

Cabinet Supplementary Information



Date: Tuesday, 3 November 2020

Time: 4.00 pm

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

2. Public Forum

(Pages 3 - 14)

Issued by: Corrina Haskins, Democratic Services

City Hall, Bristol, BS1 5TR

E-mail: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

Date: Monday, 16 November 2020



Question: CQ08.01

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 8 – Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme

Question submitted by: Councillor Don Alexander

The City Hall battery scheme mentioned in the report is both interesting and innovative. Could the Cabinet Member please explain more and update us on progress? Thanks.

Answer:

- 1. The project was approved at cabinet earlier this year, but was paused following the outbreak of Covid-19. Work has now re-started and I can confirm that the council has completed its procurement and has appointed a contractor to install the battery. We are planning to start work on-site in Spring 2021.**
- 2. The City Hall Battery will allow the council to generate savings by charging the battery when energy prices are low and discharging when they are high. The battery will also help the council cut its carbon emissions, as the national grid has a higher carbon intensity during times of high demand.**
- 3. Shouldn't be seen in isolation – overcoming the challenge of how we store energy will be key in achieving zero carbon targets.**
- 4. There are other projects - Ambition Lawrence Weston wind turbine project, the hydro project at Netham and of course City Leap.**

Question: CQ08.02&03

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 8 – Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme

Question submitted by: Councillor Martin Fodor

Two years ago, November 2018, the council unanimously approved a Green " to declare a climate emergency and set a date of 2030 for the city to be carbon neutral. In July 2019 the council received a report, mandated by the motion, to set out the Mayor's Climate Emergency Action Plan. This stocktake set out what had been undertaken and promised to date.

Then in February 2020 we saw the One City Climate Strategy, developed by city partners. This list of ideas can be used and is a reference document for use by various organisations but is subject to change each year when the city partners review it.

In terms of the emergency we declared as a whole council we are now two years through the twelve years called for by international scientists. Today must therefore be a chance to show how the city and the council are responding to the emergency in concrete ways that cut emissions, and also give a timely stocktake of the pace and reach towards the carbon neutrality target.

I'm delighted that the council itself has continued its long commitment to progress in tackling its organisational emissions, and also supported some funding success to help 6 communities develop their own actions.

The programme listed in the report has 20 items

What's less positive is the number of them captioned: call, urge, invite, encourage, commission, train, investigate, assess, work with, develop recommendations, develop a plan, continue, even quantify. While all these are important they are not a demonstration of achievement, more hope and preparation.

Some actions are also halted by the redeployment of resources or revision in priorities due to the pandemic. Of course the goal is an extremely ambitious one and circumstances are tight. I endorse the values and the direction. But let's be clear where we have got to with ten years still to go.

Therefore my questions are:

1. Do we now need a report that builds on this preparatory work and stocktake, and have one documenting physical progress towards 2030?
- **We share Cllr Fodor's sense of urgency, which is why, despite the pandemic and the impact this has had on Council finances, the administration has protected the additional funding allocated to Climate Change in February 2020. And this is why my Cabinet**

portfolio has been created, to ensure we focus on climate action and I can work with my cabinet colleagues across the council.

- **The Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme considered by Cabinet today is a programme of work which focuses on three areas:**
 - a. **The Council leading by example and delivering on the Mayor's commitment for it to be Carbon Neutral by 2025 for its direct emissions and create plans for implementation of key parts of the climate strategy.**
 - b. **Supporting action by partners – through co-ordination of the One City Climate Strategy**
 - c. **Supporting action by citizens – with deliberative democracy, climate information and community grants.**

These are all practical steps and new things which help us to accelerate progress.

- **Through the Council's Service Planning processes we are now drawing together all the action being taken across the council services – in transport, energy, housing etc into a BCC Climate Action Plan.**
- **Cllr Fodor is welcome to follow up if he has some solutions he'd like to put forward for the city.**

2. Can we have regular reports of how the budget is being spent?

- **In the Mayor's Climate Emergency Action Plan he committed to reporting annually on progress with that plan, and this is included in the Cabinet Report. We will continue to do this, including how the resources have been spent.**

Question: CQ08.04

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 8 – Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme

Question submitted by: Councillor Anthony Negus

The suite of documents that make up this item tick all the boxes but we must remain flexible to inevitable developments and responses. Throughout there is reference to 'the mayors Plan', 'the One- city Plan' and 'working with partners' and while an institutional model is important this is just another example of keeping within a comfort zone. There is no reference to a Peoples' Plan' that blocks out all the messaging and the usual suspects so that this ecumenical project may be owned by anyone else. The great majority of our residents who are going to initiate, implement and so believe in this crucial step-change will want it made by them not passed down to them if there is to be the popular momentum to make possible better lives for us all.

I'm pleased that this didn't get the basics wrong but although I'm not surprised that the money and the actions will be tightly controlled from the top, I regret that there is little trust shared with those that will lead on a personal level and within their communities.

Q1. Please explain how, apart from an 'engagement plan', this is to become a vehicle for motivating citizens to want to be part of a grand movement for making changes to the way we currently live?

- **We do want people to be part of it but we also need to reinvent city systems, decarbonising them, making them pro-nature so they are no longer reliant on consciousness, lifestyle and having spare money to live a low impact life. That is the route to making environmentalism a middle class luxury – this was the case made during the mayor's appearance before the EFRA committee earlier this month.**
- **The Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme considered by Cabinet today will engage people. It is a programme of work which focuses on three areas:**
 - **The Council leading by example.**
 - **Supporting action by partners**
 - **Supporting action by citizens – with deliberative democracy, communications and community grants.**
- **More than £1,000,000 is being allocated to this engagement with citizens and we aim to attract co-financing from other organisations to assist this.**
- **One of the projects which the council is supporting through the programme is the Lottery funded Climate Action Fund Project which is working with 6 communities in the city to help them create their own climate action plans.**

- **And on a city scale the programme is contributing to the Deliberative Democracy project and key issues, related to climate change like action on travel, energy, businesses will form part of that project.**

Question: PQ09.01&02

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation - Supplementary Planning Document

Questions submitted by: Andrew Waller

Question 1

I would like to ask about possible next steps if, as I hope, the SPD gains approval.

I am concerned about the damaging impacts of high concentrations of HMOs that already exist in some areas, particularly those with high student populations. These impacts are acknowledged in the SPD, which is a good start, but the SPD can deal only with future HMO applications, not the legacy issues we already experience.

So I would like to know whether there is any plan to complete the mission of the SPD by seeking ways to mitigate those existing problems by, for example, systematically targeting the council's enforcement functions—whether in relation to planning, noise, waste disposal or other issues—on those areas that already have “harmful concentrations” of HMOs and if there is currently no such plan, would Cllr Beech be prepared to take that idea forward for discussion with colleagues?

Answers:

- **As the question acknowledges, this supplementary planning document deals with new proposals for HMOs and seeks to ensure harmful impacts are avoided.**
- **The Council will use the relevant powers wherever there are specific matters or breaches that require action.**

Question 2

On a point of detail, I would like to ask Cllr Beech if the Planning Department might be urged to actively encourage HMO developers to adopt noise-mitigation measures. In my SPD submissions, I provided a list of such measures—for example, installing soft-closers to prevent the slamming of both internal and exterior doors. While I'm delighted to see that the SPD now advises developers to adopt such measures voluntarily, I'm disappointed the document does not give specific examples. Might Planning be asked to maintain a list of such measures and to make sure when evaluating applications that developers have given appropriate consideration to whether any might apply?

Answers:

- **By avoiding harmful concentrations and sandwiching, HMOs will be less likely to have impacts that might be disturbing to other types of housing.**
- **The SPD includes a section on sound reduction measures and the role of the building regulations. It also explains that in some circumstances a condition seeking sound reduction may be attached to a planning permission for new HMO development exclusive of any building regulations requirement.**
- **Some information on the voluntary noise reductions measures the SPD mentions can be provided when it is published.**

Question: CQ09.01

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation - Supplementary Planning Document

Questions submitted by: Councillor Tom Brook

Article 4 protections were extended to Bishopston & Ashley Down in July 2019. Could the Mayor/Cabinet Member confirm the impact of this additional intervention in slowing the growth in HMOs since then and outline the potential further benefits of the new SPD for communities across the city?

1. The Article 4 directions that we have put in place make sure that planning permission is needed for smaller HMOs in Bishopston and Ashley Down and at many other parts of central, east and south Bristol, and at Avonmouth.

2. In those areas local plan policies to ensure inclusive, balanced and sustainable communities can be applied to proposed HMOs of 3 or more people.

3. The SPD's guidance will support local plan policies helping to protect communities from any harmful impacts arising from concentrations of this form of development.

4. It will help in avoiding existing homes being sandwiched by HMOs, will prevent a harmful concentration of HMOs in any single locality and will ensure a good standard of accommodation where HMOs are acceptable.

5. You're welcome to get in touch direct to get more specific detail.

Question: CQ09.02

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Managing the development of houses in multiple occupation - Supplementary Planning Document

Questions submitted by: Councillor Anthony Negus

The supplementary Planning Document for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO SPD) was finally accepted as necessary to regulate the apparently unstoppable increasing number of students coming to Bristol and seek to prevent hot-spots and mitigate the issues arising in the city areas agreed with the Universities, principally UoB, where they may live. It is formulaic, focused on local density of existing student residences. The councillors working alongside officers were assured that this would take into account Purpose-built? Student Accommodation (PBSAs) but this was withdrawn without them being told. All types of businesses, educational and non-educational, can manage PBSAs with identical groups of residents, and none of them contribute to the costs of council-provided services. But because of an 'oddity' in the Act only a few need to be licensed. While central government has set the law that makes it difficult for Licensing and Planning departments across the country to co-operate deliver local policy, in this case a licensing anomaly has crossed over to subvert our emerging planning policy. So although all these premises should be licensable they are not licensed and so will not be counted as agreed. This long-overdue HMO SPD is like a balloon created to over above problems but with this panel missing it won't get off the ground. While it has merits, it is fatally flawed and should be withdrawn until it can be patched.

Q: Please provide the estimates of bedspaces for the following types of student accommodation across the city this year and in 5 years' time?:

2020 2025

Licensed HMOs

Legally un-licensed HMOs

Illegally un-licensed HMOs

Licensed PBSAs

Un-licensed PBSAs

Answer:

- **It is impossible to answer some of these types. For example how can we know about illegal unlicensed numbers?**
- **This SPD is the product of a cross party working group which included you, Cllr Negus.**
- **The purpose of this working group was to address harmful concentrations of HMOs.**
- **HMOs are not necessarily occupied by students and this SPD is not about student housing but about HMOs generally.**
- **I would suggest preamble to the question wrongly contends the HMO SPD does not take into account Purpose Built Student Accommodation.**

- **Purpose built student accommodation is referenced in section 4.4 of the SPD. It recognises harmful concentrations of HMOs may arise in combination with the effects of purpose-built student accommodation.**
- **Decisions will be made against criteria set out in the SPD i.e. extent of concentration of purpose-built student accommodation in the area, the proportion of HMOs, the type of any purpose-built student accommodation and its location in relation to the proposed HMO.**

Question: PQ11.01&02

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 11 – Emergency Active Travel Fund - Bristol Streetspace

Question submitted by: David Redgewell

Question 1

Whilst welcoming the government grant to the WECA mayoral transport authority and Bristol City Council, the provision of cycling and walking facilities in the old city Kings Street and especially the Bus gate on Bristol Bridge and the regeneration project around Castle Park, we would like to know how much account has been taken of the needs of Bus operators and passengers on the City Centre Lewins Mead to Stoke Croft cycle lanes scheme and what action Bristol City Council and WECA mayoral transport authority are taking to reduce the delays to Bus services terminating in Lewins Mead or Bristol bus station from North Somerset and south Bristol?

The scheme also delays cross city Bus service to Gloucester Road to North Bristol and Cribbs Causeway bus station including metro bus services.

Answer:

Maintaining efficient public transport is a priority and all schemes are reviewed for their effect on the bus network.

Following discussion with First Group about impact on their services, an amendment to the Lewins Mead scheme has been designed that will provide additional bus priority from Lewins Mead to the St James Barton roundabout. This has now been implemented and includes an improvement to bus priority over and above what was in place prior to the COVID lockdown as well as mitigating the impacts of the cycle scheme.

Question 2

With the provision of bus stops safety scheme of city centre to the following corridors bus stops A38 North and South A4018, A37, A4, A420, A431, A432 .and stops around the city centre.

What account has been taken of social distancing for passengers safely at these bus stops and is the city council or WECA mayoral transport authority going to bring in additional journeys makers or Covid 19 marshals to protect passengers safety as has been the case in other transport authority areas?

Answer:

Bus stops throughout the city centre carry appropriate messaging regarding social distancing guidelines.

In addition we are providing Covid 19 marshals to reinforce these messages and we have agreed with First Group that this will include working at bus stops and on the buses themselves.

Question: CQ11.01&02

Cabinet – 3 November 2020

Re: Agenda item 11 – Emergency Active Travel Fund - Bristol Streetspace

Question submitted by: Councillor Jerome Thomas

I welcome the speed in which funding bids have been pulled together for the Active travel fund by Bristol City Council and hope for the Tranche 2 schemes that the council will be able to share as early as possible detailed plans for the proposed schemes in each neighbourhood so that meaningful community engagement is possible with each scheme.

- 1) Can the council confirm the level of spend and the location of the secure on-street cycle shelters which have been allocated tranche 2 funding?
 - **The Tranche 2 funding allocation has not yet been confirmed by the Department for Transport but based on our expectations the draft allocation for cycle hangars is £100,000.**
 - **We are aware of high demand for these across the city and are currently working on a prioritisation process to determine the locations.**

- 2) Will the council be funding cycle parking that is non secure (eg Sheffield stands) and what level of budget will be allocated for this in what locations?
 - **There is currently no specific budget set aside for cycle parking such as Sheffield stands.**
 - **These are currently delivered as part of development and wider transport schemes.**
 - **We may consider a specific allocation within the Transport Capital Programme for future years.**