



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 16 September 2014

This document sets out details of questions received from councillors and the Mayor's response.

A. Questions from the LABOUR Group (listed in order of receipt):

LAB. QUESTION 1:

Cllr Ron Stone – Housing issues

LAB. QUESTION 2:

Cllr Fabian Breckels – Keep Sunday Special

LAB. QUESTION 3:

Cllr Gill Kirk – Independent Living Fund

LAB. QUESTION 4:

Cllr Gill Kirk – Affordable homes in Lockleaze

LAB. QUESTION 5:

Cllr Colin Smith – Cllr Frost public statement re: additional security measures at City Hall / Full Council

LAB. QUESTION 6:

Cllr Chris Jackson – Air quality

LAB. QUESTION 7:

Cllr Rhian Greaves – Regarding the Paintworks development which is on the edge of the Temple Meads Enterprise Zone

LAB. QUESTION 8:

Cllr Estella Tincknell – Lockleaze derelict pub

LAB. QUESTION 9:

Cllr Estella Tincknell – LEP strategic and investment strategy

LAB. QUESTION 10:

Cllr Mike Wollacott – Living Wage

LAB. QUESTION 11:

Cllr Sam Mongon – Joined up multi-agency care in Bristol

LAB. QUESTION 12:

Jenny Smith – Public Health Bristol

LAB. QUESTION 13:

Cllr Steve Pearce – Bus and rail services for Bristol

LAB. QUESTION 14:

Cllr Noreen Daniels – Street cleaning and grass verge maintenance

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ron Stone

Housing issues

1. Following the publication of the findings and report by the Bristol Homes Commission entitled “More Homes Faster Homes” sponsored by our City Mayor, its major finding and recommendation is the potential “Stock Transfer” of all our existing Council Houses in Bristol.
With 28,000 tenants facing a potential change of Landlord, and with that, no longer paying existing Council Rents, does the City Mayor support this suggestion or will he commit to keeping all Council Housing “In House” and keep Bristol one of the major Councils retaining “Social Housing” as a priority under our direct control?

Reply:

This was one of a range of recommendations in support of increasing the supply of affordable housing in the City and as you know I am driven by the need to increase the supply of new homes and in particular the supply of more affordable and social housing.

The recommendation is to identify whether there is a portfolio of stock that, through the mechanism of a stock transfer, has the potential to unlock access to significant additional private finance borrowing capacity. This could potentially be used to develop new affordable homes over and above current planned levels.

Having said that I don't believe it is in our strategic interests to pursue any large scale stock transfer. Additionally, any stock transfer of tenanted homes requires a ballot with a majority of the affected tenants voting in favour of such a transfer. Indications from previous discussions with tenants suggest there is no desire from tenants to transfer and any such vote would likely to be unsuccessful.

Supplementary Question 1:

I am pleased to see the mayor has at least said publicly today that large scale stock transfer is not on the agenda, because it wouldn't be supported by the Labour Party and many of the officers because of the history of this city in supporting social housing by keeping council houses and their control and development in house. However, in relation to any potential sell off with the view to rebuild what will be the ability of tenants to be able to protect themselves in these situations and how much say will they get if their home is under threat. Could we be looking at an element of the homes that are expensive to maintain / void properties – can you clarify on that?

Reply:

Clarification would be impossible because I think the whole point of this is just to open the conversation to see where the appropriate properties might be. I don't know where they are going to be, and whether there is consultation or not will depend on whether decisions affect tenants – where it does affect tenants there will be the proper consultation that enables them to have a say over their own futures. What I said is that I don't believe it is in our strategic interest to pursue any large scale stock transfer. What I am not going to do is paint myself into a corner and say that will never happen because I think it is really important that when we are considering affordable homes and provision of social housing and the building of more homes across this city that we are able to think about every single possible way of increasing the supply because in the end that's what matters rather than any particular dogma about how you do it, but my judgement at this stage is that any large scale transfer would be inappropriate.

2. With 14,000 people on the City Housing waiting List, will our City Mayor, following the recent site visits arranged in St George West and Kingswood, to new design timber frame eco homes, commit to at least a three site trial of building these homes in selected areas to be agreed, within the City Boundary, as a trial to consider them as potential answers to the chronic shortage of one bedroom homes and an innovative solution as a viable option for those tenants trapped by the impact of the Bedroom Tax, and having nowhere else to go or downsize??

Reply:

I was intrigued by my visit to the sites concerned – thank you for the invitation. I shall discuss with officers whether such a trial is possible.

Registered Providers over the last four years have increasingly used off site manufactured timber frame wall and concrete panels to speed up production. To date none of the registered providers working in the city have used off site manufactured pods which are then erected on site – which is a favoured construction method for developers of student flats.

Over the next two years four schemes are planned which will achieve Passivhaus (or equivalent eco accreditation) or use modular construction:

- a private site at Ermine Way, Shirehampton;
- a site being sold to an RP at Shaldon Road, Lockleaze;
- the former Dunmail School, and
- Hengrove Park Phase 1.

The last two sites will be marketed by the Council in November/ December this year and developers will be encouraged to bring forward innovative mixed tenure zero

carbon homes that use off site manufacturing to achieve the highest quality and speed of production.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

Keep Sunday special

1. We need to know how much the Keep Sunday Special sessions are costing this city. Can you clarify who or what organisation is being paid to run them and whether they generate more income for Bristol than we are shelling out?

Reply:

The Make Sunday Special events have cost £53,000 for 2014 overall. They were held the first Sunday of each month May – September. The overall cost included additional programming support for Big Green Week's Sunday event.

The launch date in May which included the high profile, slide on Park Street cost £34,000 and the following dates June-September have cost up to £5,000 per event.

The first date in May was coordinated by the council's events and markets teams and managed by a local event management company Richmond Event Management.

This was included in the wider coordination of the Bristol Food Connections event taking place in the city centre at the same time. The event with the slide reached a global audience with coverage across all forms of media and 100,000 people visited the city on that day – incalculable benefit to the city.

2. Do the Keep Sunday Special events attract people from all over Bristol or only a certain set? How is this being monitored?

Reply:

The online evaluation is still running until the end of September after which the final results will be published.

However, of those who have replied to date, there are responses from all but 2 wards in Bristol.

Supplementary Question 1:

Can you confirm which two wards haven't engaged in the online evaluation of Make Sunday Special?

Reply:

I do not know at this time but will find out. This relates to the people who have responded to a particular consultation not to those that attended Make Sunday Special events. My experience of walking and talking to people during those events show that people were coming from all parts of Bristol and beyond. And there was a huge level of enthusiasm.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Independent Living Fund

Changes to the ILF (Independent Living Fund) are causing great anxiety for many disabled people who depend on the fund to pay for the extra help they need to lead fulfilling, independent lives within their communities.

The Government's decision to close the fund in June 2015 and transfer its funding responsibilities to local authorities without long term funding guarantees will mean a time of very stressful transition for many people, who will be unsure whether they can continue to employ their own personal assistants and maintain the independence they currently have.

An ILF task group has been set up by the council to work with representatives from Disabled groups to manage this transition. Can the Mayor assure us that this task group is receiving adequate resources and officer time to support those affected by the changes, so that they can plan ahead and be reassured that they will not lose their rights to the support they need to live independently in their own homes?

Reply:

The ILF Task Group is supported by three Council officers, one from our Strategy and Planning unit and two, including a Service Manager from our Adult Social Care Operational Services. The Council is and remains committed to ensuring that all people who are eligible for Adult Social Care services are supported to live as independently as possible. This includes working to increase the number of people who benefit from the flexibility and independence of a Direct Payment.

I am aware of the concerns of people who are current recipients of ILF and know that working to mitigate the impact of the government Transfer is a priority for Assistant Mayor Cllr Brenda Massey, who is responsible for Adults Social Care and the Service.

Supplementary Question 1:

Could you just tell me if there is one named officer that members of the public can approach if they do want more information or support during this transition period?

Reply:

I will make sure that you are given this name and that it is made available.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Affordable Homes in Lockleaze

We very much welcome the recent building of 28 new affordable homes as part of the Gainsborough Square development, in Lockleaze. However it is a drop in the ocean in relation to the acute housing need in Lockleaze, where many families remain year after year in overcrowded accommodation and there are too few smaller properties for older people who want to downsize. Around 400 people apply for each new affordable home that becomes vacant, and in Bristol we need at least 1500 affordable new homes a year to keep up with demand.

Does the Mayor target deprived areas like Lockleaze as he considers the delivery of new affordable homes, and is he likely to make the target of 1500 new affordable homes a year and what can he do to speed up all such developments?

Reply:

Following on from Gainsborough Square development there are draft proposals for developing a council owned site to the rear of 2-60 Shaldon Road, Lockleaze back land site. It is proposed that that approx. 30 homes a mix of houses and flats will be built with some being self-finished properties. These initial proposals have been consulted with the surrounding residents of this site and the Lockleaze Neighbourhood Development Forum.

The Council are awaiting the Neighbourhood Plan for Lockleaze in order to progress the BCC owned sites within Lockleaze Neighbourhood Plan Area. This Area includes the sites in and around Gainsborough Sq, Bonnington Walk and Lockleaze School and if agreed are expected to deliver mixed tenure and commercial/retail developments, with a total of about 500+ market and affordable homes.

We are expecting citywide delivery of over 300 affordable homes in 2014/15, over 500 affordable homes in 2015/16, and more still in 2016/17.

Supplementary Question 1:

Could you remind me is there is a minimum quota for affordable housing that private developers are expected to deliver when they build private housing and will this be enforced?

Reply:

The enforcing of affordable housing is a planning decision as you know so a quasi-judicial process that is carried out by the development control committees with the advice of the development control planning officers.

I encourage the enforcement of 30% (or whatever it may be in a particular situation) of affordable homes and I think as we move into a more than healthy housing market which actually creates unaffordability it becomes even more important to impose those

conditions. There are occasions where there are fair reasons when that might be modified in terms of a really difficult site or a historic building for example, but I think the starting position should always be that the formula is applied in new housing development.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Colin Smith

Cllr Frost Public Statement re Additional Security Measures at the Council House/ Full Council

1) Does the Mayor agree with Cllr Frost's comments about the need to screen all members of the public entering the public gallery - what would this cost - and would this enhance democratic participation or reduce it?

Reply:

I don't personally agree on any measure that risks democratic participation. I have no idea what it would cost and have very little inclination to expend any council resources finding out.

2) Does the Mayor think similarly to Cllr Frost that representations made by members of the public about contentious issues eg Gaza are "disruptive", does he personally feel anyone is in danger from the public gallery and is he happy that these representations are part of the robust democratic process?

Reply:

There are always risks in open Government but I believe the risks associated with reducing access to be greater. Of course there will be occasions when someone in the gallery might be disruptive to the course of a meeting and that is for the Lord Mayor to deal with as he sees best.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Jackson

Air Quality

1) Could the Mayor list the sites where Air Quality is monitored in the city and how many Air Quality Monitoring Sites have been taken out of operation since 2012?

Reply:

We have a network of seven locations where real-time monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) is carried out within Bristol's Air Quality Management Area.

They are: Brislington Depot, Rupert Street, Parson Street School, Wells Road, Newfoundland Road Police Station and St. Pauls.

Their exact locations can be found on the website. www.bristol.airqualitydata.com

Since the end of 2012, three real time monitoring sites have been taken out of operation, for the following reasons:

- Old Market Roundabout was removed from the national network by Government due to changes in their criteria.
- A temporary site was installed on the A420 to monitor the effects of the Showcase Bus Route along that road, and was removed once the 5 year monitoring process was complete.
- A third site on the Bath Road was removed as it was consistently showing that the air quality met the legal standards and was not contributing additional information.

In addition to the real-time monitoring of NO₂, we have over 103 diffusion tubes which measure NO₂ concentrations on a monthly basis, to understand performance against the annual standards. We have retained this number since my election.

2) The Mayor frequently mentions that one of the reasons for introducing 20mph Zones is to improve air quality, but is he aware of reports that conclude that vehicle emissions increase at lower speeds, and can he tell Council how he will measure the improvement if the number of monitoring sites have been reduced?

Reply:

20mph limits are principally a society measure however I do expect 20mph zones to help improve air quality in two ways.

Firstly, they help improve the smooth flow of traffic through the network, reducing congestion at pinch points (such as junctions) that exacerbates air quality issues.

Secondly, 20mph speeds create a safer street environment that will encourage people to walk and cycle more as opposed to using polluting types of transport that contribute towards poor air quality.

The existing air quality monitoring network will allow us to monitor the long term trends in NO₂ concentrations throughout the city.

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Rhian Greaves

Regarding the Paintworks development which is on the edge of the Temple Meads Enterprise Zone.

1. There are a considerable number of concerns from local residents who so far have had little dialogue with the developer Crest Nicholson concerning parking for the extra 250 residents, increased traffic, and how long construction work will occur on the site each day. Does the Mayor have any answers to these questions or can he persuade the developers to hold a public meeting to answer residents' concerns?

Reply:

The level of parking proposed as part of the final phase of the Paintworks development will have been agreed by the Council's Development Control Committee when it considered the outline planning application in December 2012. Whilst I would expect the development to be designed in accordance with sustainable transport principles, I understand that this phase of the development included an undercroft car park to provide (with other spaces around this part of the site) 347 spaces for the new development. The Committee would also have assessed the impact of the additional traffic generated.

I note that the outline planning permission included a requirement for a Construction Management Plan to be submitted and approved by the Council before works start on site. One of the reasons for the Plan is to safeguard the amenity of nearby occupiers. Whilst such a Plan does not give the Council complete control over how the development is constructed, I would expect the developer (who is developing a number of sites in the city) to engage positively with local people to minimise disruption and I will ask officers to encourage such an approach.

2. Some residents are concerned about the safety of the Spark Evans Bridge. Can the Mayor provide assurance that the bridge can cope with the increased traffic and use that will result from this development?

Reply:

The pedestrian bridge that links the existing residential area south of the Avon, including Edward road, with Spark Evans Park on the north side of the Avon, will undoubtedly become more used by virtue of the Paintworks development being well linked to this crossing point. I have no concerns about the bridge coping with the additional pedestrian traffic and, in fact, I find it essential that the new development is linked to this local "pocket" park for the benefit of all residents – new and existing.

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Estella Tincknell

Lockleaze Derelict Pub

There is an urgent need for action across Bristol to provide more affordable housing and other community facilities, in part by bringing derelict land and buildings back into use. The former Gainsborough Pub, in Lockleaze, has been empty for many years and is both an eyesore and a waste of an important site. Will the Mayor intervene to ensure that all the powers at the disposal of the City Council are used to bring this site back into use for the benefit of local people?"

Reply:

You and I were considering this particular eyesore the other day.

As you know the site is in private ownership and discussions with the owners have failed.

Corporate Property is currently liaising with Cllr Gill Kirk and the Lockleaze Advisor Forum Group on this concern over the derelict pub site, and any other sites that can be progressed for housing on mixed use development.

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Estella Tincknell

LEP European Strategic and Investment Strategy

The LEP has recently produced a European Strategic and Investment Strategy which sets out how European funding is to be used within the West of England. Does the Mayor share my concern that the priorities as set out for the use of European Social Fund resources will not directly help many communities in Bristol who need access to decent work if we are to create a fairer city. Will the Mayor agree to intervene and ensure that these priorities are reviewed and adjusted?

Reply:

The West of England European Strategic and Investment Strategy was drawn together through a LEP managed partnership, including input from the four local authorities. The final document includes a number of funding strands which will enable the LEP and partners to address local employability priorities, driven by defined and evidenced need. At the initial stage, the stated priorities were deliberately broad:

- address and reduce NEET young people aged 16-24
- support to improve the employability and employment of people aged 19+
- remove barriers to employment

To help draw up funding specifications, local authorities have recently been asked to provide guidance on more detailed local priorities - including geographical 'hot spots' and groups who face particular barriers to employment (e.g. people with learning difficulties and disabilities; people who have little or no spoken English; young people leaving care). We are at the start of this process and we are considering baseline data, existing services, other local providers and partners, where ESF funding can add value and address gaps. It is our understanding that the allocation of ESF funding will be a phased investment over 6 years so that the ESF funding can respond to a changing employment landscape and local employability needs.

The LEP Skills Team has led the development of the European Social Fund (ESF) strand of the European Strategic Investment Framework (ESIF) for the West of England. Our understanding is that the main priorities for ESF support will be on:

- young people aged 16-24 who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and
- troubled families (which will in practice target a broad range of beneficiaries across geographic locations and age groups in Bristol)

The Employment and Skills and Economic Development Teams of the Council are generally supportive of this focus for the ESF priority groups, which aligns well with our existing and recently commenced projects such as Helping Young People into Employment (HYPE).

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Mike Wollacott

Living Wage

- 1) Given the growing consensus around the economic benefits of the introduction of the Living Wage in the UK, that has drawn widespread political support, and the growing evidence of the economic benefits of substantial increases in the Minimum Wage in the US, combined with the recommendations of Bristol's own Fairness Commission, does the Mayor feel that the Council should be moving away from the commitment to obtain Living Wage Accreditation?

Reply:

No. But the decision to become an accredited Living Wage Employer will have contractual and cost implications for the Council, which need to be properly assessed before such a decision can lawfully be made.

However I suggest that the only satisfactory way of achieving a universal living wage is via central government action to equate the minimum wage with the living wage. The onus is on you to lobby for such a move via your national party leadership.

- 2) With widespread support in Government for the Living Wage, and the economic savings that will flow with a broader take up of the Living Wage in the public and private sectors, will the Mayor seek to enter into discussions with the appropriate central government departments to ensure that progressive local authorities capture these saving to invest in the local community, and make representations to central government that when they support a top rate of tax of 45p, it is somewhat perverse to expect the lowest paid workers to see a marginal rate of taxation of 60p+ on the benefits they receive if they are brought up to a Living Wage income?

Reply:

Subject to the above, discussions on pan-local government issues would more appropriately be led by the Local Government Association, to which we as a Council could certainly input our views. For this Council, adoption of the Living Wage for directly-employed staff is a significant investment. Prior to the universal adoption of the Living Wage I would want our employees to feel the benefit of this investment.

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Sam Mongon

Joined up multi-agency care in Bristol

I'm sure the Mayor joins all sides of the chamber in their regret and sorrow for the tragic events and loss of life of one of our tenants at Carolina House on September 6th.

He will also be aware that reports have been circulating that Mr Crane was known to multiple public organisations including the council's housing and social care services, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and NHS mental health services.

It seems that nationally there is a cross-party consensus on the need for integration between health and social care as well as putting mental health services on parity of esteem with other health and social care services.

How will the Mayor, particularly in his role as Chair of Bristol's Health & Wellbeing Board, ensure that our public services work together to protect the most vulnerable in society?

Reply:

Indeed I wish to express my profound sympathies to the family, friends and neighbours of Mr Crane. I am totally committed to learning whatever lessons we can from this terrible event including how professionals strike the right, but difficult balance between supporting an individual, who has the right to live independently and the need to help people to be protected from harm which is the subject of debate locally and nationally.

The Council values mental health equally with physical health and we are working with our partners in the NHS through the Health and Wellbeing Board to deliver services which reduce inequalities, ensure resources are focussed on improving clinical services and better outcomes for people with mental health needs.

I have asked that the Bristol Safeguarding Adult Board use its established policies and procedures to review this very sad case and consider the establishment of a Serious Case Review which will be overseen by the Independent Chair of the Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board.

Questions to the Mayor from Jenny Smith

Public Health, Bristol

Under the Health and Social Care (HSC) Act of 2012 local authorities such as Bristol were given leadership and financial responsibilities for public health at local level. The overall intention was to move public health into Local Authorities in order to take advantage of existing structures and local knowledge of communities gained over many years. This was aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of Bristol citizens especially by improving the health of Bristol's poorest faster. This responsibility was supported by a ring-fenced public health grant, which has since been added to.

1. Could Council be provided with a list of where this money has been placed both internally in our own services and externally with other independent organisations?

Reply:

We are currently, along with all other local authorities, preparing a Statement of Assurance to be submitted to Public Health England at the end of September on our Public Health spend for 13/14. This will form the basis of a report to the Health & Wellbeing Board that will set out our current spend, both internally and externally. As you know, as a regular attender, this meeting is open to the public and to all councillors.

2. Is there any of this finance not as yet used, as there was a concern by the previous Scrutiny Committee that should this occur the Government might take this finance back?

Reply:

This work will also clarify any amounts carried forward and we are confident of our ongoing spend against profile.

I am disappointed, however, that the Department of Health has chosen to freeze the current budget for next year, which represents a real cut in spending power in 2015/16. The rest of the health service has not had this level of restriction, and this is doubly disappointing as dealing with increasing demands for services can only be met by preventing that need arising in the first place.

Questions to the Assistant Mayor for Place from Cllr Steve Pearce

Bus and rail services for Bristol

There has been a great deal of change and rumours of imminent change in bus and rail services for Bristol. I would therefore like answers to the following questions?

1. To ask the Assistant Mayor for Place for his assessment of the bus market in Bristol and for an update on what action he has taken in advance of and following recent First Bus and Wessex route changes and service deletions.
2. To ask the Assistant Mayor for Place to update Council on local rail services and investment options.

Reply:

From: Cllr Mark Bradshaw
Labour Co-op Councillor for Bedminster
Assistant Mayor for Place (Transport, Planning, New Homes, Property, Economic Development & Regeneration)
Place Directorate

Many thanks for your question. I offered a written reply in addition to my verbal response at the Forum.

Firstly, you asked me for an assessment of the bus market in Bristol and update on action I have taken following recent route changes.

My view is that the bus market outside London is broken and needs radical government intervention as legislation is needed to remedy the problems we and other Councils face. This view is echoed in the LGA report 'Better Roads for England' which outlines the complexity and major financial risk faced by Councils wishing to adopt Quality Contracts. Apart from Council-funded supported services, we have limited ability to intervene in the bus market. In the case of GBBN routes, most have Quality Partnerships in place and so there is some additional leverage we can apply, likewise for Better Bus Area schemes. For the vast majority of commercial routes, it is the Traffic Commissioner who has all the powers to act.

With the recent service changes and deletions, I regret that the Council seems not have been informed about these prior to registration with the Commissioner. Instead we were faced with the collapse of bus services on the route corridor served by the 20 (First Bus) and 15/15A (Wessex) services. Using existing subsidy resources and after considerable negotiation with various operators, the Council has contracted First to operate the 520 connecting Westbury Village to the Centre. This should help residents access medical and other key destinations, albeit on a service with reduced frequency than the 20. As a supported service, the Council expects the 520 to be reliable and

promoted. We will use our ability to inspect and apply penalties should this be necessary. The expanded 508 route, operated by Wessex, will help improve connections in Southmead enabling trips to Westbury Village and via the 520, into the centre.

Aside from these recent developments, I consider that a gradual review of Bristol's bus network is required, focused on key hubs where interchange and feeder services can be better aligned with MetroBus and other services, including rail. I believe I have operator support for this approach.

Secondly, you asked for an update on local rail services and investment options.

The Local Transport Board has recently approved the Preliminary Business Case for MetroWest Rail Phase One - totalling nearly £60 million of investment to enhance local rail in Greater Bristol. This is on top of the considerable Network Rail project to four track at Filton Bank and to remodel the East Bristol junction and other associated works. There is technical work underway on the initial options for new or reopened stations at Ashton Gate, Ashley Down and Horfield/Lockleaze. I hope to be able to say more about this soon. In addition, Network Rail is developing options for a platform at Portway Park & Ride using their resources and without cost to the Council up to option appraisal (GRIP 3). This ensures that any proposals are fully compliant with the GRIP protocol. Previously, the project failed to secure the necessary capital funding by not following GRIP requirements.

We are in regular contact with Network Rail, train operators and Ministers about rail developments and opportunities in Greater Bristol.

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Noreen Daniels

Street cleaning and grass verge maintenance.

I cannot remember the last time that I saw any road sweepers in the Hillfields area and the widespread growth of weeds on grass verges and pavements is clear evidence of neglect. I know the Mayor is keen on how the city looks and hope this applies to the whole city and not just the centre which is why I ask:

1. What is the road sweeping and weed clearing schedule for wards away from the city centre?

Reply:

All such feedback is helpful but can I assure you that I regard it as vital that the standard of street sweeping to be achieved is the same across the city. That is that it meets the Keep Britain Tidy standards of B+. This is a recognised industry standard which effectively means little or no litter present.

Weed removal is done through spraying, and when the weeds die back, removal is then carried out by the street cleansing crews. Hillfields was sprayed during the week ending 29 August. Our contractor Kier has confirmed that they are reviewing the sprayed areas tomorrow to ensure that weeds have all died back (they take 2-3 weeks) and that removal is scheduled. They have confirmed that Hillfields is on their list of areas to check.

2. Are there any penalties if contractors fail to do the job to time?

Reply:

Yes. Within the contract there is a Performance Management Framework which determines what the deductions are, where performance is not to the standard we have specified.

B. Questions from the LIBERAL DEMOCRAT Group (listed in order of receipt):

LD. QUESTION 1:

Cllr Christian Martin – Weekend traffic restrictions in the Corn Street / St Nicholas market area of the old city

LD. QUESTION 2:

Cllr Alex Woodman – Low emission zone – central Bristol

LD. QUESTION 3:

Cllr Gary Hopkins – Quality of life survey

LD. QUESTION 4:

Cllr Chris Davies – Arena parking

LD. QUESTION 5:

Cllr Anthony Negus – Green Capital

LD. QUESTION 6:

Cllr Anthony Negus – Scrutiny

LD. QUESTION 7:

Cllr Campion-Smith – Change / transformation programme

LD. QUESTION 8:

Cllr Christian Martin – Residents parking schemes

LD. QUESTION 9:

Cllr Tim Kent – Bus quality contracts

LD. QUESTION 10:

Cllr Mark Wright – Hydrogen ferry

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christian Martin

Weekend traffic restrictions in the Corn St./St Nicholas Market area of the old City.

Several years ago these restrictions were introduced for the period from Friday evening through Sunday. These included retractable bollards to restrict vehicle movements. Recent press reports have stated that these are no longer being used due to a “technical fault”.

Can you please let me know full details of this “technical fault” (including when it first became apparent, and what action has been taken by the Council to repair it)?

In your reply to the above question can you remind me of the cost of the bollards, whether they came with a manufacturers and/or installers guarantee, and if the Council entered into a maintenance contract entered into either at time of order, installation or subsequently?

Reply:

There have been a number of faults with the hydraulic bollards St. Stephens Street and St. Nicholas Street, including damage from vehicular impact.

The hydraulic bollards have been in place since December 2005, but the faults have been most problematic for approximately five years. The Highways Team have taken action on each occasion to have the bollards repaired.

The hydraulic bollards in St. Stephens Street and St. Nicholas Street cost £41,500 to supply and install. The associated civil engineering, road marking and signing works cost approximately £19,000. The overall Corn Street night time Pedestrian Zone project in 2005 cost approximately £88,000.

The supply and installation of the bollards included a manufacturers’ warranty. A maintenance contract was not entered into, however, many of the problems experienced with the bollards would not have been covered by a maintenance contract, particularly those associated with vehicle impact.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Alex Woodman

Low emission zone – central Bristol

My ward colleague, Cllr Mark Wright, and I have been pushing the idea of a "Low Emission Zone" (LEZ) in central Bristol for some time now. With the city becoming the European Green Capital in 2015 it is all the more imperative to take action. Low Emission Zones are currently in force in central London, Norwich, Durham and Nottingham with new ones opening in Oxford for local bus services. They also exist in many European cities and mean that lorries and buses would face stricter exhaust emission rules in order to reduce pollution and improve air quality. *The health impact of such poor air quality in the city centre is shocking and a LEZ would go a long way to solving this problem.* Arup were commissioned to provide a report to examine the business case for a LEZ and were due to report earlier this year, in March, but we have heard nothing. Will the Mayor therefore please provide an update on this report?

Reply:

I would agree with you that air quality in parts of Bristol is not as good as it should be and tackling this problem is one of my priorities. I have asked officers to look at a range of solutions, which all need to be considered in the round, there is no quick fix and a Low Emissions Zone won't solve the problem on its own.

A draft report has been received from Arup on Low Emission Zones. The report requires further consideration in relation to what steps to take next.

I am pleased to inform you that we submitted a bid on the 11th of September to DEFRA for funding to carry out research into the freight requirements in the old city with a view to helping small and medium sized businesses deliver by lower emissions means.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Quality of Life Survey

1. I was concerned to find out recently that a number of questions have been deleted from the much respected and valued Quality of Life Survey. This had not even been announced let alone consulted upon. Despite e-mailing I have yet to receive an answer to my request for a list of the deleted questions and I would want this response in written form. The consistency of the survey provides a large part of its value. One question that I know has been deleted is:

“Have you been a victim of crime during the last 12 months?”

Given that the percentage of crime that is reported is still reducing and the widespread concern at the accuracy of some police statistics is this not a vital question to retain in the survey?

Reply:

I understand it is usual practice for the Quality of Life survey to retain a set of core questions each year so we maintain time series to track indicators of quality of life. Small annual changes are made with additions and deletions of a smaller set of questions, depending on the current issues facing the city. All changes are endorsed by service managers who actively use the information collected as performance measures, monitoring of new initiatives, identify emerging issues etc. It was also evident in 2014, that some questions were already being asked in other local and national surveys and these were dropped to avoid duplication.

This year, due to question changes, the survey reduced from 16 to 12 pages in length. This will encourage a greater response to the survey and has led to a number of efficiency savings, with a greater online response and lower printing costs.

Supplementary Question 1:

As part of the Police and Crime Panel I know that this information given in this example of ‘Have you been a victim of crime’ rather than the police statistics is not available in the form we have had it for a number of years in Bristol from anywhere else. There are general surveys but this actually tells us very detailed information about peoples experiences in Bristol and what their experience of crime, which is absolutely vital. If you were proposing to drop this surely at the very least there should have been some consultation to look at this to decide if people felt we needed to keep the question. Also, should we now not be in a position where we have a detailed list of the deletions and the reasons for these deletions?

Reply:

I am perfectly happy to publish the deletions list. Of course I have sympathy with the idea of consultation, and I am sure managers did some form of consultation but I am not aware of the extent of this because I wasn't part of the process.

NB: A list of deletions is available at the end of this response.

2. One question that has been introduced since 2012 and repeated this year as part of the Quality of Life Survey is:

“Has the introduction of a directly elected mayor improved the quality of leadership within the city?”

This is despite the fact that this is a somewhat more leading question than has been the custom to include in this survey. This was strongly agreed with by 9.3% of Bristol residents but the figure in Clifton ward was significantly higher. After the recent debacle over delays to the Clifton Village residents’ parking scheme does the Mayor think that Clifton will still be a positive outlier for him and can we get the full figures on this question this calendar year as many of the public will want to know ?

Reply:

The Mayor question was introduced into the survey in 2012 at the request of the Bristol Civic Leadership Project. The study team comprises researchers from the University of the West of England and the University of Bristol and was supported by senior managers, as a topic of significant local and national interest. The result for this indicator was 37% in 2013 (residents who strongly agree and tend to agree). The question was included in the 2014 survey (currently live), and the indicator will be analysed as a priority at the end of the year.

I carry out all policy on the basis of Bristol’s best interests only and not on seeking popularity and I wouldn’t presume to second guess responses to the Quality of Life Survey, but shall take great interest in its outcome.

Supplementary Question 2:

The form of the question asks about leadership, as such if it had asked if services and consultation had improved or if experience of how Bristol City Council treats you had been asked I think it would have been a different answer and that is why some of us feel the question itself is not of the objective type.

Reply:

It was crafted by academics to get an answer to what they were researching so I cannot answer for them.

Questions that were in the Quality of Life Survey in 2013 but not in 2014

Question	Options
How safe or unsafe do you feel in your neighbourhood: Indoors after dark	Very safe, Fairly safe, Neither safe/ nor unsafe, Fairly unsafe, Very unsafe, Don't know
How safe or unsafe do you feel in your neighbourhood: Indoors during the day	Very safe, Fairly safe, Neither safe/ nor unsafe, Fairly unsafe, Very unsafe, Don't know
How safe or unsafe do you feel in your neighbourhood: Outdoors after dark	Very safe, Fairly safe, Neither safe/ nor unsafe, Fairly unsafe, Very unsafe, Don't know
How safe or unsafe do you feel in your neighbourhood: Outdoors during the day	Very safe, Fairly safe, Neither safe/ nor unsafe, Fairly unsafe, Very unsafe, Don't know
How often do you talk to family and friends	Most days, Every week, Every month, Few times a year, Never
Do you agree with the following statements "People take responsibility for the behaviour of their children"	Strongly agree, Tend to agree, Neither/ nor, Disagree, Strongly disagree
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Violence in relationships is acceptable under some circumstances	Strongly agree, Tend to agree, Neither/ nor, Disagree, Strongly disagree
Have you been a victim of crime in the last 12 months	Yes, No
If yes (to victim of crime question) did you report this crime to the police	Yes, No
What is the usual way the oldest child travels to school	Usually accompanied by an adult, Sometimes accompanied by an adult, Accompanied by an adult part of the way, Not usually accompanied by an adult
How far does the oldest child travels to school	0-1 miles, 1-2 miles, 2-3 miles, Over 3 miles
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood - graffiti	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood: fly tipping	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood: people being drunk or rowdy in public places	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood: vandalism	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood - your own personal safety	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood - drug dealing	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
How big a problem do you think the following environmental issues are in your neighbourhood: discarded needles and syringes	Serious problem, Problem but not serious, Not a problem, Does not apply/don't know
Have you seen any house sparrows in your garden or close to your home this year (2013)	yes, no
Are you satisfied with the following: jobs in the neighbourhood	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very

	dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Your present job	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Health services	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Bristol's parks and open spaces	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Leisure facilities / services for teenagers	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Theatres and concert halls	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Markets	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you satisfied with the following: Local tips / household recycling centres	Very satisfied, Fairly satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Fairly dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied, does not apply
Are you a concessionary travel card (free bus pass) holder	Yes, No
Do you think Bristol should have more, fewer or the same number of outdoor events?	more, about the same, fewer
Have you taken, or do you intend to take action to tackle climate change	Yes, No
If YES (to tackle climate change) - chosen locally grown food	Action I have taken
If YES (to tackle climate change) - changed buying habits	yes, no
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I am happy using the internet whenever I want to	Tick any box
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I don't use the internet but I am keen to learn	Tick any box
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I have someone use the internet for me	Tick any box
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I don't use the internet and I can't afford the technology	Tick any box
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I am unable to use the internet	Tick any box
Which statements about the internet apply to you? I am not interested in using the internet	Tick any box
Where do you use the internet? At home	Tick any box
Where do you use the internet? At work	Tick any box
Where do you use the internet? Public computer	Tick any box
Where do you use the internet? Out and about	Tick any box

What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Searching the internet	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Email	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Social media and sharing	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Booking tickets online	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Applying for Council or Government services	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Online shopping	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Downloading apps	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Internet banking	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Video calling e.g. SKYPE	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Editing and uploading	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Creating content	Tick any box
What do you use the internet and digital technology for? Coding	Tick any box
During the past month, how would you rate your overall sleep quality	Very good, Fairly good, Fairly bad, Very bad
Have you accidentally fallen in the last 12 months	Yes, No
If yes (to fall question) did you get professional help, e.g. see a doctor or go to casualty, because of your fall	Yes, No
If yes (to fall question) do you feel that your day-to-day life has suffered because of your fall	Yes, No
Is useful information and advice on benefits available to you	Yes, Would like more, No, Don't want any, Don't know, Don't want any
Are you the main carer for this person?	Yes, No
Do you provide any help with personal care (such as bathing, dressing or assistance with going to the toilet) to the person you care for?	Yes, No
What is the age of the person you care for?	0-17 years, 18-64 years, 65 years and over
Which statement best describes your current situation: Support from family and friends	You get a lot of, some, little, support from family and friends
Which statement best describes your current situation: Assistance from organisations and the Government	You get a lot of, some, little, assistance from organisations and government

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies**Arena Parking**

I am concerned about the many unanswered questions on finance, traffic and parking in relation to the Arena. In total, the project is estimated to cost up to £91 million. The Council's funding plan for the Arena is largely dependent on the expectation that there will be significant increases in car parking income as a result of the Arena hosting events. However parking provision on the site will be minimal, with a maximum of 250 spaces for disabled users, VIPs, and some Arena staff. The rest will therefore be provided off site, meaning parking charges in the surrounding area is going to be significant. In addition, Residents Parking Zones are now inextricably linked to any car parking strategy in the city. No consultation has yet taken place on RPZs adjacent to the Arena site in Windmill Hill or Totterdown. Without a meaningful plan on how parking and parking charges will live up to the Council's projections, the Arena funding plan will therefore not add up. Will the Mayor confirm that residents in the Windmill Hill and Knowle wards will not be adversely affected by any unfair rises in parking charges?

Reply:

Car parking income was never central to the funding plan for the Arena but work on the car parking options for the arena is still continuing.

However, the arena is particularly well placed to encourage travel via public transport. It is located next to Temple Meads Railway station and is on a main bus route connecting it to other areas of the city. By 2017, when the arena is due to open, the new Metrobus service will also be in place which will stop close to Temple Meads station. A full transport assessment is underway.

There are over 2500 spaces within a 15 minute walk of the arena already and approximately 250 additional spaces - a mix of disabled and arena operator car parking spaces are likely to be provided on Arena Island. The transport assessment will also investigate options for Park and Ride to the arena to reduce the amount of car journeys,

We shall be working on a variety of solutions to mitigate the impact of visitors to the arena on local residents, using Neighbourhood Partnerships and other methods of public engagement.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Green Capital

I am sure the Mayor will agree that Bristol's successful bid to become the first UK Green Capital city was thanks largely to the work of the previous the Liberal Democrat administration, the help of the Lib Dem MEP Graham Watson and the £7 million funding recently secured by the Lib Dem MP for Bristol West Stephen Williams. Of course, creating the new green ethos for Bristol, developing new initiatives and setting out a programme of inclusive and engaging events were the keys to our city achieving the award of European Green Capital.

To really mean something, Green Capital needs to reach out to the vast majority of businesses, not just those that can afford to take part. It is also vital that every citizen, in every community, feels the benefit in 2015 and lives the legacy in years ahead. Does the Mayor agree that its success is best measured by the degree that every home realises how things could be better and so how specifically does he plan to ensure next year will be a great partnership with all our neighbourhoods?

Reply:

I give credit to all involved in building up to our successful bid to become European Green Capital. It was due to the hard work of many people and organisations in the city, in particular the 500 or so members of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership.

However, it is worth noting that members of the commission particularly cited the fact that we had a committed Mayor in place until 2016 as a factor in selecting Bristol, including the sense of fun we brought to our approach.

I am delighted that within the Council the work to make Bristol a greener city and the Green Capital initiative specifically has been supported by all parties – whether they were in administration or not. I am delighted that this cross party support continued as we put our case to Government and I look forward to it continuing as we approach the year.

I totally agree that European Green Capital 2015 activities need to reach every community and every business and that this will be one key way of measuring the success of the year. This is why it is one of the primary objectives of the Bristol 2015 Ltd and why the programme has been developed to include three key elements:

- Small grants through Neighbourhood Partnership and through the Quartet Foundation to offer every community the chance of financial support.
- A volunteer programme offering opportunities for citizens from across the city to contribute to the success of the year.
- Communication designed to reach a wide range of audiences, and not just those who are already actively involved.

I would add that £2million into grants is 25 times the amount of money ever spent before on an environmental grants programme.

Supplementary Question 1:

The mayor should have seen my messages about the poor handling of sharing this cities intention for Green Capital with Councillors and citizens. Will he now share publicly recent changes made to the organisation around Green Capital in order to improve delivery?

Reply:

There is a report due to come to Councillors through briefing sessions shortly. I am not going to expand on this at this stage. All I can say is that I have shared any information that I have.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Scrutiny

Scrutiny under Bristol's Mayoral system of local government is failing.

This system has been tried and rejected in places like Hartlepool and Stoke-on-Trent, where the electorate have voted to revert back to their old Council systems. Policy is now generally initiated between the Mayor and the unelected senior leadership team. The assistant mayors see only approximately 50% of the proposals that used to come to the previous executive members. This city has a Cabinet in name only, that though paid the same, it is mainly a rubber-stamping group – all decisions are made by the Mayor or are generated in-house by a small group of senior officers whose jobs are bound up with the Mayor.

This is a very poor way to develop robust policy initiatives for the breadth and degree of analysis and argument is curtailed. It has taken Lib Dem Cllr Christian Martin to call a conference, of all Scrutiny chairs from all parties, to ensure that this serious shortfall in our democratic process in this City Council is properly addressed.

Will the Mayor finally admit that scrutinising his policy and identifying gaps and concerns is not party political, but is an essential process to secure better outcomes and guaranteeing many more voices are listened to, which is of course an essential part of democracy?

Reply:

The implication of your question is completely wrong. I fully support anyone, elected members and the citizens of Bristol, who wishes to hold me and/or the council to account in order to improve this city. This is why I was involved in the recent revision of Scrutiny with Party Group Leaders. The changes introduced were designed to enable greater involvement of elected members in the development of policy and to provide greater opportunities, such as this Member Forum, for questioning the Mayor.

I cannot state strongly enough how much I value my Cabinet of Assistant Mayors. Their involvement goes deep, I share decisions with each and every one of them and the advice they give to myself and council officers is invaluable.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Clare Campion-Smith

Change / transformation programme

The City Director gave a presentation recently in which she emphasised that the Council was going through a major transformation programme to make it a 'fit for purpose', efficient and effective modern Council. The Mayor has made similar remarks. From a councillor casework perspective, our residents are finding it extremely frustrating to contact the Council: they perceive poor standards of work by contractors through lack of capacity to monitor, they see waste of money because the Council apparently does not have the people to deliver simple remedies and situations reach crisis point, and they wonder why the Council cannot deliver simple routine tasks such as weed clearance. As councillors, we still have our lists of trusted and competent officers who will respond to our residents; however the list is dwindling as many of these officers take voluntary redundancy.

Questions:

1. How is the mayor personally checking that the reality for residents is matching the stated aspiration of an effective and efficient Council?

Reply:

You ask if I am personally checking the reality for our staff and residents. Yes, I do in my many meetings with the people of Bristol, both formal and informal.

However, it would be wrong of me to rely solely on personal feedback. So we have a number of systems in place to monitor the impact of change.

Our performance management system and our monitoring of service indicators will tell us whether our performance is suffering, so far few substantial issues have arisen, but it is inevitable that change of this scale will result in some and for that I apologise.

Supplementary Question 1: How can we as Councillors communicate directly with you and get a response on above issues?

Reply:

If you experience a deterioration of services I rely on Councillors coming back and reporting this – you can come back and report it to the relevant directorate, relevant Assistant Mayor and to me.

2. How is the mayor monitoring the morale and well-being of all the Council's employees?

Reply:

Making the savings we are required to make is almost impossible to achieve without consequences, but we have set out to minimise them.

With staff, we monitor sickness absence and we have seen a slight rise here, however there has been no discernible rise in the numbers referred to our employee assistance programmes. We are about to commence a staff engagement survey and I will let you know the outcomes of that.

Of course these systems won't pick up everything, but we do expect that they will pick up most things, however individual examples that members have are always useful to know of if we are to minimise the impact on staff and the public.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christian Martin

Residents' Parking Schemes

The residents' parking zone for Clifton Village - which was due to come into force in October - has been delayed until March next year. This will inevitably have a knock on effect on the residents' parking scheme for Clifton East. For some reason, you have suggested on Twitter that I, in doing my job in raising concerns of many of my own residents, have someone had the power to delay the scheme. It's fantastic that you think I have the same powers as you do! However it was in fact you, Mayor Ferguson, who has asked for the work to be held back until the pre-Christmas period before starting work on building out the scheme. I also know that you have said you want to give 'proper time for consideration of the design detail in terms of markings and street furniture'. This is not good enough. I am sorry if you were not aware that Christmas would be happening so soon after October. It is all very well to say such a delay proves you are listening, but if you had continued the Liberal Democrats' implementation of RPZ and introduced schemes that had been properly consulted and demanded by the residents, instead of your top-down one-size-fits-all model, we would not be in this situation.

Clifton Village is in fact a very small area. Why then will it take the Council so long to such simple tasks as painting roads and putting up a few signs?

Reply:

It is not the case that Clifton Village is a very small area, it is actually much larger than any of our existing scheme areas and it is right that we take the time needed to carefully plan for the implementation of such a large scheme. Your intervention as a councillor for Clifton East has been extremely unhelpful and regrettably resulted in Clifton East being given a lower priority in terms of programming

It was my original intention to implement the Clifton Village scheme during the summer, had the scheme been approved in the spring. Due to the very large numbers of residents, business owners and other interested parties who took part in the statutory consultation process and the subsequent further additional local consultations that were undertaken, it was not possible to secure a decision on the Clifton Village scheme until the summer.

Once a scheme has been approved, officers need to appoint an external contractor to carry out the implementation works and need to carefully plan the precise location of the signs, lines and road markings associated with the scheme. This process could not start until the completion of the additional local consultation, as this determines how the scheme will work on the ground, which in turn affects the information on the signs and the most appropriate location for them.

As the decision on the final scheme was not made until the summer, it soon became clear that it would not be possible to complete the detailed design and build the scheme before the Christmas trading period began. As a result, the on-site works will start in January.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent**Bus Quality Contracts**

Bristol's public transport system is still far below public expectations and desires. A great deal of progress was achieved over the previous 5 years, under the Liberal Democrat administration of Baroness Janke. We have seen growth in passenger numbers and successful bids to Government for £100s millions in extra funding by the previous administration. But First still dominates the market and too often make decisions that may suit them but does not suit our residents nor the public transport network. Full Council has voted in favour of investigating Bus Quality Contracts, the first time 2 years ago. As nothing seems to have happened since then, Cllr Martin and Cllr Negus have put this back on the agenda by requiring that a report be prepared for Place Scrutiny Commission. When can councillors expect to receive an update on the creation of a Bristol Bus Quality Contract scheme?

In the Mayor's 'Vision for Bristol', which came out before his election in November 2012, he said that he wanted "a city where people can get where they want to go, however they want to travel." Bus Quality Contracts would mean the Council would be responsible for deciding where buses run, how often they run, what fares and tickets are available, what quality standards buses run to and what happens if things go wrong. Made by local councillors, these decisions would be based on local needs and priorities and affordability and would take power away from companies like First. Does the Mayor agree with me that Bus Quality Contracts are an integral part of achieving his vision for Bristol and therefore outline his reasons for not introducing Bus Quality Contracts since he was elected?

Reply:

I can confirm that a report will be taken to the Place Scrutiny Committee in October setting out the key issues that came out of the study carried out last year. The study will be made available as part of the Committee papers.

I do know that officers constantly monitor and review the need and suitability of moving towards measures such as Quality Contracts in the light of both local and national circumstances and as you know, we have developed a stronger partnership with First over the last couple of years, seeing fares reduced and significant investment as part of GBBN. You will also know that despite legislation being in place for some years, no authorities or PTEs in the country have embarked on the QC route, due in no small part to the very significant financial and legal risks in doing so, of which you are fully aware. This is something no doubt Scrutiny will want to explore further.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Wright

Hydrogen Ferry

The hydrogen ferry was pioneered by Councillor Neil Harrison and formed a central plank in the Liberal Democrats' bid to win European Green Capital status for Bristol. It demonstrates how our buses and other forms of heavy transport can and should be run on hydrogen. Several other cities around Europe, including Venice, Amsterdam and Hamburg, have spent £14 million between them to reach the same stage on a hydrogen ferry that Bristol did for £225,000. The small amount of money that we actually put into the hydrogen ferry actually achieved a lot in terms of us demonstrating our green credentials. In the past I know that you have spoken of your desire for Bristol to be a "*Laboratory for Change*" as the European Green Capital.

How can the Mayor justify not getting behind this project and giving it his full support when he uses such promising rhetoric?

Reply:

I am of the view that this was a highly expensive publicly funded experiment with a disappointingly short life, and I would never have entered into such an arrangement.

That said, the technology did prove to work reliably and safely, and to deliver zero emissions. It did serve the city well, adding to our credentials as a candidate for European Green Capital. It also stimulated national and international interest, recognition and awards from the marine industry.

To have any future the project requires collaboration from the ferry owner and operator, Bristol Hydrogen Boats Ltd, industry, Government and other agencies that wish to mainstream zero-carbon technologies.

Whilst we would welcome such collaboration, there is no prospect of the Council continuing to fund this project into the future.

A final report with results of the hydrogen ferry trial was provided to the Council by the Bristol Hydrogen Boats consortium that undertook the project in January 2014. The full report contains technical information on the hydrogen fuel cell propulsion and control technology which is commercially confidential. However, an executive summary of the report is available for the public domain. Also, a seminar to publicise the results and also exchange information with hydrogen transport and infrastructure projects in London, Swindon and South Wales was held at City Hall on 21 Feb, chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Environment.

C. Questions from the CONSERVATIVE Group (listed in order of receipt):

CON. QUESTION 1:

Cllr Wayne Harvey – Avonmouth air quality monitoring

CON. QUESTION 2:

Cllr Claire Hiscott – Promised capital investment in local rail stations

CON. QUESTION 3:

Cllr Richard Eddy – Future of the hydrogen powered ferry

CON. QUESTION 4:

Cllr Matt Melias – Illegal taxi trade

CON QUESTION 5:

Cllr Chris Windows – Dual carriageway transport plan – A4018

CON. QUESTION 6:

Cllr Mark Weston – Delivering Bristol's new homes

CON. QUESTION 7:

Cllr Charles Lucas – Closure of Caravan Club site at Baltic Wharf

CON. QUESTION 8:

Cllr Lesley Alexander – Household waste collection and cleansing policies

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Wayne Harvey

AVONMOUTH AIR QUALITY MONITORING

1. Can you confirm that the results of the three-month air quality assessment will be made available to the public?

Reply:

Yes, the results will be made available; this will be a few months after the initial three month monitoring period to allow for results to be collated.

2. Whatever the outcome of this survey, will you consider reinstating a permanent monitoring station in this part of the city – as so many residents in my Ward now want?

Reply:

Any decision to install a permanent monitoring station in this part of the city will depend partly on the results from the current monitoring exercise.

If the results indicate that pollution levels exceed those standards set by the UK Government then we will consider how best to monitor and manage the air quality problems identified.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

PROMISED CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL RAIL STATIONS

1. In February, Council unanimously approved an amendment to your capital programme to put £1.5 million towards rail stations improvement. How is this much-needed investment programme progressing?

Reply:

The City Council is currently working closely with First Great Western on agreeing priorities for local station improvements. It is anticipated that joint priorities will be identified in the coming weeks. First Great Western are keen to make improvements to local stations through Network Rail's National Stations Improvement Programme and it is hoped that a joint approach will provide wider improvements, beyond station boundaries, to better connect communities and other transport modes to the rail network.

2. Do you agree that it is essential to establish passenger rail services on the Henbury loop line – currently part of phase 2 of MetroWest - before the huge Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood gets built?

Reply:

The specification for the feasibility stage of MetroWest Phase 2, being carried out for the West of England, includes the requirement to examine both a Henbury loop and a spur in order for the authorities to fully understand the implementation and operating costs of these options. Only once these costs are known can we properly consider a way forward. Clearly, major development such as at CPNN can only enhance the case for a loop and I would expect the demand figures to show this.

Supplementary Question 1:

Can I take from this that the mayor is full supportive of both the Ashley Down Station and the Henleaze Lock Station and he won't be going for one or the other, he will be pushing for both?

Reply:

I am very keen on getting both, I don't want one to be at the expense of the other or any other stations but the more the merrier in principle. Obviously we have to look at what is affordable

Supplementary Question 2:

In order for the business case for Phase 2 to be as robust as possible does the Mayor agree with me that we have to do as much as we can to tackle ticket dodging on existing services and what steps is he taking to achieve this?

Reply:

Yes I agree it's got to be the rail operators that deal with it. I have emphasised the importance of that with them.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

FUTURE OF THE HYDROGEN-POWERED FERRY

1. When will Members be appraised of the results of this six month green technology trial conducted in the floating harbour?

Reply:

I am of the view that this was a highly expensive publicly funded experiment with a disappointingly short life, and I would never have entered into such an arrangement.

That said, the technology did prove to work reliably and safely, and to deliver zero emissions. It did serve the city well, adding to our credentials as a candidate for European Green Capital. It also stimulated national and international interest, recognition and awards from the marine industry.

To have any future the project requires collaboration from the ferry owner and operator, Bristol Hydrogen Boats Ltd, industry, Government and other agencies that wish to mainstream zero-carbon technologies.

Whilst we would welcome such collaboration, there is no prospect of the Council continuing to fund this project into the future.

A final report with results of the hydrogen ferry trial was provided to the Council by the Bristol Hydrogen Boats consortium that undertook the project in January 2014. The full report contains technical information on the hydrogen fuel cell propulsion and control technology which is commercially confidential. However, an executive summary of the report is available for the public domain. Also, a seminar to publicise the results and also exchange information with hydrogen transport and infrastructure projects in London, Swindon and South Wales was held at City Hall on 21 Feb, chaired by the Assistant Mayor for Environment.

2. What is to become of the vessel “Hydrogenesis” now apparently moored and inactive with the conclusion of this expensive experiment?

Reply:

The Hydrogenesis ferry is being moored and maintained on the harbour by the Bristol Hydrogen Boats consortium which as a result of an over generous contract fully owns it. Work continues by the Council in conjunction with the Bristol 2015 team to secure an industry sponsor and/or government grant (OLEV) for a hydrogen refuelling station on the harbour, which would enable its operation as a demonstration facility during 2015. Alternatively, I understand, the boat can operate, albeit with a more limited capacity, using bottled hydrogen fuel.

Supplementary Question 1: Can the Mayor instruct officers to look at options to recoup lost cost?

Reply:

I don't think there is any contractual way we can recoup the costs from that contract. It was an extraordinary contract that was nearly a £0.25m for a six month experiment and I think that most people would regard that as a pretty poor deal.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Matt Melias

ILLEGAL TAXI TRADE

1. No doubt you are aware of the problems experienced by Bristol-based cabbies caused by the influx of private-hire drivers from outside of the city. What actions are you taking to stamp out or deter this illegal trade?
2. Two of my constituents have reported being seriously assaulted by taxi drivers. What assurances can you give the public that the very taxis they rely upon are in fact safe?

Reply:

I am very aware and very concerned by this.

The practice that has been highlighted by the hackney carriage trade relates to hackney carriage drivers and vehicles licensed by other local authorities operating in Bristol as part of the private hire trade i.e. being made available for pre booked journeys in Bristol. This is lawful. However we are concerned that the work that we have put into raising standards, such as compulsory customer care training for new drivers and high vehicle standards is potentially being undermined. We are working closely with the Licensing Team and the Public Safety and Protection Committee to consider whether there are steps that we can take to mitigate the effect of this activity.

It is of great concern that anyone, either members of the public or drivers, should come to harm whilst in a licensed taxi. Clearly assaults are a matter for the police who need to conclude their investigations before any actions can be considered by the Council. If the matter involves a licensed driver it is up to the Public Safety and Protection Committee to take action against the licence holder. The Committee has the power to revoke licences in appropriate circumstances.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows

DUAL CARRIAGEWAY TRANSPORT PLAN – A4018

1. Does the Mayor share my belief that halving road capacity on the A4018 approach to the Crow Lane roundabout - in order to install a dual bus lane - will cause traffic chaos for my ward and the wider road network in the north of the city?

Reply:

There is no formal scheme to install bus lanes on the A4018, but the Council are considering options to manage increasing volumes of traffic travelling into Bristol whilst balancing the needs of drivers and public transport users along this key route into the City.

I can assure you that as any scheme comes forward it will be subject to thorough public consultation.

2. Please can you give me the reasons why alternatives to this inept proposal have been rejected by your traffic planners?

Reply:

A number of options are being considered– none have yet been discounted.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

DELIVERING BRISTOL'S NEW HOMES

1. For you, what were the key findings and recommendations of the Mayoral Homes Commission?

Reply:

It is recognised that in order to increase housing supply particularly affordable housing and make the best use of the land assets in the city through the recommendations made by the Homes Commission will require the recent staffing changes in the newly structured Place Directorate to be fully implemented and for additional resources to achieve these objectives to be in place.

At the Cabinet meeting on August 5th the Mayor noted the recommendations of the Homes Commission and asked officers to consider them in detail to identify those which could be taken as priorities in action plans such as the review of the Affordable Housing Delivery Framework and Action Plan later this year.

It should be remembered that the Bristol Property Board is currently being reviewed and it is likely that this will lead to further land and asset reviews by the Council and the other land holding organisations.

The Affordable Housing Programme Board will review this Autumn the Corporate sites included in the Land Prospectus which make a major contribution to the f the Affordable Housing delivery Framework and achievement of its annual delivery targets.

The Council will ensure that appropriate project management arrangements are in place to ensure any area based regeneration activity is seen as the focus of new housing delivery and brought forward quickly.

The Council is already responding to the need for more homes faster through improved delivery systems by the adoption in March this year of the Affordable Housing Practice Note. Developers have responded very positively to the much shorter and focussed scrutiny of viability appraisals process that has been introduced.

2. Can you confirm what steps you will be taking to address and reverse the 'risk averse' culture identified by Commissioners which hinders the promotion of new construction methods and delivery models (like self-build), and could undermine attempts to meet the growing demand for new homes in our city?

Reply:

The last thing I intend to do is to hinder the promotion of new methods and models. The Council when it markets the former Dunmail School site and Hengrove Park Phase 1 site will encourage developers to bring forward innovative mixed tenure zero carbon homes that use off site manufacturing to achieve the highest quality and speed of production.

Additionally the Council has recently created a web page to capture the demand from self-builders (see link <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/housing/custom-and-self-build-housing>). The Council is also actively reviewing its land assets to identify suitable sites for individual self-builders, self-build groups and specialist providers such as SNUG Homes and Y Cube.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Charles Lucas

CLOSURE OF CARAVAN CLUB SITE AT BALTIC WHARF

1. Please can you advise me on the progress made in identifying a possible alternative location for this displaced caravan park?

Reply:

The Caravan Club have not as yet secured an alternative site once the Baltic Wharf site closes. I understand the Club have been pursuing a site in Stoke Park, although in reality this site is most unlikely to obtain a planning consent and they have been advised by the Planning Department to withdraw their pre-application enquiry. We have discussed several other sites. We have also encouraged Caravan Club to raise their need with adjoining authorities.

The Caravan Club have recently approached the City Council asking for a short term extension to their existing lease. As a result it is intended (subject to formal agreement) that the lease will now be extended until August 2015, which will give the Club an extra 8 months to find an alternative site.

2. When do you expect to be in a position to provide more details about the planned new primary school to be built on this Council-owned land?

Reply:

We will be gathering more survey details over the next 6 months and following that aiming to develop plans within the next 12 months. This timeline has enabled us to support, in principle, the request from the Caravan Club to extend their current lease until August 2015.

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION AND CLEANSING POLICIES

1. Can you explain why the Council does not fine (the minority) of residents who persistently leave their black waste and recycling bins on the pavement following their fortnightly/weekly collection rounds? There are very few homes which do not have storage space and such a penalty would act both as a deterrent and to help greatly improve the appearance of certain residential streets.

Reply:

Unfortunately legislation only allows a notice to be served on residents that prescribes how when and what containers should be presented, and only after that, does failure to do so result in a fixed penalty notice being served.

Our enforcement team currently issue notices and fixed penalties.

A notice can only be served where there is sufficient evidence, and that all reasonable efforts to prevent this behaviour from continuing have been taken. This would then be seen as reasonable should it end up going to court.

There are developments within the city that have taken place that do not provide an outside place for example when a house has been converted into flats and it should be a planning consideration as to whether such conversions will cause a nuisance.

2. When the new contract for waste collections and street cleaning were negotiated, can you tell me why insufficient time appears to have been allocated or consideration given to the importance of street cleansing? Because of this failing, large parts of the city are beginning to look increasingly shabby and I fear this will have adverse effects on tourism.

Reply:

We acknowledge that there are some areas of the city where there are more issues affecting street cleansing than others and we are working alongside Kier to find a solution to these. However, if details could be provided of the specific places referred to, we can assess the areas to see if improvements need to be made.

The contract is a Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract and as such a significant amount of time and resources was allocated to the evaluation and importance of the Street Cleansing Service.

Since the start of the contract the Council has won the European Green Capital award and was deemed to be the best place to live by the Sunday Times in 2014.

In the QOL report, residents have been asked since 2005 for their response – ‘how much is street litter a problem’. I am pleased to note that a review of figures for the three years since the new contract started shows that the scores are better each year than each of the three years prior to the new contract.

D. Questions from the GREEN Group (listed in order of receipt):

GRN. QUESTION 1:

Cllr Martin Fodor – Supporting bus routes

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

What is your strategy for supporting bus routes that meet the needs of residents where financial returns are not enough and revenue is too low for commercial operators?

Reply:

The supported bus services budget is used to fill the gaps in the commercial bus network. At present this represents approx. 40 separate contracts for Park & Ride services, 'commercial add-ons' (extensions to commercial services in the evenings and weekends) and 'stand-alone' services that are completely supported regular bus services linking communities, facilities, jobs and education etc. There was a major review of these services in 2010/11, with a consultation exercise and assessment of new routes where requests had been previously made.

All contracts were awarded for a 5 year period (with options to extend) so will be reviewed again over the next 12-18 months.

In the event of the withdrawal of commercial services, the Council investigates with operators the opportunities to replace the lost connections. For example, following the recent withdrawal of service 20, the Council engaged a number of local bus operators to look at affordable alternatives. This has resulted in the introduction of service 520, and the extension of service 508, that will reconnect communities that were affected by the service 20 withdrawal.

Supplementary Question 1:

My concern is the communication and engagement with local councillors, neighbourhood partnerships and residents was not as good as it should have been. I would like to know what the strategy is for ensuring that supported services or plans to develop supported services are properly consulted and that then the budgetary issues, and you have suggested that there is a 5 year commitment to the 520, how are those going to be handled in the longer term with other possible services being abandoned?

Reply:

I was taken by surprise at the speed of the decision to withdraw that bus service so we do need to ask the bus company to communicate as soon as possible if it has a doubt about continuing service.

My understanding is that we haven't committed extra funding in order to get this new arrangement in place.

Response from Cllr. Fodor: The long term solution would be to have an integrated network where we can have a cross subsidy that is not possible with commercial services; what steps are being taken to put in place an integrated service?

Reply:

I wish we hadn't deregulated the buses personally; it leaves us in a weak position to negotiate the service so I am looking for the powers to make this happen. It has to happen in a co-operative manner between the four transport authorities so we can be on a level playing field with London that is highly subsidised and therefore is able to give a much better deal, but of course it has a much larger population which enables it to have more effective public transport than any regional city is able to have. We missed the boat; we might have been able to install a tramway system at the same time Manchester and others did, but we didn't and now with the level of extra expenditure required it is just impossible with the current forms of funding for transport.