



Member Forum – 5.00 – 6.00 pm, 15 March 2016

This document sets out details of the questions submitted by councillors and the replies from the Mayor (including replies to supplementary questions, where asked).

The following questions were submitted:

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

- LAB Q1 Councillor Jackson: RPZ
- LAB Q2 Councillor Holland: Deprivation
- LAB Q3 Councillor Tincknell: Housing
- LAB Q4 Councillor Bradshaw: Parson Street inaccessibility
- LAB Q5 Councillor Wollacott: The Arena and St Anne's station
- LAB Q6 Councillor Langley: The library review
- LAB Q7 Councillor Threlfall: Keep Eastville Tidy
- LAB Q8 Councillor Pearce: Eco-build
- LAB Q9 Councillor Langley: Keep Sunday Special
- LAB Q10 Councillor Tincknell: Public transport
- LAB Q11 Councillor Milestone: The Impact of TTIP on Bristol

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

- CON Q1 Councillor Weston: New Park and Ride
- CON Q2 Councillor Eddy: Bristol Major projects – Hartcliffe Recycling Centre & Bristol Arena
- CON Q3 Councillor Morris: Scotland Lane frequent flooding
- CON Q4 Councillor Lucas: Revolving housing regeneration fund

CON Q5 Councillor Goulandris: Graffiti policy

CON Q6 Councillor Windows: Impact of Cribbs Causeway expansion

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

GRN Q1 Councillor Telford: Ringfencing the Independent Living Fund (ILF)

GRN Q2 Councillor Fodor: Bristol Energy Company

GRN Q3 Councillor Telford: Bristol's response to Cribbs Causeway proposals

GRN Q4 Councillor Denyer: RPS flexibility

GRN Q5 Councillor Bolton: RPS in Ashton part of Southville ward

GRN Q6 Councillor Bolton: RPS and guest houses

GRN Q7 Councillor Thomas: 400 year old oak tree on Brandon Hill

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

LD Q1 Councillor Morgan: Parking permits for commissioned service providers and social workers

LD Q2 Councillor Hopkins: The Arena

LD Q3 Councillor Negus: Ethical Investment: a positive decision on funding good work

LD Q4 Councillor Leaman: Lawrence Weston community hub

LD Q5 Councillor Kent: Hengrove Park

LD Q6 Councillor Kent: Hengrove and Whitchurch bus service

LD Q7 Councillor Negus: Benefits of working with major commercial players

LD Q8 Councillor Leaman: Litter

LAB. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Jackson

Subject: RPZs

1. Can the Mayor tell me why some Bristol City Council employees have permits to park in residents' parking zones, while other essential workers, such as care workers, who work on behalf of the Council to provide services to the most vulnerable in our city do not have permits that allow them to park in residents' parking zones?
2. Can the Mayor tell me how many Bristol City Council employees and care workers contracted by the City Council have, while undertaking their duties on behalf of the Council, been fined because they parked in a residents' parking zone in 2013, 2014, 2015, and as part of his answer can he tell me how many of these fines were rescinded in these respective years?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

I am told by officers that all permits issued for use within an RPS have been purchased either by a resident, company, or organisation.

A protocol for Council staff was established and has been made widely available to staff. This protocol lays out the option available to Council staff when visiting residents in their homes and includes a mechanism to promptly and accurately reimburse people for expenses claimed during the course of their work.

There are no plans to change this as it is important to me that the rules regarding permits are applied to Council staff in the same way as they are applied to external organisations.

Reply to the Mayor to Question 2:

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide an answer to this question, as data held on the issuing of penalty charge notices (PCN) does not record data to this detailed level.

Supplementary questions and replies:

In your first supplementary question, you suggested that there are some members of staff who are issued with residents parking passes, whilst some are not. You drew attention to home care workers, who are not issued with permits – and asked, in cases where they have to park outside the residents parking permit area, what is the cost of re-imburement in these cases?

As I said at the meeting, I don't know the answer to that question, but I will ask officers if it is possible for that information to be made available to you.

In your second supplementary question, you asked, with regard to members of Council staff that haven't been issued with residents parking passes, how many have been fined, e.g. where due to the circumstances they were dealing with whilst carrying out their duties, they have returned to their vehicles later than expected and been fined for not returning to their vehicles within the allotted parking time?

Again, as I said at the meeting, I will ask the relevant officers to see if they can find this out - though I will caveat that by repeating that I obviously don't want to cause a huge amount of work if this information is not easily available.

LAB. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Helen Holland

Subject: Deprivation

1. In a recent article, the Mayor stated that he has been “targeting investment in the most highly deprived areas” of the city. Can the Mayor list any targeted investment he has made in the last three years in the six Super Output Areas that are within the highest 1% of deprivation nationally?
2. Can the Mayor inform the Council whether the Bristol Child Poverty Strategy, 2011 – 2020 outcomes are monitored, and where the performance against those outcomes is reported, whether the strategy leads the activities of officers and other key stakeholders, and if not, what document has superseded it?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1: – Investment in six Super Output areas

I am totally committed to reducing the inequalities across Bristol. It is my belief that getting as many people as possible into employment is the best way of tackling deprivation and building resilience in our communities.

That is why I have focused much of my first term on activity to improve education and skills.

For example, in 2014/15, we have successfully engaged over 1500 adult learners in Bristol, of which 85% lived in the most deprived SOAs and 72% were without a full level 2 qualification. More resources were targeted at the most deprived areas of the city, including Lawrence Hill, Filwood, Whitchurch Park and Hartcliffe.

As a result, 92% of learners reported increased confidence; 57% of learners have progressed onto further learning; 15% have become more involved in their community; 10% have progressed onto paid employment; 8% have progressed to voluntary work.

There are many examples of where we are targeting SOAs. Two examples I can particularly highlight about focusing interventions on the most vulnerable / poorest people in the city are:

- The Council Tax Reduction Scheme: the maintained level of support in terms of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme particularly assists those living in the most deprived areas of Bristol, such as the 6 SOAs you refer to; the total value of council tax reduction in the 6 SOAs is £2,314, 643
- Another scheme, REPLICATE (**RE**naissance in **PL**aces with **I**nnovative **C**itizenship **A**nd **T**echnology) is a European scheme that we are benefitting from and working on with Florence and Saint Sebastian. This is a 25m Euro project across the 3 cities (7m Euros for Bristol), which will be producing innovative, smart city solutions targeted at some of the poorest areas of the city in terms of energy and transport.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you asked me to list interventions and implied that, in your view, the above interventions did not seem to be targeted on the SOAs

As I said at the meeting, the above seems very targeted to me and a very high proportion of those funds and initiatives have gone to those SOAs, as you would expect.

In terms of the “list” of interventions, in addition to the above, the following investment has taken or is taking place:

- Setting up Bristol Energy Company has been about reducing social inequality by tackling fuel poverty with fair and transparent tariffs for all.
- The Warm Up Bristol scheme is delivering a wide range of energy efficiency measures across the city, including the SOAs. So far the scheme has delivered 875 installations with a capital value of £2.65m and the scheme has leveraged more than £620k towards energy efficiency across tenures in the city.
- In terms of creating jobs: The Bristol Temple Quay Enterprise Zone, Filwood Green Business Park and the BottleYard Studios are providing more employment opportunities in an area of Bristol with high unemployment. The Arena development will provide even more jobs and apprenticeships for Bristol.
- In terms of improving people’s ability to move around the city and creating more affordable homes: The upcoming Joint Spatial Plan and Joint Transport Strategy, which are unique to the West of England, will help provide affordable housing and better transport options to provide links from deprived areas to areas with jobs. MetroBus and MetroWest will also strengthen transport links, making it easier for people to travel to employment areas.
- Ensuring also that within the Council, we consider the social impact of everything we do - we have developed a Social Value Policy and Toolkit, to apply when the Council buys something or commissions a service.
- With further reference to the REPLICATE project, core to the project is developing and trialing solutions *with* citizens rather than *to* citizens.

Some of the initiatives include:

- deployment of electric vehicles such as 32 electric bikes.
- car club vehicles and associated charging infrastructure.
- deployment of renewable energies including solar panels and district heating.
- 150 connected homes and energy efficient retrofitting of 240 homes.

These interventions aim to address inequalities such as fuel poverty, whilst tackling carbon emissions, improving sustainable mobility and energy resilience in the area. The project started in February 2016 and will last for 5 years.

- With further reference to improving education and skills - Bristol is a UNESCO-recognised Learning City, and through this partnership we are doing more to provide learning opportunities for people throughout their lives, with a strong focus on helping people develop the skills they need to access employment. It is a priority to improve outcomes for disadvantaged learners. As mentioned above, in the last three years, as a result of my vision, we have targeted government resources at SOAs with the highest levels of unemployment and with the highest concentration of adults of working age without a full level 2 qualification.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2: Part 2 – Child Poverty

There is no longer a requirement for local authorities to produce a Child Poverty Strategy. However, in 2013 the Fairness Commission and Education and Skills Commission, which I set up, focused on ensuring that Bristol works together to reduce inequalities through significant improvement in the life chances for its citizens.

The Fairness Commission was chaired by Alison Garnham, Chief Executive of the Child Poverty Action Group. One of the Commission's key focuses and recommendations was ensuring that children in Bristol have a fair start in life. These recommendations are being picked up through the new multi-agency Children & Families Partnership Board, which is set up to ensure the voices of children and young people influence the Council's work. Prevention, early intervention and prioritising outcomes for vulnerable children are key principles to that work.

Next month will see the review of a new strategic needs assessment (partly linked to the JSNA 2015) for the Children, Young People and Families Plan, which I anticipate will include further information around child poverty.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you stated that the strength of the child poverty strategy had been that it was signed-up to by all of the public sector and other partners, with the consequence that all those partners owned the strategy and related recommendations. You asked whether or not I think that appropriate monitoring is in place, on our own and partners' performance, against the strategy that is now in place and replaces the mandatory one?

As I said at the meeting, as far as I know, the monitoring is of a similar standard as it has always been – I can assure you that we still take the child poverty strategy extremely seriously.

LAB. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Estella Tincknell

Subject: Housing

What does the Mayor propose to do about delivering affordable housing in Bristol and developing council-owned brownfield sites such as those in my own ward of Lockleaze which continue to lie empty after four wasted years?

Reply from the Mayor:

Officers have been working with Bristol Community Land Trust and are expecting to exchange contracts on the Council owned Shaldon Road site for a scheme of 30 self-build and affordable rent homes by the end of this month. I have agreed to the employment of two new project managers who are focused on area based regeneration and place making in both Lockleaze and south Bristol. In both areas, these project managers have been tasked to undertake market viability assessments so that these Council owned brownfield sites can be brought to the market in the most expeditious and efficient manner.

At the 1st March Cabinet, I approved procurement plans to establish a Housing Delivery Framework which will identify new housing delivery partners that will enable the Council, through mini-competitions, to dispose of surplus Council sites and bring forward new market and affordable homes.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you asked whether I could commit to pursuing a compulsory purchase order (CPO) in respect of the Gainsborough pub site on Gainsborough Square?

As I said at the meeting, if it was practical to compulsorily purchase the Gainsborough pub site, I would do so tomorrow. It is an absolute blight on Gainsborough Square. It is a disgrace and I believe that it has had an owner who has not had pride in the place, or showed any attachment to Lockleaze and its regeneration.

However, the practicality of pursuing a CPO can be extremely difficult; I am afraid that many owners are extremely good at using every available legal loophole to avoid a CPO. I did raise this matter with officers. I will raise the matter again with officers as to how we can best approach this case - but there is the risk that as soon as a CPO goes in, then a planning application is made, and we get the same sort of situation as arose over many years with the Westmoreland House / Carriageworks site at Stokes Croft where a canny owner is able to exploit the loopholes and avoid a compulsory purchase.

I commit to doing everything I can to try and expedite the regeneration of this site – but I can't promise the delivery of a CPO because we could be just throwing "good money after bad" if we don't do it effectively, and it is not entirely in our hands as to whether it will be effective or not, because of the actions that could be taken by the owner to "avoid" the compulsory purchase.

LAB. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Bradshaw

Subject: Parson Street rail station inaccessibility

More passengers are using Parson Street rail station in Bedminster than ever before, but many are excluded from doing so by the steep steps and lack of any accessible provision.

According to the Severnside Community Rail Partnership, over 110,000 passenger journeys were made using Parson Street in 2014/15 or nearly 600 people per weekday use the station based on a November 2015 count.

In the next few years, this will be the only non-accessible station left on the local network despite links to the MetroBus, Greater Bristol Bus Network and nearby Malago Greenway and Hartcliffe Way cycle routes.

1. What action has been taken to work with GWR and Network Rail on devising a plan to fix this problem?
2. What funds has the Mayor allocated to resource this project?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

I am pleased that the number of passengers using Parson Street station continues to grow in line with the impressive levels of rail passenger growth across the West of England in recent years.

The MetroWest phase 1 project will hopefully improve the rail service for this station so further passenger growth is expected. I am pleased to say that the City Council's recent bid to Great Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for 2016/17, to enhance the gateway to Parson Street station, has been shortlisted and we are hopeful that this will result in improvements to this station in preparation for MetroWest.

Unfortunately the likely cost of making the station fully accessible is beyond the scope of this fund but we will continue to explore opportunities for achieving step-free access, for example through the Department for Transport's Access for All programme. We will continue to lobby the rail industry to bring about these crucial improvements, as we will elsewhere, to try to achieve step-free access.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

Capital funds of around £100k have currently been allocated for local station improvements in 2016/17. This will include match funding for the Parson Street works, if the bid is successful.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question you stated that Great Western Rail had given £40k to Parson Street rails station but pointed out that this would not cover the improvements needed in terms of accessibility. You also stated that Parson Street was going to be the only station in our local network which is inaccessible and that therefore it is vital to get work done before the Portishead line opens. You asked what work has been done to identify options and when are we likely to see a costed option(s) up to Grip 3?

As I said at the meeting, the latest on the Portishead line is that is due to open in 2019/20. I wasn't aware that Parson Street was the only inaccessible station - I think Stapleton Road has similar problems, which are being fixed. On your actual supplementary question, I will have to ask officers to report back to you about that because I didn't have that level of detail available at the meeting.

LAB. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Wollacott

Subject: The Arena and St Anne's station

1. In light of the concerns expressed over transport to and from the arena expressed at all neighbourhood partnership meetings last year when the issue of parking was raised (and ignored), will the Mayor reconsider his representations that the decision from planning was "political"?
2. In light of the inevitable parking issues that will arise from the opening of the Arena, will the Mayor recognise the increased need for the reopening of St Anne's station?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

A full assessment has been undertaken of the potential transport impacts of the Arena and a transport strategy has been proposed to support the planning application. In developing the transport strategy, views raised during consultation have been taken into account, including concerns raised around parking.

It is recognised that the potential for Arena visitors parking in residential areas is a concern and I am keen to ensure that Arena visitors do not park in residential areas. As part of the transport strategy, a number of areas have been identified which could potentially benefit from parking management measures to deter Arena visitors from parking in them.

I am keen to ensure that any parking management options are agreed with local residents and neighbourhood partnerships will be engaged with on this issue.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

The potential for reopening St Anne's station was assessed in 2012 but the study unfortunately concluded that it was not currently feasible. I have however allocated funding to investigate further local rail improvements to enhance the current MetroWest programme and the potential for a station at St Anne's will be investigated again as part of this study.

LAB. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Langley

Subject: The library review

Has the Mayor been briefed about the representations made by UNISON at HR Committee, on the library review, and what action will he take to ensure that all proposed changes to contractual hours be discussed with those who will be tasked with performing these contacts prior to announcing new working patterns?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have been assured that the recent HR Committee thoroughly reviewed the work to date regarding the implementation of the Managing Change process in libraries. I am fully aware of the discussions of the HR Committee and their findings, which was that all due process was being followed and that they had clear evidence of the positive working relationship between Unison and the Management Team, including evidence of compromise prior to the committee.

The staff review in libraries started in November 2015, after the public consultation in September, and all staff understand the changed work patterns of the service moving forward, based on public preferences for opening hours across the city.

All staff have been offered individual “one-to ones” to discuss their specific situation and impact of change, and the whole staff team has had 10 weeks consultation - an extended period of time due to the number of staff and part-time nature of many of the posts.

LAB. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mhairi Threlfall

Subject: Keep Eastville Tidy

Since the Council took over waste collection services in August 2015, the service in Eastville has not improved. I have received a number of complaints about Bristol Waste Company emptying rubbish and spilling collections on the road; recycling not being picked up during sorting; and rubbish under the M32 not being collected causing the Frome to be terribly polluted.

Can the Mayor tell me:

1. Who owns the space under the M32 and who will clean the rubbish that has been left there?
2. Are there plans to provide additional resources to the teams working within Eastville and, as part of his answer, can the Mayor tell me what he is doing to stop people who live outside Bristol from fly-tipping on our streets and where are our enforcement cameras which were promised?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

The Council owns the space under the M32. The two main areas are the skateboarding area and the sluice/green area to the side. The skateboarding area is kept clean by the users, who do a great job of regularly cleaning up after themselves, and the Council disposes of the waste when requested by the users. Waste is not currently being removed from the sluice/green area because of difficult access issues.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

In order to progress this, our Neighbourhood Engagement team have been in contact with an organisation called "Litterarti" who have been shortlisted for an award under Tesco's 'Bags of Help' funding initiative, which offers community groups and projects across the UK a share of revenue generated from the five pence charge levied on carrier bags.

Litterarti are proposing to work alongside the Council to tackle fly-tipping in the area of Eastville – BS5, clear up the litter on the concrete river-banks polluting the River Frome, and to try to prevent it from blowing in there in the first place. They also want to bring a focus to the river entering the city here and incentivise the local skating community to become guardians of the space.

In addition, Bristol Waste Company is reviewing the street cleansing resources across the whole city. This will include reviewing this area.

We will also be delivering a campaign in the spring aimed at reducing litter and fly-tipping, and will be specifically targeting hot spot areas in the city and taking tailored actions to achieve reduction in fly tipping in those areas. CCTV will be one of the actions considered.

LAB. QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce

Subject: Eco Build

1. How many City Council officers have attended Eco Build since the Mayor was elected?
2. Has the Council ever taken up exhibit space at Eco Build?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

I have been advised that four officers from Strategy, Planning and Governance have attended Eco Build since I was elected.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

It is my understanding that we did not take up any exhibit space at Eco Build. However, a number of officers in the City Design, Housing Delivery and Property teams have either attended or presented at a number of sustainable housing conferences – particularly in respect of Passivhaus construction.

LAB. QUESTION 9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Langley

Subject: Keep Sunday Special

Does the Mayor recognise, considering his promotion of Make Sunday Special that working on a Sunday should attract a premium payment, and not just be treated as a normal working day?

Reply from the Mayor:

As a result of changes in society over recent years and the need to meet increasing demand for essential services, for many employees of the Council and in the wider economy, Sunday has become a normal working day. It therefore no longer makes sense to pay a premium for working on Sundays. The Council still pays a premium for hours worked on bank/public holidays, as well as to employees who work at night, on a shift pattern and on stand-by. In addition, for many lower-graded jobs, basic salaries have increased substantially – and will continue to do so – as a result of the Council's decision to pay the UK Living Wage (as set by the Living Wage Foundation). Sundays can still be made special – it's about what we do, not how much we pay.

LAB. QUESTION 10

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Estella Tincknell

Subject: Public transport

Can the Mayor explain why he has failed to work with neighbouring authorities to get buses moving where they are needed, in particular the First Bus no. 72 through Lockleaze to UWE, which has been awaiting the opening of the Romney Avenue bus link for over two years because of delays by South Gloucestershire Council, and as part of his answer, will he work with me and Cllr Kirk to resolve this as quickly as possible?

Reply from the Mayor:

Although the main construction of the Romney Avenue bus link is complete and the link could be made ready for use when required, unfortunately a section of Long Down Avenue (within South Gloucestershire) that connects to Danby Street is not yet fully constructed.

At this time, South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) is unable to specify when the road will be completed and available for use by bus services. I understand that the planning permissions for the new roads do not contain conditions or obligations that enable SGC to require the developer to make them available to bus services.

I would be happy to support you, Cllr Kirk and Council officers to resolve this as quickly as possible.

LAB. QUESTION 11

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sue Milestone

Subject: The impact of TTIP on Bristol

1. Will the Mayor do all he can to publicise the dangers arising from The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) for our NHS, other public services and businesses and will he write to the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills, Bristol's 4 Members of Parliament and the South West's MEPs to raise concerns about TTIP and to urge them to apply for UK opt-outs in relation to our NHS and Social Services?
2. Will the Mayor ask Council officers to assess the impact TTIP will have on how Bristol City Council and NHS Bristol procures services, and as part of his answer will he confirm that he will work closely with pressure groups and trade unions locally to mitigate the effects of TTIP on our public services, and will he set up a working party to examine the situation in Bristol?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

Negotiations regarding the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership are ongoing. Supporters argue TTIP would boost growth, jobs and trade; however I recognise that there are concerns about the possible implications for standards, investors' rights and public services, including the NHS.

On behalf of the Council, I am happy to make representations to government, MPs and our MEPs (who will be asked to decide whether to back the negotiated TTIP text) regarding any threats or potential impacts it could have on Bristol. I will share this question, the associated petition and Council debate with them.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

The EU's lead negotiator, the European Commission, has stated that all EU trade deals come with solid guarantees, which fully protect public services and this will be the case for TTIP too. While I have concerns about whether these commitments will be maintained, I believe it would be premature to judge the outcome.

I have therefore asked our Brussels Office to actively monitor the negotiations with our economic development team and others, and would welcome the views of local actors to help assess the potential impact of TTIP, including on the NHS, and to form an appropriate response, once details of the final text are released.

CON. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: New Park & Ride

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not any potential sites have yet been identified for a Park & Ride to help cater for the massive Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood development?
2. If so, where is it proposed to be located and what steps is the Mayor taking to secure this essential transport infrastructure project?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

I fully support the concept of increasing the number of park & ride sites serving Bristol, and I have discussed this with the South Gloucestershire leader. Currently the South Gloucestershire Council Supplementary Planning Document for the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood does not include the provision of a park and ride site within this area. We are having conversations with South Gloucestershire on how to put that right.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

I have also discussed this with the South Gloucestershire leader and drawn his attention to our concerns. I understand our officers have requested the inclusion of a park and ride facility to be included in the Public Transport Strategy that is being developed for the Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhood area. In addition, the potential for a park and ride in that area is also being considered as part of the West of England Joint Transport Study. I do believe that we have to urgently find ways of providing more park and ride sites to the north of the city.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question you referred to another development site on land east of Harry Stoke, and you asked whether I have had any conversations with South Gloucestershire about whether that land east of Harry Stoke might accommodate a park and ride?

I have not specifically discussed this, but I have asked officers to follow up on conversations referred to above, so this point can be raised. I very much share your concern about the transport implications of these developments, which are very serious to people who live in north-west Bristol.

CON. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

Subject: Bristol major projects – Hartcliffe Recycling Centre & Bristol Arena

1. Hartcliffe recycling centre:

I am sure the Mayor recalls Council approving almost unanimously at Full Council (19th January) a motion urging him to progress urgently the long-promised Hartcliffe Way Recycling Centre. At the following Council Budget-fixing meeting (Tuesday, 16th February 2016), £2,250,000 was allocated to take this important project forward. As part of the earlier motion wording, councillors stipulated that 'we request the Mayor to meet with community groups, local businesses, local representatives and all other interested parties before the end of March to listen to the concerns ... [and] agree a plan to deliver the South Bristol Recycling Centre in 2016.' Since time is now getting short, can he advise us of the progress of these discussions?

2. Bristol Arena:

Part of the attraction of out-of-centre shopping and leisure destinations like the Mall is the availability of plentiful and free car parking. In light of this fact, and following the recent debacle over the Arena parking concession (which under Council rules required a 'capacity neutral car park space exchange' to take place), is it not time for the Mayor to scrap such a bizarre 'tit-for-tat' parking space cap for the central area of Bristol?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

As I said at the time of the motion you refer to, I fully support Bristol citizens having access to good quality recycling and reuse facilities in the city.

As part of our work this year, we have refreshed the waste and resources strategy, which I approved at Cabinet on 1st March. This will guide and inform decision making across a whole range of waste issues and as part of this programme and in response to the budget amendment, I have asked officers to look again at how we support services in south Bristol, including the contribution Bristol Waste Company might make as part of their business plan.

I am of course always happy to meet with local people and businesses to discuss this issue from their perspective.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you asked if I would commit to meeting local people and their representatives by the end of April?

In my previous reply, I did actually say that I am happy to meet with local people. I will be very happy to meet them at the beginning of my second term.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

Parking availability at out of town shopping centres really cannot be compared to parking arrangements in congested city centre locations. You will appreciate that city centre land has a huge premium over out-of-town shopping locations and therefore it simply would not be economically viable to provide free parking at city centre locations.

The management of parking is one of the most effective means of tackling congestion and its more serious consequences of increased air pollution, traffic delays and unreliability of public transport services. The availability of car parking has a major influence on the means of transport people choose for their journeys. I think it would be sending the wrong signal to have free parking in the centre of the city.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question you implied that in the central area of the city, all day commuter parking was going to be “scrubbed” in favour of evening parking spaces for concert goers, and asked me to comment on this.

As I said at the meeting, I think that is a misunderstanding of the position on your part. I don't know whether that is a deliberate misunderstanding or not, but it is a complete misunderstanding of what is proposed.

I would also just remind you though that the very first action I took as Mayor was to make Sunday on-street parking free. So I hope that people bringing their families into the centre of the city, for events on Sundays for example, recognise that.

CON. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

Subject: Scotland Lane frequent flooding

Long before Bristol's Green Capital highlighted the importance of protecting and preserving the local environment, the Council built over a toxic tip adjacent to the above busy route. Unfortunately, the authority failed to ensure that this area had adequate drainage. As a result, since that time, this important road link between Stockwood and Brislington regularly floods following heavy downpours and becomes impassable. It has been closed for many weeks over the winter.

Will the Mayor look into this problem and consider specifically allocating some funding from the highways repairs/maintenance budget to finally resolve what has become a long-stranding public nuisance and inconvenience?

Reply from the Mayor:

I am very aware of the importance of Scotland Lane to the local community and of the need to find a solution to this issue.

A prohibitively expensive solution has been found so work is taking place to investigate whether there is a viable alternative.

I have raised this with officers and will discuss it further to see whether we can establish a way forward.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question you referred to the problems this road has faced for at least the last 25 years, and asked for a commitment that the Council will find a solution and set a timescale for delivering this.

As I said at the meeting, the solution that has been looked at would cost £350k (two and a half times our entire, annual capital drainage budget for the whole city). Our budgets are tight. So we are looking at alternatives, including potentially installing a pump station to pump floodwater to the existing reed beds. I think we should look to natural solutions upstream - there has been much talk recently about how flood protection should be much more about planting trees and looking for natural solutions rather than engineering solutions. As you know, the situation at Scotland Lane has been going on for a very long time. It is very difficult for me to make an absolute commitment that I can completely alter the course of nature, but we will do what we can, within reasonable cost.

CON. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charles Lucas

Subject: Revolving housing regeneration fund

1. I note from comments made at the last Cabinet that housing officers are working urgently on the options for delivering additional homes to purchase as part of the £9 million housing investment programme approved at last month's budget-fixing meeting.

When does the Mayor anticipate concrete proposals will be brought forward for consideration and determination?

2. At this early stage of development work, is the Mayor able to advise whether any additional external funding sources for this ambitious scheme have been identified?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

As part of my ambition to tackle housing issues in Bristol at the March Cabinet meeting, I made a commitment to delivering 6 priority actions arising from the Housing Scrutiny Inquiry Day. These were:

- Fully investigating the establishment of a new housing delivery vehicle.
- A review of the housing delivery framework.
- The proactive identification and assembly land for development.
- A review of the HRA asset management strategy.
- Take action to improve standards in the private rented sector.
- Prevent and respond to homelessness.

Fully investigating the establishment of a new housing delivery vehicle will be a key priority for me in a second term.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

The task will form part of the Housing Strategy Action Plan, the delivery of which will be overseen by the new Bristol Homes Board. The new board will meet for the first time in April. There is a commitment to create an action plan by July 2016 - by then, there will be greater clarity regarding timelines for creating detailed proposals for consideration. The investigation will consider funding options including the identification of potential external funding sources.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you asked about what work was being done in the meantime to identify locations where these houses could be built.

As I said at the meeting, we have done a very thorough survey of sites across the city. As you might expect, some sites that initially seem like good sites for development become less attractive as you look into them in more detail, but we are prioritising sites that are suitable for development in various areas of the city and we are concentrating in particular on some of the areas of greatest need.

CON. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

Subject: Graffiti Policy

1. Can the Mayor clarify this Council's rather ambiguous approach to the blight of tagging and 'street art' which sees it continuing to profess a 'zero tolerance' towards vandals whilst promoting dubious daubings in lamentable 'artistic' events such as the "See No Evil" project?
2. In order to assist the prosecution of offenders, has any progress been made in producing definitive policy/ guidance on what constitutes legitimate urban art and when it is - or is not - acceptable to paint on buildings and property?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

We have clarified our approach to street art and graffiti in the policy we are developing in consultation with the Assistant Mayors for Neighbourhoods.

There is a clear distinction between street art in designated areas which enhances our public spaces and tagging which is unwanted and impacts negatively on the appearance of our neighbourhoods and the citizens who live there. We are aware that for some people there still exists a level of confusion about these two very different issues.

As I have always said, unless permission has been given by the owner to paint or draw on a building, then it is illegal, and that is the situation. The revised policy will ensure this message is clear to residents whilst welcoming the vibrancy that legal street art brings to our city.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

As part of our review of the Waste and Resources strategy, we have already begun to update the graffiti policy and further guidance will be included for those who are unclear.

We have recently had considerable success in working with the police to prosecute offenders:

- Five PCSOs have been tasked with providing support to the Police graffiti resource.
- 22 graffiti taggers have been arrested, with over half convicted at court.
- The sentences have ranged from a two month custodial sentence and fine, to a fine of over £2000. All have had community orders. The number of offences is in excess of 500.
- 7 more taggers are under investigation at present.

CON. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows

Subject: Impact of Cribbs Causeway expansion

Given the fact that the Mayor has already acknowledged the challenges he believes are presented to jobs and the future economic prosperity of the city from the planned Cribbs Causeway expansion, can you advise me what steps you are taking to counteract this threat?

Reply from the Mayor:

The Council will continue to strongly object to Cribbs Causeway expansion proposals. I will be raising the issue directly with the appropriate Secretaries of State, as I do not want to see our high streets damaged by a poorly planned development that could have devastating consequences for Bristol and beyond.

The Council is already working with the Bristol Alliance (partnership between Hammerson and AXA Real Estate Investors) on proposals for city centre development. The Alliance has commenced a pre-application process with regard to the future development of a site within the adopted Bristol Central Area Plan – Horsefair/Callowhill Court (KS02) within Bristol Shopping Quarter. The site is allocated for major retail-led mixed use development.

GRN. QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

Subject: Ring Fencing the Independent Living Fund (ILF)

Full Council passed a motion I proposed on 16th September 2014 calling upon the Mayor to ring-fence the ILF funding transferred to Bristol City Council.

As a result of concerted campaigning by Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs), and their supporters, the Conservative government have now performed a U-turn and are extending ILF funding to English councils for another four years. £7 million of funding is being released by the government to support users of the Independent Living Fund.

The Mayor has refused to ring fence this re-instated ILF funding for ILF users stating "It is not necessary to ring fence this grant to former ILF recipients, as it would be unfair to do so, however I do intend to ensure that it is ring fenced to support social care in Bristol over the coming years."

Can the Mayor give any more detail about what the £7m will be used for rather than enabling the direct support of disabled residents of Bristol to live their lives independently?

Reply from the Mayor:

Firstly, I am relieved; I welcome this grant which goes some way towards offsetting some of the very significant pressures faced by adult social care associated with increasing demand, and which compensates the Council for additional cost pressures caused by the closure of the Independent Living Fund (which was originally funded only for 12 months and was going to leave us in a very difficult situation). You will recall that following an earlier Council motion on this subject, I lobbied hard to get a better deal following the closure of the Independent Living Fund. In fact, through the core cities, I got all the core city leaders to agree to a letter to put that pressure on the government, and I would like to feel that pressure had some effect in terms of the government changing their mind.

Our approach has been consistent in that money transferred from the ILF will be ring-fenced for Adult Social Care and therefore continue to support disabled people to live independently. I am totally committed to ensuring that all adults in receipt of funded social care are supported to live as independently as possible.

Supplementary question and reply:

You asked a supplementary question around feedback from people with disabilities and asked for more detail on where the funding would be used.

The funding is going to be ring-fenced for use in adult social care, and I think it is right that we are left with some discretion around this – otherwise, we may face a situation where we are potentially "boxed in", in a way that is not going to serve people's best interests.

Representatives from service users, family carers and disability equality groups have been very complimentary about how the Council has worked in partnership with them around the closure of ILF. I have had personal conversations with some of the recipients, who have been complimentary about the way their ILF has been dealt with. This has been achieved through an ILF Task Group, a dedicated Council website and engagement at the Physical and Sensory Impairment Partnership Board, and I hope that we can continue to move forward in what has been a very positive and constructive manner.

GRN. QUESTION 2

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Bristol Energy Company (BEC)

I'm delighted to see the public launch of BEC, as one of the country's first new municipally owned energy companies. Can the Mayor say:

1. If it will be offering a renewable tariff and how he plans to develop a public process for the surplus it generates for the BCC shareholder to be used?
2. Whether he agrees that there's a case for the Council's infrastructure and supply initiatives to be integrated?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

The immediate focus of Bristol Energy is to ensure that it establishes a good set of products and services aimed at the most disadvantaged people in the community. I'm proud of that, although I am aware that the company is seeking to enter into power purchase agreements with renewable generators to integrate local renewables into its fuel mix, and it does not foresee the offer of a renewables tariff in the immediate future. It may get there but it is not the current priority – the current priority is addressing energy poverty.

The process for deciding how to spend the dividends paid to the Council by the company is part of the standard Council budget process.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you welcomed the priority of the energy company around offering appropriate tariffs for people in fuel poverty. You also asked for my comments about establishing an explicit, transparent process for the surplus – you referred to the need for a transparent process, rather than the money “vanishing” into Council budgets, in order to support the company to grow and expand, and deliver more social and environmental benefits.

As I said at the meeting I can assure you that money generated will not “vanish” into Council budgets, as you put it. They are ring-fenced within the company, and the shareholders board, which includes the Chair of the OSM Board, will make quite sure that that is so. So I don't accept your premise on that - but nevertheless I absolutely agree with you that the aim is for the company to be seen as one of the leaders in terms of social and environmental good practice.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

This was considered in the earlier stages of discussion around the company. We decided to take one step at a time, proceeding with getting the company set up and in a strong position before considering the integration of the council's energy infrastructure activities.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you suggested that the case for the integration of the council's energy infrastructure activities should be made very explicit in order to address these objectives. You asked if there was a case for starting to look at how things like Warm Up Bristol and the distribution of heat and other services should be integrated to benefit each service, to support each other and to cut costs.

I think there is a good case for that, but, as above, I think it is a case of one step at a time. I think this is absolutely the right approach. What is vitally important is that we establish a successful energy company that has the confidence to be able to move in those sort of directions. I am not prevaricating on this. I just think it is absolutely right that the company continues what it is doing in firmly establishing itself. It has made a very good start in making sure it has a sound business that will then be able to extend its purposes as you describe.

GRN. QUESTION 3

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Rob Telford

Subject: Bristol's response to Cribbs Causeway proposals

I would like to thank the Mayor for speaking out publically against the Cribbs Causeway proposals and championing the city centre as an important artistic, cultural and retail centre for the region. Additionally, recent community led regeneration of traditional retail streets like Old Market will also be affected, as well as Gloucester Road given its closer proximity to Cribbs. It is imperative that, in particular, we protect small and medium-sized businesses in the Broadmead area.

Broadmead is in much need of regeneration and we understand there may be opportunities to advance this in the next period. Can you give us some indication of what steps we can take to support and speed up this process?

Reply from the Mayor:

The Council will continue to strongly object to Cribbs Causeway expansion proposals. The current development is, in my view, horrendous.

We already working with the Bristol Alliance (a partnership between Hammerson and AXA Real Estate Investors) on proposals for city centre development, because we do need anyway to strengthen our city centre offer. The Alliance has commenced a pre-application process with regard to the future development of a site within the adopted Bristol Central Area Plan – Horsefair/Callowhill Court (KS02) within Bristol Shopping Quarter. The site is allocated for major retail-led mixed use development.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you asked whether I thought there was any “mileage” for a public campaign around the city centre, recognising the value of the retail offer in the centre of Bristol, so that we make our views on this very clear to other councils surrounding us.

I think this suggestion has got “mileage” and it is “mileage” that we share with Bath and other surrounding towns. Cribbs Causeway is not just a threat to Bristol – it is a threat to many of the cities and towns within a driving distance of it. I think also that it is vitally important that good principles of planning should give preference to city and town centres. You simply don't get the same level of cultural mix in out-of-town shopping centres, which tend to be dedicated to the multiples, to the nationals, and don't make the same contribution to the local economy because most of the money is “sucked” straight out of them, while the money spent in Bristol high streets tends to circulate more locally, especially of course when spent using Bristol pounds.

GRN. QUESTION 4

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Carla Denyer

Subject: RPS flexibility

I am currently working with several residents who are supportive of residents' parking zones in principle, but are facing difficulties because of a small detail or inflexibility, such as:

1. People with homes or businesses right on the boundary between two parking zones still only have a permit for one zone, so find it twice as hard to park near their premises as other residents, as for example they can park on one side of their own road but not the other. There are already some roads in and around Cotham that have been made 'dual-permit' to address this, and it would seem obvious to roll out this solution as standard, but the RPS project manager has told me that there is no intention to do so.
2. People whose work requires them to use different vehicles often, e.g. employees of car dealerships who as part of their job are required to drive a demonstrator, replaced at short notice. There is no generic pass that can cover this situation, and scratch cards are quickly exhausted. While not a widespread problem, it should be possible to find a solution to issues like this.

In both of these cases, the resident and/or I have not been able to get the suggested changes enacted, but have not been told why. Can the Mayor tell me?

Reply from the Mayor:

Residents' parking is designed to be as flexible as it can be without undermining the objectives of the scheme. As you say, some boundary roads either have been or are proposed to be converted into dual permit roads.

Officers have explained that decisions over whether or not a boundary road should become a dual permit road are made on a case-by-case basis as the schemes are reviewed. We cannot assume that this solution will be suitable in every case. For example, there may be some roads where it would cause the demand for parking on that road to increase to an unsustainable level and in some cases there may be other approaches which will better solve the problems raised in the review.

The permit eligibility criteria for all schemes will be reviewed later this year. However, it is important that eligibility for permits can always be verified so that we can make sure that permits are not issued to people who do not meet the criteria. This could lead to the issuing of too many permits, which would prevent the scheme from working as well as it can.

GRN. QUESTION 5

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: RPS in Ashton part of Southville ward

Cllr Clarke and I have carried out a survey of residents of the Ashton side of North St (bounded by Smyth Road, Duckmoor Road, Ashton Road and North St. We have had responses from something like 40% of the households in the area.

Not surprisingly, over 90% of respondents say that parking has become worse or much worse following the introduction of residents parking. More surprisingly, a majority (57% to 31%) have asked for residents parking to be extended.

Accepting that a Green Party survey may show systematic bias, we believe there is a will for at least an investigation into extending RPS into at least part of this area.

Will the Mayor commit the council to undertaking such an investigation?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have said before that I will be happy to consider bringing forward informal consultation for parking control schemes in areas whose communities want this. Your information is helpful in this regard and I will review the overall picture in the coming months.

GRN. QUESTION 6

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: RPS and guest houses

I have been contacted by a woman running a guest house in the Southville ward who has raised the issue of loss of permits from guests who just drive off with them. She has suggested that the reality of running such a business - with a high turnover of customers – is that this is bound to happen. However, she is unable to replace the permits, and has asked for scratch cards instead. She is happy to pay for such scratch cards (i.e. which only last a day) but has been told by the Council that she can't. Yet it seems an entirely sensible solution to her problem.

Will the Mayor acquiesce to her request, and instruct officers to introduce a more flexible approach to small businesses in RPS areas?

Reply from the Mayor:

Whilst I am sorry to hear of the problems that this guest house is experiencing, they may have other solutions available to them, such as ensuring that the permit is returned with the room key as part of the check-out process.

Officers believe that scratch cards would also have practical limitations. To avoid issuing more permits than required, the permits would need to be linked to every booking, which would be costly and time-consuming for both parties to administer.

GRN. QUESTION 7

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Jerome Thomas

Subject: 400 year old oak tree on Brandon Hill

1. Can the Mayor please confirm that the 400 year old oak tree that has fallen on Brandon Hill will not be processed for firewood?
2. Also that the tree continues to be used for social, educational or culturally enhancing purposes in Bristol?

Reply from the Mayor:

1. I have been assured that this will certainly not happen.
2. It is the intention that the wood will be used for something for the local community and no decision has been taken yet about what this will be. We will ensure that all relevant parties (such as the Friends of Brandon Hill) are involved with the decision making.

LD. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Glenise Morgan

Subject: Parking permits for commissioned service providers and social workers

We are all corporate parents of children in care and care leavers. I wish to bring to your attention the following anomaly.

With the introduction of resident parking schemes, people in commissioned services have to pay parking charges to deliver short-term services to those in temporary accommodation, hostels and their own flats. This includes services for our care leavers. Due to the nature of these services, carers' parking permits do not fit this need. As a result, the commissioned service providers are having to use a proportion of the funds awarded to them to pay for parking, for which the Council receives the income, thereby reducing the amount of paid-for delivery that our care leavers receive by the corresponding amount. Surely we should be providing the appropriate parking permits to these commissioned providers to improve both the service and its efficiency? I'm told that, after almost 2 years, there has been no response to a request for this facility.

I understand that our social workers face the same problems. Having to pay for parking and then claim back as expenses is a waste of valuable resource in terms of social workers' and administrators' time, and therefore an additional cost to the Council. It is also a continual source of stress to the commissioned providers and our social workers.

Will the Mayor please ensure that this issue is addressed urgently? I believe that it is being looked at by senior officers but it is taking far too long.

Reply from the Mayor:

I am aware that this is a matter which is under consideration and has been for some time. Officers report that they are aware of concerns from some staff about the RPZs and we are working to find a fair and equitable solution. I have asked officers to speed up this discussion so that we can resolve this matter.

In the meantime, the Council has in place a protocol which has been made widely available to Council staff. This protocol lays out the options available to staff when visiting residents in their homes and includes a mechanism to promptly and accurately reimburse people for expenses claimed during the course of their work.

There are no plans to change this as it is important to me that the rules regarding permits are applied to Council staff in the same way as they are applied to external organisations.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question regarding the protocol, you asked whether I thought it was inefficient to get staff to claim their expenses, as this could be time consuming in terms of Council resources, and whether this issue might be reviewed again, in the light of the experiences of the past year?

As I said at the meeting I am perfectly happy to ask for feedback and opinions from officers about this particular concern of yours. I don't want this to be a lengthy or time-consuming process, but nevertheless I will ask at least for some feedback on this.

LD. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: The Arena

1. Despite the obvious gaps in the travel plan for the arena, some of us have been trying to move the matter forwards. Can the Mayor please explain why he is not engaging with that project?
2. I welcome the new pedestrian access from the Three Lamps junction to Arena Island. Can you confirm whether or not any land covered by the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy is needed for this approach and what financial arrangements are being made?

Reply from the Mayor to Question 1:

As you know, I am fully supportive of the principle of encouraging sustainable travel patterns to Arena Island and to the whole of the Enterprise Zone, given its location in what is becoming a very important location in the heart of the city. The public has been engaged in developing the transport strategy to support the Arena project and the strategy has taken into account issues raised during consultation.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you stated your view that members of the Development Control Committee had “recognised concerns with regard to the travel planning, and confusion caused by the Cabinet meeting the night before.” You asked whether it would not be better to “desist from shouting at members of the committee and particularly the Chair” because that was “not really going to help to get an agreement to move things forward.”

I am not aware that I actually shouted at anybody. As I said at the meeting, I had a little rant about what happened at the time. But now I think we should concentrate on finding a good resolution to the issues involved, and I would actually like to thank Councillor Kent for not having been one of those councillors who moved a deferral.

Reply from the Mayor to Question 2:

In order to provide the appropriate connections to Three Lamps, there will be a need to widen the footway to meet the proposed bridge onto Arena Island. This is likely to require a narrow section of the land currently designated as open space. In accordance with the Bristol Local Plan, green infrastructure can include walking and cycling routes which encourage physical activity, and this area of green space already includes a pedestrian link. The potential impacts on the green space will be considered as the detailed design stage as the link design progresses.

Supplementary question and reply:

In a supplementary question, you suggested that as this land was covered under the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy, a sum of money should be passing into parks, and in particular into local parks as “compensation” to local people for the loss of this parcel of open space.

As I said at the meeting, with due respect, I think we should take a more holistic view to the health of this city, and trying to divide it into separate pockets as you suggest is not very helpful. I am interested in creating a good, overall result, in terms of the environment and the green space, and the cultural benefits that will come from the Arena. Treating the Arena as some sort of “bank” from which you can take money in order to do other things doesn’t seem to be exactly the right approach to me. So, I would say let’s take a much more holistic approach about how we get an overall good result for Bristol – I would add that my discussions that I’ve had locally have been incredibly supportive about the Arena project. So I do wonder why some people feel a need to try and cause divisions between different aspects of the city when we should all be working as one, in the context of a bigger picture.

LD. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: Ethical Investment: a positive decision on funding good work.

When this Council spends a lot of time arguing about where we should be dis-investing, other councils, such as Birmingham City Council are looking at investing the local government pension fund, a “potentially great untapped asset” in where it can do most good – in new houses and infrastructure, which is supported by the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce.

This suggestion has been debated more than once by Bristol City councillors.

Will the Mayor advise Council of how far he has taken forward this proposal which could channel a substantial part of the Avon pension fund into working to solve the most intractable problem facing this growing city, while still delivering a reliable long- term rate of return?

Reply from the Mayor:

The Avon Pension Fund is administered by BANES on behalf of the former Avon authorities. The Avon Pension Fund Committee is the formal decision making body for the fund.

The committee agrees the fund’s investment strategy, set out in the Statement of Investment Principles, including a ‘responsible investing policy’ that seeks to balance returns with tackling social and environmental issues.

I am currently in discussions with the Chair of the Pension Board and the Chair of the Pension Committee about making changes to investments, particularly with regards to fossil fuel divestment following the Bristol Full Council motion in December.

Investment in infrastructure and housing can certainly form part of that discussion. I am also asking them to reconsider Bristol’s representation on the committee, currently only one of twelve places, so that it is more proportionate to each authority’s interest in the fund.

LD. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman

Subject: Lawrence Weston Community Hub

There is currently the possibility of a joint NHS/Council backed Community Hub building project on the former City of Bristol College site in Lawrence Weston. What option will the Council adopt from its own prepared business case if the NHS decided not to carry forward this joint project?

Reply from the Mayor:

This has been a live issue over the last few days. The Council has been working closely with Ambition Lawrence Weston (ALW), NHS England (who are yet to commit to funding), Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group and the Rodingleaze GP practice to explore ways to develop integrated local services and facilities on the former City of Bristol College site.

I fully recognise the population of Lawrence Weston has significant health and social care needs, which was clearly articulated in the Community Plan published in 2013. The Council's Director of Public Health has been working with the ALW Steering Group and other partners to find a financially sustainable model of delivering integrated services, including the proposal for developing a Community Hub building project.

A meeting was held on 11th March 2016 between senior council officers, ALW, the CCG and GP practice to consider a revised proposal for a community hub new build and we are looking to formally bring forward proposals as to how this could be funded.

We recognise that this will be dependent on the decision by the GP practice on future provision of a health surgery and the outcomes of the Lottery bid being developed by ALW.

If funding is not secured through the NHS, then I will be interested in the Council working with ALW to look at other options.

Supplementary question and reply:

You asked a supplementary question about identifying the required funding, given that there is no mechanism to use the capital receipt from the sale of the site.

As I said at the meeting, I can't give you an assurance of where the funding will come from, but I am determined to find a resolution to this, and to continue to work with ALW to find that solution. I am hoping that there is a reasonably good chance that health funding will be realised – but if health funding doesn't come into the equation, there may need to be some revisions to the plans for the hub, as you would expect. But we shall continue to work together to find a way to deliver this excellent community scheme in an area of community need.

LD. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent

Subject: Hengrove Park

Hengrove Park is a very important open space which will also be the focus of future development. Will the Mayor, and relevant officers work with local residents and councillors on any future development plan and also commit to delivering the destination park that has long been promised?

Reply from the Mayor:

I am committed to delivering the development objectives for Hengrove Park set out in the Bristol Local Plan. The site is allocated for 'housing, offices and open space in the form of a large, high quality park'.

Phase 1 of Hengrove Park has delivered the leisure centre, hospital, skills academy and associated infrastructure. The Council has recently announced that Kier Living is the developer for the housing scheme on the land to the south of the leisure centre. The developer will be consulting with the community on the detailed plans as part of the preparation of a planning application which is anticipated later this year.

For the wider Hengrove Park site (phase 2), I want to engage with the community in a meaningful way and make sure discussions with the community around the possibilities are grounded in reality and deliverability. Therefore, officers are currently undertaking feasibility work to inform discussions with the community. We anticipate that the feasibility work will take approximately 6 months to complete, so we plan to engage with the community in autumn 2016.

LD. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent

Subject: Hengrove and Whitchurch bus service

Local bus services for Hengrove and Whitchurch communities continue to worsen. Links from Whitchurch to Broadwalk have been broken as well as the link direct to the BRI. Increasingly buses turn-up late or never show. I have previously raised the issue of the unreliable bus services in our area.

What steps will the Mayor take to ensure local services improve?

Reply from the Mayor:

Over the past few years, bus services have seen an unprecedented growth in usage, as a number of plans and projects have been delivered. This came with its own issues, with operators needing further investment to meet the demand being generated. Additional buses to meet this demand have been introduced over recent months.

The majority of bus services in the city have recently been affected in some measure by increased congestion in the central area. In part, this has been caused by roadworks associated with the MetroBus project. These works are being managed to minimise disruption but the scale and scope of the work means that some disruption is inevitable.

When complete, MetroBus will deliver more bus services as well as additional bus lanes, bus priorities and new stopping facilities that will dramatically improve bus reliability and punctuality for all bus services that travel in and around the centre of Bristol.

Bristol City Council and First are signed up to a Punctuality Improvement Partnership where the parties work together to improve the reliability and punctuality of bus services in the city for the benefit of passengers. Officers do and will continue to meet with First to identify issues on specific services and measures to improve.

LD. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: Benefits of working with major commercial players

The Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission recently invited the eight major supermarkets to answer key questions about their relationship with this City Council. It was seeking to identify where greater benefits could be derived in areas that are important for our well-being and make demands on Council resources and taxpayers' money.

With the rightfully greater interest that came out of Green Capital year in recycling and reuse, food waste, food miles and air pollution among others, will the Mayor explain why there has been no contact with supermarkets during his administration and how he would remedy this huge oversight?

Reply from the Mayor:

I have met with representatives from supermarkets on a number of occasions and have a strong commitment to working with both major commercial players and small traders to address the very issues you highlight.

The areas described are driven from a national perspective and voluntary agreements such as the Courtauld Commitments (the voluntary agreements aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing waste within the UK grocery sector).

We have signed up as an engagement partner with Courtauld 2025 which means the Council will be able to promote and help support delivery of the commitment across all sectors including supermarket chains. We are also working to assist local residents to reduce avoidable food waste through:

- working collaboratively with Courtauld 2025 partners to deliver greater impact than any signatory can achieve on their own (e.g. regional and national public education campaigns).
- helping communicate to residents the actions that make the biggest difference.
- helping to prioritise actions, target delivery and achieve impact.

Further, the revised Waste and Resources Strategy (adopted on 1 March 2016) will be used to identify new actions that we can take to work with local supermarkets.

Finally, I would like to thank you and the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission for the work the commission has undertaken on these issues, particularly the February evidence session. I understand that it was a very informative and productive exercise, and I particularly welcome the commitment from both officers and the supermarkets to establish a strong dialogue that will contribute hugely to addressing the issues you raise.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Leaman

Subject: Litter

What best efforts, even in difficult financial times for the Council, are being made to address the long term and continuing increase in litter around Kingsweston ward (Lawrence Weston in particular), given that we currently only receive one days cleansing per week?

Reply from the Mayor:

Bristol Waste Company is currently reviewing its street cleansing service to make it the most effective it can be. Part of this review will be looking at the frequency of cleansing and considering where areas need more resource than others.

We look at the number and location of littering issues reported to help us target resources at the streets and neighbourhoods most affected. We would encourage local councillors and citizens to report issues to us through the Council website so that we can provide the right resource for the area.

We will also be delivering a campaign in the spring aimed at reducing litter and fly-tipping and will be specifically targeting hot spot areas in the city and taking tailored actions (including enforcement and awareness raising) to reduce litter in those areas.