



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 10th November 2015

**This document sets out details of questions
received from councillors, and the responses from the Mayor**

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 Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat 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 Q1 Councillor Margaret Hickman – Tidy BS5 campaign

LAB Q2 Councillor Steve Pearce – Tax Credits

LAB Q3 Councillor Mike Wollacott – The Living Wage

LAB Q4 Councillor Bill Payne – Work Place Pensions Scheme

LAB Q5 Councillor Olly Mead – Parking in Horfield

LAB Q6 Councillor Eileen Means – Public bus service to Callington Road Hospital

LAB Q7 Councillor Jenny Smith – Homelessness

LAB Q8 Councillor Ron Stone – War memorial honouring Sikh servicemen and women

LAB Q9 Councillor Ron Stone – Primary School Places

LAB Q10 Councillor Mike Wollacott – Trade Union facility time

LAB Q11 Councillor Gill Kirk – Danby house

LAB Q12 Councillor Gill Kirk – Romney / Lockleaze bus link

LAB Q13 Councillor Mike Langley – Trade Union Bill

LAB Q14 Councillor Ollie Mead – Improve air quality in Bristol

LAB Q15 Councillor Barry Clark – Stockwood, Hengrove and Whitchurch Neighbourhood Partnership

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

CON Q1 Councillor Lucas – Ashton Gate Station

CON Q2 Councillor Eddy – Watershed Censure

CON Q3 Councillor Hiscott – Warm Up Bristol

CON Q4 Councillor Windows – Council 20MPH Survey

CON Q5 Councillor Weston – Bristol Arena

CON Q6 Councillor Eddy – 20MPH Citywide Roll-out

CON Q7 Councillor Goulandris – Prince Street Swing Bridge

CON Q8 Councillor Melias – Residents Parking Permits

CON Q9 Councillor Abraham – The Downs

CON Q10 Councillor Alexander – Parking at Bristol Hospitals

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

GRN Q1 Councillor Stephen Clarke – COP 21

GRN Q2 Councillor Anna McMullen – Bristol's approach to the budget this year with respect to the national welfare cuts

GRN Q3 Councillor Jerome Thomas – Warm Up Bristol

GRN Q4 Councillor Rob Telford – Public accountability during the Mayoral election campaign

GRN Q5 Councillor Charlie Bolton – Residents parking question

GRN Q6 Councillor Stephen Clarke – Right to Buy applied to Housing Associations

GRN Q7 Councillor Rob Telford – Nelson Street/Fairfax Street pedestrianisation consultation

GRN Q8 Councillor Carla Denyer – Trade Union Bill

GRN Q9 Councillor Charlie Bolton – Ashton Gate School

GRN Q10 Councillor Gus Hoyt – Glyphosate free Ashley trial

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

LD Q1 Councillor Gary Hopkins – Temple Meads and Arena traffic

LD Q2 Councillor Anthony Negus – The need to maintain updated records of all high-density housing to support good planning and maximise our rate support grant from Westminster

LD Q3 Councillor Chris Davies – Park and Green Spaces bylaws

LD Q4 Councillor Mark Wright – RPZ

LD Q5 Councillor Glenise Morgan – Bristol East Swimming pools

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

UKIP Q1 – Councillor Michael Frost - Migration

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Margaret Hickman

Subject: Tidy BS5 campaign

I have been supporting local residents in Lawrence Hill and Easton in the Tidy BS5 campaign against litter and fly-tipping in the area. One concern that residents have expressed to me is the extreme reluctance of council officers to communicate with local residents and inform them what enforcement action is taking place on their behalf on their streets. This has prompted some residents to resort to using Freedom of Information Act requests to obtain information. Does the Mayor agree with me that this perceived culture of secrecy and lack of transparency amongst council officers is detrimental to community initiatives such as Tidy BS5?

Response:

Currently, officers work closely with the Tidy BS5 group, and provide feedback for the meetings. Enforcement officers have attended the meetings in the past.

The enforcement team has just implemented some improvements to the way that it operates, which include the commitment to produce monthly information about enforcement activity in each Neighbourhood Partnership area, and a high level programme of proactive enforcement operations for the year ahead. The team will ensure that neighbourhood priorities and input from the neighbourhood partnerships informs the exact locations for the operations.

The first monthly breakdown of enforcement statistics went out on 9th November 2015 to all councillors and to the neighbourhood partnership team to distribute to the NP and other local groups.

Supplementary Question 1:

As the communication staff at Bristol City Council is the third largest in the country, does the Mayor think it is being used effectively as an instrument of transparency adequately communicating the councils policies and actions?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

Communication covers a number of areas and we have been transparent I would challenge other Councils to be as transparent as we have been.

The communication staff do a very effective job on behalf of the citizens of Bristol and while you may feel that communication sometimes fails and it is true that enforcement officers can't always give full details, I am hoping that if you have seen any short comings, communication will improve through the new system.

Supplementary Question 2:

In the light of the fact the litter and fly tipping scenario hasn't improved that much although I do accept there has been quite a lot of work done on it, I would like to ask that the head of

Bristol Waste comes to meet with a few of us who have been working around Tidy BS5. This would be to look at possible ways to do things differently recognising the financial envelope the Council has, maybe things could be done differently and this would result in a better environment for people to live in.

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

The head of Bristol Waste is very accessible and feels very strongly that we do need to look at new ways of doing things.

The first few months of taking over the contract have been really important as we needed to consolidate the service prior to moving into new ways. There has been a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and ideas coming from the staff on the ground.

I would urge you to write to the head of Bristol Waste and invite her to find out more about Tidy BS5.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce

Subject: Tax Credits

1. In Bristol over 20,000 families with children receive tax credits. It has been reported that these families are set to lose an average of £1,300 a year from April if the Chancellor fails to soften his tax credit cuts. Can the Mayor tell Council how many children living in Bristol does he estimate are living in poverty and as part of his answer can he tell me what impact will the Chancellor's plans will have on tackling child poverty our city?
2. Studies of the impact of tax credits suggest they play an important role in reducing child poverty rates and in helping to maintain low to middle income families' living standards. Can the Mayor tell Council what impact the Government's welfare cuts will have on demand for council services and as part of his answer can he outline what policies he will put in place to help those families living Bristol who will be worse off next April?

Response to Question 1:

The latest data (for 2013, released Sept 2015) shows that Bristol has 18,170 children under 16 living in in low-income families. This is 22.6% of all children under 16, which is significantly more than the England average (18.6%).

If measured for all dependent children (under 20 years of age), there are 20,260 children living in in low-income families (a rate in Bristol of 22.1%, compared to national 18%).

However, Bristol now has the 2nd lowest % of children in low-income families of the English Core Cities (for both measures). The rate in Bristol, as nationally, has been falling over the last 4 years. There are though substantial variations in child poverty across the city (ward-level data is available)

Definition: The "children in low-income families" data is used as a proxy for Child Poverty, and is the % of children under 16 living in families (using Child Benefit data) in receipt of out-of-work benefits (Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance) or of child tax credits with an income less than 60% of the national median income (at end of August that year). Source: DWP (Department of Work and Pensions), Personal Tax Credits, 2013 data released Sept 2015.

It is difficult to predict the impact of these cuts without all the relevant information; however, Bristol City Council will continue to work with all the services and agencies involved to provide the support and care needed to Children and families in Bristol.

Response to Question 2:

Currently around 30,000 families receive Tax Credits of varying amounts in Bristol. The Welfare Reform Steering group has been set up which consists of a range of services across BCC (Benefits, Housing, Homelessness, Welfare and Money Advice, Health Children's and Families etc.).

This group is working closely with voluntary and advice agencies across Bristol to look at how we support citizens affected by welfare reform. We are awaiting confirmation of

what the Tax Credit element will look like following on from the House of Lords decision but solutions will include, budgeting support, welfare support to ensure these families are claiming everything they are entitled to, debt advice and support practical money advice from voluntary agencies.

We will be targeted those most affected by welfare reform and engaging with them before the changes are implemented to see how we can offer help and advice. Until the details are known it is hard to predict what the impact will be and what transitional support the Chancellor offers.

Supplementary Question 1:

Is your leadership team working on a range of plans to counter the worst impacts that this is likely to have and how soon do you expect to be able to roll that out?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

The leadership team spend considerable amount of time working to mitigate some of the effects of government cuts in all areas.

Supplementary Question 2:

Are they building into that a remedy for any potential differences that might come about as a result of the impacts on what has been trailed in the press as an assault on universal credit and the universal credit budget?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

We are challenged in not being able to fully compensate for the welfare cuts. We have to find ways to prevent our citizens being unduly affected.

The system in place leaves us with very little funding because we only retain 5% or 6% of the tax base locally. When there are central government cuts it gives us an extremely small amount of removability. This means we have to be inventive in the way we fund the services.

Increasingly we find ourselves having to be more independent of central funding if we are going to be able to step in and defend those who are going to be most affected.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Wollacott

Subject: The Living Wage

The Government's current proposals set out by George Osborne for a National Living Wage would require a 14.5% uplift to meet the Living Wage as defined by the Living wage foundation. Considering that Bristol is one of the most expensive cities to live in the UK, does the Mayor recognise the profound difference in the value of the Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation and the proposed national living wage used by central government, and if so, can the Mayor write to the appropriate government minister clearly identifying that it would be inequitable to expect the lowest paid workers to struggle this living wage lite?

Response:

Yes, I do recognise the difference between the UK Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation) and the new National Living Wage (as announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer).

I also recognise the shortcomings of the latter, although I welcome the fact that the minimum wage (National Living Wage) has increased. I am proud that the Council has voluntarily adopted the UK Living Wage for its directly-employed staff. I recommend it to all employers across the city.

The Living Wage Foundation announced the new rate of the UK Living Wage at the beginning of the month and I am pleased to confirm that the Council will pay no less than the new rate of £8.25 per hour for all hours worked from 1st April 2016.

This is no small challenge as we are having more money taken away from us and it was recently announced that DCLG are taking a 30% cut which is going to mean greater cuts than what we have budgeted for. It is right that the people who work for us should be paid the Living Wage.

Supplementary Question 1:

Recognising that there are positive impacts in the lifting of the minimum wage, do you recognise that on a regular 40 hour week it means the lowest paid will be £42.00 a week worse off compared to if they were on the living wage?

Supplementary Question 2:

How does this fit with the statement you made in the Evening Post where you suggest that everyone should get a fair share in the success of Bristol?

Response to Supplementary Question 1 & 2:

We should endeavour, in every way, for everybody to get a fairer share in Bristol's success and we are aspiring to join the two thousand organisations across the UK that have become accredited Living Wage employers.

I intend to lead by example and I am currently working with employers to encourage them to have a greater involvement in social mobility across the city.

I think that is the way we increase the ability for people in this city who can be left out of the benefits of relative prosperity and help them to be part of it.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bill Payne

Subject: Work Place Pensions Scheme

1. The roll out of the Government's work place pensions scheme is causing considerable concern to people who receive Self Directed Support (SDS) who employ a Personal Assistant. At present people who receive SDS are not funded to cover pension scheme costs but only the care hours they received. Can the Mayor tell how the Council how his administration is addressing this problem?
2. Can the Mayor remind Council how many people living in Bristol receive Self Directed Support (SDS) and how many people receiving SDS does the council estimate will be affected by the Government's workplace pension scheme?

Response to Question 1:

Central Government is rolling out a system of auto-enrolment into pension schemes, whereby employers are required to make provision for their employees' pension arrangements.

Larger employers have been subject to these regulations for some time, and smaller employers, including Direct Payment recipients, are among the last to be affected.

All employers, of whatever size, need to make provision to meet their obligations.

Any Direct Payment recipient who has received a letter from the Pensions Regulator and is concerned about their ability to make provision should contact the City Council to discuss their individual circumstances.

Any Direct Payment recipient who has yet to receive a letter should wait until they do so.

Response to Question 2:

The total number of people in receipt of a Direct Payment is 1201. Councillors should bear in mind that only a proportion of these service users will employ Personal Assistants directly, rather than through an agency, and that not all PAs will be eligible under the scheme.

Supplementary Question:

A survey carried out by SCOPE and published in the Independent said that over half of disabled people are unable to access the support they need to live independently. Can you give me some assurance this is not happening in Bristol?

Response to Supplementary Question:

In terms of the Independent Living Allowance there is a real challenge as it is only being funded for one year and after we have to find alternative ways of funding those ninety or so recipients of it in Bristol.

I would have to come back to you with further information on that.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Parking in Horfield

A consultation exercise is underway with the affected residents of both Horfield and Southmead wards, with regard to the parking issues at Southmead Hospital. Will the Mayor commit to ensuring that any proposed solutions to the problem will be properly implemented and enforced?

Response:

Yes

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eileen Means

Subject: Public bus service to Callington Road Hospital

1. Since the No. 36 bus was re-routed by First, it has proved extremely difficult for relatives and friends to visit patients at Callington Road Hospital, many of whom are Older People with dementia or people living with mental health problems. What action has the Mayor taken to prioritise the provision of a public bus service to Callington Road Hospital in Brislington?
2. What assessment has Bristol City Council undertaken to monitor the impact recent changes to the No. 36 bus route have had upon residents in Brislington?

Response to Question 1:

A fully deregulated bus industry means that the Council is restricted in what it can do in relation to the provision of bus services. The Council has a limited bus subsidy budget which is used to support services which are deemed as socially necessary, taking consideration of the commercial bus market. This budget is fully committed at present and we are therefore unable to financially support a bus service to Callington Road Hospital. Representations have been made to First to review their rerouting of the 36, but they are committed to the current route, in the interests of the wider punctuality and reliability of the service.

Response to Question 2:

Changes to the commercial bus network happen on a regular basis, and the Council considers the impacts as they occur. We are aware of the loss of some the direct connections previously provided by the 36, but as a commercial service, we are not in a position to determine its route.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jenny Smith

Subject: Homelessness

1. In the summer Bristol City Council reported that the number of families facing homelessness in our city more than trebled in the past year. Can the Mayor update the Council regarding the present situation and as part of his answer can he tell me how many families are on the housing waiting list and how many single homeless people is the Council currently providing with emergency accommodation?
2. Will the Mayor update councillors regarding how the City Council is working with outreach organisations that work with homeless people and can he tell me whether we are supporting any service provision that provide medical assessments and support for homeless people in the city?

Response to Question 1:

The number of homeless households (families, singles and childless couples) where a homelessness application was taken in the last quarter (1/7/15 – 30/9/15) was 383 compared with the 272 for the same quarter last year. Of those, a full homelessness duty was accepted towards 273 households. As at 2nd November 2015 there were 9915 households on the housing register, 847 of these are homeless households to whom we have accepted a statutory duty to rehouse. We currently have 214 families occupying private sector temporary accommodation and 75 in commissioned hostels. There are 5 single people in private sector accommodation, 9 in crashpads and a further 290 in emergency supported accommodation.

Response to Question 2:

Whilst the number of households presenting to us as homeless has increased our aim continues to be to prevent homelessness wherever possible by trying to resolve the housing issue. We are working with and providing training to other departments and agencies to ensure that they are aware of the assistance that we may be able to give and to enable earlier intervention.

We continue to seek alternative accommodation in the private sector to assist us and we have recently increased our offer of incentives to landlords to assist with this.

The rough sleeping service was re-commissioned by BCC in October 2014 for three years (with an option to extend for a further two years) and is run from the Compass Centre (Jamaica St) and 1 New St, St Judes. The service provides outreach and engagement with rough sleepers (to move them into accommodation and support), education, training and employment activities, (including volunteering).

The rough sleeping service is provided by St Mungo's Broadway. There is close partnership working with the rough sleeping service from the following services and teams:

- The Housing Advice Team;
- The Accommodation Services Team (supported and private housing);
- The Anti-social behaviour team;
- The housing policy and contracts team;
- The Preventing Homelessness Board.

In partnership with the Preventing Homelessness Board a multi-agency rough sleeping task group has been formed with the rough sleeping team to put in place an action plan to reduce the high number of people sleeping rough in the city. Additional bed spaces have been arranged for the winter when the weather is particularly cold through the severe weather emergency protocol.

The Compass Health service is a GP practice for homeless people and is based in the Compass Centre and provides outreach sessions to other homelessness services. The Bristol Hospital discharge protocol is currently being revised to ensure that people being discharged from hospital with no fixed abode and referred to the correct teams within the city council prior to discharge.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ron Stone

Subject: War memorial honouring Sikh servicemen and women

The Sikh Community in Bristol numbers approximately 10,000. Their contribution to social integration and cultural diversity has helped make Bristol what it is. 83,000 Sikhs were killed in World War 1 and 109,000 seriously wounded fighting shoulder to shoulder with British troops for peace and against tyranny. Bristol currently lacks a dedicated Sikh War Memorial to their gallantry and sacrifice. Will our City Mayor recognise their efforts by holding a display and exhibition of Indian craft culture and history at M Shed or the City Museum in 2016 and will our City Mayor and Council work with The British Legion, Multi Faith Leaders to rectify this serious oversight by a memorial to them in a prominent central location in the City?

Response:

I welcome Cllr Stone's raising of this important issue.

It is right that we pay tribute to all those who fought bravely including the large Sikh population.

I would welcome exploring the possibility of an event marking their gallantry and look forward to receiving a proposal from the leaders of the Sikh community who I have spoken to on this matter.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ron Stone

Subject: Primary School Places

Councillors were recently advised that Primary School place demands had reached a peak and were likely to level off and fall in future years. Experience at Ward level in Bristol East shows an INCREASING demand for pre-school provision and increased numbers of asylum and refugee families that would tend to contradict your forecasts. How robust and accurate is the council's forecasting for primary school places and will existing designated new school sites be retained such as Speedwell Fire Station site and not disposed or prematurely until your predictions and reality of demand agree?

Response:

Our draft Integrated Education & Capital Strategy does indicate that there is a need for more early years (pre-school) provision in City, including in Bristol East. The Early Years team are working with providers with a view to increasing capacity in the City

Our pupil projections have modelled on going migration into the City. However, we recognise that the current asylum situation internationally means that the arrivals are at a higher level currently. We are currently involved in cross Council meetings to model this and to seek support from central government to resource additional demand.

We have a formal process to review the capital sites 'earmarked' for education use and would only release a site following consultation with education colleagues to ensure sites are not disposed of prematurely.

The current consultation on the draft Integrated Education & Capital Strategy closes at the end of this month and there are a number of consultation events currently taking place.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Wollacott

Subject: Trade Union facility time

There are proposals that are currently progressing through parliament, in the Trade Union Bill designed to undermine facility time that is essential to maintaining a good working relationship with local unions. We face a choice on how we engage with our local trade unions, we either choose to work in a collaborative manner, working in partnership, as we have done, or a more adversarial path. Would the Mayor agree that there is, currently a good working relationship with our in-house trade unions, and that any attack on facility time for representatives would only serve to undermine this relationship and will he give guarantees that he will not move to challenge existing facility time and write to local MP's and the appropriate minister to express what a serious retrograde step this proposal would have on industrial relations in the council?

Response:

I agree that there is a good working relationship between the Council and trade unions.

I can confirm there are no plans to change the level of trade union facility time that is current in use across the Council, though we are looking to ensure that no employee spends their whole time on trade union duties so that they can keep the knowledge and skills associated with their substantive roles up-to-date.

I will be writing to the Secretary of State, copying all local MPs, and I will make my letter available to Councillors.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: Danby house

Danby house is the only tower block in Lockleaze and relies on one lift, fitted 50 years ago. Any lift repairs can take a long time as it is difficult to get spare parts for such an old lift. Many over 50's and disabled people are housed by the council in this block. If the lift breaks down, as happened a few weeks ago, many of the vulnerable tenants are stranded, as they are unable to use the stairs. Other cities such as Birmingham have made it a priority in their housing strategy to build 1/2 bedroom ground floor and accessible properties for older and disabled people, to enable them to remain actively involved in their communities and maintain their independence as long as possible. How does Bristol compare to other Core Cities in its provision of new 1/2 bedroom council properties suitable for older and disabled people?

Response:

Danby House is one of only two multi-storey blocks with a single lift, all other blocks have two. The current lift was renewed in 1990 and, as there have been a number of breakdowns over the last year, major repairs to the lift will be undertaken in the New Year. Both Estate Management and the Services to Older People Teams are aware of the repair plans and will introduce measures to support vulnerable tenants whilst the works are carried out.

We are also exploring the feasibility of fitting an additional lift in this block. If this can be done we will also be able to renew the existing lift as part of the same project.

This means the council has 4,616 homes with 1 and 2 bedrooms that are for older or disabled tenants, this represents nearly 17% of our stock.

The council has just started to build new council homes again. The first phase of these homes is larger (4+ bed) family homes. These are the homes in most acute need; with the largest gap between the supply and demand (only 18 x 4+ bed homes were re-let in the last year, meeting only 7% of that need).

However, after this first phase, our priority would be to build new homes will be smaller (1 or 2 bed) homes in existing estates. These homes will be targeted at tenants who are under-occupying and who wish to downsize. Many of these new homes will be bungalows and all are being built to Lifetime Homes standard, meaning they can readily meet the needs of disabled residents.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: Romney / Lockleaze bus link

Lockleaze residents and UWE students have been waiting over a year for the planned 72 bus route to serve Lockleaze estate and provide a faster route for students to UWE. Despite ongoing negotiations between BCC officers and S. Glos council, delays to the opening of Romney Bus Link continue, and this is blocking the bus service Lockleaze residents so badly need.

Will the Mayor undertake to personally contact South Gloucestershire Council to negotiate a resolution to the problem that is holding up the opening of the Romney Bus Link?

Response:

Peter Mann, Service Director Transport, has made numerous representations to his counterpart in South Gloucestershire Council to press for the opening of this route so that buses can use it and serve the residents. Disappointingly, little positive response has been forthcoming and we are very much in the hands of others to achieve this. However, we will continue to use all the influence we can to ensure the route is available as soon as possible.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Langley

Subject: Trade Union Bill

1. Considering the cost of deducting union subs from payroll is effectively zero, and the challenging economic climate that local government has been operating under recently, and will continue to for the lifetime of the current government; Does the Mayor feel that current proposals to empower employers to stop the use of such facilities as short sighted, and likely to undermine harmonious industrial relations, at a time when these relationships are under unprecedented pressure due to current economic policy and subject to the answer above, will he write to the appropriate Minister and to MP's within the City to express concern at this retrograde proposal, and encourage a more holistic approach by employers towards employees and their trade unions representatives?
2. It is a long established legal principle that agency workers should not be used to undermine lawful industrial action. If the Mayor agrees that such action will have the effect of seriously undermining industrial relations in any given situation, and given that the Recruitment and Employment Confederation has also expressed concerns over this regressive legislative change, will he write to the appropriate minister, and local MPs, challenging the validity of this attack on worker's rights?

Response:

I cannot see the benefit of the proposal to end the practice of trade union members paying their union membership fees via the payroll.

I would be concerned that the use of agency workers to cover for those on strike could damage relations between the Council and trade unions. This could impact on the Council's ability to agree with the trade unions that employees carrying out certain essential services will not be called out on strike, which has become practice over recent years.

I will be writing to the Secretary of State, copying all local MPs, and I will make my letter available to Councillors.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Improve air quality in Bristol

What steps is the Mayor taking to improve air quality in Bristol by encouraging all bus companies operating routes in the city to reduce emissions from their buses?

Response:

Over the last 5 years the Council has been involved in lowering bus emissions through the following:

As part of our supported bus service contracts we specify minimum emission standards of the buses to be used on contracted services.

Working with bus operators to introduce minimum vehicle requirements on the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) through a Quality Partnership Scheme (QPS).

Working with operators interested in running MetroBus to introduce low emission vehicles to use MetroBus facilities through a QPS.

We have received a Department for Transport grant through the Clean Vehicle Technology Fund to fit 42 single deck buses with thermal management technology to reduce NOx emissions.

We have recently submitted a bid to the Clean Bus Technology Fund to improve the emission levels of 35 of the dirtiest buses in the city with equipment to reduce NOx emissions.

We are in the process of submitting a £5m bid to the Office of Low Emission Vehicles for bio-methane powered buses, in association with our bus operating partners.

We have received grant funding from the Department for Transport for the purchase of 2 hybrid-electric vehicles which will be in operation in December 2015.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Barry Clark

Subject: Stockwood, Hengrove and Whitchurch Neighbourhood Partnership

1. What action has the Mayor taken to help the Stockwood, Hengrove and Whitchurch Neighbourhood Partnership which is expected to expand by 25% through the merging of the Hengrove and half of the Whitchurch Park wards and not had its budget altered to reflect this?
2. To just decide on a whim without any consultation that the Whitchurch Park community should be split asunder and just placed where ever is convenient for the officers involved seems extremely negative. We have ample time to review the neighbourhood partnerships in order to make sure that they are best placed to be able to deal with the new ward boundaries. Will the Mayor fully review and rearrange the Neighbourhood partnerships following the boundary changes in order to best serve our communities?

Response:

NPs have always been organised around electoral boundaries. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has changed the Bristol ward boundaries, and as a result of this the NP boundaries have also changed.

I appreciate that many councillors and other NP stakeholders would like the opportunity to revisit the NP boundaries. I would support discussions and consultation about the future shape of NPs generally, which could include a discussion about the boundaries and distribution of resources.

Officers are looking into a timeline for a review of neighbourhood partnerships.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charles Lucas

Subject: ASHTON GATE STATION

1. Can the Mayor state what role, if any, a fully functioning railway station at Ashton Gate would play in his transport plans for the Bristol Arena?
2. Given the tremendous amount of public support for the reopening of a station at this strategically important location, and its proximity to Bristol City FC and Bristol rugby, is the Mayor prepared to reconsider inclusion of this project in his forthcoming draft capital budget recommendations?

Response to Question 1:

I am very strongly in support of having a station at Ashton Gate. I think there is an increasing case for it with the development of the stadium and the further development that will be generated around the stadium.

There is also a case in terms of the rail connections to the Arena and the availability of public transport to the Arena. The Council is working with the train operator to provide additional journeys to serve arena events.

Response to Question 2:

A feasibility study was undertaken last year to explore options for a new station at Ashton Gate. The study at that point found that there is not currently a strong enough business case to support a new Ashton Gate station. A new station here is likely to cost several million pounds to deliver so we have to make sure the business case is built.

As was the case for the Henbury Loop and so much other rail investment it does depend on the information that goes in in terms of the result you get out and I think we need to look at some of the information that goes in, working with the Ashton Gate team as to see whether a better case can be made.

I cannot include the project in the budget recommendations until we get a team agreement by West of England because it is part of the West of England transport system. I would welcome you and other councillors pushing for it as much as possible.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: WATERSHED CENSURE

1. Is the Mayor aware of, and what is his reaction to, the Charity Commission's recent censure of Bristol's Watershed for failing to observe political balance in its programming - in particular, the anti-Israel bias exposed and expressed in its Palestinian Film Festival (due to be held in December 2015)?

Response:

This is a matter between the Watershed and the Charity Commission's.

My understanding from the Watershed is that they have not received an official censure and I simply do not know where this idea came from.

Supplementary Question:

Does the Mayor welcome the fact that apparently Watershed is about to tighten its views or its procedures on political partiality?

Response to Supplementary Question:

Watershed themselves have said they are extremely concerned at the implications of your statement and their role is to showcase temporary culture in all its diversities without political bias of any kind.

I do not believe they are challenging from a particular political stance. They would be prepared to be challenging from all sorts of stances and you happen to have picked on one.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

Subject: WARM UP BRISTOL

1. Since the contactor Climate Energy went into administration I have received many complaints from my residents who have participated in the Warm Up Bristol scheme. Many have complained about sub-standard work/unfinished works and deposits paid with no start dates etc. Can the Mayor confirm that the council department dealing with this crisis will be adequately resourced in terms of staffing to deal with and manage the fallout from this insolvency in a timely manner?
2. What quality control measures govern the selection of firms as partner organisations to the council and can the Mayor confirm that these measures were adhered to in the selection of Climate Energy?

Response to Question 1:

The Energy Service is in the process of recruiting additional staff to the Warm Up Bristol team to complete the outstanding works. The team will be paid for from the work completed.

The Energy Service has now signed an addendum to the Climate Energy contract with most of the Warm Up Bristol installers and work has commenced this week. We will be dealing with the high priority cases in the first instance and these are properties where there is a genuine Health & Safety concern, a danger of damage to the property or where there are vulnerable occupants residing.

Response to Question 2:

The team is working very hard to improve the quality of the works together with the installers and requirements on quality control have been included in the addendum that the installers have signed. Council Officers will be also checking the quality of the works on site on a regular basis and be present for signing the completed works off so that any potential issues can be resolved together.

Since the demise of Climate Energy I think there has been a good response by the team and I think that the process of omitting the 'middle man' organisation has been a positive one.

Supplementary Question 1:

As Climate Energy was doing quite a poor job, does the Mayor think we could have stepped in earlier?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

There was an understanding that Climate Energy were not performing as one might have wished and action was being taken.

Supplementary Question 2:

Can the Mayor assure us that lessons will be learned and we will take steps not to let this sort of thing happen again?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

This has been taken with a huge amount of seriousness by the team who have shown concern and some very hard lessons have been learned.

I think you should judge people by how they respond to a crisis and I think they have responded extremely well.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows

Subject: COUNCIL 20 MPH SURVEY

Following the publication of the recent survey by Dr Adrian Davis on Bristol's 20 mph speed limits, does the Mayor agree that, often, the outcome of such studies very much depends upon how the question is actually phrased or put to the public?

Response:

Poorly constructed surveys with badly formatted questions can indeed be misleading and produce biased results. This is why all of the 20mph surveys conducted on behalf of the project are commissioned by independent professional marketing companies such as YouGov.

The questions asked from 20mph surveys in Bristol are clear and concise and the outcome builds a true picture of views of those surveyed about speed and their local neighbourhoods. Our results are also reflected within other surveys undertaken elsewhere in the UK and are corroborated nationally and internationally within other 20mph studies where people consistently show support for 20mph speed limits on residential roads.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: BRISTOL ARENA

1. Can the Mayor tell me when the promised transport strategy for the Bristol Arena will become available for consultation and comment?
2. What scope will there be for these proposals to be changed, revised or redrawn in the light of public response to these plans?

Response:

The recent Bristol Arena consultation, during September and October, included the emerging transport package to support the development. The planning application is currently being finalised and will be submitted later this month. The proposed transport package to support the Arena will be included as part of this application and will be publically available when the application is submitted. A period of statutory consultation will follow submission as part of the planning process.

A wide range of comments relating to transport were received as part of the recent consultation and these comments have informed the proposed transport strategy which will be submitted. The statutory consultation period is another opportunity for people to comment on all aspects of the application, including transport.

There will be an element of monitoring and evaluation to some aspects of the proposed transport package to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: 20 MPH CITYWIDE ROLL-OUT

The Mayor will be aware that in September 2015, the final part of Bristol (including my ward of Bishopsworth) became subject to the 20 mph speed regime. Bearing in mind that the primary justification for the citywide roll-out was a claimed reduction in personal-injuries (despite the confused picture provided by the two 20 mph pilots), can the Mayor confirm that a review of pre- and post-20 mph zone personal-injury figures by the Neighbourhood Partnerships will be carried out and, if so, when?

Response:

The final phase was indeed celebrated by local primary school children and residents in the south of the city in September and marked the completion of the rollout.

As noted in the cabinet report written in July 2012 there are **three** aims for the 20mph speed limits and influencing casualty reduction was only one of these. The project also aims to help increase total physical activity time in the population through increases in routine walking and cycling and seeks to achieve an increase in social cohesion. As with any project based on behaviour change it will take a few years to collate evidence and there are, of course, other interventions going on in the city which will also have an influence. This is to be expected as 20mph has always been part of a wider transport programme aimed at improving transport in the city.

As part of the monitoring of the project data pre and post implementation will be collated and includes traffic volumes and speeds, collision data and household interview surveys to track changes in attitudes. This data will be collected over a period of 3 years which is in line with our standard practice to evidence the impact of the speed limits.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

Subject: PRINCE STREET SWING BRIDGE

1. The Mayor will be aware of public concerns regarding the impact of the closure of the Prince Street Swing Bridge. Could he advise us of progress please, and the estimated date for its re-opening?
2. Has the Mayor instructed officers to research the effect of this closure on local businesses and, more importantly, what can be done to help them?

Response to Question 1:

Work to uncover the full extent of the problems with the bridge is ongoing. Significant corrosion of the iron structure has been revealed and the best way of repairing and replacing the affected elements is being determined. The age, condition and unique heritage nature of the bridge means that this is non-standard work. The original programme was to reopen to traffic in April 2016, but that may well be affected by the issues which have subsequently come to light and the practical solutions which need to be found. We will have a more precise understanding of the programme in approximately a month's time when investigations and testing should be complete.

Response to Question 2:

The impact of the bridge closure is being monitored in terms of traffic flows and journey times; data is being collected during November in order to produce a report detailing the changes which occur due to the diversions in place. This is in addition to the real-time traffic monitoring and management which takes place in the city every day. We will ensure that the negative impacts of the closure are kept to a minimum by completing the works as promptly as possible and maintaining the signing and alternative routes which are in place to indicate to the public and businesses how best to access the area.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Melias

Subject: RESIDENTS' PARKING PERMITS

1. Can the Mayor tell me what progress has been made in rectifying the problems many people have experienced (automatic cut-offs after 30 minutes waiting to speak to someone) in contacting the Council's dedicated Parking Permits telephone contact line?
2. Does the Mayor agree that few private businesses or organisations could afford such a cavalier approach to customer service?

Response to Question 1:

The problem outlined, with members of the public having difficulty in contacting the Permits Team by phone, has been an increasing one as the number of new residents parking schemes has gradually increased over the past few months.

Up until recently all calls were being answered by the RPS Permit Team, but officers became increasingly aware that insufficient resource was available to deal with the growing number of enquiries.

Measures were therefore taken to transfer these phone calls to the Councils Citizen Service Centre (CSC) where additional resources are available to deal with the increased number of calls. The transfer of the phone lines was completed on Friday 30th October.

All calls related to the Residents' Parking Schemes are now being handled, in the first instance by the CSC who offer advice and respond to general questions, with more detailed queries being referred onto the Permits Team.

This change has only been in place for a short period of time, but initial indications are that this change has reduced the wait time quite significantly and appears to have resolved the problem. Figures from last week indicated a 92% answer rate – calls answered within 2 minutes. Officers will continue to monitor the situation and will address any issues as they arise.

Response to Question 2:

The permit phone line has been in place for a number of years and the service provided has never been in question.

Additional resource was also put in place to deal with the expected increase in calls due to the roll out of the new RPS schemes.

The number of calls however greatly exceeded expectations with many of the calls being simple queries regarding permit prices and eligibility, despite this information being readily available on the Councils website and information packs mailed to all residents.

Many private organisations have moved towards customer self-service and many such as the high street banks, do not provide phone numbers for their customers or members of the public.

The Council has however continued to offer a digital application process supplemented by a telephone service to those customers who need it.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Peter Abraham

Subject: THE DOWNS

At the last Full Council meeting the Mayor gave his assurance that much delayed works would be undertaken by November, on Stoke Road (the main route across the Downs for buses), to ensure that traffic flows freely and, in particular, so that buses and public service vehicles would no longer experience lengthy delays.

Is the Mayor going to honour this commitment?

Response:

The Downs parking scheme was approved last week and officers are currently finalising the implementation with the contractors. We fully expect the scheme to be on site this month as previously anticipated.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

Subject: PARKING AT BRISTOL HOSPITALS

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not he has read the recent survey which revealed the rising (average) cost of parking for people visiting hospitals run by North Bristol NHS Trust?
2. Irrespective of any concessionary schemes or places that may be available to visitors to these facilities, do you not think it is understandable that many – particularly in the case of Southmead Hospital – will simply choose instead to park for nothing in surrounding residential streets?

Response:

I am aware that parking costs are rising across the vast majority of NHS Trusts. Whilst it is the responsibility of the Trust to set charges and to assess the impact of this on their visitors, we have been working closely with the Trust on monitoring the impact on the residential areas around Southmead Hospital and are taking action, funded using Section 106 monies, to remove unsafe and obstructive parking from these areas.

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: COP 21

The Green Councillor group welcome the fact that the Mayor will be attending COP21, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, in Paris during December and note that Bristol, as European Green Capital, has a particular leadership role during that conference. We trust that he will be adding his voice to those striving to finally reach a global political settlement that attempts to limit our destruction of the planet's ecosystems. From a more local perspective; can he confirm that Bristol is on track to reach the carbon targets adopted in 2009 of 80% reduction by 2050?

Response:

I confirm that I will be adding Bristol's voice to call for and contribute to a significant climate change target. I think Bristol should be proud that we are playing a part by partnering with the city of Paris.

Bristol's carbon emissions are reported annually, including to Place Scrutiny Commission. The most recent year of data is 2013.

Annual data on emissions is subject to a number of variables outside of Bristol, such as UK electricity supply generation mix and winter weather conditions.

Bristol has reduced energy use by 18% and carbon dioxide emissions by 17% between 2005 and 2013.

During this time there has been a 24% reduction in per capita emissions, as Bristol's population has grown by almost 8%.

This is one of the highest rates of carbon reduction of any major city and Bristol has the lowest per capita carbon emissions of the largest cities in England. A lot of people have put a lot of hard work into ensuring this should happen.

We are therefore broadly in line with our 2020 targets which is an essential step towards the 80% reduction you talk about by 2050. Thanks to research undertaken by the University of Bristol we have been able to plot a trajectory to the 2025 and 2035 targets. This will require significant investment and action by many organisations, individuals and communities.

I will do everything I can to ensure we deliver the 80% reductions by 2050. I am advised that to try to go beyond 80% at the moment would be deceptive and would be rhetoric rather than reality. Let's hope we can make that reality between now and then.

Supplementary Question 1:

The cabinet institute report published by Bristol University concluded that our role as European Green Capital could generate up to ten thousand clean sustainable jobs. Are you going to drop the recommendations of that report as so far as that's possible?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

I will be championing that report at Paris as one of our transformational actions.

While it is not Green Capital alone that would have created those ten thousand jobs, it is the pathway to Green Capital and beyond that creates the ten thousand jobs.

I think the fact that people had the foresight for Bristol to go for Green Capital which involved civil society as well as the politicians; that would have made a huge difference to our green and clean economy and to the provision of jobs that will be coming between now, 2020 and beyond.

Supplementary Question 2:

Will you be able to report back on the progress of those recommendations and the progress of those actions?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

We will continue to monitor the progress but we have to take these things step by step.

As an authority we are ahead of the game and have almost met the targets for 2020. As a city we have some way to go.

We will continue to monitor the progress annually or at least by-annually.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor McMullen

Subject: Bristol's approach to the budget this year with respect to the national welfare cuts

You will be aware that many vulnerable people groups in our city are going to face significant changes to their welfare support in the coming budget cycle, including people with disabilities, young people, large families etc. which may result in homelessness, isolation, destitution, and other outcomes. Although it is clear that officers have taken considerable care within their budget areas to look at how we respond to welfare cuts, a wider change of tack with respect to budget setting, I feel, is needed to specifically address this crisis.

Will the Mayor consider a strategic reallocation of spending to support the needs of people impacted by the significant welfare reforms being imposed on Bristol?

Specifically, to:

- a) Allocate extra resources to work out an adequate overarching response across departments to the welfare cuts,
- b) Redirect funds to front line services that specifically support those who are going to be adversely impacted by multiple welfare cuts.

Response:

I have already taken steps to ensure that the council's existing budget makes provision to support those impacted by welfare reform. I introduced a £250k annual budget for hardship and those most in need from 2014/15 onwards.

I have ensured that funding sources are identified as a single source to fund a holistic approach to all welfare reform changes; this will also include the local crisis and prevention fund of £1.7m which was included in the approved budget for 2015/16.

Bristol City Council is also one of few remaining council to retain a fully funded Council Tax Reduction support scheme at an estimated annual cost of £4m.

There is a limit to how much we can address with the money Central Governments leaves with the Authority. We will do everything we can to ensure we protect the most vulnerable citizens in the city.

Supplementary Question 1:

Can the Mayor commit to assessing a very specific set of vulnerable people within our city who will be most affected by the budget cuts?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

The Welfare Reform Steering Group crosses all affected areas and is monitoring this week by week. This is an up to date and continuing process that is addressing all these issues. It is covering benefits, homelessness, housing, health, children, families and other areas.

We will be targeting those most affected by the welfare reforms and engaging with them before the changes are implemented to see how we can best offer help.

This includes additional front line posts that will work with citizens engaging and offering in depth support to those most affected.

I am determined that we deal with this as most effectively as we can within the limitations of our resources.

Supplementary Question 2:

Given that the Independent Living Fund subsidy from Government is running out this year, is Bristol going to continue to replace that?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

We can't afford to continue to replace it but what we have done is assessed all those receiving the Independent Living Fund and what alternative funding they could be entitled to.

Question from Councillor Jerome Thomas

Subject: Warm Up Bristol

Despite setbacks we need to ensure that Warm Up Bristol can still achieve its potential as a flagship Bristol and national retrofitting and energy saving project. As well as the need to resolve issues for existing customers due to Climate Energy going into administration, and the recent changes in government energy schemes, will the Mayor comment on the options for closer council control of programme delivery and greater community involvement that could gain greater social value?

Response:

I think Warm UP Bristol is still on course to achieving its potential as a flagship Bristol and national retrofitting scheme despite the setbacks. There has been a huge amount of support in terms of the aims of the scheme.

I think the challenge now is to make sure that it is delivered as first intended.

I believe it adds a huge amount of social value to. It is not just about energy but about community and affordability to. It is dealing with the issue of energy poverty which is one of the big issues we have to deal with.

I am happy to report that Bristol Energy has signed up its first customers in the last week and is now into its trial period.

Supplementary Question 1:

Is the Council planning to replace Climate Energy with another single provider as it sounds like you are thinking of keeping control of operations in house?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

At the moment we do not see a reason to do so. We will test the current way of doing it which cuts out the middle provider but we will retain an open mind if we find it does put too much strain on the system.

I would not see us following the same module as we were before as we may have discovered a better way of delivering. I will be very interested to see how the other authorities who were using Climate Energy responded to see if there are any lessons to be learned from them.

Supplementary Question 2:

In terms of the lessons learned, is there a formal learning review mechanism that you are planning to put in place with regards to the initial selection of Climate Energy and the module that we used?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

We always have a review whether you would call it formal or not.

I do not want to impose a lengthy bureaucratic process on it but you can be assured that there is a proper review of what has taken place and what replaces it.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

Subject: Public accountability during the Mayoral election campaign

Will the Mayor be both encouraging, and attending a high number of hustings and Q&A events in the run-up to the Mayoral election in May 2016?

Response:

There is an on-going discussion with the other candidates about how we can ensure we get the most out of the very short lead up to the election. I think most people agree that this isn't through having an unlimited number of hustings.

I personally think it is better to do fewer more focused hustings and this is what I will be encouraging.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bolton

Subject: Residents parking

Residents Parking is currently being implemented in Southville. This has brought up a number of issues, one of which is to do with the treatment of nannies and child care professionals. Currently nannies and child care professionals need to either use visitors' permits, park in a pay and display or shared use parking bay or use an off-street car park.

Concerned constituents are being told that the Council is aware that there are not currently specific permits available for nannies or child care professionals, but that this will be considered as part of a review of the policy later this year. Can the Mayor confirm if the council has looked into this issue, and if so what the results are - if not, when will it be looked into and when can we expect a response?

Response:

I am aware that some citizens and child care professionals are concerned that the options currently available under the Residents' Parking Schemes do not suit their needs.

As a result we are exploring the possibility of making an appropriate change to the Residents' Parking Schemes next year; the permit policy review will be carried out once we have finished delivery of the RPS programme later this year.

Requests for changes to the scheme rules will be considered in respect of all the RPS areas at once, so that each area benefits from any changes we identify.

We hope that as part of this process a long-term solution can be found for nannies and child care professionals.

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: Right to Buy applied to Housing Associations

The Green Group of Councillors think that the conservative land grab (otherwise known as Right-to-Buy) aimed at Housing Associations is an ideologically driven and poorly thought out idea. These assets have been built up over many years and are now being effectively stolen from charities and not-for-profit organisations for short term political gain. Can the Mayor confirm that he agrees with the Green Party group that the Right-to-buy provisions should not be applied to Housing Associations?

Response:

The extension of right to buy is a matter outside of Local Authority control, the City Council and the Mayor will be unable to decide whether or not the new right-to-buy provision will be applied locally as the issue has been legislated.

The Government has accepted the National Housing Federation's offer to implement the Right to Buy (RTB) on a voluntary basis and Part 4 of the new Housing and Planning Bill provides for grants to be paid to associations to compensate them for selling homes at a discount. The Bill provides a mechanism through which local housing authorities will be required to make payments to the Secretary of State.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Telford

Subject: Nelson Street/Fairfax Street pedestrianisation consultation

The council has now consulted on the Nelson Street Public Realm Strategy three times. This is a route I use regularly on my cycle-commute in and out of the city centre. The feedback to the latest consultation (which garnered 149 responses, a good number) reads:

“Most people supported the crossroads option to All Saints Street which reduces traffic movements. Whilst this provides simpler traffic movements, this is contrary to standard guidance on cycles facing traffic however. It does provide the opportunity to pedestrianise Fairfax Street though, which has considerable support.”

I understand that this is now going out for further consultation because some of the larger businesses in this area haven't submitted their responses in time, despite residents and civic groups having managed to respect the deadline

Does the Mayor think that these vital improvements for safety, legibility and traffic control need to go out to four consultations for him to be able to make a decision, and can the Mayor provide some leadership and implement the Fairfax Street improvements which, as the latest consultation says, have “considerable support”?

Response:

There is support for creating a cross roads at the All Saints Lane/Nelson St junction. Changes to traffic movements can clearly have an impact outside the immediate location, however, and the crossing of a two-way segregated cycle routes by vehicles needs careful consideration to create a safe cycling environment.

Fairfax Street provides the only access for large vehicles to The Galleries underground service area, as well as being a bus route. In the revised arrangement all this traffic would come along All Saints Lane and exit onto Fairfax Street at the already complex junction at the bottom of The Pithay.

Officers are currently looking in detail at traffic movements through the area to ensure that the proposed changes would work technically, create a safe cycling environment and retain some resilience in the network for future development. If this can be established this option will be promoted.

The Galleries is essential to the economic well-being of Broadmead and the Council seeks to work for the community through consensus. Whilst every attempt is made to engage with stakeholders during consultations, where they are directly affected by proposals the Council would always seek to consult with them individually. This enables us to understand their concerns and overcome, where possible, any objections that could delay the formal Traffic Regulation Order process that is required to effect the changes.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Denyer

Subject: Trade Union Bill

The contribution that the union movement in Bristol makes to the quality of our workplaces and the democratic interaction within our city is clear. Given national legislation currently being brought, which stands to severely limit the freedom of unions to act on behalf working people, Bristol should make it clear that as a city we reject this legislation.

Will the Mayor make a commitment to sign collective agreements with unions in Bristol City Council workplaces to ensure that their role and rights are protected as far as possible? In particular, will the Mayor commit to not hiring agency staff to cover striking workers?

Response:

All of the Council's employees are covered by one or other of a range of national collective agreements.

Local collective agreements are made from time-to-time, most recently on the introduction of a new contract of employment, including a revised scheme of payments for working additional hours and overtime, on bank/public holidays, at night, on shift patterns, and for stand-by and call-out arrangements.

In reality, the scope for hiring agency workers to cover those on strike is very limited because it is unlikely that suitably skilled and experienced agency workers could be found to cover work, particularly as it is difficult to know in advance who will be on strike.

In any event I would be concerned that the use of agency workers could damage relations between the Council and trade unions. This could impact on the Council's ability to agree with the trade unions that employees carrying out certain essential services will not be called out on strike, which has become practice over recent years.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bolton

Subject: Ashton Gate school

I'd like to thank the Mayor for coming to Ashton Gate primary school last week and seeing for himself the problems faced by parents, teachers and staff at the school with the volumes of traffic going down Upton Road.

The officers have basically said what to parents are all the right things – namely they will seek to close the school to through traffic in the longer term, and take other safety measures to seek to remedy the situation. However, they have also raised concerns over funding.

Will the Mayor undertake the following?

1. Make resolving traffic problems at Upton Road a top priority
2. Ensure funding is in place for any solution
3. Ensure the school and parents are kept informed of progress

Response:

I am supportive in principle of a road closure, and am disappointed that the opportunity was not taken to progress this as part of the school development, and create an improved sense of place directly outside the school.

I am mindful however, of the objections the Council received to the proposal to close Upton Road when this was included in the planning application for the school development. Nevertheless, child safety is of utmost importance, so I have asked officers to work up a closure option for consultation. In doing so, they will work closely with the school and local community so that the proposal addresses local concerns.

This is in addition to the Council's approved works programme and so funding will need to be identified from an appropriate source.

In the meantime officers are carrying out some short term changes to the area to increase the visibility of the school and improve safety.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hoyt

Subject: Glyphosate free Ashley trial

Last month I wrote to the Mayor and proposed that Ashley Ward could be used as a glyphosate free zone. A neighbouring authority, Glastonbury has already successfully trialled the safe alternative foamstream. So far I haven't received a response from the Mayor on this proposal.

On 15th September at Full Council I asked if you would help move Bristol away from glyphosate based herbicides. You seem genuinely supportive of this, but since then I feel this issue has somewhat been brushed under the carpet. This is a grave concern for many people across the city and especially in my ward of Ashley. Can the Mayor confirm whether he will support a glyphosate free Ashley trial, and if so when this could be started?

Response:

I have asked officers to look at the Glastonbury trial and to consider the available information about herbicides to consider what would be possible and practical in Bristol

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins (Knowle Ward)

Subject: Temple Meads and Arena Traffic

1. When Councillors asked Transport Officers how, after the removal of the gyratory roundabout near Temple Meads drivers coming from Bath and Wells Road would get to Temple Meads or the Enterprise Zone, we were told that they should travel past St Mary Redcliffe, loop around that roundabout and then come back past St Mary Redcliffe. Not only was this not good news but also I was aware that there was a desire to reduce traffic past St Mary Redcliffe Church. When questioned by me, you (the Mayor) said that the manoeuvre would not be possible as that roundabout was to be removed.

This I put back to our Head of Transport during the last few days who assured me that no decision had been made on the St Mary Redcliffe Roundabout and that if it was removed Temple Mead bound transport would have to head off towards Old Market roundabout to do a u-turn. Can we have some clarity on this matter as neither cutting off most of South Bristol from the railway station and Enterprise Zone or having long u-turn routes on busy roads is attractive.

2. The justification for the road redesign outside Temple Meads was to allow the traffic to flow better. Given that quite regularly the third inbound lane on the bridge is mainly unused due to traffic queuing for the u-turn at the Fowlers roundabout, do you not think that the road design around the area needs to be reconsidered?

Response to Question 1:

After consulting officers I can confirm that there is a long term aspiration to remove the Redcliffe Church Roundabout. It would be an unacceptable option to use the Redcliffe Roundabout as a turning point in order to bring traffic into the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone. I think it would be a very poor strategy to build a major car park at Temple Meads for the arena as has been discussed before.

The redesign of the Temple Circus roundabout maintains the existing prohibited right turn into Bristol Temple Meads Station Approach for vehicles approaching from the south on the A4 and A37. The alternative to this route will be to take York Road, Redcliffe Hill and Redcliffe Way, or continue to the Old Market Roundabout and return. Traffic from the Bath Rd also has the option of diverting to St Philips Causeway and accessing both the Enterprise Zone and Temple Meads via Albert Road and Avon Street. Journey times and distances to Temple Meads from Bedminster Bridge are both reduced. We have consulted with representatives of the licensed taxi trade and our proposals were welcomed.

Response to Question 2:

The objectives of the Temple Gate (Temple Circus) improvements are to provide a greatly improved gateway to the City that will enhance sustainable forms of transport and movement such as walking, cycling and buses whilst maintaining existing traffic capacity. It will also reduce the land currently taken up by the highway and release it for regeneration that will create employment opportunities and new civic spaces.

The design of the Bath Bridges junction is being reviewed as an integral part of the overall Temple Gate scheme. This will include a new crossing for pedestrians and cyclists across the junction with York Road.

Supplementary Question 1:

Currently traffic cannot move from Wells Road onto the Bath Road to access Albert Road. I want to know how that would be overcome.

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

Traffic coming from Wells Road would have to go past the station as it currently does.

Supplementary Question 2:

It was mentioned a while ago that the Taxis could possibly turn right part of the way towards the roundabout at Old Market but this would not be the case for ordinary cars. So are cars going to have to go up to the Old Market roundabout to do a u-turn or not?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

The information I have got is that cars will have to go up to Old Market if that was their chosen direction but there are other options.

I would find it unacceptable if we were throwing more traffic past St Mary Redcliffe Church rather than around Redcliffe Roundabout as had previously been indicated to you.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: The need to maintain updated records of all high-density housing to support good planning and maximise our rate support grant from Westminster.

Cotham ward, that I represent, is the most densely-populated by families, flat-dwelling professionals and students in the whole city, by a wide margin. It has special protection in the form of an Article 4 Direction against further conversion from family houses to more dense occupation without a planning approval. Our Development Management policies (DM2) do not support excessive densification. But this protection applies only to certain recently-updated Conservation Areas and not to cramming more people into existing multiple-occupancy accommodation. Planning controls are being challenged with the only beneficiaries being the large business landlords.

The only defence at an Appeal against planning refusal for this densification in Bristol is to demonstrate that the local area has so much similar densely-occupied accommodation that more would upset fragile 'balanced, sustainable communities'. Many residents argue that this is not a clear definition, or threshold as used by other cities, and is made more contentious as Council records of licensed and unlicensed HMOs and other types of accommodation do not reflect the actuality on the streets. The Super Output Areas do not match high density areas and so are unhelpful.

In addition we have inadequate knowledge of the conditions within private rented accommodation in which many of the students guesting in our city are living. We issue standards attached to landlords' licenses but inspections are rare. We do not have the information we need to monitor and intervene as we should. As each year rolls out, the Universities are able to compile a list of properties in which their respective students live but these are not public records. There are at present approximately 60,000 students studying and living in Fresher's halls, purpose-built student accommodation and in flats and Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the communities in Bristol.

Cotham has the greatest numbers of students living within our community which adds much to the vitality and character of the area and some clashes of lifestyles. I am heartened that constant good work from the Student Community Partnership is easing resulting issues. Much of this resource cost comes from the Universities in the context of a very complex financial model. Most student properties are Class N exempt from Council tax and this shortfall in income to the council is compensated by a block grant from Government distributed on the basis of a national estimate. This grant is not keeping up with the increase in student numbers in Bristol and so our ability to provide services for all our inhabitants is further weakened.

1. Will the mayor confirm how Bristol, heavily penalised in the government cuts to support funds, and one of the fastest-growing double university cities, has made certain that it is not losing out a second time and having to deliver services to an expanding population with central compensating funding that does not fairly match the unknown loss of Council tax income?

2. Will the Mayor explain how this council will better work with the city's Universities and letting agents to ensure we have a regularly updated accurate record of the locations, with

numbers of occupants of all properties in Bristol which also records where their condition falls below recognised acceptable standards?

Response to Question 1:

I would say with difficulty.

Response to Question 2

I assume that the question relates to rented properties. In 2012 there were an estimated 40,000 properties in the private rented sector in Bristol.

The Council has developed a good working relationship with both the University of Bristol and the University of the West of England. The Universities have recently provided information on the number of students living in each unit postcode in Bristol based on 2014/15 term time addresses. A unit postcode generally covers a street or part of a street but does not identify individual households.

Where properties are licensable by the City Council they will need to meet certain standards to ensure that they are safe and suitable for the number of people who live there.

I do acknowledge that there is huge pressure on some of the residential areas for a variety of reasons and some people feel that they are reaching a tipping point when some areas become student areas rather than family areas.

I would like to get that balance right and the increase in the amount of student properties being built across the city including the conversion of some of the office blocks will reduce that load on some of the more sensitive areas.

Supplementary Question 1:

What steps is the Mayor taking and the Council taking to get to grips with assessing and understanding how capable Bristol is in coping with the massive short fall of council tax income; because of exemptions have you taken a strong line with Central Government over making sure we get a fair deal so we can address some of our problems?

Response to Supplementary Question 1:

It is one of many issues we make representation to the Government about and it is one of the things that add to the challenges that we have got.

I would not rate this above many of the other challenges.

Supplementary Question 2:

The reply I have from a senior council tax officer states 'as there is no requirement to maintain a list of council tax HMOs I am unable to supply the information requested.'

Without that information not only are students at risk of having poor accommodation but we also have no ability to handle pressure for increasing densification. Would the Mayor like to comment on that shortfall in which seems to counter your previous answer?

Response to Supplementary Question 2:

No

Question(s) to the Mayor from Cllr Davies

Subject: Park and Green Spaces Byelaws

1. We will shortly be debating park and green spaces byelaws given that amendments on the day are not allowed my ward colleagues has raised with senior officers the appalling problem of vehicles driving onto grass verges, Broadwalk is a Conservation area, we get more complaints about vehicles driving onto the wide verges and churning them, than practically any other local issue and we regularly lodge complaints with the Police and Council Officers. Both say they are powerless, this issue is not covered in the proposed by laws can I get an assurance the oversight will be rectified not only for this site but for similar ones around the city?
2. We have recently had a case of a seriously damaged car parked in the small car park at Redcatch Park for over 2 weeks. As officers seem to be powerless, can I have an assurance that the new bylaws will cover this sort of problem and allow swift removal?

Response to Question 1:

Officers are currently consulting Legal Services regarding the potential to include other green spaces, not defined as parks, under the bylaws legislation Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee is over-seeing this work and the results of these discussions will be shared with them at their next meeting on 23rd November 2015.

Response to Question 2:

We will try to give you a proper answer to that as I don't know what the answer is.

The powers already exist for officers to address abandoned cars, wherever they are, however there are specific legal criteria to be met in the definition of "abandoned."

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Wright

Subject: RPZ

1. The original RPZ in Kingsdown within my ward was carefully consulted upon and reviewed. It has been very, but not obviously, not universally popular; the foremost consideration was that it was for the benefit and protection of local residents. Can the mayor confirm whether or not that is still the first priority?
2. When any major development takes place, it is common for there to be some local negative effects for residents. These are very often dealt with by conditions on the Planning Approval to provide mitigation for residents. Can the Mayor confirm that he agrees and supports this principle and it should apply whether it is a private or public sector developer?

Response to Question 1:

Residents' parking schemes have always been provided for the benefit of local residents, organisations and their visitors. This remains the case.

Response to Question 2:

Appropriate mitigation is required of all developers.

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

Subject: Bristol East Swimming Pools

1. What are the projected subsidies for each Bristol swimming pool in 2015/16, and if available 2016/17 and 2017/18?
2. What is the Mayor's current view on the feasibility of progress of the East Bristol Pool given the expected report mentioned at previous Full Council meeting?

Response to Question 1:

Total projected 15/16 revenue subsidy for each site:

Easton Leisure Centre = £241,492

Henbury Leisure Centre = £259,174

Bristol South Pool = £185,198

Horfield = £218,506

Jubilee Pool = £78,593

Hengrove Leisure Centre: = £622,802

Projected 16/17 revenue subsidies for each site will be the same as above plus indexation (0.5% in 2015) plus any tariff increase for the utilities element of the above figures (see overleaf)

Projected 17/18 revenue subsidies for all sites above with the exception of Hengrove Leisure Centre and Jubilee Pool, will be zero due to recent contract negotiations with the leisure operator 'Everyone Active'.

Hengrove Leisure Centre and Jubilee Pool will be the same as the 16/17 revenue subsidy but again with any indexation applied and any tariff increase taken into account for the utilities element.

Response to Question 2:

At Full Council, Officers as I referenced are completing work on demand and I understand this will be brought to me shortly.

Aside from the need, there remain significant financial concerns related to the construction and ongoing operational costs. Since the original capital costs were calculated there has been an estimated 11% increase in construction costs and there remain questions related to potential ongoing revenue costs. Further feasibility work would need to be undertaken to understand more fully the financial risks associated with this project.

Additional information for supplementary questions if appropriate:

Table 1: Breakdown of projected 15/16 revenue subsidies:

Leisure	Management	Utilities	NNDR	Total
---------	------------	-----------	------	-------

Centre	Fee/Revenue Cost		(Rates)	Subsidy
Easton	£105,525	£125,556	£10,411	£241,492
Henbury	£109,540	£136,500	£13,134	£259,174
Bristol South Pool	£119,021	£64,418	£1,759	£185,198
Horfield	£0.00	£201,877	£16,629	£218,506
Jubilee Pool	£21,373	£55,473	£1,747	£78,593
Hengrove	*£572,674	See below	£50,128	£622,802

- (*this includes utility costs c.£400k and the remainder being towards the total cost of the Unitary Charge Payment which is circa £2,969,760 for which PFI credits from DCMS contribute the large majority. This is not shown as part of this sum as it is not from the Council's revenue budget)
- Total projected 15/16 revenue cost subsidy for all sites = £1,605,765
- Subject to finalising terms and conditions the Council have successfully negotiated a zero based revenue subsidy from April 17 onwards, across 'Everyone Active' sites in return for a five year extension on their existing contract

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Michael Frost (Hengrove Ward)

Subject: Migration

1. Can the Mayor tell the chamber what he will say to the 14000 Bristolians currently on the housing list when he gives the house they may have waited years for to an economic Migrant family? (EU law states asylum seekers must claim asylum in the first safe country they arrive in, which geographically can't possibly be the UK)
2. Where will the Mayor get the extra money to finance the cost of free housing, schooling, migrants, whose budgets will be cut?

Response to Question 1:

I will thank the many citizens of Bristol who have once again demonstrated their generosity and willingness to embrace people who have suffered terrible trauma and suffering as a result of the conflict in Syria. These refugees would fall under the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) Scheme run by the Home Office. The scheme prioritises help for survivors of torture and violence and families deemed to be at risk. The VPR scheme is a unique scheme developed by the Government with significant input from Councils, including Bristol City Council. Refugees under this scheme are granted humanitarian protection giving them leave to remain for 5 years with full access to employment and public funds (including welfare and housing benefits). At the end of the 5 years, if they have not been able to return to Syria, they may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK.

This scheme will be fully funded and as such, we will be able to make available the resources (including accommodation) that would otherwise not be available given the funding position to support Syrian refugees.

Response to Question 2:

I have asked that officers ensure that central government is aware that the VPR scheme is fully funded by central government for the five years that humanitarian protection applies.