



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 16th December 2014

**This document sets out details of questions
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. A follow-up written reply will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.
- Via the group leaders/ whips, each group has submitted their questions in priority order.
- At the forum, the Labour group's "top priority question" will be dealt with first, followed by the respective top priority questions from the Liberal Democrat, Conservative, and Green groups (the sequence is based on the number of seats held by each group), followed by the question from the UKIP councillor.
- After these "top priority" questions have been dealt with, questions will continue to "rotate" between the groups, taken in priority order as submitted by each group.

The following questions have been submitted:

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

LAB. QUESTION 1 Cllr Sean Beynon – Mayor's Carbon Footprint

LAB QUESTION 2 Cllr Rhian Greaves – Green Capital and Traffic Congestion

LAB QUESTION 3 Cllr Mike Langley – Living Wage

LAB QUESTION 4 Cllr Sam Mongon – Arena

LAB QUESTION 5 Cllr Olly Mead – Buses

LAB QUESTION 6 Cllr Mike Wollacott – Blue Badge Scheme

LAB QUESTION 7 Cllr Mike Wollacott – Legal implications of Living Wage Accreditation

LAB QUESTION 8 Cllr Jeff Lovell – Regeneration of Filwood

LAB QUESTION 9 Cllr Chris Jackson – House Building on Filwood Park

LAB QUESTION 10 Cllr Gill Kirk – Gainsborough Square

LAB QUESTION 11 Cllr Naomi Rylatt – Digital Exclusion – the Bristol Workplace

LAB QUESTION 12 Cllr Naomi Rylatt – Office Furniture Recycling

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

LD. QUESTION 1 Cllr Gary Hopkins – Budget Consultation (and specific Colston Hall)

LD. QUESTION 2 Cllr Anthony Negus – Waste and Recycling

LD. QUESTION 3 Cllr Clare Campion-Smith – Council Website

LD. QUESTION 4 Cllr Alex Woodman – Apprenticeships

LD. QUESTION 5 Cllr Tim Leaman – Roads

LD. QUESTION 6 Cllr Mark Wright – European Green Capital (carbon emissions)

LD. QUESTION 7 Cllr Mark Wright – Cycling

LD. QUESTION 8 Cllr Glenise Morgan – Mental Health (suicide rates)

LD. QUESTION 9 Cllr Christian Martin – Hydrogen Technology

LD. QUESTION 10 Cllr Christian Martin – Somaliland (Twinning) NB: This is also a motion for Full Council

LD. QUESTION 11 Cllr Mark Bailey – Bus Quality Contracts

LD. QUESTION 12 Cllr Christopher Davies – Affordable Homes

LD. QUESTION 13 Cllr Tim Kent – Council Reserves

LD. QUESTION 14 Cllr Fi Hance – Tax Collection and avoidance

LD. QUESTION 15 Cllr Neil Harrison – Air Quality Monitoring

LD. QUESTION 16 Cllr Jackie Norman – Winter Weather (salt stock)

LD QUESTION 17 Cllr Barbara Janke – Devolution

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

CON QUESTION 1 Cllr Mark Weston – Future Financial Support for City's Museums

CON QUESTION 2 Cllr Richard Eddy – Ashton Court Parking Charges

CON QUESTION 3 Cllr Peter Abraham – Street Clutter

CON QUESTION 4 Cllr Peter Abraham – 20 mph Safety Statistics

CON QUESTION 5 Cllr Richard Eddy – PFI Liabilities under School-Building Programme

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

GRN QUESTION 1 Cllr Charlie Bolton – City of Sanctuary

GRN QUESTION 2 Cllr Martin Fodor – BCC Supported Buses and the 520

GRN QUESTION 3 Cllr Rob Telford – Schools Funding

E. Questions from the UKIP. Group (listed in order of priority):

UKIP QUESTION 1 Cllr Michael Frost – Green Capital

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Sean Beynon, Labour, Southville

Subject: Mayor's Carbon Footprint

1. Can the Mayor list the trips he has taken abroad since becoming Mayor of Bristol, and the mode of transport used, to include details of all trips which the Mayor has taken where any part of his visit has been in connection with his role as Mayor of Bristol, not just those trips which the City Council have paid for, in part or in full.
2. Could the Mayor make an estimate of the impact these trips have had on his own carbon footprint, before any off-setting?

A written answer is requested.

Reply:

Since becoming Mayor I have taken 20 trips abroad, all in Bristol's best interests. Where possible I will always try and travel by train however for some trips, such as China or the USA, I do have to fly. I have asked officers to produce a full list and an estimate of the impact of these trips, however this will take a few days to calculate and I shall ensure this information is provided in a written response to this question. Is it, of course, impossible to accurately evaluate the massive effect that the resulting higher international profile has on the local economy.

I would however add that while I am someone who is more conscious than most of the importance of minimising our carbon footprint, that I am not going to compromise Bristol's increasing standing in Europe or the world by failing to take full advantage of the traction that the role of elected mayor brings to the city.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Rhian Greaves. Labour, Brislington West

Subject: Green Capital and Traffic Congestion

Bristol has recently been quoted as having the most traffic congestion of any city outside London, a fact which is hardly consistent with our status as a Green Capital.

1. What strategies is the mayor considering for dealing with this problem, when many people will be visiting our city next year
2. What work has been undertaken to measure the impact of residents parking schemes since they were introduced?

A written answer is requested.

1. Coincidentally the Campaign for Better Transport has, today, found us to be the 7th least car dependent English city in England out of 29. A key priority is to “Keep The City Moving”. There will undoubtedly be challenges in 2015 and beyond as the city heads into an unprecedented period of infrastructure investment coupled with events during European Green Capital. We have an excellent track record of managing the transport impact of large events, such as the Harbour Festival that draws hundreds of thousands of additional visitors in to the city over a single weekend. We will continue to work closely with key partners, including public transport providers, to ensure the city continues to keep moving.

2. A robust framework to assess the impact of the Residents Parking Schemes has been put in place. This includes on-street parking surveys, analysis of census data and customer satisfaction surveys broken down for each RPS area.

The general results have been pretty good once Zones are in place. We know that there has been an enormous protest about the idea of them, and the fear of the consequences, but the general experience is that nearly all of that goes away once they've been put into place. But there is also the formal survey that we carry out.

Supplementary Questions

1. How will the Council work with key partners such as the West of England Partnership to address the issues?

Reply:

We do have a transport partnership with the West of England, and we work with them on the strategic transport planning issues, and will continue to do so, especially with 2015, as we would with any series of events that take place in the City.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Councillor Mike Langley, Labour, Brislington East

Subject: Living Wage

1. With all substantive staff on BCC now paid the Living Wage can you explain why adult apprentices will be kept on the minimum wage in their final year?
2. What would be the cost of uplifting the pay of these staff to the Living Wage?

A written answer is requested.

Reply:

1. Apprenticeships are intended to be training opportunities and are designed to offer the opportunity to develop skills which enhance the employability of the apprentice, rather than being used to fill substantive roles. As a result of this, apprentices are not covered by the provisions of the Living Wage.

Bristol City Council currently pays £3.20 per hour for apprentices during their first year, which is significantly above the recommended national minimum of £2.73 per hour. Further, Government guidance is that apprentices **over the age of 19** should be paid the national minimum wage appropriate to their age in the second and third years of their Apprenticeship. Bristol City Council pays the age-appropriate national minimum wage to **all apprentices** in their second and third year, irrespective of their age.

In reviewing any approach to the level of pay applied to apprentices we would need to be clear that this does not jeopardise the success or take-up of the apprenticeship scheme where, for instance, services felt that it would be too costly, or believed they could get a fully-qualified resource for the same amount of money.

Payment of a living wage to 'adult' apprentices only would amount to age discrimination when compared with younger apprentices.

2 Based on current numbers of apprentices, the costs would be as set out below. Please note these costs do not include Employers' on-costs, which would add around 30% to each of the figures below:

- To pay all apprentices the Living Wage: £362,111 per annum
- To pay all apprentices in their second and third year the Living Wage: £118,000 per annum

Supplementary Questions

1. Do you think you could live on £3.25 an hour?

Reply

I don't think I could live on £3.25 an hour, but there are other provisions in place, and most apprentices are considered to be as much in education as they are in work, I couldn't live on a school student's Education Allowance either.

2. Is it possible to give them a pay rise, even a small one, to ease the burden they face?

Reply

Anything is possible within a budget, I can't give you a specific answer. We never close our doors to the possibility.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Sam Mongon, Labour, Windmill Hill

Subject: ARENA

1. Given that the Mayor has changed his mind about reporting stages of the development of the Arena at Cabinet, a change which I welcome, can the Mayor also tell us when he will be changing his mind on the introduction of a Living Wage Arena?
2. The information that no work has been undertaken on a transport plan for the Arena, came as a shock to all members. When did the Mayor find out about this omission and what action has he taken since?

A written answer is requested.

Reply:

1 As you are aware, Full Council considered two reports on the Living Wage on September 16th 2014. The Living Wage is now being paid to Council employees as per the Resolution below:

“That the Council’s pay policy be amended to introduce a Living Wage Supplement, which will ensure that all employees including casual workers receive no less than the Living Wage as their pensionable pay for all hours worked with effect from 1st October 2014”.

In relation to whether the Living Wage should apply in contracted services, Full Council agreed the following:

“The financial and legal implications of making payment of the Living Wage a requirement on the Council’s contractors must be quantified before Council can decide whether to seek Living Wage employer accreditation”.

In accordance with this decision of Full Council in September, I will be receiving a report on whether the Council should become a Living Wage employer. It is not appropriate to consider the Living Wage for an arena operator in isolation from the wider implications for the Council and contracted services. We are inviting twin bids for all contracts from now on, so we can see the cost of the Living Wage and assess it.

2 The statement that “no work” has taken place on transport planning is incorrect. Consultants have been working on the first stage of the Transport Assessment for a number of months and the first phase is nearing completion. When the first Phase is complete we will be in a position to work out what mitigation measures are required

for the project. A full Transport Plan will be required for when the Planning Application for the Arena is submitted next summer.

Supplementary questions

1. What conversations will you be having with Arena contractors to ensure they will pay a Living Wage to their employees?

Reply:

We will be asking them what the consequences of paying a Living Wage will be, and we will share the answers to that. We shall certainly encourage them.

2. Will the Mayor assure local residents that any impact of transport around the Arena will not have a cost for them, and if the need arises for a Residents Parking Zone as a result of the Arena, they won't have to pay for it themselves, but will be paid for by the operator?

Reply:

I am not going to make a commitment to that, but I understand you as local councillor making the suggestion.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Olly Mead, Labour, Horfield

Subject: Buses

1. Given the recent Appeal Court ruling in favour of First Bus, what efforts are being made to improve disabled people's access to public transport (especially buses) in Bristol?
2. The Councillors for Horfield and Southmead wards have been frustrated by the on-going delays in undertaking a parking review in the roads around the new Southmead Hospital, as the issue not only affects people parking near their homes, but also prevents emergency vehicles and delivery vans from accessing people's homes. What measures is the Mayor taking to ensure that the review takes place early in the new year so that the remedial actions that will be funded by a triggered S106 payment can go ahead?

A written answer is requested.

Reply:

1 The Council has for many years invested in the upgrading of bus stops, to improve the access to buses for disabled people. Of the approximately 1500 stops in Bristol, about 750 have been upgraded with raised boarding platforms. This has largely been on the key radial routes (as part of major scheme delivery such as GBBN) as well as some orbital routes. There is an ongoing programme to provide raised boarding platforms at all remaining bus stops in Bristol.

Accessibility requirements for the buses themselves are governed by national legislation (Public Service Vehicle (Accessibility) Regulations 2000). Amongst these requirements is that all single deck buses must have level (no step) access by January 1st 2016, and the same for double deck buses by January 1st 2017. Bristol City Council contracts have specified level access for many years, and First Group's local Bristol fleet is now almost completely level access. All of the buses operated in Bristol by Wessex have level access.

In partnership with First, and funded by the Better Bus Area Fund, the Council has also developed vehicle audio and visual announcements. This is being rolled out on 81 buses in the Bristol area.

2 I shall ask officers for an update in regards parking around Southmead Hospital and respond to you within the 10 working days required with further information.

Supplementary question

1. On the buses themselves, can the Mayor try to get First to improve the amount of space to have a wheelchair on the bus? There is no room for buggies and wheelchairs, and there needs to be pressure from politicians to First Bus to make sure there's enough room for everyone to be able to travel on their buses.

Reply

I will share that conversation with Assistant Mayor Bradshaw, and we will see what can be done.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Mike Wollacott, Labour, Brislington East

Subject: Blue Badge Scheme

Following discussions with a constituent, I have sought clarification on the parameters of this important initiative that gives vital mobility for those with profound restrictions on their mobility and their carers.

It has become clear, that the scheme only applies to physical disability, and does not apply to those with severe mental health issues, that have a profound impact on their ability to participate in everyday activities and their carers.

It seems to be complete nonsense that central government should set parameters that discriminates between physical and mental disability.

1. Does the Mayor recognise this perverse anomaly and will he lobby the appropriate government agency to adjust their guidance so as to remove this antiquated differentiation between physical and mental disability?

A written answer is requested

Reply:

The Blue Badge Scheme is largely intended for those with mobility challenges, however the inequality between physical and mental health are well known and I understand that the government are bringing forward plans to create parity between mental health and physical ill health.

I will ask Council officers to feed Cllr Wollacott's views to the appropriate department to put into the wider debate about inequality.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Mike Wollacott

Subject: Legal implications of Living Wage Accreditation

In response to my questions on Living Wage Accreditation at November's Full Council Meeting, you quoted concerns over the potential of legal challenge to this, the relevant section is reproduced below.

The matter of Living Wage Foundation (LWF) accreditation is not a straightforward one. Firstly – as noted in the legal advice contained in the report to Full Council on 16 September 2014 – we need to be certain that the law permits us to impose contractual restrictions on our contractors in respect of staff pay.

As I am sure you are aware, the Living Wage Foundation visited Bristol on 8th December to discuss the process of accreditation and to allow members to raise concerns and issues relating to the process to become a Living Wage Employer. This was a very constructive meeting, with all those in attendance seeing the positive benefits of pursuing Accreditation.

The question was asked "*Have any local Authorities who have already gained accreditation faced a legal challenge to this policy?*" The response to this was negative, in as much as there has been no challenge suggested to any of these Authorities.

As it seems that there is very limited scope for legal challenge to seeking accreditation, and the fact that there has been no challenge –

Can you confirm that you,

- 1) Accept that there is no legal restriction that would act as a barrier to seeking Living Wage Accreditation, and if you do not feel that you can do this, please give concise reference to the legislation (either UK or European) that you still perceive as being a potential restriction to Accreditation.

A written reply is requested.

Reply:

The feedback from the Living Wage Foundation on 8th December gave Bristol City Council a level of confidence that the chance of legal issues arising from Living Wage Accreditation would be small.

However, as part of the discovery work that is currently underway in preparation for the report around Living Wage Accreditation to be considered by Cabinet in March

2015, we will seek the assurance of our internal Legal Services team to assess this level of risk formally, particularly in relation to changing existing contracts.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Jeff Lovell, Labour, Filwood

Subject: Regeneration of Filwood

You are fully aware that the community of Filwood has been involved in planning a regeneration programme for many years, following an extensive programme of consultation with residents it was agreed to the sale Filwood park for development on condition that the regeneration programme delivered a 'Quality Park' a 'State of the Art Play Area' along with a covered sports area that could be used 365 days a year, the sale generated in excess of 4 million pounds and cabinet agreed to 'ring fence' this fund to support the Filwood re-generation process.

- I. Can you advise if these funds are generating interest and if so, how much interest has been accrued over the years?
- II. What is the current balance of fund in the ring-fenced pot, including the interest if this has been added?

Written answer requested.

Reply:

Bristol City Council's Cabinet on 4th October 2012 decided to ring-fence capital receipts from asset disposals in the Knowle West Regeneration Framework area for reinvestment the in area. This includes the £4m capital receipt from the sale of Filwood Park.

Of this £4m:

- Cabinet (29/3/12) approved the allocation of £1.4m towards the regeneration of Filwood Broadway.
- £110k has been allocated for the provision of a new play area at Inns Court
- £80,000 has been allocated for the development of Knowle West Regeneration Framework design codes
- Up to £928,000 has been allocated towards Filwood Green Business Park costs. (Cabinet 5/12/13)

The residue of this £4m has not yet been allocated and remains available for investment in accordance with Knowle West Regeneration Framework priorities. Funds held by the council are invested in accordance with approved Treasury Management and Investment Strategies. As such, interest earned is accounted and budgeted for centrally and not applied to individual budgets.

Question(s) to the Mayor

from Cllr Chris Jackson, Labour, Filwood

Subject: House Building on Filwood Park

I have previously raised the issue with you in the chamber about the building of houses on Filwood Park, setting out that many hundreds of thousands of pounds have already been invested in the infrastructure and outline planning agreed, I requested you to get fully engaged with this project as you have promised on many occasions.

1. I once again ask if you can shift your priority from an Arena that would be NICE, to addressing the ESSENTIAL chronic shortage of housing and affordable accommodation in communities such as Filwood.

Filwood Green Business Park sits in my ward of Filwood and was one of the key visions of the city that supported the green capital application, this was a valuable green space within Filwood that was once again was offered up for development following extensive consultation with our community, a consultation that promised the regeneration programme would start with the Green Business Park.

2. Do you agree that the community of Filwood although having major issues with employment and education opportunities along with community challenges with drugs and ASB has once again 'played it's part' in delivering on the visions of the city and in doing so deserves 'a better deal' from yourself during your tenure of office?

A written answer is requested.

Reply:

1 Filwood Green Business Park was one of the key visions of the city that supported the green capital application, this was a valuable green space within Filwood that was once again was offered up for development following extensive consultation with our community, a consultation that promised the regeneration programme would start with the Green Business Park.

2 As you will be aware from my published 'A Vision for Bristol' I have a range of priorities to be delivered for the benefit of Bristol and its communities. The Council will be facilitating the delivery of additional housing and affordable accommodation as well as delivering an Arena.

I understand that a developer has now been selected to develop a range of new homes around the edge of Filwood Park which will assist with delivering housing targets as well as supporting environmental and security improvements to the open spaces.

I am delighted that the Filwood Green Business Park, which is being developed on the former contaminated brown-field Hanger Site, is nearing completion. This state-of-the-art development, which was conceived by local communities, is expected to support substantial new employment opportunities locally and support the wider regeneration of the area.

I am hoping to be able to support the provision of a new housing site capable of delivering an additional 85 new homes, some of which will be affordable, on the site of the former Florence Brown School in the near future.

Regrettably I agree that unemployment levels in Filwood remain too high and educational attainment in the area is not good enough. Local communities face significant challenges and deserve improved opportunities. I remain committed to supporting regeneration of the area and the delivery of appropriate investment to achieve this.

I thank you, the Knowle West Project Board, and local residents for developing the ambitious Knowle West Regeneration Framework which supports substantial improvement to the area, including new homes, employment opportunities, and other improvements to the area for the benefit of residents. I look forward to being able to continue to support the delivery of the Knowle West Regeneration Framework.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Gill Kirk, Labour, Lockleaze

Subject: Gainsborough Square

The Gainsborough pub has lain derelict for many years, causing an eyesore on Gainsborough Square which the Council has recently invested in regenerating.

The derelict pub is owned by a private landlord who has done no work to repair it, bring it back into use, or to sell it on.

Officers have advised us that because the pub is in a derelict state it has no rateable value under the VOA and therefore the landowner does not have to pay any business rates whatsoever.

We believe this is a great disincentive to the landlord making any improvements to the site or to him selling it on, meanwhile local residents have to put up with a derelict, vandalised and unsafe building in the heart of their community.

1. Will the Mayor commit to examining this site with us so that it can be used for the benefit of the Lockleaze Community?
2. If the legislation is as officers have advised us, will the Mayor write to the appropriate minister asking for this situation to be rectified so that landlords cannot “sit” on their sites?

A written answer is requested

Reply:

1 Yes, this building is in need of regeneration and a planning application was received from the owner in 2012. The development proposed was inappropriate and the application was withdrawn. I am concerned about its current status and I will request options from officers to enable its reuse / redevelopment in the near future.

2 I will request Officers to consider options further on how to motivate the owners on bringing forward the building's redevelopment.

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Naomi Rylatt, Labour, Hartcliffe

Subject: Digital Exclusion – The Bristol Workplace

It is important that as a service to our citizens we modernise our practises, welcoming the improvements in technology, and the costsavings this brings, to allow as many Bristol residents to self-service on-line many standard transactions, we eagerly await these opportunities. However, we also recognise that for some of the residents in Bristol owning a computer is a pipe-dream, they may not have the skills to use a computer available in a library or purely have a preference to complete transactions face-to-face. In recognition of this, we must ensure that we do not increase "Digital Exclusion".

1. Could the Mayor clarify the availability of face-to-face transactional offices out in the neighbourhoods, how many there will be and their location?

Please provide a written response

Reply:

- In 2015 the Bristol Workplace Programme will be looking at the neighbourhood offer to make sure we provide the right mix of face-to-face services across the city
- Whilst we will provide a face-to-face offer for those that need it, it is important we provide a high quality digital offer for those that prefer to self-serve
- Assisted digital for citizens that need support to self-serve will be a fundamental part of a face-to-face offer
- The feedback we are collecting from citizens to shape the redesign work is challenging our assumptions about the preferred ways to engage with us. For example, some of those accessing our homelessness service are asking for text reminders about appointments, and many of the devices that citizens wish to use to access our services are mobile and not computers
- Recent new online services include council tax exemptions, blue badges, parking permits and some self-assessment tools – further new online services will be going live throughout 2015
- The most important thing is we reflect the needs of our citizens across the city and that we shape it accordingly

Question(s) to the Mayor from

Cllr Naomi Rylatt

Subject: Office Furniture Recycling

We recognise that it is a complex procedure moving many staff into 2 central office locations - one that takes much organisation, planning and thought. Following the departure, in the main, from City Hall and other offices into Brunel House, Park View and Temple Street, many desks, chairs and other office equipment has accumulated as being "spare". We understand steps were taken to offer this equipment and furniture to local charities, schools and other not-for profit organisations.

1. What percentage of the available items were recycled or re-used in temporary offices and also what plans are there to recycle and re-use any additional spare furniture and equipment once the refurbishment of City Hall is complete and staff move from their temporary workplaces into the two central hubs?

A written reply is requested.

Reply:

- All furniture from City Hall will either be reused across the Council, redistributed to charities and community groups or recycled – nothing will go to landfill.
- Between January and March an asset register will be developed that will catalogue every single furniture item that has been left in City Hall. This register will be used to account for the redistribution or recycling of each item.
- Due to the quality, age and suitability for modern ways of working of the majority of current City Hall furniture, the vast majority will not be reused in a refurbished City Hall. However all heritage furniture items and those with a relevant connection to City Hall history are being retained and stored appropriately during construction.
- All good quality furniture items (approx. 30%*) have either been redistributed to other Council offices, e.g. Brunel, or stored in A Bond ready to be redistributed once an understanding of furniture need has been established in other Council offices.
- We are working with charity partners on the redistribution & recycling of the remaining 70%* of furniture.

**Once the asset register has been completed a more accurate picture of the redistribution and recycling of City Hall furniture items will be available.*

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins (Knowle)**Subject: Budget Consultation**

In the 2014 Budget Liberal Democrats made strong representations that there was, as well as an additional £20m of earmarked reserves, an underestimation of revenue income. Our predictions have been proved more than accurate with estimates for 2015/16 of £4.6m and rising in increased council tax yield and income from other government sources.

1. In his budget 'consultation' the mayor talks of a £3.9m one off windfall that could not allegedly have been predicted and says "*this is mainly due to a review of single person discounts in the city*". But council action to ensure single person discounts are being properly claimed has proven to be only 5% (£221.8k) of the total surplus and the rest was, as we said, from already known and predictable sources. Will the Mayor now correct his consultation and issue with accurate information, both on the revenue information and source of revenue?
2. The Mayor's £100k for the Colston Hall was rejected from all sides as inadequate and badly targeted. Will the Mayor now commit to meet with me to go through the reality of the Colston Hall plan and examine the huge cost to this city the failure to address this satisfactorily?

Reply:

1. My consultation document does not simply refer to Single Person Discounts. The document actually states:

"A positive variance of £4m in respect of income due to better than forecast performance in Council Tax collection – primarily as a result of reviewing eligibility for single person discounts and changes to second home discounts."

Together, these sums represent 73% of the figure.

The information available at the time of calculating the figures last year was based on the most up to date information using central government Council Taxbase returns. There has since been a change in the government's technical guidance for the calculation of discounts and exemptions, resulting in these changes, which was not available when the figures were calculated last year.

2. As I said at the last Cabinet meeting I have proposed to allocate £100,000 to support the Bristol Music Hall Trust, by funding a feasibility study into the restoration and further development of the Hall – focussing not just on opportunities for development, but also the ability to secure third party external funding for a project.

The Budget consultation closes on Monday 29 December, and the results will be fed back to Cabinet and I to consider. We will meet on 13 January 2015 when I will decide on the final proposed budget. This will then need to be debated and approved by Full Council on 17 February 2015.

All discussions with the Bristol Music Trust suggest that this intervention is seen as both timely and welcome. So I would be disappointed if it was, as you say, "rejected by all sides."

In the autumn of 2015 it is likely we will have the opportunity to bid to the Arts Council England for resources to assist us with the development of the Hall. I've had discussions with the Chair of the Arts Council who very much welcomes this investment and takes it as a very serious sign of our intent, and thinks it's a very constructive way forward. It would be very damaging for us not to produce that £100,000 in connection with the Arts Council's indication that they would be able to contribute a £10 million grant through the Lottery, and that that the Heritage Lottery Fund a further £4.9 million, which would be dependent on the Arts Council fund. All this is dependent on us finding another £20-25 million to make up the total requirement of the project as currently defined. I want to be sure that we have a prepared and thorough investment plan and use that opportunity well, so I hope this receives cross-Party support, because it would be pulling the rug from under the process, if we aren't able to inject that £100,000 now, to ensure that if we do put the other funds in, it's done on a proper basis.

Supplementary Questions

1. What are the proposals for the £3.9 million, and when can we see some details?

Reply:

The proposals are deliberately consultative, so I have left them as open as I possibly can, so members of my Cabinet and Council are able to contribute to the thinking behind it, and I will be listening very intently to the contributions that come from my cabinet, who naturally take a very keen interest in any available additional funding, and I will be making recommendations based on these discussions, in preparation for the Council Meeting on 17 February. The decision will be made at the Cabinet Meeting on 13 January.

2. Will you now give a clear commitment that by Autumn next year that the money the Council needs to put in to make certain that all the funding sources are locked, so the project takes place?

Reply:

I'll put in a commitment when I see that we have a project that we can all understand the value, and we have studied all other means of obtaining funding. To commit the level of funding now that the project requires would be completely beyond the means of the Council to do so, and would be irresponsible.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus (Cotham)

Subject: Waste and recycling

Official figures from Defra have revealed that household waste recycling rates in England stagnated last year, at 44.2%, compared to 44.1% in 2012. If the UK fails to recycle less than 50% of household waste by 2020 it could face fines from Brussels in excess of £500,000 a day.

1. In 2004/5 the average Bristol household produced 925 KGs of residual waste. This was reduced to 206Kgs by 12/13 but is on the way back up and is expected to be up by 30% (these are figures supplied by Bristol City Council) by the end of 14/15. Why has this happened?
2. In 2012 when the Liberal Democrats left office recycling was around 50%, but in 2013 after a year of the mayor in charge, recycling rates dropped to 44%. Why has this happened?

Reply:

The issues of waste increasing and recycling rates dropping are inter-linked and for that reason there is one response below rather than two separate ones.

Factually there is no one reason for these changes, and I can only give educated guesses as to what have been the causes. Some of the reasons are likely to include:

- The 2012 recycling estimates were high.
- The public are more confident in the economy and are consuming more and therefore producing more waste.
- Population has grown in Bristol and therefore the amount of material produced will increase.
- Recycling tonnage has not increased proportionally in line with residual waste as there has been a constant light-weighting of wine bottles / beer bottles, that people are moving away from the traditional newspapers and are consuming news more on line, that manufactures are changing the materials items are made from (moving away from glass bottles to plastic ones, moving away from tin cans to tetra pack type containers, etc).
- The new property developments in the city tend to be flats more than houses which are notoriously difficult to get and keep recycling from.
- An increase is something that has been noticed in our neighbouring authorities and so this is not a unique occurrence.
- Weather plays a factor, a year with a good summer (as this year) will produce more garden growth, more recycling (more barbeques, etc) a wet summer may have the opposite effect, and this may account for some differences.
- More communications could be developed and actions taken to improve education and participation and we are working on that during this year.

Supplementary questions

1. Could the Mayor explain why the weather was bad in all the previous years, and why the rate has got worse, and can we have something more than guesses?

Reply:

I can't give you any better answer than I've given. It's a combination of reasons, weather is one, and I'm giving you intelligent approximations rather than absolutes, which are pretty difficult to give, as it's down to human behaviour rather than anything else.

2. Is the Mayor prepared to admit to being ashamed by this reduction to the figures that earned us Green Capital status?

Reply:

Absolutely not.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Clare Campion-Smith (Henleaze)

Subject: Council website

I recently went on to the Barnado's website to find some general information available to the public about the signs of Child Sexual Abuse. The link that I found was blocked by the Council system and listed as Entertainment. In the light of the subject content that seemed offensive. This blocking is too frequent: it slows down work and it is unnecessary.

1. What is the rationale and criteria for blocking sites and is this criterion the same for officers and for councillors?
2. How much time does the organisation waste in unblocking, on an individual basis, perfectly acceptable sites?

Reply:

1 The council operates two networks:-

- an internal secure access to the internet used by members and staff only, when they are securely logged onto the council's network
- The B-Open wireless network, which is freely available to anyone, including the public, when using council premises where this service is available.

The Council, as a responsible organisation, needs to ensure its ICT infrastructure is used appropriately and that inappropriate material is not accessed.

The Council therefore uses web filtering on both networks to restrict access to unsuitable web sites. This is to prevent deliberate or accidental access to such sites and is there to enforce Council policy, protect employees, members, and citizens as well as protecting Council reputation. Additionally, it provides protection against websites that may contain malware or other malicious intent. Most large organisations will employ web filtering for the same reasons and is seen as an essential level of protection.

BCC use a 3rd party tool to provide this web filtering. Our 3rd party supplier (currently NetSweeper), like most others, uses Artificial Intelligence techniques, including word matching, to categorise the millions of web sites on the internet. Council officers do not select individual sites to be blocked.

We have recently liberalised the access restrictions to the internet, allowing much wider access. However, we continue to block web access based on what are

considered to be unsuitable categories such as Weapons, Hate Speech, Pornography, Profanity.

Occasionally, the categorisation provided by the suppliers is incorrect - In these cases, members or staff can request specific sites to be unblocked by contacting the ICT service desk. Most filtering is global, so will apply equally to all BCC network users, although there are specific groups that may have specific access allowed. For example, Museums may have access to Weapons sites, for research purposes.

Officers recognise this can at times be frustrating, but we have to strike a balance between providing open access to the web and our duty as responsible organisation, managing the associated risks to reputation.

2 As this filtering is provided by a third party, the Council spends little time managing it - our role is generally limited to arranging for sites to be unblocked or enabling groups to access particular categories. We estimate that less than one request to unblock an incorrectly categorised site is received per month, which takes even shorter time than answering the question.

Supplementary questions

1. Would you consider changing your third party blocker on the grounds the situation is worse than it was before the computer system changed, and what was the estimated size of the problem this system is trying to solve?

Reply:

I will ask officers to report back on whether they're experiencing a worse problem with this third party provider, and if so, whether it would justify change, and I will ask what the issues were that lead to the blocking in the first place.

2. To whom should I send the list of sites I have been blocked from, which are most definitely mainstream sites, coming from links supplied by the council in newsletters to Councillors?

Reply:

Send it to our ICT services.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Alex Woodman (Cabot)

Subject: Apprenticeships

Since May 2010 there have been over 13,500 apprenticeship starts in Bristol, with 240 businesses having received a £1500 apprenticeship grant. Apprentices are a great way to give young people the skills they need for their career. On average, apprentices earn £100,000 more over their career than less qualified workers. They also help businesses; over 80% of businesses who employ apprentices agree they make their workforce more productive.

1. How many apprentices are on schemes run by the City Council?
2. What priority is given to businesses with apprenticeship schemes in the procurement process for Council contracts?

Reply:

1 There are currently 72 apprentices directly managed by Bristol City Council, and a further 25 managed by OnSite, a construction apprenticeship scheme, who are placed in Bristol City Council – giving a total of nearly 100.

2 Opportunities are proactively explored with Services as requirements are being developed to include clauses relating to the provision of apprentices. Where appropriate the number of apprentices to be employed on the project is specified.

A recent example of this approach is the specification for a Dementia Care Home project, which contained the following:

“The workforce will be represented by apprenticeships with a target of approximately 5% across the staff team.”

The bidders' responses were evaluated. There was a 90% positive response from bidders.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman (Kingsweston)

Subject: Roads

It was announced in the Autumn Statement that there will be a new junction on the M49 to provide strategic access to Severnside and Avonmouth to help support the enterprise zone and local growth in the Bristol area. In total the South West will benefit from 7 new schemes worth around £2 billion, creating an estimated 1,300 construction jobs.

1. What discussions has the Mayor had with the government to bring extra investment to the city to improve the state of our roads?
2. Other than introducing imposed, non-consensual Residents' Parking Schemes, what exactly has the Mayor done to minimise any negative impact on the environment and improve congestion and road safety on our roads?

Reply:

1 Throughout my time in office I have had regular conversations with government to seek additional powers and/or funding for Bristol and I will continue to raise the state of our roads as an ongoing issue.

2 I think you know RPZs are strongly supported once they are installed. A whole package of measures is being delivered to encourage people to increase the number of trips they make on foot, by bike, by public transport or car sharing. The aim is to make sustainable transport the "norm" for local trips within Bristol.

Measures include MetroWest Rail, MetroBus, 20mph, Cycling Ambition Fund, Better Bus Area and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund package of measures working with businesses, schools and communities.

Through combining incentives with demand restraint measures such as residents parking we can maximise the impact of our sustainable transport investment.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Wright (Cabot)

Subject: European Green Capital (carbon emissions)

It was announced last week that Bristol, as the new European Green Capital for 2015, has pledged to cut carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 as it becomes the first UK city to join a world-leading platform for local and subnational climate action. The Liberal Democrats actually announced the 40% target back in November 2009 when we were in control at the Council – the mayor is re-announcing our target and I thank him for doing so.

1. Will the Mayor please give a breakdown of the figures of how the city has been cutting carbon emissions since 2009?

Reply:

The target was proposed by Cllr Harrison as a motion to Full Council in 2009. It was adopted unanimously and I am delighted that there is cross party support for action to tackle climate change.

The baseline year for emissions in that target was 2005. In addition, to the Carbon Dioxide target the Council also adopted a target to reduce energy use by 30% over the same period.

Data for monitoring progress against the targets is drawn from national datasets. These include gas and electricity used at Bristol addresses and an estimate of traffic fuel consumption based on traffic counts. It excludes motorway traffic. The data for gas consumption used in the energy dataset is weather corrected – compensating for cold or mild winters - and giving a better picture of the underlying trend. The data used for the CO2 dataset is not weather corrected and so shows a greater annual fluctuation. The last year of both datasets published is 2012.

The energy data gives a clearer picture of the overall trend in Bristol's performance - due to the weather correction - and this shows that Bristol has successfully reduced energy use by 16% between 2005 and 2012 (weather corrected), which is 1% ahead of target. As Bristol's population grew at the same time actual energy reductions per person (weather corrected) were 21%.

As a result of national factors Bristol's CO2 emissions are more variable with a 18% reduction in 2011 and a 12% reduction in 2012, overall, with a 17-23% reduction in per capita emissions.

The press release referred to this reduction of about 20% per capita.

The City Council not only adopted targets for the city emissions and energy use but also for its own operations and I am delighted to report that the City Council reduced CO2 emissions 2005/6 to 2013/14 by 30%, which is well ahead of target. This combines the effects of investment in streetlighting and building energy efficiency and the contribution of the Avonmouth Wind Turbines. I would like to commend

previous administrations for developing these projects and making this investment which takes time to come to fruition. I am committed to continuing such long term decisions for the city.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Wright (Cabot)

Subject: Cycling

Last month the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg MP announced a package of cycling measures (totalling £214 million). The investment will include £114 million to secure funding to support the Cycling Ambition Cities Programme for the next 3 years (in Bristol, Birmingham, Cambridge, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich and Oxford) to accelerate the development of local cycling networks, increase protection for cyclists at junctions and traffic hot spots and help prevent accidents. Bristol should hope to secure a good chunk of this money.

1. Does the Mayor have an indication how much of this £214m will come to Bristol, and does he have an idea what projects will now happen because of it?

Reply:

Currently we do not know how this will be allocated or if indeed there will be a requirement for bidding. We are awaiting the detail from Department for Transport as to how this will be allocated, and we have recommended to them that an allocation based on population should be used.

Officers are compiling a list of possible projects and will be making recommendations as to what to prioritise when the level of funding is known

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Glenise Morgan (Henleaze)

Subject: Mental Health (suicide rates)

Bristol has had an incidence of suicide that is somewhat above the average within the core cities group over the last 6 years. Men in their mid-life years have the highest rates of suicide in Bristol and they are at a higher risk of suicide if they are single, recently separated, divorced or widowed. Men in unskilled employment are also twice as likely to kill themselves compared with other men in the general population. This is just one of the reasons why from next year for the first time; mental health will have waiting times just like physical health, thanks to the Liberal Democrats in the Coalition Government.

1. What is the mayor doing to improve the local level of mental wellbeing in Bristol and what discussions has he had with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust (AWP) to help those most at risk of suicide?
2. Following concerns about the number of men dying by suicide, a Men's Health Forum was established. What discussions has the Mayor had, if any, with the Forum?

Reply:

1

Improving Mental Wellbeing

I am the chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and mental health is one of my priorities.

Suicide

There is a city wide suicide prevention group led and coordinated by public health. AWP sit on this group and therefore work in partnership with the rest of the group to address suicides; though their main focus is on users of their services.

Extract from the 2014 report of that group:

People in contact with Mental Health Services: Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust (AWP) lead on this work within the Suicide Prevention and Audit Group. In addition to their own suicide prevention strategy and action plan, AWP has undertaken a review to better understand patterns within the deaths by suicide among those known to their service. A number of key actions have emerged from this work and these are included in both the AWP's and the Group's Suicide Prevention Action Plans. These actions include additional training for staff, action on prescribing, and improved data analysis and data share.

We have lacked a strategic lead for mental health (and suicide) since the departure of Christina Gray. To all intents and purposes this function is still waiting to be filled.

2 To date I have not received an invitation from the Men's Health Forum to meet or attend an event. I would of course accept a request if received in the future.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christian Martin (Clifton East)

Subject: Hydrogen technology

Last month representatives of five major European bus manufacturers (Daimler Buses (EvoBus), MAN, Solaris, Van Hool and VDL Bus & Coach) signed a joint Letter of Understanding at the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking's Stakeholders Forum in Brussels. The Letter underlines the commitment of bus manufacturers towards the commercialisation and market introduction of fuel cell electric buses. Fuel cell buses run on hydrogen and constitute a zero emissions transport alternative. In a symbolic ceremony, the letter was handed over to Olaf Scholz, First Mayor of the City of Hamburg, and Kit Malthouse, Deputy Mayor of London for Business and Enterprise.

1. Hamburg was the European Green Capital in 2011. Bristol is now the European Green Capital for 2015, yet we were not present. Does our Mayor agree with the other mayors at the launch who said: "hydrogen fuel cell technology will eventually replace the internal combustion engine"?

Reply:

The potential for hydrogen is huge and it could well replace the internal combustion engine but this is not likely to be until next decade. In the meantime I am keen that we push on and make use of all available technologies to tackle the blight of poor air quality in our city.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christian Martin (Clifton East)

Subject: Somaliland

People from Somaliland fought with the British in both the First and Second World Wars. Sheffield City Council was the first place to recognise Somaliland. People in the Somali community believed Sheffield was welcoming and hospitable and people had settled and had families here. There was a strong culture among the community and the same could be said of the 10,000 Somalilanders living in Bristol too. They make a significant contribution to our city.

1. To broaden the understanding of the success of Somaliland and the country's aspirations to become an independent country, the Bristol Somaliland community held a screening of a film called 'Somaliland Experiment in Democracy' in October in Jamaica Street in Stokes Croft. Will the Council please consider screening this film as an introduction to Members, Officers and members of the public who may seek to further explore their understanding of the Somaliland community here in Bristol?

Reply:

I believe it is really important for me as Mayor, the Council understand the culture and history of all of our communities including those from the Somaliland community.

Should the Somaliland community choose to re-share the film, I am sure there may be member of the Council and the community you might wish to attend to learn more.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Bailey (Windmill Hill)

Subject: Bus Quality Contracts

In his 'Vision for Bristol', in the section on 'Keep Bristol Moving' the mayor states "there is huge potential...for the bus to meet the majority of our other routine travel needs. But these forms of transport must become more attractive if people are to use them. Improvements to safety, price, comfort and convenience are vital."

1. Does the mayor agree that Bus Quality Contracts therefore offer a viable solution to his aims and will he therefore finally add his support for Bus Quality Contracts?
2. It has recently been reported that the cost of First's day rider will soon rise from £4 to £4.40 despite the company recording an increase in passengers of almost a fifth. How high do bus prices have to rise in Bristol before the mayor takes meaningful action?

Reply:

1 Quality Contract Schemes (QCS) are one of the options available to authorities, and although the North East Combined Authorities have a proposal to pursue such a scheme there is still a way to go before it is fully demonstrated to be achievable under the current legislation. Even if it was implemented as planned, it does not necessarily follow that it is the right solution for Bristol. The growth in patronage reported by First over the last 12 months would indicate that the market in Bristol is buoyant and that the partnership approach is working.

2 It is of course regrettable that First have had to raise any of their fares, particularly the much used day rider ticket. However, this was the only fare that they have changed since the consultation last year, and it was a fare that had not changed since 2010. We have developed a good working relationship with First and have aimed to work together to identify and mitigate issues where we can. Unfortunately we have been unable to head off this particular increase. First have advised that the increase in this fare will directly support an increase in the number of buses they operate in order to meet growing passenger demand.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christopher Davies (Knowle)

Subject: Affordable Homes

Thanks to the Liberal Democrats in the Coalition Government, funds have been set aside to ensure that 275,000 affordable homes are delivered in the next Parliament - more than during any equivalent period in the last twenty years. When we ran the Council, before the mayor took office, we commissioned the first new council houses in Bristol for 30 years.

1. How many affordable homes have been built in Bristol in the last five years?
Can the Mayor please provide a breakdown of the full figure?
2. In the light of the pressures for revisions across the West of England under the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), how is this Council planning to develop our current Core Strategy to incorporate these new targets for housing in the city?

Reply:

1 Yes, I will provide these in writing to you (see below)

2 A new Strategic Market Housing Assessment (SHMA) for the wider Bristol Housing Market Area, taking into account the up to date evidence, has been commissioned by the four West of England authorities, Bristol City Council, and South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and Bath and North East Somerset Councils, from consultants ORS.

The housing need identified in the SHMA will be considered through a Joint Strategic Planning Strategy (JSPS) for the West of England which will be brought forward jointly by the four West of England authorities. A timetable for the production of the JSPS is anticipated to be published in the new year within a 'pre-commencement document'. The appropriate level of new homes to be delivered through the future Bristol Local Plan will be established in the Joint Strategic Planning Strategy. The preparation of the JSPS and any amendment to the Local Plan will involve full community stakeholder engagement and statutory public consultation.

Breakdown of how many affordable homes have been built in Bristol in the last five years:

2010/11

Affordable Housing	
Gross AH Units	402
Total Social Rent	334
Total Intermediate Sale	47
Total Intermediate Rent	21
Net AH Units 2010/11 (minus refurb/comm)	402

2011/12

Affordable Housing	
Gross AH Units	369
Total Social Rent	267
Total Intermediate Sale	63
Total Intermediate Rent	18
Total Affordable Rent	21
Net AH Units 2011/12 (minus refurb/comm)	369

2012/13

Affordable Housing	
Gross Units Forecast 2012/13	300
Total Social Rent	205
Total Intermediate Sale	43
Total Intermediate Rent	0
Total Affordable Rent	52
Net Enabling Units 2012/13 (minus refurb/comm)	301

2013/14

Affordable Housing	
Gross Units Forecast 2013/14	103
Total Social Rent	82
Total Intermediate Sale	12
Total Intermediate Rent	0
Total Affordable Rent	38
Net Enabling Units 2013/14 (minus refurb/comm)	102

2014/15 (Projected figures)

Affordable Housing	
Gross Units Forecast 2014/15	265
Total Social Rent	0
Total Intermediate Sale	0
Total Intermediate Rent	0
Total Affordable Rent	0
Total Firstbuy/HBD/Mortgage Rescue	0
Net Enabling Units 2014/15 (minus refurb/comm)	261

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent (Whitchurch Park)**Subject: Council reserves**

According to analysis conducted by the Financial Times, England's councils have built up extra reserves of £2.3 billion in the last financial year. Before the last financial year local authorities in England predicted they would have to eat into their reserves by £1.2 billion. Instead they increased their total reserves by £2.3bn to £23.7bn in the 12 months to last April, according to data from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

1. How much money is currently sitting in Bristol City Council's reserves?
2. Why did the Mayor insist on:
 - a. Cutting more than he had to in his budget earlier this year;
 - b. Putting more money into the reserves instead of freezing council tax (Bristol's council tax in 2013–14 is 8.7% above the national average band D figure);
 - c. Refusing to take the government grant money that would have been available.

Instead of adding all this to the money currently in the reserves the Mayor could have helped residents with their bills and keep more of our council services going. Why is he continuing to put so much money into Council reserves?

Reply:

1 In the 2013/14 Audited Accounts, the total usable reserves for the council stood at £206 million. These included: General Fund balances, Earmarked reserves, Schools Reserves, HRA balances and usable capital receipts.

As far as the general fund usable balances and reserves are concerned – they did not increase in 2013/14 — **they actually reduced, in accordance with approved spending plans.** In total, the General Fund balances at 31 March 2014 were £87.7m compared to £91.8m at 31 March 2013, a reduction of £4.1m

2 A Cutting more than he had to in his budget earlier this year;

The budget savings proposals in the three – year financial framework were subject to detailed consultation – the principle of planning ahead over the medium term for budget cuts is better practice than looking at savings on an annual basis.

B Putting more money into the reserves instead of freezing council tax (Bristol's council tax in 2013–14 is 8.7% above the national average band D figure);

At 1st April 2013, the level of uncommitted general fund balance was only £6.0m. This represented less than 2% of the net revenue budget. Good practice indicates that the general fund reserve should be at least 3- 5% of the net budget – ideally higher than this during times of financial uncertainty / austerity.

At the year-end, a review of the council's balance sheet and reserves was undertaken. A number of 'earmarked' reserves held, were identified as either redundant or no longer necessary. This resulted in the creation of a Strategic Reserve of £14m, as part of the overall general fund balance – resulting in a This approach was reported to Audit Committee The year-end position therefore resulted in a combined balance on the general fund and the strategic reserve of £20m; representing some 5.7% of the net budget.

C Refusing to take the government grant money that would have been available:

Freezing Council tax and accepting the government grant may have brought a short term benefit to our council tax payers, but would have impacted on services, and in taking my financial planning responsibilities seriously, I believe it would be irresponsible to have eroded our long term tax base. This has been openly discussed previously.

Instead of adding all this to the money currently in the reserves the Mayor could have helped residents with their bills and keep more of our council services going. Why is he continuing to put so much money into Council reserves?:

The position on reserves is clear and transparent - and my proposals reflect good practice in financial planning.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fi Hance (Redland)

Subject: Tax collection and avoidance

I am sure everyone is now aware that the Mayor is currently asking for the public's views on how to spend £3.9million in 2015/16 Bristol City Council has raised, we are told, a crackdown on single person Council Tax discounts. The Coalition Government has already done more on improving tax collection by clamping down on tax avoidance than any government before it, having collected £24 billion in the last 4 years by closing tax loopholes.

1. Will the mayor commit to enforcing an ethical procurement approach at the Council by not using suppliers operating tax avoidance schemes?
2. Stephen Williams MP personally led a boycott campaign against Starbucks and called for HMRC to review Starbucks's tax activities. Eventually Starbucks reportedly agreed to pay £20 million (in 2012-14) in corporation tax. This is in stark contrast to the zero pounds they paid in the three previous years. What has the Mayor personally done to raise awareness of businesses in Bristol who do not pay their fair share of tax?

Reply:

1. The Council's procurement activities are governed by the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006. Under these Regulations the Council is limited in what regard it can have to the tax affairs of potential contractors.

Under Regulation 23 an authority can disqualify a potential contractor from participating in a procurement process if it has committed an offence of cheating the Revenue, or not fulfilled its tax obligations under UK law or of the relevant State in which it is established.

It is common practice for the Council to take advantage of Regulation 23 and question bidders on their compliance with this Regulation.

It is worth noting that tax avoidance schemes are however not unlawful, and involvement in such schemes (even assuming the Council had knowledge) would not breach Regulation 23 and so permit the Council to exclude a potential contractor.

2 HMRC are responsible for safeguarding the flow of national taxes, including corporation tax, to the Exchequer through collection, compliance and enforcement activities. As a local authority, Bristol Council is not responsible for the collection or analysis of corporation tax payments made by businesses in Bristol and as such I am not in a position to understand or comment on their tax position. I have, however, continued to actively support independent traders in Bristol and I'm proud to say that Bristol is recognised as having a high proportion of independent businesses. This makes our high streets and communities thrive and promote entrepreneurial spirit

and job growth. I also back the Bristol Pound which now has over 700 businesses involved and around £700,000 issued.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Neil Harrison (Cotham)**Subject: Air Quality Monitoring**

The Mayor has previously stated that air quality is his priority for the year of Bristol as Green Capital in 2015. However, councillors attending the Place Scrutiny Commission have been told that in the central part of the city and along main radial roads concentrations of NO₂ are regularly exceeding UK and European air quality objectives.

1. Are we sure that the information that we are obtaining from the air quality monitors in the city is enabling us to develop an intelligent blueprint for the targets (announced by the Lib Dems in 2009) to reduce emissions in the city by 40% by 2020?
2. I know that the Mayor has committed to 12 months of air quality monitoring in Avonmouth. Is the Mayor confident that our city's planning policy takes sufficient account of the quality of air in the residential areas of Avonmouth, when deciding on future developments?

Reply:

1 The target referred to in question 1, to reduce emissions in the city by 40% by 2020, refers to a carbon dioxide emissions reduction target. This was adopted unanimously by Full Council following your motion to Council and I thank you for this contribution which you made to action on climate change in Bristol. However, this is not an air quality issue – Carbon Dioxide is not a local pollutant – we focus on those pollutants which have a local effect on health like Nitrogen Dioxide and particulates.

Bristol's air quality targets are from national and European standards.

There is an extensive air quality monitoring network in Bristol with 7 locations at which real-time monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide takes place and over 100 nitrogen dioxide diffusion tube monitoring locations. In addition the real time monitoring site in St Pauls measures PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and Ozone.

Since 1998 the Local Air Quality Review and Assessment process, as prescribed under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995, has required Local Authorities to review their air quality in relation to health based air quality objectives. Exceedances of the objectives for NO₂ and PM₁₀ were identified in the first round of review and assessment process in 1999/2001. The current air quality monitoring network has evolved since this time as the understanding of the patterns of air quality within Bristol has developed allowing us to be confident that we are monitoring in relevant locations and are able to identify changes in air quality as they occur.

The location specific issues which have arisen at Avonmouth are being monitored separately by a specific monitoring regime and I look forward to seeing the results of this monitoring.

2 Bristol's planning policies related to air quality are contained in Bristol's Local Development Framework, specifically the Core Strategy (Policy BCS23) and in the Site Allocations and Development Management Policy (Policy DM33 on Pollution Control).

All planning applications which have a potential impact upon air quality are required to submit an air quality assessment as part of the planning application process.

Our provisions are in line with UK legislation and with guidance issued by the Institute of Air Quality Management and Environmental Protection UK, which sets out clear requirements for when assessment is required and the appropriate methodologies that should be used.

Where appropriate planning applications in Avonmouth are required to consider the cumulative air quality impacts from committed developments to ensure that an accurate and reliable assessment takes place.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jackie Norman (Brislington West)

Subject: Winter Weather (Salt Stock)

A survey by the Local Government Association has found that as many as 91% of local authorities in England and Wales are either maintaining or increasing salt stock levels this winter, with around 1.3m tonnes of salt stockpiled. The survey also showed that 49% of councils were planning to share salt supplies when necessary with neighbouring authorities this winter.

1. What are the current levels of salt and grit supplies held by Bristol City Council and are there any plans to increase them?
2. Can the Mayor please inform us what further action, if any, is being taken to keep Bristol moving during the winter this year?

Reply:

1 We currently hold over 1000 tonnes of salt at Hartcliffe and are ordering more up to the maximum that we have room for in the depot (about 1800 tonnes). This ensures that we meet national guidance in terms of salt stock levels and are able to respond appropriately. Salt stocks are also maintained in over 750 grit bins across the City.

2 Our 'Snow and Severe Winter Weather Plan' is in place, lots of information regarding what we do is on the BCC website. We have commissioned a new weather station and weather bureau this year to provide us with improved intelligence to help us make efficient and effective decisions based on local conditions.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Barbara Janke (Clifton)

Subject: Devolution

The promise of devolved powers to the Greater Manchester area means the possibility of meaningful devolution in the South West and Bristol has at last become an achievable reality, if we act swiftly.

1. What discussions, if any, has the Mayor had with the neighbouring partners of the West of England Partnership (Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils) on supporting the transfer of powers away from Whitehall to local our area?
2. Does the Mayor agree that meaningful devolution is not synonymous with the need for city or metro mayors?

Reply:

I have held a number of high-level discussions with the West of England leaders and officers about the potential for devolution to this city region.

I do not believe that we should be hung up on governance structures at the expense of devolution from central to local government.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: FUTURE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CITY'S MUSEUMS

1. Last year, the Mayor removed the threat of closure hanging over four local cultural and educational venues, namely Blaise Castle House Museum, the Georgian House Museum, Kings Weston Roman Villa and the Red Lodge Museum. However, I understand this was only an interim measure to allow for a fundamental review of museums and heritage buildings to take place. What progress have you made in determining the funding options available to secure the long-term future of these important city attractions?
2. When will the promised report apparently being commissioned on this subject be published or made available for consideration by Members?

Reply:

This year has been an exceptionally busy year for Bristol's Museum, Gallery & Archive Service with a full public programme of exhibitions and events. With the additional responsibility for festivals, events and film this service has now become responsible for a much wider remit and this year a complete review of the staffing structure has been undertaken which has been very time-consuming.

Some areas have progressed well this year, whilst others have progressed less well without a permanent Service Manager in post. This year for instance, the Museum has successfully applied for, and been awarded, over £4.5m from Arts Council England for period 2015-18, (although this has involved a huge amount of work on planning and laying the foundations for future activity). On the other hand, the work on the Houses has not advanced as quickly as we would have liked, especially as the report commissioned from consultants Black Radley (which was received in March) was disappointing and further work is required before a report can be prepared which can properly illuminate the issues for discussion.

The Head of Culture and her management team have explored some ideas for developing the House museums and a small task group is currently undertaking a review of what can be done, including looking at other similar buildings, and how the local audiences can be engaged. In tandem with this the programme team is focussing on increasing the numbers of visitors to the attractions and reducing the cost per head.

It must be recognised, that the question of what to do with the Houses is complex; there are several different issues to be considered: legal and financial as well as operational and there needs to be a recognition that even if the buildings were closed they would continue to cost money as they currently hold collections which, as an accredited museum, the Council is committed to looking after. Initial findings are that capital investment is undoubtedly required to make Blaise Castle House Museum attractive to any potential commercial operator.

I have asked officers to bring forward proposals so that there can be a full and well informed discussion on this question.

2. I will come back to you on that

Supplementary Question

1. Might it be advisable for the small team considering the options to meet with Councillors for the Wards where these collections are held, to consider local options?

Reply:

That sounds like a very constructive option and I will suggest it.

2. Places like Blaise Castle have "Friends of" groups – can you assure me that no changes to the museum structure without widespread consultation and involvement of those groups, again to see if a local solution can be found?

Reply:

Concentrated consultation with the relevant groups would be a welcome idea.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: Ashton Court Parking Charges

1. Can the Mayor confirm my understanding that enforcement of the recent pay-to-park regime at Ashton Court is no longer functioning as the appropriate Council Officer failed to renew the contract in time?

Reply:

Earlier this year our contractor who was carrying out the parking enforcement stopped and this was then to be sub contracted but the sub-contractor was not accredited with the British Parking Association. Unfortunately due to staff leaving and restructuring it has taken us longer to put a new contract in place. This work is currently taking place and a new contract will be appointed soon.

However we have not had a decrease in Income from the car parking as the majority of people pay to park when they use Ashton Court so whilst we have not enforced the car parking we have had people using the site effectively.

Supplementary question

1. Does the Mayor believe this is like a business-like approach, especially bearing in mind the cost to the tax payer of installing the equipment at the beginning of the process?

Reply:

I think it is right that there should be control of car parking in a car park that could otherwise be used as a commuter car park.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Peter Abraham

Subject: Street Clutter

1. There is a stretch of road, one of many in our city, Coombe Lane and Parry's Lane, which currently accommodates over 25 traffic signs – including four 30 mph warnings within just a few yards of each other. Does the Mayor agree with me that such excessive signage not only spoils an otherwise attractive streetscape but also is distracting to drivers and contrary to relatively recent government instructions to seriously cut down on such “street clutter”?

Reply:

Yes. I agree that excessive signage does spoil the streetscape and fully support rationalising signs and removing unnecessary signs, guard railing and other street furniture where possible.

Officers delivering new highway schemes in the City are fully aware of my position and the need to strike an appropriate balance between providing sufficient information for people to find their way around our City safely and minimising the impact that signing has on our surroundings.

In some cases there is flexibility around what signs, if any, are needed as well as how they look. However, those that reflect a legal order, for example a 20mph speed limit, have to meet specific design standards in order for that order to be enforceable. Even in these circumstances I'm urging officers to use the absolute minimum signs required, to seek opportunities to remove signs through good design practices and to rationalise existing signs in order to reduce the clutter that can occur.

1. It's not 25 signs, it's 36, PLUS the 4 30 MPH warnings. Please can I ask you to take some action to ensure this is changed in Coombe Lane?

Reply:

What's important is we instil a culture of making sure we don't put up too many signs, and take down those that are unnecessary.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Peter Abraham**Subject: 20 mph Safety Statistics**

1. The Mayor frequently justifies his 20 mph blanket coverage policy on the basis that lower speeds reduce traffic accidents and encourages more cycling and walking. Will you please publish the evidence upon which this claim is based, including when, where and how much this research cost?

Reply:

The 20mph speed limit has been introduced in Bristol to reduce the severity and frequency of collisions, but to also improve physical activity levels and social cohesion.

From international research, evidence suggests a 5% increase in injury accidents per one mile/h increase in average speed and on urban roads with low average traffic speeds any 1 mph reduction in average speed can reduce the collision frequency by around 6%. This evidence includes UK research based on empirical studies where changes in accident numbers were associated with a 1 mph change in speed.¹

Research has also shown that the risk of a pedestrian dying in a collision with a car increases slowly up to an impact speed of around 30mph, but at speeds above 30 mph the risk of death increases rapidly. Car occupants also benefit from lower speeds.²

Pedestrians have also been shown to have a 90% chance of survival when struck by a car travelling at 30 km/h (18.64mph) or below, but less than 50% chance of surviving an impact at 45 km/h (27.96).³ The actual speed at which a pedestrian may be hit by a vehicle will vary but one of the findings from the pilot area monitoring report was the significant reductions in very high speeds being driven eg over 35mph. If a driver has to break from such higher speeds the impact speed may still be closer to 30mph than 20mph and have a significant greater negative impact on survival chances.

Evidence from Newcastle City Council showed that for the first three phases of their 20mph pilot areas introduced in 2007, a reduction in casualties of 56% was reported. Other evidence from Graz, Austria showed that the imposition of a blanket 20mph limit in 1994 saw a 30% reduction in collisions. In addition, a recent review of both 20mph zones and limits by the University of Durham reported that there is

¹ Taylor, M., Lynam, D., Baruya, A. 2000 The effect of drivers' speed on the frequency of accidents. TRL Report TRL421. Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne.

² Department for Transport Circular 01/2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf accessed 7th November 2014.

³ http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/world_report/speed_en.pdf

convincing evidence that both 20mph zone and limits are effective in reducing accidents and injuries, motorised traffic speed and volume.

The roll out of the 20mph speed limits also aims to increase physical activity levels as noted in the Bristol pilot monitoring report where an increase in walking and cycling was reported.

This increase in active modes of transport can help to reduce the risk of illness and premature deaths.

The pilot report was published in March 2012 and cost approximately £100k which includes all of the before and after monitoring in terms of household interview surveys, traffic surveys recording the speed and volume of all modes of transport, air quality data, collision data and the analysis and report itself. This monitoring was necessary as it provided local evidence showing the support for 20mph in Bristol (82% of those surveyed supported 20mph after implementation), it also showed that 65% of roads saw a reduction in mean speeds and walking and cycling increased.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: PFI Liabilities under School-Building Programme

1. The Mayor may recall that at the Full Council Meeting held last March (Tuesday, 18th March 2014) his Cabinet colleague, Assistant Mayor Cllr Brenda Massey, replied to a written question of mine regarding the indebtedness of Bristol City Council in relation to the PFI rebuilding of city schools. Cllr Massey confirmed the indebtedness was then estimated to be £750 million.

Bearing in mind that many of these schools have subsequently elected to become independent Academies (and more may do so in future), can he confirm that responsibility for this financial liability has now transferred entirely off the balance sheet of Bristol City Council so that these contractual loan repayments are now the responsibility of the Academy Schools or their sponsoring bodies?

Reply:

As someone wholly opposed to PFI as a mechanism for funding schools, I can say that the financial liability unfortunately continues to rest with Bristol City Council. There are two PFI contracts with Bristol City from two different providers (Bristol Schools Ltd & Bristol PFI Ltd) to provide 8 secondary educational facilities (including service elements such as cleaning, grounds maintenance, leisure facilities and the provision of school meals). The transfer to Academy status by the schools does not alter this contractual position.

The funding of the payment for the School PFI schemes come from the individual schools budget (as set out in an agreement with the school and the Council) and a special government grant.

Ownership of the property is returned to the City Council at the end of the PFI contract period and is then leased to the individual Academies.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor (insert name) Charlie Bolton

Subject: City Of Sanctuary

1. Will the mayor support requests from Amnesty International that all Cities of Sanctuary, including Bristol, accept refugees from Syria?

Below is the text of an email from Ade Couper of the local Amnesty group giving details.

Hi Charlie,

Thanks for your tweet saying you'd had a letter regarding Bristol Amnesty International group's current campaign on Syrian refugees.

The situation in Syria is appalling. Millions of ordinary people from Syria are now displaced due to the ongoing conflict- Lebanon has already taken over one million refugees.

The Prime Minister has said that the UK will be happy to take refugees from Syria: however, as at the end of September, only 75 refugees had been taken in.

You may be aware of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement (VPR) scheme, which allows local authorities to volunteer to take refugees. Amnesty International UK is asking all Cities of Sanctuary to volunteer to accept refugees from Syria, and be an example to other local authorities within the UK. To this end, all our members within the Bristol City Council area have been asked to contact their local councillors & raise this: I have also written to George Ferguson directly, and have asked the Bishop of Bristol to intercede as well.

I am more than happy to meet with you & your colleagues (together with other members of the Bristol Amnesty group), to discuss this further. If you would like me to meet with you, please let me know some convenient dates, & I'll be happy to come and give you some more information.

Best wishes

*Ade Couper
07552544986
Chair, Bristol Amnesty International group.*

Reply:

We remain committed to the City of Sanctuary vision and recognise the Syrian crisis has displaced approximately 3 million men, women and children, many of whom are suffering from ill health and war trauma.

Bristol is keen to support the resettlement of vulnerable individuals and families and we recognise that we need to plan and resource such commitments carefully.

Supplementary question

1. When will you know for sure and be able to give a yes or no?

Reply:

It's not a case of giving a yes or no, it's a case of taking a sympathetic attitude to applications that come our way. I can't give a number.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: BCC supported buses and the 520 service

Council spends about £3m pa on supporting buses. Funds are being used to subsidise the new 520 service following the 20 service being discontinued by First Bus.

Residents and users in my ward and elsewhere on the 520 route have raised many concerns: issues like reliability, timekeeping, cancellations, ability to complete the route within the allotted time, and drivers not scanning bus passes or blocking users from presenting them (being waved on with the reader covered). This latter practice would stop the council from knowing the full use of the service.

I have concerns over the future success of this service to meet residents' needs in Redland but also wonder if the scale of bus support is adequate to fill gaps in the commercial services across the city to meet community needs.

1. I'm wondering how long is subsidy available to keep the 520 going and what factors this is this contingent upon related both to the service being run and other demands in the city?

2. Please can the Mayor explain (in writing as well as at the meeting) more about the funding and oversight of such services:

-

The process by which bus support is allocated on a year by year or reactive way, across the city and based on need;

- How supported routes are monitored;
- How new routes can be initiated and build up over time through using bus funding to stimulate new services; and
- How data is used to monitor and justify bus support
- How user information is disseminated
- What communications will be used to ensure better promotion and improved liaison with operators

Reply:

1 The Council agreement with First is to support service 520 until September 2015. The intention is to run a tender for this service to continue until September 2016, which is when all the Council's bus service contracts are due to expire. A full consultation and review of the supported bus network is proposed in 2015, ahead of a retendering exercise for contracts from September 2016 onwards. The network from this date onwards will be dependent on the aspirations of the Council in terms of the quality and scope of the network it wants to support over and above commercial services, as well as the tender prices received for the supported network, and the budget available.

2 The supported bus service budget aims to fill the gaps in the commercial bus network, by providing services that it considers to be socially necessary. These are operated under Terms and Conditions that include deductions for specific failures against the specification, such as early, late or non-operation, adherence to route and stopping arrangements and vehicle requirements. These are monitored by the Council, but there is also a reliance on reports from the travelling public.

The budget for supported bus services covers around 47 contracts, that provide 'standalone' services, Park & Ride services and 'add-ons' to the commercial bus network in the morning, evening and at weekends. Most of these contracts came into effect in September 2011, after a major consultation, review and retendering process, which included a saving requirement of £1m. The network established at that time fully committed the available budget, and is fundamentally the same as now.

In determining which services to support, the key factor is the need for the Council to have regard to the operators of commercial services, and the network that is provided commercially. Council subsidy for bus services should complement the commercial network. The Council is therefore likely to be supporting services that are not considered to be commercially viable, but that it feels are socially necessary.

The historic supported network was aimed at ensuring that services were in place that connected areas with their neighbourhood centres. In addition it was also felt important that the bus network was maintained into the evenings and weekends. As the commercial network became predominantly focused on high frequency radial routes, Local Transport Plan consultation responses in the early 2000's highlighted a dearth in orbital bus routes. The development of Park & Ride also established 3 regular P&R services from 2002 onwards. These groups of services, (commercial add-ons, Park & Ride, standalone orbitals and local shopper services) represent the services currently supported.

All contracted service passenger data is held by the Council and there is an ongoing assessment of the services, on the basis of the cost per passenger journey. Where this figure is very low, it demonstrates some commercial potential. Where the figure is very high, it questions the value for money of the service being provided. It is therefore very important for all passengers to be recorded, so that its value is fully understood. This point has recently been reiterated to First in connection with the 520.

In the context of a review of the network, the focus is often on services that have either a very low or a very high cost per passenger journeys. The figures that demonstrate near commerciality will prompt a discussion with the operators about its commercial potential.

Providing new services is of course dependent on funding being available, and an assessment of the demand or potential demand. The last major review of the supported bus network in 2010/11 included a major consultation exercise and an assessment of traffic data to identify potential gaps in the network. The Council does use a number of funding sources (such as developer contribution) to 'pump prime' new services, in the belief that demand for the service will develop over the funding period to an extent that would allow the service to continue on a commercial basis. Examples where this has been successful is the Council support to the Night Bus

network, which has seen a number of the routes previously supported by the Council move to commercial operation. However, it can be more difficult for completely new services to be established, and it can present the Council with potential ongoing revenue support requirement for services that do not reach commerciality before the one off funding stream ends.

The Council is in frequent contact with contractors about various elements of contract performance. This has recently specifically included service 520, and concerns raised by residents. There will be further meetings about the reliability of the 520 in the near future.

Supplementary questions

1. With more people using buses, and more congestion discouraging people from driving, how can new routes be stimulated, especially as situations have changed since the last consultation exercise?

Reply:

That is the purpose of the consultation that will happen towards the end of next year, that will inform our approach for the September 2016 contract.

2. How widely will the framing of that consultation be considered, as there are opportunities to make a lot of changes, including looking at reshaping existing routes and developing new routes?

Reply:

It will be a combination of strategic thinking, although the general experience of consultation tends to focus on existing routes, as that is what people know, but there will be strategic thinking about what potential there may be for new routes, that will be more widely shared – including Park and Ride.

3. Communication about route changes and new routes will be essential to encourage take-up

Reply:

I agree, it's very irritating for people when they don't have information, and the more real "real-time" information people get, the better.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

Subject: Schools Funding

The Bristol Schools Forum recently recommended that an underspend of £3.355m (comprising £1.138 m transitional funding reform contingency and £2.217m unallocated EY formula funding for 3-4 year olds) was to be retained centrally to provide capital funding and some resource funding.

1. Can the Mayor assure me that this underspend will be included in his upcoming capital budget?
2. It is becoming widely understood that children with SEND require a different but complementary learning environment if they are to be included in mainstream education from the early years onwards.

Will the Mayor commit to using some of this underspend for specific adaptations to nursery schools and children's centres so that they can adapt to the changing circumstance of more SEND children attending their settings?

Reply:

The Early Years Direct Schools Grant underspend will be included in the Capital budget linked to the Integrated Education Capital Strategy. Bristol City Council is committed to including children with Special Educational Needs Determination in mainstream settings and there will be an opportunity for early education providers to apply for Capital funding to adapt their environments.

Supplementary question

1. What is the process for applying, so I can feed that back?

Reply:

If you contact the Service Director for Education, he will direct you to the right person.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Michael Frost

Subject: Green Capital

During my council meetings, I have only asked **one** question of our "Elected Mayor", which was, "was compensation, or severance paid when Kris Donaldson, the original head of the controversial Green Capital Contract, left his post." His last answer was incoherent, which I, nor any other councillor could make sense of.

I will therefore ask Mayor Ferguson AGAIN, was compensation, or severance paid and/or a Gagging Order put in place as has previously been made to Council members, when they have left Bristol City Council.

I wish to state that if I do not get an answer to this I shall use due process and file a Freedom of Information request.

I would like a formal written response to all of the above, from the Mayor,

Reply:

Kris Donaldson was contracted by Bristol 2015 Ltd and not Bristol City Council. As such the decisions taken in relation to this individual were made by the Board of Bristol 2015, and I am unable to give you an answer to that, but you are of course free to make an Fol request.