

Cabinet

Supplementary Information



Date: Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Zoom Committee Meeting
with Public Access via YouTube

2. Public Forum – Questions and Answers

(Pages 3 - 13)

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Date: Wednesday, 14 October 2020



Question: PQ08.01&02

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 8 – Temple Quarter Development Framework Update

Questions submitted by: Suzanne Audrey

Background

In April 2019, the Environment Agency raised concerns with Colin Molton, then Bristol's interim director of growth and regeneration, about "a disconnect between the development of the flood risk strategy and your aspirations for growth and development". Plans for St Phillip's Marsh, part of the Temple Quarter area, and Western Harbour were of concern. The Environment Agency stated: "If these come forward in the absence of a strategy setting out how wider flood risk will be managed then we will, in accordance with national planning policy, be duty bound to object on flood risk grounds as development in these areas would make flood risk worse elsewhere. This is not where we want to be and really illustrates the difficulty in taking a piecemeal approach to development and regeneration." In a subsequent meeting with Bristol City Council officers, the Environment Agency asserted its 'red lines': significant development in areas of flood risk must not be supported in the absence of a strategy and nor can areas be protected in isolation as it will increase flood risk elsewhere. In response, Colin Molton said delivery of flood defences would be "development led" and it was agreed he would "consider inviting" a representative of the Environment Agency onto the project steering group for Temple Quarter. It is not clear from the notes of the meeting why this had not already been considered.

Question 1: Is a representative of the Environment Agency now on the project steering group for Temple Quarter?

- **The Environment Agency are represented on the Strategic Board for Temple Quarter, this Board having providing strategic oversight of the project. The meeting of the 25th September included a discussion on these issues, which the Environment Agency were engaged in, and there is agreement that we need to continue to work together on flooding issues, not just for Temple Quarter, but across the city.**
- **Early engagement has begun on the flood strategy, Nicola has written to around 1,200 homes and businesses near the River Avon to invite them to have an early conversation with the council to ask questions and voice any concerns they may have.**

Question 2: The Temple Quarter – Development Update indicates agreement to appoint a Project Director initially on a 2 year fixed term to lead the team. Please can you give details of the process that will be followed to recruit and appoint the Project Director, including compliance with the Council's equality and inclusion policy?

- **The appointment of a Project Director will be on the basis of a national, open recruitment process and will comply with best practice in relation to equality and inclusion.**

Question: CQ09.01&02

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Sports Facilities in Parks and Green Spaces

Question submitted by: Councillor Anthony Negus

Q1. Please clarify the implications of the very particular wording: “incorporate.... into the Bristol Future Parks without a condition that they continue to be used only for sport” and “with a condition that playing pitches must be able to be provided”.

- **There is a distinction in the report between pitches that will have a condition that they will be used for sport, and those that may be used for a blend of sport and wider community uses.**

Q2. Where leases are not granted would the council consider arrangements with individual-site trusts or even a city-wide trust or more boldly looking through the telescope the usual way and developing mutual engagement with companies, such as schools, universities and colleges, retirement homes, private sports centres or business groups wishing to adopt or share our facilities to joint benefit as has been done with BCC-owned sites for housing?

- **Yes, that’s what this report offers.**

Question: CQ09.03&04

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Sports Facilities in Parks and Green Spaces

Question submitted by: Councillor Martin Fodor

(i) The report identifies funds from sale of green spaces to deliver its objectives. Further sales of green spaces could affect both community well-being and have implications for action on the Ecological Emergency.

Question 1: Are further sales of green spaces planned and what would be the process for pursuing this?

- **No green spaces are planned for sale.**

(ii) The report selects some facilities for Asset Transfer with permanent use as sports pitches currently offered or multifunctional sports, and others without this condition. It creates different categories of Asset Transfer and says:

A = Incorporate in to the Bristol Future Parks programme without a condition that they continue to be used only for sport.

B = Invite Expressions of Interest from Sept 20 with a condition that the function for sport must be protected. Site use may be multifunctional in order to support sustainable funding, use and [word missing from report].

Question 2: Why is this distinction being made?

- **Almost all of the facilities are protected for their current sport. For the few that are not, the clubs in question have an opportunity to express their interest.**
- **Our point is, if there are no takers in places we know sport has declined, then the community has the opportunity to think of a better option.**
- **This is for a combination of reasons including the facilities being very poor and a decline in use for sport without a clear remedy. Through the Future Parks expressions of interest process we will stimulate and invite ideas for alternative uses as well as uses for sport. This is an**

opportunity to work with sports clubs and providers to improve facilities.

- We've handed over a large area of Horfield Common where the Ardagh Community Trust have done a good job and have turned failing sports facilities into a multi-use community hub with sports and other activities including a multiuse games area, sheds and garden centre for residents.
- We may get a blend of uses for the facility which will help each become financially sustainable and bring wider benefits to the community and the park.

Question: PQ10.01&02

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 10 – Housing Revenue Account New Build Acquisitions

Questions submitted by: Ollie Fortune

Question 1:

I'm sure all of us living in Bristol welcome the commitment within agenda item 10 to build more council housing but it is disheartening to see this report talking about 10s of houses dotted around various private developments across the city when we have 13,000 households currently waiting to be housed by Bristol city council.

How disheartening it must be for them to hear the council talking about 10s of houses being built when it's thousands that are needed! And quickly!

Do you agree that this report is not nearly radical enough and that it offers the 13,000 households waiting for permanent accommodation no realistic prospect of a home in a timely manner?

- **In order to have a more radical approach to council house building we need a Labour government that will back councils with the resources and powers they need to deliver.**
- **The £20 million investment in the report is to allow us to respond to an opportunity to buy housing directly from developers. This is in addition to our existing council housing new build programme. The opportunity has arisen due to Covid19 and the current housing market. We will review further opportunities as they arise**
- **Our existing council housing development programme has already delivered hundreds of new homes across the city, has won awards for design and innovation and has a pipeline to deliver 1,000 new homes over the next five years and to embark on an ambitious council estate**

regeneration programme.

- **Our housing company Goram, is now in a delivery phase.**

Question 2:

I've made it known that I am pleased to read that more council housing is being built although I find the low numbers demoralising so I won't make that point twice. In the spirit of recycling and reducing our carbon footprint does this administration plan to make more money available for buying up former council houses flogged at a heavily reduced rate under right to buy as and when they come on the open market?

- **We will be buying back homes that have been sold under Right to Buy where this is in line with our agreed viability parameters. This is part of the wider council housing development programme (and as part of the wider HRA capital programme).**
- **I am not sure how that relates to recycling and carbon.**

Question: PQ10.01

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 10 – Housing Revenue Account New Build Acquisitions

Questions submitted by: Councillor Clive Stevens

This £20million is a great first start, but is it likely to do further rounds like this in future years?

- **The £20 million is to allow us to respond to an opportunity to buy housing directly from developers. The opportunity is due to Covid19 and the current housing market. We will review further opportunities as they arise.**
- **This investment is in addition to our existing council housing development programme, which has ambitions to deliver 1,000 new council homes over the next five years and to embark on an ambitious council estate regeneration programme.**
- **We are in the process of producing a new 30-year HRA Business plan for Council housing, which will set out our investment and new homes proposals in greater detail. The plan is due to be considered by Cabinet in early 2021.**

Question: CQ11.01

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 11 – Revision to Local Development Scheme and Application of Adopted Local Plan Policy

Question submitted by: Councillor Don Alexander

I notice that this scheme may only be 'interim' pending the results of the Government's White Paper called 'Planning for the Future'. Could the Cabinet Member please tell me what she thinks of this White Paper and particularly its promise to end the role of planning committees? Thanks

The government's White Paper:

1. **Aims to address issues with the existing Planning System. Many attempts to refresh nationally have resulted in lengthy and convoluted processes. Aspiration to shorten, simplify and streamline is to be welcomed. [for example the preparation of Local Plans]**
2. **Has a clear aspiration to increase community involvement in plan making and in influencing decisions, the proposals don't demonstrate *how* this can happen in the tight timeframes sought.**
3. **In danger of provision of a system that *reduces* the community's opportunity to influence either:**
 - a. **in principle at the local plan preparation stage. [Shorter preparation time, fewer opportunities to comment on emerging proposals, and fast track decisions on the form and use of land in the designated 'growth' and 'renewal' areas such that community groups are unable to effectively co-ordinate thought and engage]; or**
 - b. **through the role for local members representing community views at committee [which would appear to be significantly reduced in the majority of cases].**
4. **Want a planning system to give confidence to developers and our communities and result in development at the right place, time, to the right standards – and meet the breadth of housing, affordable housing and employment needs that Bristol has.**

The gaps between the aspiration of the White Paper and the means to deliver the potential benefits of an improved system, need to be very swiftly addressed – as set out, this can't be assured.

Question: CQ13.01

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 13 – Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2020-23

Question submitted by: Councillor Don Alexander

Could Cllr Godwin please explain some of the advantages of caring for our children and young people who need to be living in children's homes in council-owned homes here in the city rather than further afield with private sector providers? Thanks.

- **We will always try to place children locally where possible, either within the council run homes or local privately run homes, unless it is more appropriate for them to live out of area; for example if they are at risk of child criminal or sexual exploitation locally. This is because there are numerous benefits of a child remaining in the local area:**
- **The Children and Social Work Act 2017 states that in placing in a child we must take into account the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people in care, usually children will want to remain in the area they are currently living in.**
- **When the child lives locally it is easier to enable and maintain contact between a child in care and their parents/relatives/friends, and maintain existing social and support networks to minimise feelings of isolation.**
- **The closer a child lives to Bristol, the more easily that support from local services, such health and education, can be offered or sustained.**
- **However, there are not enough places in our in-house provision to house all children requiring residential care, and lack of sufficiency in Bristol to place all children locally means we do have to look further afield. We have five in-house and three external private children's homes in the Bristol area.**
- **The reason we have a Sufficiency Strategy is to signal to the market there aren't sufficient places in Bristol. It enables us to have an informed discussion with the market on our needs to encourage new providers into the area. We are in the process of refreshing our Market Position Statement on Residential Care which will provide more detail on the specific needs and current gaps in provision.**

Question: PQ13.02

Cabinet – 6 October 2020

Re: Agenda item 13 – Children in Care Sufficiency Strategy 2020 – 2023

Questions submitted by: Councillor Clive Stevens

Bristol has done well with its approach to Children in Care. One thing I would like to ask about is the future market positioning statement to replace the current one for Foster Agency placements. I note from Adult Social Care there is Government guidance issued about market positioning statements which includes grants to organisations, working with charities etc. I am most concerned about recent news reports of the private sector (for profit) entering this market for children in care.

My question is therefore whether the new market positioning statement for CiC will create opportunities for the social and charity sectors to thrive?

- **We already use two third sector Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) – one of which is a charity and one which is a co-operative. We will use these providers if they are able to recruit foster carers and can respond to our requests to match the needs of the child requiring a placement.**
- **As with residential care the market is currently saturated, both in-house and with external IFAs creating a lack of sufficiency in market. We are currently developing a Market Position Statement for foster care to provide detail on our needs and gaps to help develop market and inform our discussions with IFAs.**
- **We strongly encourage charitable third sector organisations into the market and the Market Position Statement will provide these organisations with the relevant information to develop their services to meet our needs and support them in bidding for placements from Bristol City Council.**