



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 19 January 2016

This document sets out details of the questions submitted by councillors and the replies from the Mayor.

The following questions were submitted:

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

- LAB Q1 Councillor Holland: Bristol's housing crisis
- LAB Q2 Councillor Tincknell: The Local Enterprise Partnership
- LAB Q3 Councillor Means: Housing
- LAB Q4 Jenny Smith: GP waiting times
- LAB Q5 Councillor Phipps: 20 mph speed zones
- LAB Q6 Councillor Kirk: Replacement library service
- LAB Q7 Councillor Means: Adult social care and children's services
- LAB Q8 Councillor Wollacott: Council budget
- LAB Q9 Councillor Hickman: Mental health services
- LAB Q10 Councillor Kirk: The future of a Horfield /Lockleaze station
- LAB Q11 Councillor Breckels: 2016 posters
- LAB Q12 Councillor Payne: Bristol City Council's e-guide
- LAB Q13 Councillor Tincknell: Bristol's housing crisis

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

- CON Q1 Councillor Melias: Heavy goods vehicles on Kingsweston Road
- CON Q2 Councillor Hiscott: St Peter's elderly persons home (EPH) site
- CON Q3 Councillor Eddy: Planned Redcliff Hill MetroBus bus lane
- CON Q4 Councillor Weston: Revenue raised from bus lane enforcement
- CON Q5 Councillor Eddy: South Bristol Link road
- CON Q6 Councillor Alexander: Refuse collection
- CON Q7 Councillor Alexander: Street cleansing

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

- GRN Q1 Councillor Thomas: Bristol air quality
- GRN Q2 Councillor Bolton: Safety of children travelling to school
- GRN Q3 Councillor Clarke: Bristol Sport's offer of a new bus service to allow the use of Ashton Gate Park and Ride for stadium parking on football and rugby match days

GRN Q4 Councillor Clarke: Keeping the Faithspace building in Southville as a valuable community asset

GRN Q5 Councillor Stafford-Townsend: 20 mph speed limit on Avon Crescent

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

LD Q1 Councillor Negus: Listening to others good ideas

LD Q2 Councillor Leaman: Lawrence Weston hub

LD Q3 Councillor Kent: Proposed urban extensions

LD Q4 Councillor Leaman: Historic footbridge at Kingsweston Road

LAB QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Helen Holland

Subject: Bristol's housing crisis

1. Bristol is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. It was recently revealed that two-thirds of large developments approved by Bristol City Council in Bristol fall short of the authority's own affordable housing targets. Figures uncovered by Bristol 24/7 reveal that just 11 of 36 major developments in the city have been approved with the minimum requirement of 30 per cent affordable homes as set out in the Council's housing policy. Can the Mayor tell me how many affordable homes have been built in Bristol in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively and as part of his answer can he provide an explanation as to why his Council is failing to uphold its own housing policy?
2. It has been reported that over 8,000 new homes have planning permission, but only a tiny proportion have been built. Can the Mayor tell me how much council tax revenue would have been generated if these homes had been built?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. This is one of the biggest challenges that we face as a city, along with other cities across the UK. The challenge is exacerbated by the government's position in relation to social rents, benefits and the extension to right-to-buy, all of which has reduced our ability to extend our social and affordable housing.

As you know, affordable housing is not "in my gift". It tends to come on the back of development. I am not able to influence the decisions about the proportion of affordable housing provided through development on any site other than on those we own as a city. Therefore we are unable to make the 30 – 40% levels of affordable housing (that I would like to see) stick, partly because of decisions taken by planning officers/committees, and sometimes planning inspectors, where decisions come down "on the side" of the developer's case for not including affordable housing.

I think it is appalling that some developers are allowed to use the fact that they've paid a lot for a site in their calculation as to whether they can include affordable housing - I think that should be absolutely irrelevant, because the price they paid for the site should have been taken into account in the first place, to enable the delivery of affordable housing.

The figures that you ask for are (these figures are net of RTB and demolitions):

2011/12: 369

2012/13: 336

2013/14: 103

2014/15: 241

- but these figures do not of course represent the total picture. We are for the first time in many years building new social housing in the city. I am proud of that, and would like to build more, but we are limited by the government's position on the issues that I have described above.

When compared with core cities, we are not out of line in terms of the number of affordable and social homes produced in relation to the city's population. While we would all prefer to

have produced more affordable housing, we are, I believe, doing everything we can in the circumstances, and I am proud of some of the achievements, including putting many empty properties (nearly 2,500 since I came into office) back into use. So there are some good stories to tell, but there remains a huge challenge.

You asked a supplementary question about whether I accept that (as well as the exacerbating factors mentioned above), the ratio of house prices to average salaries in Bristol also makes the affordable housing situation here a much more significant problem here than in core cities located in the Midlands and the North.

I totally accept that. I think the pressures in Bristol are much greater than they are in the northern cities. Also the land prices are higher here, so that also makes it that much more difficult to deliver affordable housing, bearing in mind also that affordable housing is less “affordable” in Bristol because of the guidance that it is defined as 80% of market, which is much higher here than in the North. So, yes, we have a much tougher job to do than some of the northern cities, and yet we are performing better than them, in some cases, in terms of delivery.

2. You refer to 8000 new homes that have planning permission but only a tiny proportion having been built. The truth is there are about 5500 that are “stuck” i.e. not currently progressing to development – it has been at that level for quite a long time and we are trying to work with developers in order to “unstick” these. So, of that 8000, 5500 are “stuck”. 2500 are progressing towards development. If you take the 5500 figure and multiply that by the Band D tax rate, you will get the figure you request.

In a supplementary question, you asked me to comment on a point made (during a briefing to councillors on the devolution bid) that, in terms of encouraging housing development on private sites, the Council should lead by example and get to work much quicker on some of the Council’s own sites, for example Hengrove Park.

I think we share an enthusiasm for the development of Hengrove Park. The Council and city has particular pressures – we don’t have enough land, essentially to produce the amount of housing that we need. This is why we need to work as 4 authorities together – that is why we need a devolution arrangement and I am hoping that I will get the backing for that - I am working with the other 3 authority leaders to take this forward. I have been very enthusiastic about using devolution in order to be able to set our own planning conditions, so we can get away from the situation where developers “sit” on a planning permission, which some have done for many years, which is leading to the land banking that is blocking the development of housing across the city, as well as preventing the development of a fair proportion of affordable housing.

We are doing what we can, there is much more to do – we are having to tackle this with “one hand tied behind our backs” by the government.

LAB QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Estella Tincknell

Subject: The Local Enterprise Partnership

The current LEP plan for the West of England region indicates that the population has grown to 1.1 million people and that the current share of national economic growth (GVA) is the highest of any core city region at 3.1%. Indeed, Oxford Economics base line growth projects 65,000 jobs and 2.6% GVA growth to 2030 in the West of England, reflecting the fact that this is one of the most economically successful sub-regions in the UK. Yet Bristol remains a city which has huge economic inequalities, and those are growing too.

Many localities have high levels of dependence on low-paid insecure employment. In South Bristol, the gender pay gap is growing. Many black and ethnic minority communities do not have access to high quality jobs in growth sectors. Yet it seems that the LEP is failing to prioritise tackling this kind of inequality. This issue has been raised with the Mayor by councillors and other organisations many times, and little has changed. It is high time the LEP was restructured from top to bottom so that it is more transparent, more accountable and, crucially, better equipped to manage economic growth in ways that truly benefit the whole region and everyone in the city of Bristol.

Can the Mayor tell me, in writing, what he has done to urge the LEP to address Bristol's growing inequality and as part of his answer can he explain how he will make the LEP more accountable?

Reply from the Mayor:

The LEP regards it as one of its prime roles to address Bristol's inequality of opportunity and I take every opportunity to encourage it to do so. However, I think we all accept that much more needs to be done across the board, everywhere in the city. Social mobility is one of our greatest challenges, and it's a challenge for us, it's a challenge for business and it's a challenge for all of us involved in the city, wherever we may work.

Having South Bristol in the West of England LEP's Strategic Economic Plan was incredibly important in that it identified South Bristol as a priority area for support.

This inclusion enabled the prioritisation of South Bristol for EU funds through the Sustainable Urban Development Programme.

The MetroBus and MetroWest programmes, funded in part by the Local Growth Fund which is only accessible via the LEP, will provide access for South Bristol residents to employment opportunities across the city region, reaching right into South Gloucestershire.

Currently, the Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options paper makes specific reference to South Bristol in its economic assessment and one of the spatial scenarios has a focus on improving transport links to South Bristol.

In a supplementary question, you asked how I would help to make the LEP more accountable, and whether I would support the appointment of an equalities officer who would carry out a "top to bottom" audit of the LEP.

As I said at the meeting, together with the other 3 authority leaders, as a result of the requirement to make the LEP more accountable (which I absolutely agree with you about), I took part in the decision to set up the Strategic Leaders Board, which was introduced in 2014, being responsible for investments made by the LEP, and this is of course democratically and publicly accountable.

In addition, the function of the Joint Scrutiny Committee, which scrutinises the Strategic Leaders Board, has been supported by appointing a Council officer to provide additional support to the committee, although I would personally like to see this strengthened in line with our own scrutiny committee functions. These steps are designed to make the LEP more accessible and accountable but I am always interested to hear other ideas. The issue of an equalities officer can, I think, be best raised via the Joint Scrutiny Committee.

LAB QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eileen Means

Subject: Housing

We note that during the final year pre-election, the Mayor has found it necessary to set up a Housing Delivery Board to try to resolve the Council's poor record of delivering social housing and affordable homes here in Bristol. I remind the Lord Mayor and Members of Council of Mayor Ferguson's stated ambition to build 1,000 affordable homes by 2016. Given the failure of this council to deliver anything like 1,000 affordable homes, allied to the increase in numbers on the housing waiting list and the very visible number of homeless people on our streets and sleeping in our parks, can the Mayor tell me what practical steps he is taking to resolve the housing crisis and as part of his answer can he tell me what he is doing to; Ensure that more genuinely affordable homes are built in the near future; Ensure that opportunities are seized to convert more empty buildings into social housing like the flats in Weir House in my ward of Brislington West; Be more proactive over compulsory purchase of properties left empty in our city; Free up land for housing development; and encourage self-build schemes?

Reply from the Mayor:

I do have great ambition for affordable housing in this city. I have explained (see earlier reply to Lab Question 1 from Cllr Holland) the difficulty in achieving that ambition. It was an ambition, not a ridiculous target. It was almost one-quarter of the target that was proposed by your candidate in the Mayoral election. There was no way we were ever going to be able to achieve those ridiculous figures. I had realistic ambition, and that realistic ambition has been severely affected by some of the government changes in terms of the funding of housing out of the housing revenue account, and our ability to build the housing revenue account to enable us to deliver social housing.

I can only refer you to the figures from the DCLG comparing the core cities, in which we come out very respectably. I think I and all core city leaders are disappointed at the restrictions that don't enable us to meet any of our ambitions in terms of the delivery of housing, but we do need to work with national government in order to achieve them. As you know, we are completely at the mercy of private developers in terms of the delivery of affordable housing, and I referred earlier to decisions that are made by the planning committee, and ultimately sometimes by the planning inspectorate - it is an archaic process that makes the figures extremely difficult to deliver. What I have given an absolute assurance about is that any development of Council owned land will stipulate the delivery of the full quota of affordable housing within the development of these sites, such as is happening with the HAB and United Communities development in Southmead.

You asked a supplementary question about what practical steps I am taking to resolve the housing crisis, and to ensure that more genuinely affordable homes are built, stressing the need for decent housing being provided for ordinary people earning an average income, whether they are renting or buying.

The only practical step is to provide more social housing. I am very proud of the fact that we are building more Council homes and that is the only way to provide social housing. I've explained already that affordable housing is defined as 80% of market, and is therefore unaffordable to many, many people across this city, and this is a real disgrace.

We have an innovative scheme to provide housing for homeless people (who would otherwise be destined for bed and breakfast accommodation - expensive, unsatisfactory, arrangements, especially for families) by buying housing off the market. In the last three and a half years, we have put 2,500 empty properties into use, not all for social and affordable housing, but increasing our housing stock. There are many ways in which we are delivering, and over the next 2 years, we will be building 100 new council homes, which will be large council homes for families, providing well built, high standard buildings.

We will continue to do as much as we can afford to do – I have explained the factors that constrain us. This is not an excuse – it is a reason – we don't have the funding within the housing revenue account to achieve as much as I would like to achieve but I will continue to battle to try to do so.

LAB QUESTION 4

Question to the Mayor from Jenny Smith

Subject: GP waiting times

I understand that residents in North Bristol who are asking to see their local Doctors are being told that they cannot see them for 2 months. I am also being told that there is an action group who are telling residents to just go into their local walk in centres or A&E to bypass this problem as it will be quicker. Given that our local A&E's and hospitals have recently been designated as being in Code Black, and are unable to cope with the increasing referrals, can the Mayor tell me:

1. Where staffing shortages exist in all the Community Bases Medical Health Centre in the city?
2. What action is being taken to recruit for these vacancies, and what encouragement is being given to encourage those leaving final medical training, to go into community based health centres to fill these vacancies?

Reply from the Mayor:

While it is of course not the responsibility of the Council to provide or commission GP services (this is the responsibility of NHS England), I am concerned to hear that residents may be experiencing such long delays in accessing primary care services in the North Bristol area.

This is something I take extremely seriously and is something that, as Co-Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, I thought it pertinent to investigate further. As such, I instructed officers to write to NHS England to find out the current situation and to ask for information in response to the questions you have raised.

LAB. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Celia Phipps

Subject: 20 mph speed zones

As a supporter of the 20 mph speed zones, I am frequently contacted by local residents who are concerned that the lack of enforcement is reducing effectiveness. Vehicles drive at high speed in Ashton Vale, Duckmoor Road and Luckwell Road in particular and road safety is compromised in these areas. What influence do you have to ensure that either the police can better enforce speed limits or Bristol City Council can support the zones to improve effectiveness?

Reply from the Mayor:

This question sits at the heart of what I am trying to achieve – safer streets that more people can enjoy. As such, we are working on education and enforcement. Speeds have generally been reduced in the 20 mph zones even if they are not strictly observed.

The Council is working very closely with the police to identify locations and enforce speed limits where there are persistent offenders and high levels of dangerous speeds recorded. I do know, for instance, that several people have been prosecuted and fined for speeding on Duckmoor Road. Avon and Somerset Constabulary are also one of only 6 police forces in the country to operate the 20 mph speed awareness course. This provides an educational option for those caught speeding within certain parameters in 20 mph limits.

Other activities we are carrying out with police support to address speeding across the city include:

- Providing speed measuring kits to local Community Speedwatch groups.
- Adding further lines and signs where appropriate to make the speed limit clearer for all road users.
- Making use of vehicle activated signs (VAS) in different locations.
- Holding community events with local schools to raise awareness of the local 20 mph speed limit.

LAB. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: Replacement library service

Could the Mayor please update us as to whether premises have been found for the replacement library service we were promised for Lockleaze, following the announcement of the closure of Eastville library in March 2016?

Reply from the Mayor:

The library service is still actively looking for a suitable site for library provision in Lockleaze. At this stage, I cannot specify where the site will be but, as I think you know, officers are working with the community organisations around Gainsborough Square and colleagues in Property Services and I would of course welcome members' in-put to this process.

LAB QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eileen Means

Subject: Adult social care and children's services

Following the questions I put to the Mayor at Cabinet last week, several people have contacted me to express great concern regarding future funding of Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Over recent years, these essential services to the most vulnerable in our population of Bristol have suffered from a prolonged period of budgetary cuts and restrictions, leading to ever tighter eligibility criteria for support services.

Would the Mayor please expand on the answer he gave last week that: "No assurance could be given that a 1.95% increase in Council Tax would lead to a balanced budget without damaging cuts to these vital services in future" by specifying the areas which will be considered first for any actions that need to be taken in order to achieve a balanced budget - e.g. would it be Older People's Services, Learning Disability or Autistic spectrum disorders, residential provision vs community care?

Please inform us of the areas under consideration in writing.

Reply from the Mayor:

You are going to be deeply disappointed if you think I am going to write your election leaflets for you!

You have the opportunity to bring an amendment to the Budget debate on 16th February regarding the Chancellor's proposed 2% precept that he announced in the Autumn Statement after we had completed the budget consultation process.

As I stated at Cabinet on the 12th January, during 2016/17 officers will be looking in detail at the long term financial position of the Council, in line with developing a new Medium Term Financial Strategy to address these major financial challenges, which are not just in social care and children's services, as outlined in the indicative budget till 2019/20 as per paragraph 48 of the 2016/17 Budget Cabinet report.

LAB QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Wollacott

Subject: Council budget

1. Now that we have details of the financial settlement proposed by central government, can the Mayor indicate what council provision/support is at risk going forward?
2. Given that funding reductions are likely to reduce the support available to the most disadvantaged communities in the city, what mitigation does the Mayor envisage is possible to curb the inevitable increase in inequality that will result from this, so that we have an inclusive city where all share in future economic progress?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. As indicated in the 2016/17 Budget report to Cabinet on 12th January 2016, the current financial strategy will be sufficient to balance the Council's budget in 2016/17, if delivered in full. However, the Council has been consistent in stating that further savings will be required beyond the delivery of the current MTFs period (para. 43).

There remains a great deal of uncertainty in accurately projecting the Council's future funding, while also continuing to manage a growing range of potential and actual risks. Our approach to the 2016/17 draft budget and consultation process is one of minimal change to the core assumptions and established plans. The figures for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 are our best estimates following analysis of the detail emerging from the Spending Review and Settlement. Whilst the figures are indicative, they illustrate the scale of the financial challenge facing the Council over the medium term.

A full update of the medium term financial strategy, including identification of a revised baseline and future years detailed savings plans, will be compiled and consulted on following the May 2016 election (para. 46 budget report).

2. The Corporate Plan 2014-17 has a cross cutting priority to work to address inequalities of health, wealth and opportunity in the city, providing the right kind of help and support, at the right time. This includes a commitment to focus our attention on those most vulnerable in society, targeting limited resources on those most in need and, where our support is needed, to always seek to intervene as early as possible.

The priority includes embedding the principles of promoting equality and celebrating diversity in everything we do and working to connect people with opportunities, focusing on those neighbourhoods and communities who face barriers to accessing employment, education or leisure opportunities.

The Council will review the impact of the medium term financial plan 2014-17 and its impact on vulnerable citizens before any agreements are made as to how to meet future financial challenges. The Council will consult widely on how we plan to meet the new financial challenges ahead.

LAB. QUESTION 9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Margaret Hickman

Subject: Mental health services

1. Can the Mayor, in writing, tell me what the Council spent on children's mental health services in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively?
2. Can the Mayor provide Council and me with his assessment regarding whether our mental health services have the resources to meet demand and, as part of his answer, can the Mayor remind councillors what is the Council's current projected spend on mental health services for the coming financial year?

Reply from the Mayor:

The budget figures below relate purely to the CAMHS (Children & Mental Health Services) budget. This does not include mental health services expenditure under other Public Health budgets relating to services such as Social Care & Early Help / Troubled families.

2015/16 – Budget £924,710 (including £51k one-off for Primary Mental Health Specialist, funding passed on to Public Health)

2014/15 – Budget £853,197

2013/14 – Budget £829,924

2012/13 – Budget £822,935

2011/12 – Budget £825,506

2015/16 current forecast for CAMHS £924,391

2016/17 Indicative budget for CAMHS £873,710

The funding for CAMHS comes primarily from the CCG. Local authority funding is focussed on supporting early intervention and prevention.

LAB. QUESTION 10

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: The future of a Horfield /Lockleaze station

With the recent announcement that the Henbury Loop will not be built and only a spur, we were given to understand that there would only be new stations in Ashley Hill and Henbury, but no station in Lockleaze where Constable Road had been earmarked as a suitable site. We were told that Network Rail would keep 'passive provision' for a station at Constable Road so that in future phases of development, Lockleaze might have a local station.

I have recently been informed from the pressure group Friends of Suburban railways that the West of England partnership (WEP) have moved the goalposts and given up on the idea of a Horfield/Lockleaze station as it would be too far to walk to Southmead Hospital and having more than one local station would reduce the increased speed of intercity express trains.

They say Lockleaze wouldn't get the footfall, and it would cost £19 million to build as it would be a new site, not re-opening an old one. Network Rail are planning to build the IEP 'crossover point' at Constable Road which would mean it would be impossible for a station to be sited here in the future. This would be devastating news for Lockleaze.

Can the Mayor tell me whether he has made a case for the keeping of passive provision for a future station at Constable Road and as part of his answer can he outline what plans are there for an integrated transport plan that would connect Lockleaze to the new stations that are opening so that our residents would benefit?

Reply from the Mayor:

In September 2015, the West of England Joint Transport Board endorsed the Preliminary Business Case for the MetroWest Phase 2 project including a recommendation to progress the project as a Henbury Spur with three new stations: Ashley Down, North Filton and Henbury. It was disappointing that the business case was unable to include a proposed Constable Road station, which was found to be expensive relative to other stations being delivered as part of the MetroWest Phase 2 project and therefore unaffordable at this time.

However, options for future phases of the MetroWest rail programme will be considered in a new study later this year which will include consideration of how a new station at Constable Road could be delivered in the future. The prospects for Constable Road station and the Henbury Loop are also being considered by the West of England Joint Transport Study. Works to this line to deliver electrification and 4-tracking of the Filton Bank will not preclude the delivery of a station at Constable Road in the future.

The design of new rail stations, such as the new station planned for Ashley Down, will include consideration of how access routes can best connect local communities, and will include public consultation.

LAB. QUESTION 11

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

Subject: 2016 posters

Can the Mayor tell me how much did the 2016 posters that went up around Bristol cost and who is paying for them?

Reply from the Mayor:

I am unaware how much the posters cost but I understand that the majority of the advertising space has been provided by JC Decaux as part of their sponsorship of Bristol's European Green Capital year. I'm sure members will be pleased to hear that the second phase of eight designs (featuring local people and achievements) will launch on 1st February. This is an important part of the Bristol 2015 strategy to ensure that the tremendous benefits of our year as European Green Capital continue well into the future.

LAB. QUESTION 12

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bill Payne

Subject: Bristol City Council's e-guide

1. Can the Mayor explain why did the Council get rid of the e-guide?
2. Can the Mayor tell me whether the Council is going replace the e-guide with something similar and if the answer is no, then how is anyone supposed to know who does what in the Council?

Reply from the Mayor:

To be honest, this is news to me but I understand that the e-guide was built on the back of the e-mail solution at the time (Novell Groupwise). When the Council changed e-mail solutions (to Microsoft Exchange), the e-guide was no longer supported.

The Outlook address book provides similar functionality through its search facility. Officers are aware that there is some functionality that is not the same as the e-guide and I am told we are looking at how we might replicate this.

LAB. QUESTION 13

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Estella Tincknell

Subject: Bristol's housing crisis

Can the Mayor remind Council how many council homes he built in 2015/16?

Reply from the Mayor:

2015/16 – 23 are under construction and 4 new homes were completed (4x 4bed houses)

2016/17 – The 23 currently under construction will complete and a further 50 will be started, of which 40 of these will be completed

2017/18 – the remaining 10 from 2016/17 will be completed along with a further 35 that are programmed for this year.

Total council house approved new build programme 2015 – 18 = 112 new homes. In the years prior to 2015/16, no new council homes were built. Following the HRA settlement in 2011, the Business Plan was re-built, and this allowed the building programme to start up again. The lead time for new homes is such that the first homes were able to complete in 2015/16.

Changes to government policy in 2015, specifically real-terms reductions in rent levels over the next 4 years, and the requirement to sell off higher value homes (to fund housing association RTB replacement) is very likely to significantly cut back, perhaps back to zero, the numbers of new council homes that can be built.

CON. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Cllr Matt Melias

Subject: Heavy goods vehicles on Kingsweston Road

1. Owing to road works on the A403, large commercial lorries are diverting along Kingsweston Road and Kingsweston Lane. Can the Mayor advise what action traffic planners will take to discourage or stop this activity?
2. As a result of this increase in heavy goods vehicle traffic using these routes, the old cast iron bridge on Kingsweston Road has recently been hit and damaged. Will the Mayor consider asking Council officers to intervene to repair and protect this locally important historical structure?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. I am told we are already experiencing a significant reduction in delays on the A403 as the works progress. However, I am aware that any delay may encourage larger vehicles to use alternative routes.

In a supplementary question, you asked if I would instruct officers to undertake a review of the current numbers of heavy goods vehicles going along Kingsweston Road and near to the historic footbridge, given there are local concerns about this.

I totally agree with your concern on this issue. To reduce the risk of this continuing to happen, we have asked local employers to remind their drivers of the weight limit on Kingsweston Lane and we are considering whether additional signs are needed.

2. I am very concerned to hear about the damage to the historic footbridge. We fully intend to repair this important structure and to do what we can to protect it from any such incident in the future.

The possibility of raising the bridge to reduce the likelihood of further damage is being explored, although I do not favour this solution in terms of its relationship to the landscape.

I hope to have a good idea of everything which is needed by the end of this financial year. This will allow a budget estimate to be produced and, once this has been done, officers will assess when it will be possible to carry out the works.

CON. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

Subject: St Peter's elderly persons home (EPH) site

1. Considering your previously declared 'vision' for a city which has "*Neighbourhood facilities that meet your needs and attract others to visit*", can the Mayor confirm that Council officers will be doing all they can to ensure that any redevelopment on this site will include provision for a community facility?
2. Will the Mayor guarantee to ensure that ward councillors and the local residents' group are fully engaged in trying to find a creative solution to establishing some community amenity in this part of Bristol - something that meets the genuine and recognised needs of the Manor Farm Estate?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. We both share a vision, I think, for making quite sure that our communities are well served, and that there are good community facilities wherever you may live in the city. It's a challenge, as you realise, in current circumstances.

You and members should be aware that St Peter's EPH site was closed as part of the citywide review of Older People's Services, before I took office. Cabinet approved the reinvestment of the sale proceeds from all surplus EPH's, which is identified in the business case for the commissioning of new facilities. We will be seeking to provide much needed housing from any redevelopment of the St Peter's EPH site. This will be achieved by either progressing feasibility work through the housing revenue account or by disposal of the site on the open market. The inclusion of community space will though diminish the value of the site. A separate decision to allocate funds within the capital programme will therefore be needed to support the capital cost of any community space.

2. It will be entirely appropriate for officers and ward councillors to remain engaged with the residents group to establish what is needed and what can be delivered for the residents of Manor Farm. I am fully in support of achieving a community facility in an area that has a dearth of such facilities, but there must be a community plan that is financially sustainable and that doesn't require continuing Council commitment to revenue support. That's the challenge. I think it is easier to find the capital than it is to find the continuing revenue support.

In a supplementary question, you asked whether (given that the St Peter's building/site was surplus to requirements nearly 2 years ago) I would do all I could to help "chivvy things up".

I shall do all I can to assist. You and I have visited the site, we've met with local residents, and I thank you for not having over-ambitious requirements. It's a matter of trying to find a way of having a reasonable community meeting space that is decently serviced. Nevertheless, it is still a challenge to get it "over the line" in terms of viability. I am absolutely with you in trying to achieve that, whether this is at the St Peter's site or nearby.

CON. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: Planned Redcliff Hill MetroBus bus lane

Does the Mayor agree that the approved north-bound bus-lane over Redcliff Hill will lead to increased traffic congestion and is he surprised that there are no planned bus lay-bys at this location, so stopped buses will inevitably impede traffic flow?

Reply from the Mayor:

Work to construct this new bus lane, an important bus priority measure for MetroBus, is well underway and will be finished in the next few months. This is a very heavily used route for buses. In addition to two MetroBus services, many existing local bus services will benefit from the bus lane.

Bus priority measures like this bus lane are good for everyone - bus passengers benefit from faster and more reliable journey times - and as buses become more reliable, more people will be willing to leave their car at home which eases traffic congestion for everyone, including other road users like cars, vans and the emergency services.

Currently bus services using Redcliff Hill north-bound do stop on the carriageway, in one of the two general traffic running lanes, so passing vehicles have to wait or overtake the stationary bus. In future, the bus stop will be located in the bus lane and general traffic will use the outside lane. To introduce bus lay-bys would result in a significant reduction in the width of the existing pavement, compromising proposals for improved walking facilities along the extent of Redcliff Hill, and result in the loss of some mature trees.

In a supplementary question you queried why bus lay-bys couldn't be considered on Redcliff Hill, due to what you described as the very wide pavement on the west side.

All I can say is that we have looked very carefully at this. We are satisfied that this solution will produce the best balance in terms of pedestrian safety, road safety, traffic flows and the environment.

CON. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: Revenue raised from bus lane enforcement

1. What was the amount of revenue raised by the authority in the last twelve months from fines levied on motorists who have strayed into bus lanes?
2. Can the Mayor advise me of any specific transport projects that this money was then re-invested in (as required by law)?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. The amount of income received by Bristol City Council in the last twelve months (2015 calendar year) from motorists who were issued Penalty Charge Notices for driving in a bus lane was £1,133,502. (This figure is based on the total income received during the period rather than notices issued during the period and is the gross figure, not taking into account operating costs).
2. As most of this period falls within the current financial year, the accounts cannot yet be confirmed. However, the Council is required by legislation to produce a Section 36 statement each year which details the financial position of the bus lane account and lists the uses of any surplus income.

The legislation restricts the use of any surplus and states that it must be used for “meeting costs incurred, whether by the authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services or the purposes of a highway improvement project in the authority’s area.”

In previous years, the surplus bus lane income has not been used to fund any specific project, but, as per the legislation, has been used as a contribution to the Council’s operating costs for Passenger Transport Services and Concessionary Fares. I am sure you would approve of this.

CON. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: South Bristol Link road (SBLR)

As the Mayor is aware, I have previously lobbied on behalf of local business, and my constituents, for the remodelling of the Cater Road roundabout (the eastern start to the South Bristol Link Road) before the SBLR is finished. I understand that officers have now received engineering options, costed them and believe they represent value-for-money. Can the Mayor kindly confirm that the roundabout remodelling will be incorporated in the Place Directorate's 2016/17 budget?

Reply from the Mayor:

I acknowledge that this potentially beneficial preliminary design change, to the westbound approach to the Cater Road roundabout and the circulatory carriageway of the roundabout itself, has now been prepared, and an outline cost generated. No detailed design works have yet been completed.

A copy of this preliminary design will be shared with you and your fellow ward councillor in the next few weeks to seek your views and comments.

Although this scheme is not currently funded, I am pleased to be able to report that officers are working to identify any appropriate opportunities for funding and carrying out this beneficial scheme as soon as possible. It should be noted, however, that the MetroBus programme may present the city with other similar demands and these will need to be considered in terms of their respective priority and what funding opportunities might exist.

CON. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

Subject: Refuse collection

Mayor, I was very concerned to observe that on the first collection after Christmas, all the recycling except food was tossed into one bin by the collection men despite the careful sorting by residents. This is infuriating to them and leads to rumours of whether the rubbish is recycled or not. Understandably, such shoddy practice by Bristol Waste Company operatives makes people question whether they are wasting their time separating these items.

When we apparently are trying to increase recycling rates, we obviously do not want to negatively influence behaviours so, can the Mayor tell me why this mixing of materials is happening and is the refuse treated in this way actually being recycled?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have to say that I have been impressed by the dedication of the Bristol Waste Company recycling teams, reinforced by my experience of working with them recently where I saw how much effort is put into separating mixed recycling boxes in challenging weather.

This experience does enable me to understand that, due to the significant increase in additional waste and recycling put out over Christmas, Bristol Waste Company managers were keen to ensure that they achieved all of the collections at the time they had promised as well as to ensure that streets were kept clear. They therefore collected some of the recycling more speedily by mixing it – for subsequent separation (I am told this practice has occurred in previous Christmas collections).

I can give absolute reassurance that although the recycling was mixed in this very short period, it has still been recycled.

This will have had no negative impact on the recycling rates and I do encourage all residents to help by looking to the best examples of resident recycling separation in their street.

CON. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

Subject: Street cleansing

Apart from the shopping areas, it is very rare to see a road sweeper. They seem to be an endangered species! Consequently, I get a lot of complaints about the dirty state of the roads. I never thought I would say "come back SITA all is forgiven" but at least during their time the roads were usually cleansed on a 1, 2 or 3 week cycle (depending on the status of the road). Now, it is not uncommon for rubbish and slippery leaves to be left strewn in the roads and streets for long periods, impeding drainage after our lengthy rainy weather.

Furthermore, on the odd occasion when the motorised sweeper arrives, it is usually at 7.00 am before the cars are moved!! Dustbins and recycling boxes are left on the pavements for days on end causing obstruction for buggies and wheelchairs and adding to the untidy look of the streets.

What are the Council doing to proactively encourage residents to return them to within their properties and what plans do you have for road cleansing to be undertaken more regularly?

Reply from the Mayor:

I appreciate the interest that you take in this highly important issue for local residents.

With regard to the frequency of road cleansing, the systems operated by SITA and that inherited by Bristol Waste Company from Kier are different. SITA operated a system where they attended at a set frequency, whereas Kier (and now BWC) operate a system where streets are cleaned to a set standard rather than frequency.

BWC are currently reviewing the street cleansing operation they have inherited and are considering what needs to be changed in order to make the service more efficient and would of course welcome member feed-back.

If you could let officers have details of the specific street/area, we can look specifically at these ahead of the full review.

With regard to encouraging residents to return bins to properties, we have several examples of areas we have identified where this is an issue, and we have used a combination of education and enforcement to ensure bins are placed appropriately. If there is a specific street/area where this is an issue, please let officers have details and we can investigate further.

GRN. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jerome Thomas

Subject: Bristol air quality

In December 2015, the Government announced plans to introduce Clean Air Zones in Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton by 2020.

Can the Mayor clarify how the Council's budgets in 2016/17 are supporting progress toward introducing a Low Emission Zone in Bristol?

Reply from the Mayor:

The Council is currently conducting research on the potential for a Low Emission Zone or a Clean Air Zone in the Old City area of the City Centre, funded by DEFRA.

There is no current provision in the Council's budgets for the introduction of a Low Emission Zone but I shall be seeking funding by any means possible in the future.

As you know we are pursuing a wide range of initiatives to improve air quality in the city, including working with First Bus and other companies on funding for hybrid and other low emission vehicles as well as retrofitting existing Euro 2 & 3 buses to Euro 5 & 6 standard.

I shall be pursuing any other opportunities to encourage low and zero emission vehicles and to seek appropriate local powers, as we develop devolution arrangements.

In a supplementary question, you asked me to comment on whether I feel it is a good thing or a bad thing that Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby, Southampton and London all have plans for clean air zones by 2020 but Bristol doesn't yet.

As I said at the meeting, we will have a clean air zone by 2020, if I continue in this post, because it is one of my top priorities to see that we make this a really healthy city, and the best way of making this a healthy city is to clean up our air.

In a second supplementary question, you asked if I had an explanation as to why the above named cities have been chosen by the government as clean air zones but not Bristol.

Again, as I said at the meeting, I don't have an explanation for this, but it is clear that we have further lobbying to do. We are ahead of many of those cities in relation to other aspects of clean air in the city, especially in terms of measuring it. In Europe, we are recognised as one of the leading cities in terms of dealing with the issue of air quality.

GRN. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: Safety of children travelling to school

I have been contacted by a number of parents/residents in or around Holy Cross School on Dean Lane, concerned at what is the second incident in a few months around the school entrance, which also is on a main walking and cycling route into central Bristol, and also is on a double right-angled bend.

I asked the Mayor at the Cabinet meeting at which he cancelled the Camden Road bridge project if any money could be re-allocated to helping the situation at Holy Cross. I also asked about a project at Clanage Road - a walking and cycling route to Bower Ashton, Ashton Court and Ashton Park School.

1. Could he tell us which projects are being pursued, and are either of the above included?
2. Given the above and, as he knows, the concerns at Ashton Gate Primary school on Upton Road, does he think the Council is doing enough to ensure safety of our children going to school?

Reply from the Mayor:

I thank you for bringing this to my attention. I gather officers working on the implementation of residents' parking in Southville were made aware of the issues in the autumn of last year, resulting in the road markings being adjusted last week to address concerns about obstructive parking. I honestly don't know what the delay was in making that happen but it has now been implemented.

Officers are assessing the feasibility of the Clanage Road project and other options. No decisions have yet been made about which projects will be progressed. But I am asking for a full report on all the projects that are coming up, regarding the use of the Cycling Ambition Fund.

We have identified funding to progress improvements to Upton Road which will be delivered this year. The safety of children on their way to school is an absolute priority for me and I was extremely disappointed to hear of a planning committee decision to reverse the officer recommendation to make Upton Road access only, resulting in greater risk to the children and greater operating costs to the school. As you know, that was a planning decision, over which I have no influence. I think it was a bad planning decision and we are having to find ways of reversing its impact.

In a supplementary question, you advised that neither Ashton Gate primary school nor you had received any information about progress on a long term solution regarding Upton Road in terms of a road closure.

I can assure you that officers will be back in touch with the school and with you and your other local councillor before the end of January to confirm the programme for the scheme.

In a further supplementary question, in which you mentioned particular concerns about the safety of children around Holy Cross School (which you indicated was regarded locally as “an accident waiting to happen”), you asked if further resources could be found to help deliver a solution.

As I said at the meeting, I will ask officers to have a serious look at this, but I don't know yet what the final list of schemes is in respect of the use of the Cycling Ambition Fund, and whether that can be applied or not.

GRN. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: Bristol Sport's offer of a new bus service to allow the use of Ashton Gate Park and Ride for stadium parking on football and rugby match days.

The Mayor will be aware of the issues around parking in large swathes of South Bristol when matches are on at Ashton Gate stadium. Again; for the hour before last night's match against Preston, large numbers of cars were cruising Ashton and Southville looking for spaces and I personally know of several incidents where residents were effectively scared to move their cars for the whole evening. Unfortunately things are only going to get infinitely worse as City move up the table and the new stand (with an additional capacity of nearly 11,000) gets closer to completion.

Meanwhile, Bristol Sport have handed a potential lifeline to the council and residents by offering to run a bus from the Ashton Gate Park and Ride thereby allowing it to be used for match day parking. An extra 1600 spaces! Manna from heaven; but...

We have again been told that although First Bus and Bristol Sport wanted to start this service some time ago they are unable to do so as a result of Council officers expressing undefined 'concerns'.

My question is: what are these 'concerns' and can they not please be overcome by some Mayoral leadership?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have to agree with your sentiments regarding this and have sought feedback from officers who have presented me the following concerns, which I am determined to overcome through co-operation with North Somerset and the Police Authority:

1. The legal situation given that the site is located in North Somerset is subject to various restrictive planning conditions and agreements and is not fully in the ownership of Bristol City Council. Each of these issues is being clarified over the course of the next few months in the context of the powers granted by the MetroBus Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO).
2. There are other concerns related to the capacity of the site to support increasing use expected when MetroBus Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and South Bristol Link services to the city centre become operational from 2017. The potential for very heavy usage at times of stadium events is likely to conflict with the core purpose of Park & Ride for Bristol. I think that needs testing.
3. Finally is the matter of road safety, if as it likely, a large number of football or rugby supporters use the Park & Ride and decide to walk to the stadium rather than taking a bus. The walking route towards the stadium, along part of the A370 is currently not safe and alternatives would need to be found. I think we should be seeking those alternatives. It is understood that at some time in the past the police requested that without a safe walking route the Park & Ride should not be used for stadium purposes.

But as I say, I think all this should be the subject of very immediate conversations with North Somerset and the Police Authority.

In a supplementary question, you sought my further comments, stating that this was an issue about a specific request for a bus to go from the Park and Ride to the football ground, and indicating that, in your view, this offered a partial solution that was apparently being ignored.

To be completely clear, I am in favour of us trying to achieve that solution. I have been explaining also that it is not totally within our control, but I shall continue to work with officers and you as the local councillor, and with the football club to see if this can be achieved, because I absolutely believe, as you do, that this would be a “win, win.”

GRN. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: Keeping the Faithspace building in Southville as a valuable community asset

Further to my question to the last Council meeting regarding the Methodist church on Stackpool Rd (known as Faithspace), can the Mayor now confirm whether he has spoken to the relevant officer of the Methodist Church concerning the imminent sale of the building - in particular, did he discuss the desire of the community (as clearly expressed by the large number of people currently demonstrating outside this meeting) for the building to remain as a valued part of the community, and if so, what answer did he get?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have made contact with the Superintendent Minister of the Bristol & South Gloucestershire Methodist Circuit and my office is in the process of arranging an appointment to meet before the end of the month.

I will be happy to give you an update after that meeting takes place.

GRN. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend

Subject: 20 mph speed limit on Avon Crescent

Can the Mayor confirm what enforcement is being done to ensure that drivers are keeping to the 20 mph speed limit on Avon Crescent, following the Smeaton Road closure?

Reply from the Mayor:

I share the local concerns over the speed of vehicles travelling through Avon Crescent and officers have made a specific request to the police for enforcement of the existing 20 mph limits here since the diversion was put in place.

Enforcement of the temporary extended 20mph speed limit along Cumberland Road has also been made part of this request and we have checked and confirmed that the signing for the temporary traffic management is fully compliant to enable the police to enforce this.

LD QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: Listening to others good ideas

This City and Council has a wealth of good ideas and recommendations to which the Mayor should be listening and developing where possible.

Q1. Will the Mayor explain where local or city-wide flexibility has been made to his Residents' Parking Schemes as a result of the many observations made by councillors and from the public on this issue?

Q2. Will the Mayor set out how the many practical and cost-effective service improvements that were developed by councillors during the productive Waste Inquiry Day on 18th March 2015 have been implemented to date?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. There are many such examples in relation to residents parking schemes, one being the trial of part of Woodland Road for use by both Kingsdown and Cotham permit holders, which led to Woodland Road and Hartfield Avenue being designated as Bristol's first dual permit roads in 2015.

Other examples are the variations in operating hours and maximum stay times across the city, and different arrangements in Bower Ashton.

We are continually seeking to make improvements where we can and I value any contributions that colleagues and the public wish to make to this process. But any jibes that this is a "one size fits all" approach are completely disproved by the variety of changes to times and other aspects of the schemes.

In a supplementary question, you suggested that in many cases, people will accept the need for RPS, but that what they don't accept is what you described as the inflexibility and the inability to deliver a much more useful working community zone for parking which would take into account 24 hours a day rather than 9.00 am – 5.00 pm restrictions. You asked whether I had anything valuable to say that I have gained from listening to people which will actually show that this is working "on the ground."

As I said at the meeting, there are many examples of this. One is the situation regarding the Fiddlers night club which you can hardly say is a 9.00 am – 5.00 pm operation; that business was suffering as a result of double yellow lines which meant it was difficult for them to operate their night time events, so, at my request, officers went to see them and came to a very sensible compromise which Fiddlers are happy to live with.

There are many, many examples. RPS is not inflexible. We are operating different times, and I am finding huge amounts of acceptance, a real majority acceptance of the schemes. I share your feeling that these should perhaps have been referred to as community parking schemes, but I inherited from your administration the name "residents parking" and I was very happy to take the "bull by the horns" and implement what had been dithering in the background previously.

2. Yes, as follows:

It was agreed that all new landlords should be asked to sign an indemnity form when they were granted a licence which gave permission for graffiti to be removed by the Council. This has been implemented.

It was agreed that the Council should make an example of repeat offenders which would then send out strong messages to others. The street scene enforcement team has started an intensive programme of enforcement action in hotspot areas.

It was agreed that a stronger focus on enforcement and the publicising of this is required. The use of social media is being developed within the neighbourhoods teams, and the intention is to publicise enforcement statistics as part of the team's communications strategy.

It was agreed that the Council needs a constant citywide publicity campaign that facilitates business and domestic waste reduction and an increase in re-use and recycling, and that this campaign should highlight both the economic and environmental benefits to be gained. In response, campaigns have been drafted for waste related issues across the board and are being progressed.

It was agreed that if the sharing of database information within the Council were improved, it would certainly assist with enforcement issues. This is something that is part of the remit of the enforcement review.

Members requested that it is ensured that waste contractors are fulfilling their contractual obligations.

So, we do listen, we do act, and we will continue to do so.

In a supplementary question, you suggested that officers "on the ground" don't seem to know about the above. You suggested that there was no evidence of any of these things happening on the ground, and implied that of the results that came out of the inquiry day, very little of that has actually "trickled down" to activity on the ground. You asked me to comment and explain this.

As I said at the meeting, I was advised of the above information by the officers who are connected with the people who deliver on the ground. We have excellent officers, I take their word for it. I will be interested in any particular examples that you are able to cite as to where the above information may be incorrect.

LD. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman

Subject: Lawrence Weston Hub

The four Cllrs for Avonmouth and Kingsweston express their full support for a community hub on the former City of Bristol college site in Lawrence Weston. Having now been granted planning permission, there is a need for the Council to fully get behind this project in regard to the services it wants to see provided within the hub. The Council can support the community and help to finish this project. The indices of deprivation (2015) as in previous years still reflects the health, employment and social need for services in the Lawrence Weston area. The local Cllr's strongly back the community as part of the (NP) Neighbourhood Partnership in supporting the community hub to help address the re-generation of this community. (Cllr Tim Leaman reflecting the views of Kingsweston and Avonmouth elected members)

Will the Mayor outline his and the Council's current position on their commitment and support for the inclusion of authority services within Lawrence Weston's future community hub building which has been granted planning permission?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have given strong support to this important scheme, both within the community and within the Council and am determined to see it implemented.

Officers have made good progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of the community hub project at strategic level across the Council.

Both the Strategic Director for Place and the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods have recently written to the Chair of Ambition Lawrence Weston Steering Group to demonstrate the authority's commitment to ongoing and senior level support for this work.

It is an ambitious scheme. This is a complex piece of work and we need to connect our thinking more directly with the Health partners. We are holding discussions with Bristol CCG and NHS England leads to see how we can take this forward, but until we get commitment from them, we cannot afford the major funding that is required for the community hub.

I am delighted that we have made progress with the other aspects of the scheme in terms of the housing and the supermarket, but the community hub needs funding too, and it is a serious level of funding.

Officers will continue to work hard to respond to the ambitions expressed by the community to ensure that any local authority services provided within a future hub are sustainable and successful.

You asked a supplementary question about why has it taken 2 years for the Council to engage on this important project.

As I said at the meeting, I know that there has been Council engagement on this project within that 2 years. I've made visits to the site with Council officers, had discussions with local people and with Ambition Lawrence Weston, so I don't accept that it has taken 2 years

for the Council to engage. It is true that the work to date has raised some concerns about the overall financial viability of the project as it stands, and therefore, at this point, we are not in a position to commit the level of capital finance set out in the community's business case.

I strongly support the scheme but it will need some adjustment, possibly from both sides, in order to enable it to happen.

In a second supplementary question, you asked whether the community in Lawrence Weston can be re-assured that there is no "turning back" regarding this project.

As far as I am concerned, absolutely there is no "turning back" – I think it is vitally important to Lawrence Weston. I am full of admiration for the energy that has come out of the community, and for the professional way that this has been managed by the project manager concerned, and I thank the people of Lawrence Weston for what they've done – I think this an essential element of a healthy future for Lawrence Weston.

LD QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent

Subject: Proposed urban extensions

The West of England is currently consulting on plans for additional new housing for the region which include proposals for three urban extensions to South Bristol, including around Whitchurch. Roads are already gridlocked so can the Mayor advise us of his position with regard to these proposals?

Reply from the Mayor:

The West of England local authorities are currently consulting on the Joint Spatial Plan Issues and Options. This consultation includes a number of strategic options for delivering the development needs of the area, including new homes, employment land and transport infrastructure over the next twenty or so years. The options include the potential for the development of a number of urban extensions around Bristol, including one at Whitchurch.

The local authorities will consider the responses to the consultation together with carrying out further technical work, including transport assessment and sustainability appraisal, before consulting again on any preferred option.

I support the ongoing work to produce both a Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Study but my personal, current preference is for increased densities in the central development area of the city and around transport hubs rather than adding pressure to the edges of the city as is implied in the question.

LD. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman

Subject: Historic footbridge at Kingsweston Road

The Historic Footbridge at Kingsweston Rd (Kingsweston) which recently suffered a vehicle strike is cast iron and installed as two separate halves bolted together mid span and supported off the rock face masonry abutments. The impacted side is unrepairable and will need a new re-cast in full. There may be wooden mould patterns from the 70's which if still available from a similar strike at that time and if re-usable would create a new cast. To repair the bridge means complete removal and would mean closure of Kingsweston Rd for some time. Future bridge replacement could include raising the height to avoid a similar future hit and the fact is whoever did this has caused a large amount of damage and disruption while yet to be apprehended or come forward. In summary the wooden pattern moulds are important and being sought, as to total cost this is undetermined and the bridge will remain closed until further notice. It has not only been there since the 1800's but is a vital pedestrian link (safety) between the two sides of the Kingsweston estate.

When will a budget be fixed in 2016 for repair to the historic footbridge at Kingsweston Rd which was recently struck by a vehicle?

Reply from the Mayor:

I am very concerned to hear about the damage to the historic footbridge. We fully intend to repair this important structure and to do what we can to protect it from any such incident in the future.

The possibility of raising the bridge to reduce the likelihood of further damage is being explored, although I do not favour this solution in terms of its relationship to the landscape.

I hope to have a good idea of everything which is needed by the end of this financial year. This will allow a budget estimate to be produced and, once this has been done, officers will assess when it will be possible to carry out the works.