why was a Cost Benefit Analysis into the impact on part-time employment not carried out?

A3 The impact on each individual will be different and depends on many factors. We engage with employers in each RPS area prior to drawing up our final proposals so that we take forwards the best scheme that we can.

Q4. Since the introduction of the revised RPZ scheme in 2013, has a revised assessment of the economic risks to SMEs been carried out, and if so have the results been published?

A4 No. Small businesses have generally reported that they have benefitted from our existing schemes because it is much easier for their customers to find somewhere to park.

We have responded positively to the business request for more flexibility with the pay-and-display spaces by extending the initial free period to 30 mins on all schemes. Similarly, we are proposing to extend the hours of operation of the pay-and-display parking in Cotham Hill to include Saturdays as the specific request of local businesses.

Q5. How much revenue from parking fines has been raised in Cotham, and Kingsdown in the last 2 years of RPZ operation?

A5 Each schemes' figures are income received up to the 12th March 2014. Kingsdown has received £175,671 since its implementation in January 2011. Cotham has received £114,892 since its implementation in December 2012.

Q6. What was the text in response to The Official Complaint made by Westbury Park Residents Association about RPZ consultation? When was this made public?

A6 Data Protection requirements prevent us providing the letter in full but below is the response in respect of the consultation element the request with all personal details removed. The response was sent on 11 October 2013.

“When the proposal to develop additional RPS areas was first announced in March 2013, it was envisaged that the plans for

the Redland RPS area would be subject to the statutory advertisement process only and would not be subject to an informal consultation period.

This arose because the Council recognised that parking problems in Redland had worsened following the introduction of the Cotham RPS in December 2012. Proceeding straight to the statutory process would have enabled these parking problems to be resolved sooner than would be the case if the proposals were subject to a consultation period beforehand.

However, it soon became clear that people wished to be able to shape the proposal that would be taken through the statutory process. The Council also recognised that people in the Westbury Park area of the proposed RPS felt that it was not necessary to introduce a scheme that extended that far north.

Having listened carefully to this feedback and made the detailed designs available online and in local libraries to enable people to give their views on them before a final proposal was developed. Posters were displayed on lamp-posts throughout the area to make as many people as possible aware that plans were being developed for the local area.

We were keen to elicit as wide a range of views as possible at this early stage and so officers encouraged residents at public meetings to engage with the process to help shape the basics of the scheme. This however, would not have precluded comments about any part of the scheme once the statutory consultation began.

The report approved by the Cabinet on 27th June set out that all future proposed RPS schemes would be subject to a four week informal consultation period (paragraph 48). It also recognised that proposals for Cotham North and Redland were at a very advanced stage and that these areas had a particularly pressing need for a scheme (paragraph 38). The plans had already been available for a number of weeks and meetings had been held with ward members and community stakeholders during this time. Therefore, there was a balance to be struck between the desire to seek as many views as possible and the need to move towards developing a final set of proposals.

This accounts for the number and varied nature of the terminology used to describe 'consultation' and 'engagement' that you quote in your complaint. The Cabinet report was describing a situation that was evolving very quickly in direct response to feedback from the local community affected by the policy proposal.

The Council is clear that when undertaking any consultation, regard must be had to certain underlying principles of consultation, namely:

- (1) The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- (2) the proposal must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;
- (3) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
- (4) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any statutory proposals.

As you know, following further discussions that have taken place with local residents and councillors since the Cabinet report, the Redland boundary was significantly redrawn and we are not progressing with proposals in Westbury Park. This demonstrates that consultation did take place whilst the proposals were at a formative stage, that adequate time was given for a considered response to be made and that the responses that we received have influenced our final statutory proposal for Redland.”

PQ03

SIMON LEWIS TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME

According to the 2014 timetable for RPS consultations, Montpellier will undergo its informal consultation throughout this month and into April. A formal consultation is planned for September with a decision in October in preparation for launch next Spring.

Q1.

Residents in Montpellier have not received any information about the current informal consultation. When will the community be informed and by what means?

A1

Informal consultation will start in early April and will run for four weeks. Every property in the area will receive information about the consultation and a survey which can either be completed online or posted to the RPS team. Drop-in sessions will be organised to take place alongside the consultation so that people have the opportunity to come in and ask questions about our initial ideas.

Q2. What will be the role of the Neighbourhood Partnership and Councillors Telford and Hoyt in this informal process?

A2 Officers will continue to work with the ward members and the Neighbourhood Partnership throughout the consultation process to ensure that their views are included

Q3. Can council officers estimate how many car parking spaces will be lost in Montpelier when RPS is implemented? This may be of considerable future concern to residents returning home to park in the evening who currently find parking spaces nearby without too much difficulty.

A3 Parking spaces will not be removed unless it is unsafe for a vehicle to park there or if a parked vehicle would cause an obstruction or prevent emergency vehicle access. This will result in the loss of some spaces but the general experience elsewhere is that the pressure for space reduces as multiple car ownership reduces.

Q4. Can council officers provide information about how many households are affected by each parking zone in Bristol, and how does the impact of the Mayor's scheme here in Bristol compare with those in cities of a similar size?

A4 The number of households in each area is not known until the boundary of the scheme is finalised. In our existing schemes, they are approximately as follows:

Kingsdown – 2,800

Cotham – 2,600

Redcliffe - 1,200

The schemes in Bristol are expected to have a broadly similar effect on general traffic reduction and improved ease of parking as similar schemes in other cities, most of which have had such measures in place for many more years than Bristol.

PQ04 ROBERT DUXBURY TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

04A Agenda Item unavailable? – Final report and recommendations of the Cross Party RPS Working Group

Please find below my questions in **bold text**, some of which relate to the headings in this report.

Firstly I would like to thank the working group for compiling this report and its recommendations. The recommendations provide a clear and balanced summary of many of the key issues that have concerned us ever since the Mayor announced his

predetermined intention to roll out RPS across the city nearly a year ago.

However, given that the working group has sat down with council officers on 4 occasions, I am disappointed at the lack of facts and data in this report. The report appears to shy away from evidence to substantiate certain claims contained within its key clause paragraphs and some key requested details are yet to be provided.

Q1. When will this missing data be published and is the Mayor comfortable to make decisions based upon unsubstantiated claims?

A1 The Working Group was provided with an explanation of the available and relevant information to the decisions that need to be taken in respect of the RPS programme. Where information was available, this was provided.

One issue that the report fails to address is any reference to flexibility and implementation of changes requested by residents after the schemes have gone in, when it comes to the 6 month review.

Q2. Can the Mayor confirm that, where there is a clear message from residents as a result of the 6 month review, any modifications to their neighbourhood scheme will be implemented in response to their requirements? Would this also include abandonment of a particular scheme where residents demonstrated it was not needed?

A2 The review process is designed to gather views and experiences from the scheme in question and to reflect these in any amendments proposed. Where a significant number of residents feel a scheme should be abandoned, their views will of course be considered alongside all others.

04B Current situation and implementation

I see the announcement on 10th February regarding the 2014 programme update timetable for RPS roll-outs as an attempt to undermine SD&T and the work of the cross party group. The Mayor has apparently ignored the spirit of the motion passed at Council on 18th July by agreeing to publish this timetable before full council has debated the cross party RPS working group's final report and recommendations on 18th March. In the 18th July motion, Councillors noted that the existing process is "flawed" and called for the Mayor to halt the rollout of Residents' Parking Schemes. This was so that the working group could consider the current situation and report back "in order to

produce a more gradual phased approach with greater consultation and input from local residents and businesses”.

Q3. Why was the 2014 RPS roll-out timetable published in early February before the working group has reported back to Full Council?

A3 Officers have been working to a timetable since the development of the scheme was approved by the Cabinet in June 2013. The information released in February was the latest update.

Q4. How are members of the public to have any confidence that any of the recommendations of the working group will be sympathetically addressed by the Mayor?

A4 I and my cabinet colleagues value the work of scrutiny and their contribution to policy development and will give due consideration to all recommendations.

Q5. Will the Mayor commit 100% retrospectively to the working group’s recommendations where schemes have already been implemented?

A5 No, but we shall look carefully at the recommendations and operational experience as more RPS schemes are implemented and reviewed.

04C Communications, Engagement and Consultation

The report says “officers outlined that the business sector was starting to see the need for the schemes and to be involved; they were submitting written statements”.

Q6. Please can we see the evidence to support this assertion? How many written statements in support of RPS have been submitted by the business sector?

A6 It is not possible to quantify the volume of dialogue with businesses and their representatives. All comments at the statutory stage are, however, summarised and considered in the decision making process.

The report says “concerns expressed by the public would have been lessened by the adoption of the philosophy embodied in the Council’s own excellent Statement of Community Involvement drawn up for planning policy and development management (due for review this year) across the whole spectrum of the authority’s activities”.

Q7. Is this document's philosophy going to be applied to the public's concerns about RPS and will the document's review this year enshrine that philosophy in a more accessible way for the public to engage in forthcoming RPS consultations, both informal and statutory?

A7 The Council's approach to consultation on RPS is governed by Traffic Regulation Order procedures, although in carrying out extensive informal consultation as schemes are being developed we go much further than is legally required to ensure all views are considered, and as many as possible are accommodated in final scheme design. The Statement of Community Involvement relates to the development of planning policy documents and strategies which are very different to local traffic and parking schemes.

04D Role of Ward Councillors and Neighbourhood Partnerships

Our two Ashley ward councillors appear not to have had any direct engagement in the proceedings of the Cross Party RPS Working Group, despite numerous attempts by Ashley Ward residents to ask them to represent our concerns.

Q8. Why is this? What are residents to do when their views are not represented by their own councillors and why has any discussion about RPS been banned from the councillors' official social media platforms?

A8 The two Ashley ward councillors were not members of the cross-party RPS working group, so had no direct engagement in the group's proceedings although I do know they have taken intense interest in the issues raised

04E Impact on Public Transport

Given that in the minutes of the SD&T meeting on 19th Dec, there is confirmation by Paul Matthews of First Bus that "*No targets had been set with the Mayor*", and the Mayor is on public record as promising that he had done a deal with First Bus:

Q9. What confidence can we have that the Mayor will satisfactorily address the points in recommendations 2 and 3?

A9 Your assertion is quite wrong. There was and is a continuing deal with First over enabling less congested routes and fare reduction and they have made it clear that adequate capacity exists or can be provided on its own network in response to increasing demand caused by the RPS programme. Specifically

on the Park and Ride issue, a new service from Long Ashton Park and Ride to Clifton will commence on the 14th April 2014

04F Costs and Charging Policy

Q10 When will the income from penalty charges from current schemes be available and will these be published so that residents can see it?

A10 Income from Penalty Charge Notices cannot be broken down by RPS area as our back office software does not record it in this way. Additionally, the Civil Enforcement teams do not operate exclusively within single RPS areas

Q11 When will the overall breakdown of cost and definition of disabled parking bays/spaces be available?

A11 This question is unclear. Disabled parking bays are provided where needed when a scheme is introduced or revised.

Q12 When will revised figures for Redland be available?

A12 Separate figures for Redland have not been produced.

Q13 When will further discussions about permit pricing take place?

A13 A review of prices will take place 3 years after implementation

Q14 What impact upon revenue will the reduction for low emission cars actually have?

A14 It is impossible to ascertain the effect of this until more schemes are in place and the use of low emission vehicles is more generally known.

Q15 How exactly is the money raised from penalty charges accounted for?

A15 This forms part of this Council's Parking Services budget. Income received from Penalty Charge Notices is declared in annual accounts and must be utilised for transport purposes under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 2004.

Q16 When will answers be available to the working group's questions about the income from the existing schemes and its request for a comparison of predicted versus actual income on those?

A16 Pay and display and permit income from existing schemes can be provided, but comparison with predicted income are part of the high level business case for the programme as a whole.

Q17 How serious an issue is the point about judging the success of the implementation and the 'steady state' needed and how will such a 'steady state' be judged?

A17 Very serious. We will only know how well the schemes are working after they have been installed and been allowed to run for a period of time. We will carry out a six months review of every scheme.

At the full council meeting on 18th June 2013 I said "I always realised that I was kicking up a bit of a hornets' nest but I have listened to some reasoned judgements. As a result of that, there will be hundreds of individual alterations that are in accordance with particular geographical and social issues. I hope that today's major repackage of changes will show once and for all that I really do listen to reason"

Q18 Given that council officers are maintaining their intention to implement a blanket 'one size fits all' scheme, please can the Mayor provide evidence of the hundreds of individual alterations that will be made to alleviate concerns of local communities?

A18 There is and never has been a 'one size fits all' approach. That is your interpretation. We have a minimum set of operating criteria approved by Cabinet but there is plenty of local flexibility within that framework. In Clifton Village alone, we have made 90 design changes and adjustments to maximum stay times in pay & display bays in most streets as well as changes to operating hours and methods of permit allocation

The report on changes in Clifton Village is available to view on the Council's website.

There is also a new Park & Ride service to Clifton and Southmead Hospital, from Long Ashton, in response to local concerns.

PQ05 JOE DOBRASZCZYK TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

FRACKING

Q1 With respect to Bristol's water being supplied from the Chew Valley, and the concerns about Fracking sites planned less than half a mile from a main aquifer, what emergency planning procedures does Bristol have for a leakage or poisoned water supply?

A1 Water supplies are the responsibility of water companies, in our case Bristol Water. Under the Water Industry Act, water companies must have plans in place both to manage a contamination of the water supply and to ensure the delivery of alternative water supplies if piped supplies are contaminated.

As part of the licence application process, Government requires potential fracking operators to produce a plan to address the risk of induced seismic activity and will review this plan before licences are granted. This 'seismicity plan' should take into account the impact on surrounding infrastructure such as water collection, processing and distribution networks and indicate if an increased risk requires amendment to emergency plans.

PQ06 PETER MCGAHAN TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

UNDER OCCUPANCY CHARGE (BEDROOM TAX)

The Bedroom Tax is becoming ever more discredited and unworkable. For example:

- Court Judgments defining what is a bedroom, as well as the pre-1996 exemption, mean that in a significant proportion of cases Bedroom Tax has been charged on an unsound legal footing from 5 April 2013. All these people are entitled to claim repayments.
- In Scotland a special fund is being set aside to pay off tenants' Bedroom Tax arrears, effectively leaving the measure dead in the water in Scotland.
- Evidence of the extreme hardship, malnutrition, mental ill health and family breakdown caused by the Bedroom Tax is mounting ever higher. A high proportion of those affected are Disabled people. A report by a United Nations Special Rapporteur has branded the measure in the eyes of the world as having a negative and often discriminatory effect on many of the most vulnerable individuals and families and calls for its immediate suspension.

Against this background, George Ferguson, Bristol's Mayor, tried in January to overrule a 76% democratic majority of Bristol City Councillors (47-12 with 3 abstentions) who had voted on 17 December 2013 for an amendment to the report of the cross-party working group. That amendment sought to prevent evictions of tenants who are in Bedroom Tax-related rent arrears except in limited circumstances. He then tried to airbrush this vote out of council records and has quite rightly been called to account on procedural grounds.

The effect of the Mayor's undemocratic decision would be to end the no evictions policy, making it easier to evict.

Given that:

- the Bedroom Tax is unjust, inhuman, discredited, and in many ways so unworkable that it doesn't even yield the predicted "savings"
- An evictions policy puts tenants in fear of losing their homes because they cannot make ends meet as a result of the Bedroom Tax
- an overwhelming majority of Bristol Councillors have voted for a no evictions policy with limitations –

Q1 Why did the Mayor overrule the amendment democratically passed at the last full council meeting, which would maintain a no evictions policy (with *limitations*) for Bristol?

A1 I totally disagree with your highly charged interpretation and have made my opposition to the Under Occupation Charge very clear on many occasions. As you know the decision made regarding the under occupation charge (commonly referred to as the bedroom tax) has been 'called in'. This means that the process followed to make the decision has been challenged, not the principle. The matter will be discussed at Full Council and this may result in the matter being referred back to the Mayor for re-consideration, but I maintain the notion of 'no eviction' is untenable and have responsibility to ensure that all Council tenants are treated fairly.

PQ07 KEITH WAY TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

UNDER OCCUPANCY CHARGE (BEDROOM TAX)

Q1 What has the Mayor actually done to campaign at a national level against the Bedroom Tax?

A1 I have joined in with my fellow Core City leaders in making representation to HM Government.

UNDER OCCUPANCY CHARGE (BEDROOM TAX)

Every tenant who is affected by the Bedroom Tax has the legal right to appeal formally against it, all the way to a tribunal if need be.

The cross-party working group report which the Mayor wants to accept in its unamended form speaks of engaging with tenants to avoid unnecessary evictions. Yet the Bristol Anti-Bedroom Tax Campaign cannot trace that the Council has informed people that they have the legal right to a formal appeal in any of their publicly issued information.

For example, information about the formal right to appeal to a tribunal hasn't appeared in the leaflet published about Welfare Reform, it's not on the council website, nor is it on the tabloid style "Benefits Briefing" delivered through front doors.

As a result tenants who should not be subject to the charge don't know they have the right to a formal appeal and are living in dread of losing their homes. Some do without food or heating to meet the shortfall in their housing benefit.

Instead of proper information about appeals, tenants are merely invited to contact the Council informally, which is not at all the same thing. It is left to campaigns like the Bristol Anti-Bedroom Tax Campaign to let people know they have the legal right to a formal appeal.

If the Mayor is genuinely committed to keeping people out of housing debt, can he explain why he has not ensured that Bristol City Council is:

- Taking every opportunity to clearly flag up tenants' legal right to appeal against the Bedroom Tax - including the Council's leaflets, briefings and website
- Enabling Council employees to provide tenants with properly informed advice that they have the legal right to a formal appeal and forms on which to make appeals?
- Advising housing associations in Bristol that tenants should be made aware they have this right of formal appeal, and making information about the appeals process available to housing associations to give to tenants who fall into arrears?
-

A1 You have asked why the Council is not promoting the legal right to appeal against the under-occupation charge in advice leaflet regarding the under-occupation charge. The leaflet is only intended to be an over-view of the various reforms.

Tenants have the right to appeal against decisions made relating to their Housing Benefit entitlement, this includes decisions regarding benefit entitlement due to the under occupation charge (commonly referred to as the bedroom tax).

Tenants are advised of these rights in letters sent regarding their housing benefit entitlements so all tenants are advised of this regardless of who their landlord is.

Information regarding the right of appeal is also provided on the Bristol City Council website, in the section regarding Housing Benefit (<http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/financial-help-and-benefits/questions-about-your-benefit>).

**PQ09 ANGIE SCOTT TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR
*UNDER OCCUPANCY CHARGE (BEDROOM TAX)***

Q1 On 28 February the Mayor slept out of doors with representatives of housing charities to draw attention to the problem of homelessness. If he is genuinely concerned about homelessness, why does he want to overrule the democratically passed amendment so that it's easier to evict people from their homes for Bedroom Tax arrears?

A1 I slept out of doors with many others, including Cllr Jackson and Cllr Negus at the invitation of the charities concerned. We did so on one of the coldest nights of the year to raise attention to the plight of rough sleepers and were united in doing so. The amendment you refer to is no more a 'no evictions' policy than the proposed policy but is labelled as such, which only serves to send out a false message to those who might intend to take advantage of such a policy.

PQ10 ALISON DEVONSHIRE TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

FUNDING THE HENBURY LINE

BS10 would like to ask Mayor Ferguson- with his business head on will he help support BS10 Group in appealing to the developers of CPNN to offer a one off Levy towards the funding of the Henbury Line? The developers will benefit from increased house sale prices in offering a solution.

A huge housing estate feeding into multiple traffic jams, is not an attractive proposition for anyone. One feeding into a frequent, imminent, fast rail service - is a winner for everyone - those who will live there, those who profit by building it, and those transport operators who meet their needs. Once the stations are built, the rest will inevitably follow. Without those stations fairly early in the process, nothing is inevitable. S.Glos do not; they are focussing on BRT3/MetroBus as a solution.

Q1 Will the Mayor commit to the bigger picture how rail is the way forward as a matter of urgency?

A1 I am in strong support of the BS10 group and appreciate concerns regarding cross boundary congestion between South Gloucester and Bristol as a result of the Filton development. We are asking for the bulk of the section 106 money to be devoted to congestion measures and are absolutely committed to rail as part of the vision for the city, and support the MetroWest ambitions for better utilising existing and new rail infrastructure, including provision for the Henbury loop.

I approved development funding for phase 2 of the MetroWest Rail programme in January 2013 which includes the Henbury Line. Officers are now working in partnership with Network Rail and the other West of England authorities in taking forward the project through the first stages of the rail industry GRIP approval processes, which is a mandatory requirement. Bristol and our partner councils have commissioned various technical studies. The Joint Local Transport Board held last week, attended by Cllr Mark Bradshaw, Assistant Mayor for Transport, received a detailed update on the MetroWest proposals for the city region.

PQ11 RACHEL WALL TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

CLIMATE CHANGE

Q1 In the face of climate change and increased economic insecurity does the council intend to abide by the 1992 principals of sustainable development and seek ways to preserve the right of intergenerational equity as detailed in agenda 21 or does it intend to support or turn a blind eye to the root causes of the problems we face: a dependence on fossil fuel systems? Alternatives do exist. Will this council be brave enough to encourage them?

A1 I am personally committed to the principles of sustainable development and so is the City Council. We are also proactively reducing our own and the city's dependence on fossil fuels - with

ambitious targets and comprehensive energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

Bristol is on course to achieve a 30% reduction in energy use in the city and a 40% reduction in carbon emissions between 2005 and 2020.

Currently we are investing millions of pounds in projects to insulate homes – helping to reduce the use of gas and electricity – and to install solar panels across the city to generate renewable energy.

Bristol City Council is also actively encouraging community initiatives to reduce fossil fuel use through support for and work with the Bristol Energy Network.

Q2 As Bristol has been awarded the title of European Green Capital and has been made one of 33 of resilient cities worldwide, what actions does the council intend to take in the push towards actually improving its green credentials and making the city more resilient to climate change and economic instability?

A2 Bristol is just beginning the Resilient City project, and with the funding from the 100 Resilient City Network we will be recruiting a Strategic Resilience Officer to lead the development of the Resilience Plan. This will build on the wide range of existing work such as that on energy referred to in Answer 1.

Q3 Does the council believe that allowing hydraulic fracturing or methane gas extraction in the area would be moving towards or away from these goals of increased sustainability?

A3 We are prioritising energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy to reduce the demand for fossil fuels and believes fracking to be inappropriate within urban areas.

Q4 What will Bristol council do if the government overrides local planning procedures and decides to allow hydraulic fracturing despite council and public resistance?

A4 Bristol City Council has received no planning applications for hydraulic fracturing exploration or extraction. The decision making processes, responsibilities and policies regarding hydraulic fracturing are set out in legislation, relevant regulations and government policy.

Q5 As I'm sure you are aware many areas in the south west including Bristol and surrounding region have extremely

high radon levels which can cause lung cancer. What impact would hydraulic fracturing have on radon effected areas and the well-being of residents?

A5 Bristol does not have extremely high levels of Radon, however in certain parts of Bristol there may be homes with radon levels above “action levels” as determined by UK Radon. The impacts of Radon in the home vary considerably according to the design and build of the property. If you are concerned about Radon within your home you should contact UK Radon (www.ukradon.org) or The Radon Council (<http://www.radoncouncil.org/>) for more information.

In October 2013 Public Health England issued a report: “Review of the Potential Public Health Impacts of Exposures to Chemical and Radioactive Pollutants as a Result of Shale Gas Extraction” which concluded that “It is considered unlikely that shale gas extraction and related activities would lead to any significant increase in public exposure from outdoor radon levels or indoor levels in nearby homes”.

All shale gas extraction sites will be subject to regulation by the Environment Agency which will consider Radon impacts.

Q6 Regulations require the Council to prepare adequate emergency plans for COMAH (control of major accident hazards) sites within their areas, which have the potential to cause a major accident. These plans must demonstrate the coordinated response of agencies to an emergency that has (or may have) off-site effects and are referred to as Off-Site Emergency Plans. How much are the preparation of these plans relating to coal bed methane and hydraulic fracturing either within Bristol boundaries or in surrounding areas expected to cost and will this come out of the tax payers purse?

A6 Whether a fracking site will be subject to COMAH regulations depends on the amount of gas an operator stores on site. It is unclear whether a fracking operation would require sites to store enough gas to meet COMAH thresholds.

However, if an operator does intend to store sufficient amounts of gas, above the COMAH thresholds, they would be subject to the COMAH regulations which include the production of an off-site emergency plan drawn up and maintained by Local Authorities.

Under the COMAH regulations, activities around the preparation of off-site emergency plans are cost recoverable; the Local Authority can recover the costs of preparing and testing plans

from site operators. This is the case for our existing COMAH sites at Avonmouth and Severnside – the cost of work done is recovered from site operators and does not fall to the taxpayer.

Q7 Is the council aware that the hydraulic fracking industry in the USA has been likened to a Ponzi scheme (pyramid scheme)? Leaked documents revealing this were published in the New York Times. The insiders, many with decades in the oil and gas industry, say shale gas is overhyped for several reasons. The gas is not as easy to extract as promoters claim, meaning it's not as cheap as they make out. Furthermore wells are depleting more quickly than expected. This was confirmed not just by email comments but by production data provided by companies to state regulators and reviewed by the *Times*. How would the council protect itself, residents, workers, local industry and the environment against what amounts to blatant fraud?

A7 This industry is regulated in accordance with national legislation and the City Council will follow this legislation accordingly if we are compelled to accept fracking within the city.

Q8 We are all 70% water, as is this planet. A contaminated water supply would mean no water to drink, to bathe, to grow things or to hydrate the living systems that surround us. Even if the probability of water contamination were only 1% would you really want to risk access to fresh water for every man, woman, child and living being in the area for a potential profit for gas companies? Is it really worth that risk?

A8 Water supplies are the responsibility of water companies, in our case Bristol Water. Under the Water Industry Act, water companies must have plans in place both to manage a contamination of the water supply and to ensure the delivery of alternative water supplies if piped supplies are contaminated.

As part of the licence application process, Government requires potential fracking operators to assess the impacts on water supplies and the Environment Agency will consider this in its licensing process.

Q9 In 2010 the UN made access to water a human right. It has been acknowledged that water access is of increasing concern around the world. With increasingly unpredictable weather occurring how can we be sure that we will not be further impacted by extreme drought. In the case of drought, how will the council ensure that the water companies put the water rights of the people before those of corporations?

A9 Under the Water Industry Act, water companies must have plans in place both to manage drought situations and in the development of their water resources strategy Bristol Water is considering the impacts of Climate Change and the need to additional investment to ensure an adequate supply of water.

Q10 It was well publicised a few years ago that Bristol City council has an emergency plan for a zombie attack? What emergency plans does the council already have in place for water contamination and how might this need to be modified with the increased risk imposed by hydraulic fracturing in the areas surrounding Bristol?

A10 Water supplies are the responsibility of water companies, in our case Bristol Water. Under the Water Industry Act, water companies must have plans in place both to manage a contamination of the water supply and to ensure the delivery of alternative water supplies if piped supplies are contaminated.

As part of the licence application process, Government requires potential fracking operators to produce a plan to address the risk of induced seismic activity and will review this plan before licences are granted. This 'seismicity plan' should take into account the impact on surrounding infrastructure such as water collection, processing and distribution networks and indicate if an increased risk requires amendment to emergency plans.

Q11 In the event of increased road traffic due to the construction and transportation of waste material from fracking sites, will fracking companies liable for increased disruption and damage to roads? Will the companies responsible be forced to prove their can cover financial implications of this and damage to the environment?

A11 As part of the planning approval process the impact on the highway network will be considered. If significant impacts are anticipated then the applicant would need to make provision for the repair of damage caused with a financial Bond.

PQ12 JILL BROWN TO ASK GEORGE FERGUSON, THE MAYOR

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME

Q1 We are a business based in Clifton with 35 employees of whom 20 drive to work. Under the RPS scheme we are unclear on how many permits we will get. The number floated has been from 3 to 7. This will create a shortfall of provision for those without a permit where can they park?"

A1 Small business in the Clifton Village area are eligible for three permits. For larger businesses, the number of permits available will depend on where the business is located and the parking capacity nearby. We will keep the number of permits available under review.

The report on the informal consultation for Clifton village makes reference to changes to business permit allocation which should benefit several businesses in the area.

I cannot be specific about individual businesses at this stage.

Q2 We understand that the objective of RPS is to stop commuters from driving into the city. If public transport isn't an option, and cycling and walking isn't possible what are the driving commuters in our company supposed to do?

A2 A key objective of residents' parking schemes is to encourage employees to travel to work using more sustainable modes of transport. Use of the Severn Beach line calling at Clifton Down, A new Park & Ride service running from Long Ashton Park & Ride to Clifton Village starts next month, to make Park & Ride a more viable option for many employees. Long-stay parking is available in West End car park and at Clifton Down shopping centre. People can park in the northern part of the scheme area for up to five hours using the pay & display facilities providing, which may be suitable for part-time employees. Car sharing may also be a viable option for some. We can provide travel planning support to businesses based in the area, along with a number of incentives to help employees switch to other means of travel.