



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 22 July 2014

This document sets out details of questions and statements received from councillors.

1. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS:

Procedural note:

- Councillors are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions.
- Councillors are also entitled to ask a maximum of 2 supplementary questions at the forum.
- If a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics. All supplementary questions though must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- Replies to all questions will be given verbally. If a reply cannot be given at the meeting (including due to lack of time) or if written confirmation of the verbal reply is requested by the questioner, a written reply will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.
- Questions will be dealt with, in the order of receipt, as listed below.

The following questions have been submitted:

- CQ 1 - **Cllr Goulandris – Maximising public use of Avon Gorge**
Cllr Goulandris to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 2 - **Cllr Weston – Henbury loop**
- CQ 3 - **Cllr Weston – Blaise park rangers**

With regard to CQ 2 and CQ 3, Cllr Weston to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Where a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics.

- CQ 4 - **Cllr Melias – Avonmouth environmental health issues**
Cllr Melias to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 5 - **Cllr Martin – An open democracy**
(Cllr Martin has requested that the reply be confirmed in writing)
Cllr Martin to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 6 - **Cllr Leaman – Clear and frank communications**
(Cllr Leaman has requested that the reply be confirmed in writing)
Cllr Leaman to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 7 - **Cllr Negus – A planned sustainable future**
(Cllr Negus has requested that the reply be confirmed in writing)
Cllr Negus to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 8 - **Cllr Hopkins – Green Capital and a sustainable city**
(Cllr Hopkins has requested that the reply be confirmed in writing)
Cllr Hopkins to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 9 - **Cllr Hiscott – Bristol cycling strategy**
Cllr Hiscott to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 10 - **Cllr Colin Smith – Events charges**
Cllr Colin Smith to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 11 - **Cllr Harvey – Port of Bristol – sale of freehold**
Cllr Harvey to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 12 - **Cllr Alexander – Site allocations & development management policies**
Cllr Alexander to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 13 - **Cllr Davies – Green flag parks / Britain in Bloom awards**
Cllr Davies to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 14 - **Cllr Breckels – Budget**
Cllr Breckels to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

CQ 15 - **Cllr Tincknell – Children’s centres financial planning**
Cllr Tincknell to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

CQ 16 - **Cllr Shah – Transport issues in Easton**

CQ 17 - **Cllr Shah – Bristol to Bath cycle and pedestrian path**

With regard to CQ 16 and CQ 17, Cllr Shah to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Where a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics.

CQ 18 - **Cllr Telford – Private tenants’ rights**

CQ 19 - **Cllr Telford – Carriageworks / Westmoreland House site**

With regard to CQ 18 and CQ 19, Cllr Telford to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Where a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics.

CQ 20 - **Cllr Radice – Cycling strategy**
(Cllr Radice has requested that the reply be confirmed in writing)
Cllr Radice to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

CQ 21 - **Cllr Pearce – Mayoral commissions**
Cllr Pearce to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

CQ 22 - **Cllr Morgan – Annual audit report – risk assessments**

CQ 23 - **Cllr Morgan – Corporate Plan – Keep Bristol working and learning**

With regard to CQ 22 and CQ 23, Cllr Morgan to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. Where a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics.

CQ 24 - **Jenny Smith – Adult social care**
Jenny Smith to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

- CQ 25 - **Cllr Martin Fodor – Cycling strategy**
Cllr Fodor to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 26 - **Cllr Mark Wright – Residents parking**
Cllr Wright to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 27 - **Cllr Jeff Lovell – Regeneration investment in Filwood**
Cllr Lovell to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 28 - **Cllr Ollly Mead – Housing benefit**
Cllr Mead to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- CQ 29 - **Cllr Mike Wollacott – Residential care in Bristol**
Cllr Wollacott to ask up to 2 supplementary questions – these must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

2. STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

Procedural note:

- One statement per councillor is permitted.
- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement.
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with, in the order of receipt, as listed below.

The following statements have been submitted:

- CS 1 - **Cllr Bolton – Make Sundays special**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 2 - **Cllr Stone – Parking fines for care assistants in RPZ streets**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 3 - **Cllr Kirk – Lost bus services in Lockleaze**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 4 - **Cllr Shah – Trading standards**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 5 - **Cllr Hickman – Private renting**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 6 - **Cllr Brain – Seagulls**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.

- CS 7 - **Cllr Jethwa – Future use of Bowmead elderly persons home site**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 8 - **Cllr Telford – Support for Acorn tenants’ rights union**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.
- CS 9 - **Cllr Clark – Hengrove Park**
1 minute allowed for presentation, subject to overall time constraints.

QUESTION CQ 1

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

MAXIMISING PUBLIC USE OF AVON GORGE

1. The Mayor will, I'm sure, share in my delight that the Avon Wildlife Trust has purchased the former Bristol & West sports ground on the Portway, thus preserving this important green space as part of the iconic Avon Valley & Avon Gorge network. The Avon Gorge is a truly outstanding environmental feature of Bristol with its unique flora and fauna. However, one negative feature, which detracts from visitor enjoyment of this location is the noise pollution caused by the A4 Portway, which has been exacerbated in recent years by the use of surface dressing.

Are there any plans to use 'quiet tarmac' on the Portway to reduce the current level of noise pollution?

2. If not and/or cost issues are the problem, has consideration been given to applying for grants e.g. lottery grants or central government funding to help reduce the level of noise pollution and attract more visitors or are there any other ways in which the level of noise pollution could be reduced?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

HENBURY LOOP

The recently submitted SEP by the Local Enterprise Partnership failed to adequately make the case for the urgent restoration of the Henbury Loop, sooner than current funding projections allow. Instead of making explicit the quest of national funding coming forward sooner for a loop, not a spur, they argued that this was 'implied'.

Please can the Mayor tell me what steps he is taking to secure investment for the full Henbury Loop and toughen and make more explicit the stance taken in the SEP?"

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

BLAISE PARK RANGERS

At the moment some of our prime green spaces are served extraordinarily well by bespoke Park Rangers. These hard working individuals know their areas well, they know how to take care of them and manage them in such a way that they draw people to our green spaces from far and wide. Due to the current restructuring these positions are now under threat.

I am sure that the Mayor values the Park Rangers as much as I do, so I would like to know what steps he will be taking to ensure that we retain these highly skilled individuals into the future?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Matt Melias

AVONMOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

1. What lessons have been learned by the Authority and (other public bodies charged with protecting our environment) from the dust, noise and fly infestation problems which have beset my ward?

2. Can the Mayor state what measures are now in place to prevent a repetition of the catalogue of errors which created and compounded the misery suffered by local residents arising from the various industrial processes neighbouring their properties? For example, we believe there must be civil contingency plans in place to allow for an immediate clean-up response to deal with such escaping health hazards.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christian Martin

AN OPEN DEMOCRACY

1. As you know Liberal Democrats have considerable concerns about the reduced ability of Cllrs and members of the public to question and hold to account the Mayor because of the new constitution.

Three of my colleagues submitted questions on 19th June regarding your Boomeco fiasco and a report that was on the cabinet agenda for 1st July but were told that “the report is not now going to 1st July and that the officer was awaiting a REVISED TIMELINE from the officer in charge.”

Colleagues were therefore debarred from asking questions (because of the late withdrawal of the report) that were very much in the public interest especially as there seems to be every intention of the planned arrangement being resumed.

Unfortunately I was not allowed to make my speech at full council in June which would have included highlighting the democratic deficiencies in the new constitution because the other parties guillotined the debate but I would be keen to learn where in the constitution does it allow for questions to be ruled inadmissible following the removal of items from a published agenda? i.e. they were valid until someone ruled them invalid - does this not expose the rules as anti democratic and unacceptable was this the Mayor's intention?

2. In the Mayors forward plan current at 19th June the waste treatment contract had under scrutiny input column “not envisaged” (as did the hugely controversial parks ground maintenance). Does the Mayor accept that this is unacceptable and that it would have been far better to listen to wise advice from scrutiny rather than having to rely on a veto from the environment agency to halt us getting in to ridiculous contracts and give an assurance that this whole matter will come to the planned scrutiny day on waste?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman

CLEAR AND FRANK COMMUNICATIONS

1. Given that in June this year the Mayor was assuring protestors in Avonmouth that the council had nothing to do with Boomeco and the local environmental problems does he now feel that he should re explain the position as this council under his leadership has been doing business on 2 wood contracts with the company for 18 months and the environment agency is sufficiently concerned at the operation to be arranging a revisit to the Boomeco wood site ?

2. In your press release of 19th June, designed to reduce reputational damage to yourself and this council, you were very careful to stress that the problem (rotting bales “processed” by Boomeco on North Somerset waste) were from outside Bristol. Would it not have been, in the interests of openness and honesty, to have admitted at that point that your asst. mayor Cllr Hoyt had on 24th of April approved and signed off an arrangement to push around 40,000 tons per annum of BCC waste through the same process with the same firm as a piggy back on the N. Somerset contract ? (This report was still on the cabinet system for rubber stamping by cabinet on 1st July at that time).

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

A PLANNED SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

1. Prior to the Mayor taking over this council, joint plans had been made between the 4 authorities in the West of England not only for the treatment of our own municipal waste but to provide a framework for all waste in the area. A key component of this was the proximity principle which agreed that we should not be moving large amounts of waste in or out of the area and that we should find local sustainable methods of treatment.

As you have previously acknowledged, our waste treatment and planning were fundamental to securing an unassailable lead in the technical assessment stage that swept us to win European Green Capital.

Do you feel that, after a little local treatment, shipping our waste to another distant country and then burning it, is consistent with the principles set by the previous administration ? If not, will you assure me that such plans, and continuing with Boomeco will be dropped ?

2. Clearly the imposition by Eric Pickles of a large incinerator in the Avonmouth area to burn waste primarily from West London is regarded as unacceptable by many people as this too countermands locally – set sound sustainable principles. (I might remind you that the administration of this council changed in 2009 because of unacceptable plans for an Avonmouth incinerator). I trust that he, like us, has lobbied against this environmentally unfriendly diktat. Does he not feel that the protests from some of us about distant waste and unacceptable technology are undermined by Cllr Hoyt's plans, which seem only to have been halted temporarily by the withdrawal of Boomeco's licence by the environment agency ?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Green capital and a sustainable city

1. The political control of this council changed a few years back when Conservatives switched their support behind us as we demanded the abandonment of Labour's PFI incinerator option for West of England waste and instead backed more recycling and the solution using a new plant built by New Earth Solutions. All sides now seem agreed that that was the right decision and the plant has been praised by a number of members of this administration (although the Asst cabinet member responsible seems never to have visited or inspected).
Green capital (which the Mayor effectively inherited) should be used to assist the growth of sustainable growth and jobs not for political spin. There are many firms in the Bristol area that give wonderful leads and NES is an example where we should be looking not only at expanding local jobs but the sale of world leading sustainable technology around Europe.
Can he explain therefore why the assistant Mayor, Cllr Hoyt , chose to undermine these important opportunities by choosing to send our waste to a distant incinerator instead of speaking to this respected local employer or even apparently considering other options and will the mayor now assure us that this planned contract is not to be revived ?

2. The waste in question had been on a temporary arrangement ,initially for landfill, with SITA who at the time had bought in plans and planning permission for what looked like a promising local waste treatment plant. Knowing that it was a possibility that the plant would not proceed, a clause was put in the contract to prevent SITA switching the waste to an unacceptable means of treatment. This of course was primarily aimed at incineration. The contract unusually did not contain a minimum tonnage to allow for continued reduction in waste, which unfortunately seems to have halted under the present administration, so we had all the options within our hand and the non procedure of the SITA plant happened well over a year ago. Can the Mayor reassure me that he agrees that the option chosen by Cllr Hoyt is unacceptable, that mass burn incineration is unacceptable for BCC waste and that renewed efforts will be made to find a solution that is compatible with the sustainable principles previously established ?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

BRISTOL CYCLING STRATEGY

1. Given this document appears to reflect large parts of the Bristol Cycling Manifesto, can you reassure me that the Authority will not be adopting a key *element of that group's strategy (copied below), namely Congestion charging?

***Integration:** Excessive and inappropriate motor vehicle use must be made less convenient, and fairly priced, e.g. through congestion charging and parking management schemes.

2. Under the section of your draft consultation paper entitled "Harnessing Innovation the Bristolian Way" it states that 'we won't be afraid to try things out, pushing the boundaries of legislation and petitioning government for review and reform where needed'. Are you able to give me any specific examples of what this might entail?

QUESTION CQ 10

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Colin Smith

EVENTS CHARGES

Given that the financial support available to the Downs Committee is becoming much more marginal because of recent contingent expenditure on local significant rock falls, can you tell me why the Film Unit at Bristol City Council only levied/collected facility fees of £75 for each event (e.g. Nationwide advert) when the budgets for such media productions runs into many tens of thousands?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Wayne Harvey

PORT OF BRISTOL – SALE OF FREEHOLD

1. Following the decision to proceed with negotiations aimed at disposing of the Council's freehold interest in the Port (and adjoining land), please can you update me on how this matter is progressing?

2. What will be the criteria applied for accessing this £10 million regeneration fund?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

1. Do you accept the need to preserve and protect the prime agricultural/allotment land adjacent to the M32 for the purpose of future food production?
2. If so, will you commit to reclassifying this site to that end at the earliest available opportunity?

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies

GREEN FLAG PARKS / BRITAIN IN BLOOM

1. I was surprised to note that in a promotional video for yourself and our city you refer proudly to the 11 Green Flag Parks in Bristol City Council. This is particularly galling for many parks enthusiasts and volunteers around Bristol in the light of the recent decision not to seek either the renewal of these awards or the accreditation of additional ones in 2014.

The Green Flag awards are great for local pride, good for staff morale, are awarded against objective standards and are vital for the image of Bristol as European Green Capital.

Can I now have your assurance that this miserly cut will be reversed, and that we will work to both maintain the Green Flag awards Bristol currently has, and encourage other parks to come up to the required standard?

2. In 2011 Bristol won the cities category of the Britain in Bloom awards, and in 2012 Bristol won the highest award in the European Entente Floriale. This is judged over a wide category of areas and was a great advert for our city in many parts of Europe. As a result of these wins Bristol should be hosting the finals and presentation of both events as part of our European Green Capital 2015.

In 2013 despite the many enthusiastic volunteers around the city continuing to do well in the community awards, Bristol failed to win its category in Britain in Bloom.

Can you tell me what was missing from Bristol's entry last year, and give a commitment that the Council will do everything it can to ensure Bristol returns to winning ways in this contest in future?

QUESTION CQ 14

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

BUDGET

The Mayor makes much of his stated commitment to openness and giving residents access to information, so can he please explain why, despite our agreeing the budget for 2014 to 2015 back in February, it has still not been published and made available to the public?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Estella Tincknell

CHILDREN'S CENTRES FINANCIAL PLANNING

I am sure that the Mayor will agree that nursery schools and children's centres are doing a vital job across the city in helping to ensure the equality of opportunity which is so badly needed in Bristol according to the recent report of the Fairness Commission. The austerity agenda forced on the city council by the government is doing little to help many children fulfil their true potential and children's centres offer a vital intervention in this respect. However, in these hard times it is difficult for such centres to undertake financial planning without full information, especially when the financial year concerned is already well underway. Could the Mayor therefore inform me exactly when decisions for this current financial year about the capital allocations to nursery schools / children's centres will be made and communicated?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Afzal Shah

TRANSPORT ISSUES IN EASTON

The proliferation of caravans, mobile homes and trailers left in residential streets many for months at a time in Easton is a cause for concern. People are living in them and have little regard for the families that live in the houses they park outside – the residents who actually do pay their council tax towards the services they receive from the council. Some of these vehicles are untaxed. My feeling is that the owners of these “mobile homes” are in breach of other laws, too, and I cannot understand why they cannot be moved on. I am concerned that some residents could take matters into their own hands out of frustration.

What exactly are the legal difficulties in trying to move on these caravans and trailers – and why is action so slow in dealing with blatant breaches of the law?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Afzal Shah

BRISTOL TO BATH CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH

The Bristol to Bath cycle and pedestrian path is currently being well used but the speed of cyclists, and general anti-social behaviour at times is having an intimidating effect on children - particularly those using Whitehall Primary School.

Will the Mayor visit the school and the cycle path with me, and ask for a report on these safety issues, and possible solutions like speed limits and segregating cyclists and pedestrians in certain stretches, before there is a serious accident here?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

PRIVATE TENANTS' RIGHTS

The tenants' rights group ACORN have highlighted three areas that they want the council and key stakeholders in the city's housing trade to tackle:

- ending tenancy fees (which has already been achieved in Scotland)
- ending rolling contracts (these leave tenants with very little security from month-to-month)
- promoting and securing longer term tenancy contracts (to give tenants safety and security in their homes)

In this light, what more does the Mayor think can be done to help private tenants in Bristol?

QUESTION CQ 19

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

CARRIAGEWORKS / WESTMORELAND HOUSE

I understand that the Mayor cannot make comments on planning applications (there isn't one yet), but what is his view on the community consultation process that the Carriageworks Action Group undertook, in conjunction with the council, on what use the community would like for the Carriageworks/Westmoreland House site?

QUESTION CQ 20

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Danielle Radice

CYCLING STRATEGY

I welcome the consultation on the new cycling strategy. Will you be appointing a Cycling Commissioner to ensure that cycling is effectively championed across the whole city and all city council departments ?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce

Mayoral commissions

As the Mayor is aware, OSMB last week received a report on the Mayoral Commissions, and had a full discussion about these.

For the benefit of Council, would the Mayor like to comment on lessons learned about how these Commissions operated and his thoughts about subjects/issues for future Commissions?

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Glenise Morgan

Annual audit report – risk assessments

Council is being asked to accept the Audit Report 2013/14. The Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers, received and reviewed, included those for each of Neighbourhoods, Children & Young People's Services, Public Health and Health & Social Care. With the recent change in corporate and cabinet structures, which has resulted in Public Health being incorporated within Neighbourhoods, and Health & Social Care being incorporated within People, will new risk assessments now be carried out on "Neighbourhoods" and "People" at the earliest opportunity? Many members are concerned at the potential risks to governance due to the additional responsibilities, which include statutory functions, within these new much enlarged portfolios.

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Glenise Morgan

Corporate Plan – Keep Bristol working and learning

In the Bristol City Council Corporate Plan 2014-2017, section “Keep Bristol Working and Learning”, there is no mention of life-long learning or adult learning. Is this an oversight or a deliberate omission? The importance of this area for health & wellbeing and in combatting social isolation, as well as improving employment opportunities, is well established.

Question to the Mayor from Jenny Smith

Adult social care

While endorsing that we should aim to keep older and disabled people in their own homes as long as possible, there is a need to ensure that those who need support to do so, are given adequate support, either on a temporary basis or more permanent. Given the statistics that I was given when I asked about Social Care at the Cabinet meeting before the elections, there is a need for clarification on the assessment process as the statistics clearly showed that some who had received care in the past had had their care withdrawn. I also ask these questions because the Nuffield Trust and Health Foundation and the Care and Support Alliance Group raised clear concerns about the impact the Social Care Cuts were having on the lives of the elderly and vulnerable.

- 1) There is a need to know the criteria which is used when assessing the elderly or disabled when looking to give them support in their own home, or to put them into Residential Accommodation. Can the Mayor tell Council if this is based on their physical or mental abilities, how tightly are criteria adhered to, and how often are people reassessed?
- 2) Can the Mayor advise Council whether there has been an increase in those who are now responsible for their own budget, and what measures are in place to ensure that this funding is going to support them where they need it most, in their own homes or with access to events in the community?

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Martin Fodor

Cycling strategy

With the launch of the city's proposed cycling strategy the establishment of a coherent, quality cycle network across the whole city for all users, present and future, is essential.

However, with many cycle projects in the pipeline and many have been announced, some promised schemes have been dropped, apparently, without announcement (eg the route parallel to Gloucester Rd in my ward), or seem to be experiencing delays. This can happen, but there seems to be a significant problem at present as promised schemes have time-limited funding. If not delivered by the start of April their funding is in jeopardy.

The Local Sustainable Transport Fund, and the Cycle Ambition Fund projects are all subject to deadlines. I hear that delays and postponements have been applied for. This is worrying, and I'd like to know, with details in a written answer, to what extent cycle projects are being postponed, dropped, or have delays requested? If staff shortages or other delays are affecting delivery then how is this being tackled and what steps are being taken to put adequate resources in place? With even more projects needed in future to create a true citywide safe cycle network of adequate quality then this cannot go on. If the city gets a reputation for failure to deliver then this could jeopardise essential future schemes and lose funds.

What steps are being taken to ensure all projects are adequately resourced to ensure effective consultation, scheme design and delivery?

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Mark Wright

Residents parking

The Press Release from the Council issued on the 17th July on the Clifton Residents Parking Zone (RPZ) commented on:

“Changing business permit allocation from a flat rate of 7 per business to a new formula more suited to the area’s diverse and dense mix of business and residential properties.....”

Will the Mayor agree to look at other RPZ schemes already in operation to see if that need for flexibility is also relevant to the areas covered by those schemes?

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Jeff Lovell

Regeneration investment in Filwood

Mayor Ferguson, you pledged to this city you would deliver an arena and made this one of your priorities, my community in Filwood would not see an arena as one of their priorities, they need somewhere for both themselves and their children to live along with employment opportunities, they see regeneration investment in their community as a priority.

1. Questions are now being ask by the community such as “ have we been shafted again, promised lots but delivered nothing”? In line with your corporate visions for housing delivering this regeneration proposal for Filwood Park should be a no-brainer, so what will you and you team do to prioritise the regeneration vision for Filwood and take advantage of the £700k already invested/committed, and can you tell Council why this project has stalled?
2. Filwood has had extensive consultation over many years to deliver their much needed regeneration vision, you had the full support of the community to deliver the Green Business Park and will use this as a flag ship for 2015 green capital programme, it will be somewhat disappointing to the community if this is the only part of the agreed package delivered, so what can you say to the Filwood community who feel they were given false hope and what will you do to convince them that you do prioritise their visions and will work with officers, deputy mayors and project board members to hopefully have in place start dates for the rest of the agreed package?

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Olly Mead

Housing benefit

1. Is the Mayor aware of 8-week long delays in the payment of Housing Benefit to people in Bristol, including those already in receipt of the benefit when their other benefits are annually reviewed, and the problems likely to result from this?
2. Would the Mayor like to visit the Manor Farm estate in Horfield with me?

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Mike Wollacott

Residential care in Bristol

It has been an area of concern for many in the City that residential respite care is changing and that this change is being driven by the current economic crisis.

Great passions have been stirred on the proposals to close both School rd and Bush house, which are held in high esteem by the users and their family members.

As there are these concerns,

1. What guarantees can you give that there will be no depreciation in the quality of care provided?
2. Do the council feel that certain budgets should be ring-fenced, to ensure that the services provided to the most vulnerable in the city ?

Statement re 'Make Sundays Special'

I attended a meeting of the Bedminster Town Team board a few weeks ago.

At that meeting, a trader pointed out that he closed up on the one Sunday a month when 'Make Sunday Special' was on in town, because he did not get enough trade to justify remaining open.

At the Town Team meeting, he made a suggestion that a request be made to move 'Make Sunday Special' around the city, with a view to holding events in Bedminster.

Subsequently, the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership adopted a motion supporting the proposal.

We welcome the recent celebratory Sunday events in Bristol City Centre, but are concerned that they may be damaging trading activity in the Bedminster high streets by drawing large numbers of people away from BS3. Several traders have reported a decline coinciding with city-centre events. We therefore think that the celebrations should be more evenly spread across the city, with several events per year being held in out-of-centre areas such as Bedminster.

I have since spoken to my fellow Green councillors who unanimously agree that there is a case for decentralising the 'Make Sunday Special' concept so that it works in different areas of the City, such as North and East St, Gloucester Road and elsewhere. This might be instead of or in addition to the city centre closures.

On behalf of Bristol Green Party, I therefore ask the mayor to support the proposal of the Bedminster Town Team and motion passed by the Greater Bedminster Community Partnership. I further ask him to instruct officers to consider and report back on how such a decentralisation of the whole 'Make Sunday Special' concept might work.

Cllr Charlie Bolton

Statement to Bristol City Council

Parking Fines For Care Assistants In RPZ Streets

Recent media coverage on Radio Bristol highlighted that our care assistants suffer parking fines when visiting clients of our Home Care Services living in areas with an RPZ in operation.

Often parking fines are in place on staff cars, before they can return with a permit supplied by their client. Another problem is they are therefore forced to hunt for on-street parking outside the RPZ enforcement area, often many streets away from their client's home address, thus adding extra pressures to their job and reducing actual contact/help time with clients.

It was also stated that apart from supplying their own vehicle, road tax, fuel and insurance, care staff have to pay fines out of their own pocket, and Bristol City Council as their employer, refuses to refund the cost of parking fines. Is this true? If so, this is outrageous as their direct employer.

Surely they could be assigned "Blue Badge" status and given a badge identifying their role/service, and given freedom to park in RPZ areas, or other restricted parking places, to carry out their important and vital care role within the total city boundary.

Our staff are not highly paid in their care role, already providing vehicles, running costs, insurance etc as stated before, from their own resources. Taxing them again by fines when visiting the city's most vulnerable residents cannot and must not continue.

Please introduce a badge/permit sticker for their vehicles, and instruct parking attendants to fully recognise and respect the vital role our care workers provide for Bristol's most vulnerable residents.

Councillor Ron Stone
City Councillor – St George West

Statement - Lost bus services in Lockleaze

submitted by Gill Kirk, Councillor for Lockleaze

In April 2014 Lockleaze residents found that they were losing 3 vital local bus services .

Although we can still access the city centre by a slower route, and Southmead hospital, using the 24 service, increasing the frequency of this one service has not compensated for the services we have lost to other destinations -the 507 to Fishponds and Kingswood, the 25 to St Werburgh's and St Paul's, and the 4 to Frenchay.

The 507 was cancelled due to loss of a bus subsidy, and this has left us with no bus service at all on the long hill running through the heart of Lockleaze estate . We know that commercial bus operators prefer to run faster more profitable routes on the main roads round the edge of the estate but this leaves the residential heart of Lockleaze cut off and a long walk from the busstops.

Those most affected are the more vulnerable, elderly, disabled, mums with small children and those on lower income who have no car and cannot afford to get taxis. For many, the walk to the nearest remaining bus stop is simply too far, up or down a steep hill, and changing buses and waiting for connections, when you cant stand for long, have heavy shopping/walking aids or buggies is impractical

Lockleaze has few shops, no supermarket, bank or free cashpoint, and relies heavily on public transport for residents to access these amenities in other parts of the city. Young people need buses to get to college and job opportunities. There is no direct bus to our nearest shops on Gloucester Rd or out to supermarkets in Fishponds and Kingswood. Where are residents without cars now meant to shop for affordable fresh food?

Without a direct route to neighbouring hospitals such as Cossham, residents are missing appointments because they cannot afford the taxi fare. Many older people cannot even catch a direct bus to the GP surgery.

We want to encourage older people to be active and independent but this is impossible without adequate bus services. We hear from residents that they cannot get to friends and family just a few miles away, Some older people are unable to get to the social activities they used to enjoy, leading to social isolation and poor health.

I ask the Mayor to stand by his aspiration to reduce inequalities across the city. Will he accept that Lockleaze, a council estate on the edge of the city, needs better local bus services (and in the future, reopening of its railway station) to connect it with vital amenities.

Today I am presenting a petition signed by those residents most affected by the bus cuts asking the Mayor to restore lost bus services in Lockleaze, by negotiating with the private operators and ensuring that council bus subsidies are targetted to the areas such as Lockleaze which have the greatest reliance on public transport for their social and economic wellbeing.

**Bristol City Council Trading Standards
Statement by Councillor Afzal Shah**

Recent cases involving the seizure of illegal alcohol and illegal tobacco are to be welcomed but Bristol City Council should investigate ways of closing down those businesses, because these products are not regulated by any health standards and are a danger to citizens who understandably want a bargain, but have no idea they are damaging their health when they consume the illegal goods.

Additionally Trading Standard Officers should investigate closure of those businesses which are regularly found to be misrepresenting goods such as Halal and non-Halal foods.

My feeling is that there ought to be greater co-operation between the licensing department/committee, public safety and protection committee and trading standards.

It is vital that all these enforcement agencies act together to seek out and close down these businesses in breach of the regulations.

Court cases have demonstrated that some of the illegal items seized could cause serious health problem to unwitting consumers. But despite guilty verdicts and heavy this illegal trade still appears to flourish.

It is time all the agencies we rely on to protect residents acted together to close all such premises.

Statement from Cllr Marg Hickman – Lawrence Hill ward

Private renting is the norm for tens of thousands of people in Bristol – actually about 43,000 people. Many of those people have seen, and are living with, the growing cost of renting and the insecurity and uncertainty built into the rental market.

An example of this is that rents can just jump up at anytime from one year to the next. There is little the tenant can do – either pay up or move.

What's more Lettings Agents, who act for landlords, can charge tenants fees and do so for practically nothing at all – for example changing a name on a rental agreement. Renewing a six month lease when all the details are the same as before. Drawing up an inventory – surely the landlord should be liable for this fee? Other fees are demanded for what looks like little or no service at all.

Many tenants feel this is unfair and unreasonable. In the inner city a group of tenants has formed called ACORN. They want an end to those fees and they want more security – and end to the constant worry that they might lose their home every six months or that the rent might shoot up.

ACORN have got together spontaneously as a result of shared difficulties. They are struggling to live from day to day. Struggling with the system.

We are part of that system. They are our citizens and I think we should back them.

We call on the chamber to support the work that Acorn does backing the interests of private sector tenants who find themselves in an impossible market of soaring rents and astonishing lettings fees and little security of tenure. They believe the law has to change to make things fair for all.

If elected next year, a future Labour government promises to introduce, three year tenancies as the norm, an end to lettings agencies fees for tenants and fairer rents.

Whatever your view on this issue Mayor Ferguson I would ask you to write to the government minister concerned now - and ask for legislation to facilitate a more stable and secure rental market which works for the 43,000 tenants you represent. One which works for landlords, too. A fairer deal for all.

STATEMENT FROM CLLR. BRAIN - SEAGULLS IN HEADLEY PARK

Late last year I received a complaint from Mr and Mrs A of Brookdale Road, Headley Park about a severe nuisance being caused by seagulls nesting on the roofs of buildings on Cater Road Business Park. In the first instance I contacted the park manager, well known in the community who replied that he had been told by a council officer that *“The position with regard to the City being able to provide services this year for addressing the seagull problem is highly unlikely, as this service is down to become a victim of the proposed Budget cuts.”*

I asked the then Finance (section 151) officer to look into the matter which he promptly did. The response I received from a manager at pollution control was *“I have just received a confirmation from my line manager [Officer X] to contact and relay to you that the Gull control budget has not been cut and we can help to deal with his bird issues when the season begins. Many Gulls nest in places with difficult access; all work on roofs is subject to Health and Safety regulations for working at heights. If we are able to gain safe access to offending nesting sites, we will do our utmost to carry out the egg replacement process.”*

As part of the budget setting process I proposed an amendment preventing a cut of £200,000 to the pest control budget so that the position now should be unchanged compared with the last financial year.

I wrote to residents proposing a public meeting on the issue which was warmly welcomed and I received a number of replies from residents on how the problem had affected them.

Mrs B

“My granddaughter was playing in our garden and was swooped on by seagull.”

Mr C

“I have phoned the council many times before only to be told we must wait for nesting season to start, they told me to ring back in April. Last year my wife and I were in our garden when a seagull dropped his mess right on my wife head. We get this noise of seagulls all day and all night. I think it’s about time something was done about this. The garden at times is a dumping ground for seagull’s crap.”

Mr D

“It was really annoying back last summer the noise went on almost continually, it usually started in the very early hours of the morning and just went on and on !!!!”

Mrs E

“Seagulls have become not only a health hazard but a flying plague on the environment. The noise is absolute hell that continues 24/7 resulting in sleepless nights, a sheer nightmare when you have to get up for work or if you are of poor health In general a nightmare!!”

She went on to explain how she is unable to open windows at night due to seagull noise, unable to relax in her own garden due to the threat from droppings, how if a person sits in their garden they are a target for seagull aggression and that this can sometimes frighten local children. She told of how she is constantly cleaning her windows and how clothes hung out to dry have to be re-washed due to droppings from seagulls. She said that she has witnessed them attacking small garden birds too which

might impact upon the sparrow population. I was unable to organise a public meeting with officers during the election period because officers would not be permitted to attend a meeting organised by a councillor close to an election due to the rules on purdah which prevent officers doing anything that could cause a party political advantage during an election period.

On June 8th once the election was over I contacted a pest control officer by e-mail saying *“You will recall that before the election we were looking at the issue of seagulls and the nuisance they are causing to residents of part of Headley Park. You may also recall that I intended to set up a meeting so that we could all meet with residents affected by this problem so that we can discuss what can be done. Obviously it was not possible to set up a meeting during the election period due to purdah restrictions. However, now that the election is over we can have our meeting. I have made preliminary enquiries about a possible venue. This would need to be an evening meeting because many of the residents who would like to attend will be at work during the day. I am aware that pest control officers sometimes work a shift pattern. If that is the case with [Officer Y] then it would make sense for the meeting to coincide with a scheduled working evening. Can you please give a couple of dates about three or four weeks from now that fit with your work pattern?”*

No e-mail was received by way of reply. The officer in question left messages on my council telephone whilst I was at work which I had not expected. Once that matter was cleared up I rang him at pest control. I found that if you ring about seagulls the automated system is set so that it eventually hangs up on you without the caller ever having spoken to a human being. I rang again, this time using the corporate line and was told that the officer was not available. I sent a further e-mail requesting an e-mail response on July 6th which has not been responded to. Meanwhile, local residents are becoming frustrated thinking that I as their local councillor am not responding to their concerns and that I am making grand promises that I have no intention of delivering on.

Recently a resident sent me another e-mail.

Mrs B

“Last year I received a letter from you telling me you were going to deal with the seagull problem in Cater road. The problem has got worse. Our windows, washing and garden get covered with their droppings they wake us up at night & early in the morning with their constant screeching. When are you going to keep to what you said in your letter?”

As a local councillor I am trying to resolve this issue and to this end I want to set up a meeting at which local councillors, pest control officers, local residents and a representative from the business park can be present to discuss the issue and find a solution that everyone can be happy with. I take no pleasure in publicly criticising a department within Bristol City Council and I go to great lengths to avoid doing so but in this instance I believe that I have been left with no choice. The pest control service is not providing a proper service to my constituents and is not complying with the officer/member protocol regarding response times to queries. The automated telephone system is in urgent need of review as it is not at all customer friendly and I believe gives the impression that this authority is a great bureaucratic monolith which is exactly the kind of thing that the Mayor is trying to change.

I call upon the Mayor to task a senior officer to take a personal interest in this matter, to look at ways to improve the response to public concerns, improve the way this service works with councillors and in particular to encourage officers to engage in a positive way with the residents of Headley Park to resolve their seagull issue.

STATEMENT CS 7

Statement by Councillor Jay Jethwa to Mayor George Ferguson for the Members' Forum to be held on Tuesday, 22nd July 2014

FUTURE USE OF FORMER BOWMEAD ELDERLY PERSONS HOME (EPH) SITE

I would like to reiterate and place on record my wish to see this vacated site used for very sheltered or affordable housing for the elderly. This aspiration was outlined in a previous statement to Full Council made last year (15th January 2013).

Since the decision was taken to close Bowmead EPH, it is perhaps inevitable that this land will be used to provide some type of housing.

My only plea to you is that your Officers in any potential disposal decision are respectful of the surrounding area and mindful of the needs of the people living in this part of Stockwood.

As Ward Councillors, Cllr Morris and I recognise the huge demand for new homes and particularly accommodation suitable for the elderly. Stockwood has one of the highest proportions of elderly residents in the city and, as such, we need to make specific provision for them.

I also urge that before deciding on any type of building or redevelopment of this former eph, there is a thorough and meaningful public consultation with the local community on the planning application. It is important that neighbouring households are heard and have an input from the start of this process.

This is important not only to ensure that residents have a say in shaping their neighbourhood but also to avoid unnecessary delays and cost to the Council through public opposition.

COUNCILLOR JAY JETHWA
City Councillor, Stockwood Ward

Statement of support for ACORN tenants' rights union by Councillor Rob Telford

I would like to support the statement made by ACORN on secure homes.

ACORN's statement goes into the wide-ranging issues really well, particularly on homelessness.

I would like to make a more personal statement about my own circumstances, and the circumstances generally for young people in Bristol and in the rest of the country.

I'm 30 years old and in my adult life I have only ever been accommodated in the private rented sector.

I'm not alone. There are many young people who are similarly unable to afford to get on the property ladder. It often feels more like a "property roof" that we can't jump high enough to reach.

I have been working for the past five years, but the extortionate fees that letting agents have insisted on me paying in that time have often forced me into debt and have made it impossible for me to build up savings to go towards a mortgage.

For my parents' generation (and, as a result, for many people in my own generation), owning a house is incredibly important for wide-ranging reasons – security, societal status, etc. The societal assumption is that I should want to buy a house. I don't actually want to own a house, but that's what society expects. I just want somewhere safe and secure to live, like everyone.

I have a number of friends of similar age to me who have mortgages, but predominantly because of money that came from elsewhere – family, friends, inheritance, trust funds, etc. – and not predominantly because of their own earning power.

Young people shouldn't need to rely on family and friends for their social security. Financial independence and a safe, secure home are fundamental to a healthy, happy and fulfilled life.

We must do more as a council to talk to those who provide vulnerable or lower income individuals with their homes. From what I have heard at ACORN meetings, there are estate agents who want to do the right thing and want to engage on this issue.

And on the issue of rolling contracts – this is just incredibly annoying.

Every 6 months I have to fill in the exact same contract with my estate agent, just because they say I have to. Nothing has ostensibly changed in the terms of the tenancy. But I'm lucky it's every 6 months - the examples that ACORN cites in their statement are indicative of the completely changeable situation that many tenants find themselves in.

It is only in the large estate agents' interests to keep short contracts, to maximise the amount of money they can squeeze out of their tenants.

There needs to be – in the first instance – a much easier way to renew a contract and – in the long-term – a more secure foundation for tenants in the private rented sector.

I would suggest that – as a council – we look much more closely at the private rented sector and see what powers we can apply to follow Scotland's lead and make agency fees illegal.

STATEMENT CS 9

Hengrove Park

It seems that Hengrove and Whitchurch residents are having to take the lion's share of supplying building plots for housing in Bristol, over the last few years we have seen considerable amounts of land being swallowed up for building new properties. Hengrove Park should have been in the Green Space Strategy and therefore should have been subject to the decision of the Stockwood, Hengrove and Whitchurch Neighbourhood Partnership in line with all other green spaces across Bristol that were subject to development considerations. Some residents therefore feel that this was very much sneaked through the back door in order to not get stopped by those who use and love their park.

This Park must be one of the highest used parks in Bristol. Some of this is due to the diverse things that happen here. From the largest boot sale in Bristol to competitive cycle racing, from walking the dog to a safe way to walk with the children to the many facilities that are now abundant on the park and of course not forgetting carrying on the tradition of why this area was created by the members of the model aircraft club. This list only touches on the many uses that residents of Hengrove and further afield get from this park and why this is such a valuable piece of green space land to us in the centre of our community.

In my three years as a Councillor the Neighbourhood Partnership has spent large amounts of money in order to enhance this area and it would be a travesty to see all of this green space used for housing.

Cllr Barry Clark