

Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



Date: Tuesday, 10 January 2023

Time: 12.30 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR

Distribution:

Councillors: Kye Dudd, Mayor Marvin Rees, Donald Alexander, Lesley Alexander, Amal Ali, Kerry Bailes, Jenny Bartle, Nicola Beech, Marley Bennett, Mark Bradshaw, Fabian Breckels, Andrew Brown, Craig Cheney, Jos Clark, Asher Craig, Sarah Classick, Amirah Cole, Chris Davies, Carla Denyer, Tony Dyer, Richard Eddy, Emma Edwards, Jude English, Lily Fitzgibbon, Tessa Fitzjohn, Martin Fodor, Lorraine Francis, John Geater, Paul Goggin, Geoff Gollop, Zoe Goodman, John Goulandris, Katy Grant, Fi Hance, Alex Hartley, Tom Hathway, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Katja Hornchen, Jonathan Hucker, Philippa Hulme, Farah Hussain, Chris Jackson, Hibaq Jama, Tim Kent, Ellie King, Heather Mack, Mohamed Makawi, Brenda Massey, Henry Michallat, Yassin Mohamud, Graham Morris, Paula O'Rourke, Barry Parsons, Steve Pearce, Ed Plowden, Guy Poultney, Kevin Quartley, Tom Renhard, Tim Rippington, James Scott, Sharon Scott, Steve Smith, Ani Stafford-Townsend, Lisa Stone, Christine Townsend, Andrew Varney, Mark Weston, David Wilcox, Chris Windows and Tim Wye

Copies to: Nancy Rollason (Head of Legal Service), Kevin Slocombe (Strategic Advisor to the Mayor), Simon Cowley (Mayor's Policy Advisor), Ben Mosley (Executive Office), Lucy Fleming (Head of Democratic Engagement), David Fowler (Members' Office Manager (Conservative)), Paul Shanks, Rachel Abba (DLT Support Manager), Sarah Wilson (DLT Support Manager - Business Change), Louise Baker (DLT Support Manager Place), Sara Manix (DLT Support Manager) and Fiona Gilmour (Mayor's Office Policy Manager)

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Date: 9 January 2023



Agenda

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Member Forum

10 January 2023

Questions and replies



Procedural note:

Councillors are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions each.

- The questions submitted and written replies are enclosed.
- Councillors are also entitled to ask a maximum of 2 supplementary questions at the forum. A supplementary question must arise out of the original question or answer given.
- Via the group leaders / whips, questions have been submitted in priority order.
- At the forum, the asking of supplementary questions will be rotated between the political groups that have submitted questions, taken in priority order.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Pearce, St George Central Ward

Subject: Railway Stations

Work on the Portway Park and Ride station – Bristol’s first new train station in over a century – will rightly be welcomed across the city. Please could the mayor provide an update on this station, as well as the other stations the Labour administration has in the pipeline?

REPLY:

I am pleased to report that the Portway Park & Ride Rail Station is almost complete, with testing and commissioning currently being undertaken ahead of it’s opening in the spring. The station is scheduled to open next year, and the opening date will be confirmed this month.

Work on another new stations, at Ashley Down is due to commence on site in March, subject to the approval of funding by the West of England Joint Committee at the end of January.

Ashley Down forms part of the MetroWest Phase 2 project which will also deliver new stations at North Filton, for the Brabazon development and arena, and Henbury. These new stations are scheduled to open in 2026.

We continue to work through the Combined Authority on a future rail vision for the West of England and will look to develop options for potential new stations at St Anne’s, Lockleaze and Ashton Gate.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Edwards, Bishopston and Ashley Down Ward**Subject: Transforming Cities Fund**

I note that WECA was given £103m for projects as from the Transforming Cities Fund <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WECA-Investment-Strategy-Final-Nov-19.pdf>

Q1 : How much was Bristol City Council allocated as part of the Transforming Cities Fund?

Q2 Please provide a table of all TCF-funded projects, how much they cost and whether they have been completed

REPLY:

As with all regional funding allocations the Transforming Cities Fund must be seen as part of a wider portfolio of funding pots that support an ongoing programme of works. Our projects include the following:

Project	Forecast Spend
Bristol Bridge Section of – Bristol City Centre Junction FBC – Acceleration of CRSTS minor advanced works – junction improvements to facilitate bus corridors for Bristol City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor)	£313,078
Bedminster Green section – Bristol to Hengrove Metrobus Sustainable Transport Corridor (A38S)	£1,638,000
Portway P&R	£1,403,216
Portway Rail Station	£1,200,000
Phase 2 – Concorde Way / Dovercourt Depot	£273,289
Phase 1 – St Georges Liveable Neighbourhood (Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood)	£557,493
A4018	£624,522
Phase 1 – Old City & Kings Street	£516,245
Total	£6,525,842

(Note this the current forecast for year end spend which will be updated when we reach the end of the financial year)

Some projects will be completed by year end such as Portway Rail Station, others such as Old City King St will be completed later in the year using CRSTS funding and others are at development stage, for example Concorde Way. All of the spend shown in the table is expected to be delivered this year.

As well as these schemes, while not the named lead, Bristol is a key partner on other TCF funded projects such as the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor, M32 P&R, metrobus consolidation, metrowest phase 1 to Portishead, metrowest phase 2 and Temple Quarter regeneration. Full details of spend on all projects will be available from the West of England Combined Authority following conclusion of the TCF programme late this year.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy (Bishopsworth)

Subject: FIRE SAFETY AND THE CITY'S TOWER BLOCKS

All Members recognise that the planned interim measures (waking watch) and longer-term remedial works are necessary steps to protect tenants and provide them with safe homes. However, it is also important to know or understand more about potential obstacles which may arise to prevent the Authority from dealing with this issue in the most cost-effective or efficient manner

1. Can the Mayor explain what were the reasons given by residents at Castlegate House for objecting to the installation of sprinklers in their tower block, given that this would be an improvement on the safety status of that building?
2. If, as you have previously stated that lessons were learned from this engagement, how is it proposed to overcome future resistance to any new project?

REPLY:

1. When surveyed the residents had experienced two other fires within the block which were contained within a single property, resulting in them feeling safe in their homes.

Residents also did not want the potential disruption nor did they like the aesthetics of the sprinkler after a trial in a flat and Laundry area. We should also consider the risks to people's property should sprinklers be triggered by an incident in another nearby property.

2. Early engagement and regular communication play a key role in successful delivery of any project.

Lessons learned resulted in a more aesthetically pleasing product being used to hide the pipework on show and dependant on project size and scale will result in a dedicated resident liaison officer being assigned. Furthermore, new powers under the building safety act 2022 may be applicable to enforce for safety.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies

Subject: Public Safety and Protection Committee

On Tuesday 20th Dec I tendered my resignation from PSP B Committee. I have served on this unsung but vital committee for many years currently as a KCP representative and previously as a Lib Dem but having raised the problems of attendance and management repeatedly with party whips feel that i had no alternative. A very small number of Cllrs have been shouldering the burden with ever lengthening agendas for the few Cllrs willing to serve. I have considerable sympathy for the officers at the sharp end trying to make this work. Panels have regularly run with less than 3 members.

Q1 Can we have a print out of the party representation actually attending panels panel by panel since the last local election and the number of cases per panel?

Q2 What actions are the administration going to take to get this structure functioning in balance again and getting all parties to take their share of the responsibility?

REPLY:

1. Democratic Services will be able to provide you with a print out, but this link can be used to calculate attendance [ModernGov - bristol.gov.uk](https://moderngov.com/bristol.gov.uk)

Committee attendance

Date range: [◀ Earlier](#) - [Later ▶](#)

Committee: ▼

Public Safety and Protection Committee, 6 meetings

Member	Attendances
Councillor Richard Eddy	5
Councillor Christopher Davies	2
Councillor Brenda Massey	0
Councillor Guy Poultney	2
Councillor Jonathan Hucker	5
Councillor Amal Ali	1
Councillor Marley Bennett	5
Councillor Tessa Fitzjohn	1
Councillor Katja Hornchen	1
Councillor Farah Hussain	0
Councillor Barry Parsons	2
Councillor Christine Townsend	2

2. PSPB is not an executive function and my administration has no role in how it operates. This is one of the committees that operate in the way all future committees will operate and it is concerning that it is struggling to deliver. I am sure councillors will consider this as they take forward the new system of governance.

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Pearce, St George Central Ward

Subject: Arson on council property

When BCC property falls victim to criminal damage or arson, does the authority routinely report it to police or take a position of complainant?

REPLY:

We are very concerned that too often perpetrators are not dealt with more severely.

Arson, including anyone that is a victim of criminal damage, should be referred to the police for action and prosecution.

We consider any damage to its property to be a serious issue and will take further action as necessary depending on the circumstances. The actions we take in response to arson/criminal damage will vary depending on several factors:

- The perpetrator/s tenure – this dictates the legal remedies open to us
- The level of damage – consideration of likelihood & impact when applying for costs through a legal remedy
- The outcome of a legal prosecution bought by the police – may open up options to consider mandatory possession grounds, if the perpetrator/s is a resident.

Each case will be managed differently based on the particulars of the case, we're unable to take a standard one size approach to each situation.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fodor, Redland Ward**Subject: Committee system**

The development of the new committee system is underway. It will create a proportional, more representative decision-making process.

In the recent revenue saving consultation it was proposed that funds for the mayor's office and for member development [councillor training] should be cut.

The mayor's office contains many parts of the council operations not all related to a single decision maker. This was described as 'clearing the way' for committee-led decision making. But it was also admitted that this doesn't leave a budget for the new committee led model including support for committees and their chairs, and a complete refresh of councillors from all-out elections across the city in 2024, plus the wider participation anticipated.

1. What functions in the mayor's office are solely needed by an elected mayor compared to those transferable to other forms of decision making in other authorities?
2. What provision will be made in the forthcoming budget and MTFP to ensure adequate resources from at latest May 2024 for training new councillors and roles, and for wider participation and cross party collaboration through new committees in all council decision making from May '24?

REPLY:

1. We see no evidence that the committee structure will mean a proportional, more representative decision-making process, instead it will slow down the council's ability to deliver on the housing, climate, and ecological crisis.

Your party on several occasions has used budget amendments to reduce the budget of the Mayor's Office and so I am surprised you don't welcome it now.

There is no doubt that the Mayor's Office cost at the end of the term will be zero. Where and how the current functions of the office are replaced in the future governance model are a question for the Governance Committee and you should table the issue there.

2. While your party told everyone in the referendum that the committee system would be cheaper, it now appears the opposite is true. However, you will need to allocate costs in the 2024 budget for the running of the system and that will be a matter for next year's budget.

Later in the year I will offer each party to form a cross party Budget Committee to develop a budget, that I will submit in March 2024.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)**Subject: BRISTOL BEACON (COLSTON HALL) LEASE**

The council's recent budget consultation for 2023/24 included many very unpalatable scenarios, including cuts to core facilities such as libraries and parks which many residents use and enjoy. The Conservative Group are strongly opposed to cuts in these areas. Given current financial constraints, it appears that many essential frontline services are vulnerable. It therefore seems increasingly imprudent that the authority has committed to spend £107 million on the refurbishment of a concert venue, the Bristol Beacon. This is especially so in view of the following facts:

- The venue is leased to the Bristol Music Trust under a long-term agreement
- The council does not receive a commercial income from the property; therefore it is deemed to have no economic value to the authority
- Using conventional Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) methodology, the asset is valued at zero in the council's accounts
- All expenditure on the project is being written-off as it is being incurred

1. Can the Mayor please advise the actual annual income the council receives from the Bristol Music Trust under the terms of this agreement?
2. Is there any break clause in the lease, or is it possible that the agreement could be renegotiated to provide a better deal for the council and taxpayers?

REPLY:

1. The historic lease is a peppercorn lease, and the Council does not receive significant income from BMT under the lease. Under those arrangements the lease required BMT to provide music related services to Bristol, rather than focus on revenue.
2. Now we have made substantial investment in modernising and restoring this significant cultural asset, the future lease will be predicated revenue returns to recoup the city's investment.

A paper setting out the latest position is coming to cabinet in January.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins**Subject: Mike Alden**

The mayor will no doubt have noticed that Knowle resident Mike Alden was named as the national winner of the unsung sporting hero award on the BBC sports personality of the year on 21st December 2022. An award that Knowle is proud of as should the city be.

Specifically, this award was for his selfless work for the Park football club in Daventry Road Knowle over 10 years. The club run many teams including those for disabled, youngsters of both sexes and women's teams. It is simply the most successful and inclusive club that anyone could imagine. Despite a bulging trophy cabinet it is the community benefit that matters. The club have worked with the Park management and have renovated their previous club facilities they have been rewarded with brand new facilities but because of sharing with the new school have less pitch time.

The club now play some fixtures in Redcatch park but are hampered because the pavilion fell into such a state of disrepair that its only use at the moment is as a canteen for parks staff. Having at first asked for bids for repair parks then said that they wanted to do an asset transfer.

The club together with the community garden backed by ourselves have indicated a long time ago that they could take over, repair and use the facility. Long term there are plans for a massive upgrade. They have a track record of success. The cabinet member has said this is exactly the sort of solution you are looking for.

1. Why then despite much reminding is this club still locked out of the changing facility that they could repair and when can this ridiculous position be fixed?
2. How much of your inability to get a working arrangement is down to over centralisation of all decisions and after apologising to the club can you now ensure proper access this season?

REPLY:

My cabinet was ahead of this curve and has been actively progressing community asset transfers and carried a cabinet paper in October 2020 on sports asset transfers.

This provided for sports clubs to manage their own pitch and surrounds, take over their club houses and seek external investment for a sustainable future, rather than be subject to a diminishing investment from the council.

This process was applied to every sports ground in the city with pitches and we received expressions of interests for many of our parks.

Progress of this was delayed by lack of resource and funding and the pandemic. We are committed to completing this work this year. Everyone who has submitted an Expression will be able to submit a business case and we can take the sports asset transfers forward.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bennett, Eastville Ward

Subject: Welcoming Spaces

Please can the mayor provide an update on the use Welcoming Spaces over the Christmas period?

REPLY:

We promised the city we would try and help people through the current economic crisis and Welcoming spaces has been an important part of this.

This project has been a great success, drawing on the amazing communities and assets we have in Bristol to respond to the cost of living crisis created by the government. Christmas can be a really challenging time for some people, but we've worked together with community sector to make it as good as possible for those struggling with the cost of living crisis.

82 welcoming spaces have opened up across Bristol offering somewhere to work, relax, take part in activities, community meals and access support. Welcoming spaces are existing community, arts, faith leisure or civic spaces doing what they do best all year round. They have pulled out all the stops to extend opening times and provide a warm welcome to all.

Over 20 Welcoming spaces were open including Zion, Bricks, Wellspring Settlement, Bishopsworth Childrens Centre, a number of Leisure Centres and the four mosques.

Redcliffe Hub, Easton Community Centre, Pakistani Welfare Organisations, Shirehampton JTE Hub opened on Christmas day for meals and activity.

Other organisations including Black2nature, Bristol Somali Youth Voice delivered meals and food parcels. We know about 500 meals and food parcels were shared.

Some of the welcoming spaces staff and volunteers took a well-deserved break over the period too. Thank you to everyone involved in this incredible community response and to everyone involved in growing and strengthening our communities.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Wilcox, Lockleaze ward

Subject: Bristol Bridge

The advertised dates for the much-needed work around Bristol Bridge to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists have been published on One.Network
<https://one.network/?GB131904062>. May till September 2023.

I note that this is a £1.6m project combined with the improvement to the Car Park Variable Message Signs.
<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s75056/TCF%20Cabinet%20Paper%20-%20Bristol%20Bridge%20Jct%20Car%20Park%20VMS%20-%202024-08-22%20TS%20v3.pdf>.

This was due to be funded from the Transforming Cities Fund
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-the-transforming-cities-fund> which must be completed by March 2023.

Q: Can the mayor please detail which projects have been cut from the CRSTS programme to fund this expenditure?

I note from Cabinet Papers that both the “Old City & King Street Pedestrianisation Scheme Full Business Case”
<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s72934/Decision%20Pathway%20Report%20Old%20City%20King%20St%20Dems%20Services%20FINAL.pdf> - £2.1m from June Cabinet and “Refreshing permission to construct the A4018 scheme following a change in funding source”
<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s75894/220927%20A4018%20permission%20refresh%20FINAL%20VERSION.pdf> - £5m from October Cabinet, were also allocated to the Transforming Cities Fund.

Q: Will these projects be completed before the March 23 deadline?

REPLY:

1. No projects have been cut from the CRSTS programme to fund this expenditure.

The Bristol Bridge junction has been part of the Strategic Corridor work packages that are included within the CRSTS Programme.

In this instance the work at Bristol Bridge has been brought forward to improve matters for pedestrians and cyclists whilst also reducing the maintenance liability (and potential abortive spend due to a remodelling of the junction) of the current traffic signals that are at the end of their service life and need urgent replacement.

The Transforming Cities Fund opportunity has reduced the overall cost to CRSTS of the Bristol Bridge junction works with the funding allocation that has been agreed for Financial Year 22/23.



2. These projects are being funded by both the Transforming Cities Fund and CRSTS pots. The spend allocated from TCF will be spent by the end of March as per the funding requirements. The projects themselves will then use CRSTS funding to complete.

The Old City is expected to be completed by Autumn 2023 and the A4018 by September 2024.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston (Henbury & Brentry)

Subject: PROVISIONAL FINDINGS ON IMPACT OF CAZ

1. Can the Mayor confirm if there is any initial data or findings available on the environmental impact/improvement achieved since the commencement of the Bristol scheme?
2. Has monitoring been undertaken to assess pollution levels in areas where traffic volumes have increased or been displaced due to the CAZ – with specific reference here to Sylvan Way?

REPLY:

1. The City Council has monitored air quality since the 1990's and increased the extent of the air quality monitoring network in and around the Clean Air Zone in 2021 to collect comprehensive data on the effects of the Clean Air Zone, including for the effects of traffic displacement. The data from these monitors will be used by the national CAZ assessment programme run by the Institute of Transport Studies (Leeds University) who will report to national Government. All data will be published in the normal way on our open data portal.

[Air Quality Dashboard – Open Data Bristol](#)

Because air quality varies daily, weekly and monthly with the weather conditions and traffic patterns, the individual monitor results need to be validated based on a full calendar year of data. We can confidently report the effects of the CAZ with a full assessment in 2024.

2. Three additional monitors have been installed on the Portway, at Sylvan Way, Roman Way and Bridge Valley Road.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bennett, Eastville Ward

Subject: Bristol Beacon

Please can the mayor provide an update on the Bristol Beacon project?

REPLY:

The major refurbishment and transformation of the Bristol Beacon has gone well until this point. There have been a number of obstacles, unforeseen delays and the project has been hit by inflated costs of the supply chain. Despite that we've committed to conclude the work and restore this important cultural asset to the city.

A cabinet paper will be tabled at the January meeting which will outline all the reasons for increased costs, the decision points that had to be taken and then impact of various factors on both costs and on programme. It will include a recommendation to complete the project that will allow the Beacon to reopen to the people of Bristol near the end of this year.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Parsons, Easton ward

Subject: Stapleton Road and St Marks Road

The stretch of Stapleton Road from Berwick Road north to St Marks Road is notorious for pavement parking, which obstructs disabled people and slows down buses. Speaking to Bristol Older People's Forum last September, Cllr Alexander said "I'm looking at putting bollards on that bit of pavement opposite those takeaways just to stop those cars physically from getting on there."

Q1 May I have an update on the administration's plans for this stretch of road?

Following controversy over a proposed pedestrianisation in 2020, I have been pleased to work with officers from the City Design team, local traders, residents and places of worship, to develop plans to improve St Mark's Road that are acceptable to the whole community.

Q2 Is the administration able to confirm that these plans will be delivered this year?

REPLY:

1. Cllr Don Alexander has asked the team to look into this. However, their assessment is that there is no simple solution. Bollards within the existing footway would narrow the useable footway for pedestrians and would not stop cars from being parked on the road in contravention of the existing restrictions.

This would probably need the footway to be widened, but there is currently no funding available to do so.

2. The administration has progressed the scheme and consultation will shortly be carried out.

As Traffic Regulation Orders are required to enable our scheme to be delivered, we will have to follow the formal process for advertising and consulting on the TROs. This will take around 9 months so the scheme is likely to be delivered late 2023/early 2024.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: NO.2 BUS ROUTE IMPROVEMENT

1. Can I please have an update and timeline as to the current development of these proposals after the conclusion of the consultation exercise?

REPLY:

We are reviewing the scheme in light of the consultation results and adjusting the designs and business case to bring to cabinet for decision. Further work will be required to test additional options for some sections of the route that need consideration following the consultation.

We will be looking to split the scheme into a number of separate elements so that work can begin on those sections of route that are ready to be delivered so as not to delay delivery of much needed improvements along the corridor.

This will require approval by WECA as the funding body for the scheme and we will be seeking approvals later this month

The scheme is due to come back to cabinet for approval of the business case. This will include a timeline for delivery.

Other elements will take longer to develop and will follow on after these sections.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hussain, Central Ward

Subject: We The Curious 'the Arc'

I was disappointed to hear that We the Curious have decided it's not currently feasible to move ahead with 'the Arc'

- 1) Are there any forms of grants / funding that could be made available to We the Curious to help support the project?

It's creator recently said: "We were greatly encouraged that Bristol councillors at the planning committee voted unanimously to support Arc at We The Curious. We will just have to be patient until we find the right location."

- 2) Has the council had any discussions about using any of other locations for this project?

REPLY:

1. I agree it is disappointing that this exciting project has stalled, however we know that there is a difficult set of conditions in construction at the moment. Given the council's own financial circumstances and that this is a privately funded scheme, we are unable to offer grants or support. However, some national funding pots might be appropriate. This is of course for the Arc team to explore.
2. My office is not aware of any further discussions regarding this particular project at this stage. We felt the We The Curious site was a good one, but we're always open to a conversation with those who want to bring investment into the city.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mack, Lockleaze ward

Subject: Concorde Way

Last year there was a consultation to determine future changes to Concorde Way.

1. Have any decisions been made about the Concorde way rerouting based on the results of the consultation that ended months ago?
2. Does the mayor support a safe and traffic free path along this strategic transport route?

REPLY:

I support a safe and traffic-free path along this strategic transport route from Lockleaze to Muller Road.

Based on the results of the consultation (in which 74% of respondents preferred the creation of an off-road route) an off-road route is being prepared in outline for further consultation and the development of an Outline Business Case to WECA.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: HOUSING OFFICERS STAFFING

I have twice submitted questions regarding the numbers of Housing Officers required. Unfortunately, the response received was somewhat opaque and, apparently, subject to an independent review.

1. Can the Mayor now provide me with a full and complete answer to the information requested on recruitment and appropriate staffing levels?

REPLY:

The current Housing Officer compliment within the estates team is 61 FTE of which three are trainee housing officers. These staffing levels were set in 2019. We currently have 58 full time housing officers in post and we're now recruiting to the remaining three housing trainee positions.

We've commissioned an independent review of the housing service which includes benchmarking against other Core Cities which will report back soon.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hornchen, Brislington East Ward**Subject: Ecology**

Atlantic herring, mackerel, plaice, dover sole, brown trout lamprey, and European eel and Atlantic salmon – which are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of threatened species – have been found in the harbour and the Avon. This is welcome news, and follows beavers being found in the Avon catchment for the first time in 400 years.

- 1) How can we continue to support Bristol's ecology, allowing threatened species to thrive?
- 2) Are there any plans to reintroduce plants or wildlife to the Bristol area?

REPLY:

We are proud to be the first city in the UK to declare an Ecological Emergency. Our One City Ecological Emergency Strategy sets out our plan for supporting nature recovery up to 2030. Its priorities include managing at least 30 per cent of land in Bristol for the benefit of wildlife.

It's great to see that you're as happy as I am to see the results of our environmental DNA survey of Bristol's harbour and local waterways with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART), including the Brislington Brook in your ward and the River Avon at Conham.

Others reading this pack might be interested to read more on my blog:

<https://thebristolmayor.com/2022/12/13/bristol-rivers-biodiversity/>

Our administration has supported efforts to graze cattle at Stoke Park, with a herd of cows and goats, and have also confirmed that work will soon start to restore three historic ponds there, which will support great crested newts (another protected species) living on the Estate.

Work continues apace as part of the Avonmouth and Severnside Ecology Mitigation and Flood Defence Project which will create 80 hectares of new wetland habitat for birdlife as part of the £100 million joint scheme with South Gloucestershire Council and the Environment Agency. Local Councillor Don Alexander recently visited the Hallen Marsh and can share more about how birds and deer are enjoying the new scrapes there.

Along the Floating Harbour, work to strengthen biodiversity will take place by removing invasive plant species such as Himalayan Balsam alongside installing new floating reed beds (also proposed for Capricorn Wharf), new artificial otter holts and new kingfisher perches to support these colourful, protected, birds in hunting. The goats which call the Avon Gorge home are also protecting more than 30 species of rare plants that only grow in our part of the world, including the Bristol onion and Bristol rock cress. And, over the river, Ashton Court Estate has been home to a deer park for more than 600 years.



And, of course, our ambitious plans to plant 16,000 new trees this year will also support the city's wildlife. This follows on from the more than 80,000 trees that we have planted since 2015 in Bristol: an average of 10,500 new trees per year.

I was pleased to announce these plans with Councillor Ellie King in Hillfields during National Tree Week, when we also kicked off a new scheme to give out almost 5,000 new fruit trees to schoolchildren in Bristol. This is all part of getting our city planting enough trees to meet the ambitious One City target to double Bristol's tree canopy by 2045.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Plowden Windmill Hill ward**Subject: Clean Air Zone**

Clean Air Zone: It is good to know from the Mayor's last answer to my question that no areas of Bristol are modelled to be non-compliant for poor air quality following the introduction of the CAZ. Although any intervention to improve Air Quality should be positive, access to the actual data (rather than the modelled assumptions) is going to be vital to know if the CAZ is indeed working.

I therefore would still like to know what the monitoring plan is, to see if the modelling is proving correct and what are the actual effects of the modelled displacement (as per modelling on pages 36-43 of the Cabinet Report) and increased casualties in some areas (as per page 146 of the Cabinet Report).

Q1: I presume there must be a plan. Please can this be shared?

As noted the CAZ displacement is modelled to increase road danger in some areas. Not all the interventions to address road danger identified by Area Committees using CIL have been able to be funded.

Q2: Will any funding from the revenue generated by the CAZ charges be made available where there is a forecast negative effect on road danger due to CAZ displacement, and if not what is the intended use of the revenue?

REPLY:

1. The "Evaluation, Monitoring and Benefits Realisation Plan" was submitted as part of the Final Business Case in February 2021. All relevant materials are available on the council's "Clean Air for Bristol" website and have been for some time.

Officers are following the recommendations from Jacobs in the plan. Over 90 new monitoring sites have been established, most of which have been monitoring since the start of 2021 to provide a "before scheme" baseline data set.

Officers are liaising with the Government to report the data at agreed intervals. As stated in the answer to Conservative question 3, it is not possible to report compliance, or a trajectory towards compliance over the short term because of the inherent variability of air quality.

The Institute for Transport Studies is conducting the analysis of air quality and traffic data for JAQU from the CAZ scheme. They will judge compliance status and will incorporate advanced analysis of the air quality data allowing comparison with other cities. Compliance reporting will happen in 2024.

All of the council's air quality data will continue to be reported through our open data portal and via an annual report in the normal way.



2. The revenue generated from Bristol's Clean Air Zone is not intended or created to generate profit. Funds from charges will be used to cover the costs of operating the zone including maintenance of cameras, installation of signage, and operational staff as well as setting up a reserve to cover any costs of decommissioning and any required contingency.

Government have stipulated that any surplus revenue must be ringfenced and used for supporting the Council's local travel policies:

- To keep Bristol's Clean Air Zone running without using public money from the Council's budget
- To award funds to the most urgent priorities which will be calculated by considering each project's:
 - impact on air pollution and
 - value for money
- To help drivers with vehicles which don't meet the zone's emission standards to upgrade and
- To help people travel in more sustainable ways

Funding may also be allocated to the following existing transport schemes:

- Bristol City Centre
- Long Ashton metrobus
- Bristol to Bath Sustainable Transport Corridor
- M32 Sustainable Transport Corridor
- Portway Sustainable Transport Corridor and Hub
- Stockwood to Cribbs Causeway Sustainable Transport Corridor
- Bristol to Hengrove metrobus extension
- Liveable Neighbourhood pilot scheme



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris (Stoke Bishop)**Subject: TACKLING BLOCKED DRAINS ON HIGHWAYS**

The combination of recent heavy rain and the seasonal fall of leaves from deciduous trees has resulted in several blocked drains not only in my ward but right across Bristol. This causes major problems for pedestrians, cyclists, scooter users and motorists.

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether Highways Officers regularly inspect drains for blockages or do they rely solely on residents to report blocked drains to councillors or via the "Fix my street" website?

Residents in my ward, who undertake litter picks and other community friendly activities, have said they would be willing, if BCC Highways were happy with the suggestion, to keep an eye on local drains and try and unblock as/when necessary.

2. Is this something Highways would welcome or is their preference to be alerted to any blocked drains?

REPLY:

1. The Council are responsible circa 45,000 gullies on the highway network. Of these, the majority (38500) are subject to inspection by a highway inspector. The aim is that every gully should be inspected once every two years. Unfortunately, due to resources, this is averaging at one inspection every 3 years.

The remaining, 6,180 key gullies are subject to an annual cyclical cleanse and are largely located on the resilient network.

Most of the gully cleansing is actioned by inspections.

2. We welcome and encourage community groups and the public to clear leaves and debris from the grid surface as this is often the cause of highway flooding. Persons should be aware of their surroundings and do not attempt this on major roads.

If the gully is blocked, we would recommend reporting by the councils Fix My street process, as the gully covers are heavy and the waste in gullies is contaminated, requiring special disposal.

Gullies are design to hold water, like toilets, to prevent smells. Therefore, gullies that are holding water are not necessarily blocked.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Smith (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: FIRE SAFETY AND AUTHORITY HIGH-RISES

1. Irrespective of tenant reticence, would the Mayor consider installation of a new sprinkler programme in communal areas?
2. What powers does the local authority have/retain as landlord for imposing a fire safety solution to the dangers posed with high rise buildings – which extend beyond cladding issues?

REPLY:

1. Details of additional fire safety measures will form part of the HRA cabinet report based upon 23/24 budget setting, the housing investment plan and medium-term financial plan for the Housing revenue account.
2. Building Safety Act 2022 introduces power of entry to support safety activity meaning any opposition to installations may be overcome considerably with residents, but legally if required - a step that never existed previously.

This would need to form part of a wider policy and consultation process with residents that has not yet happened and dependent on the route approved by cabinet and full council on the housing investment plan.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: WAKING WATCH PROVISION

1. What plans are in place to ensure the waking watch scheme is strictly time-limited?
2. Can the Mayor confirm the latest safety advice being given to tenants in the event of fire?

REPLY:

1. They will of course be time limited to dealing with the cladding concerns.

For example, Eccleston and Phoenix House has had Waking Watch stood down as the cladding has been made safe.

2. Fire safety advice given to residents is approved and signed off by the local fire authority.

However, advice may vary dependant on the type of property the resident lives in. In the higher risk buildings specific guidance per block has been communicated to each block explaining the fire safety measures and what to do in the event of a fire. This has been communicated via letter, text where applicable and resident engagement sessions throughout November and December.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows (Henbury & Brentry)

Subject: OVERSIGHT OF REMEDIAL WORKS IN THE CITY'S TOWER-BLOCKS

Given the importance of this work, and without precluding any future opportunity to debate this issue, will the Mayor agree to the following:-

1. Task officers to provide OSM and/or Communities Scrutiny Commission with a regular update (containing timescales and milestones) on the progress of this project?
2. Join with PGLs in writing to the Minister of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with a request that sufficient funding is made available to identify and remedy every building found to have unsafe cladding?

REPLY:

1. Scrutiny agendas are a matter for the respective chairs, and they can decide their programme of works. If a scrutiny committee requests this work, then officers will be tasked to support it.
2. We've already written to DHLUC on the 4th November, without reply. We also wrote to Core Cities on November the 8th to make them aware of the proactive steps we were taking. Party Group Leaders can follow up if they wish.



The following statements have been submitted – full details are attached:

	Name	Subject
CS01	Cllr Phillipa Hulme	Afghan Refugees
CS02	Cllr Andrew Brown	Threats to the Central Library and broader Library Service
CS03	Cllr Mohamed Makawi	Street Drains
CS04	Cllr Katy Grant	Water Quality

CS01

Members Forum statement from Cllr Phillipa Hulme

Subject: Afghan Refugees

I want to thank all the volunteers and staff who have been supporting Afghan refugees - and indeed refugees from other parts of the world - in Bristol. As a City of Sanctuary, it's reassuring to see so many people come together to make Bristol a safe haven for those fleeing violence and persecution.

Across the country, Bristol included, refugees are being housed in hotels until long-term accommodation becomes available - due to a lack of government funding to provide proper homes for refugees and for social housing in general. I would appreciate the cabinet member or officers getting back to me in writing about the plans and timeframes to have the refugees who are currently in hotels into permanent homes.

With around 15,000 people on the housing waiting list and a shortage of housing in Bristol, there are a lot of factors that will effect this. But with 2,563 homes being built in Bristol last year alone, far surpassing an ambitious target, I am hopeful that we can find the long-term homes that refugees in Bristol so urgently need in the near future.

CS02

Members Forum statement from Cllr Andrew Brown

Subject: Threats to the Central Library and broader Library Service

Bristol's Central Library is one of the city's most popular public assets. Its lending and reference libraries are used by tens of thousands of people every year. It has been housed in the same building since 1906, a grade one listed architectural gem with national significance. The building was designed for use as a library and, with its later extension, serves that purpose just as well today as a century ago.

The hall of the reference library continues to inspire learning and discovery and The Bristol Room, with fixtures incorporated from the original 17th century library in King Street, houses thousands of documents from the city's history. It is very hard to understand why anyone thinks it would be a good idea to close down the library, with a completely uncertain future for the building or its contents.

Over recent years under both the current and previous Mayor, we have seen repeated threats to the Library Service in the city. On those occasions, after broad-based public campaigns, threatened libraries have been saved, albeit with curtailed hours. Indeed, just a couple of years ago the Mayor's office was trumpeting how he had saved the city's libraries...

I urge the Mayor to abandon any plan to close the library, and review threats to other libraries across the city, such as Whitchurch Library in my ward. The Central Library in its current building should remain the centre of a comprehensive public library service in our city.

If he is unwilling to categorically rule out closing it then he should at least give full disclosure on the cost estimates he has received for the full relocation of all the library's contents and assets. He should disclose which alternative locations have been investigated for any relocation. He should disclose what the annual rental costs of any new location would be, compared to the zero rental costs of the current library. He should disclose the identity of any potential future tenants of the current Central Library and what uses they would make of a listed building designed as a library.

The Central Library is something that works well in our city. It is a centre for life-long learning. It has a bustling Business and IP hub. It is in an accessible location. It is a place where people can meet. In the current cost of living crisis, it is a warm place for people experiencing fuel poverty. It is also one of the few locations of public toilets in this area of the city (and rather more accessible than those in this building). Closing it would be preposterous and damaging.

CS03

Members Forum statement from Cllr Mohamed Makawi

Subject: Street Drains

I am writing this statement regarding drainage in the city, especially in my ward Cotham.

As I have reported so many of them to the fixmystreet for complete or partial blockages, some for more than a year, and none of them have been unblocked so far, and many of these reports are closed and recorded as 'completed' as if the work is done.

But the reality is otherwise.

The most important point is not opening or unblocking the drainage, but is that they cause the streets to be bulldozed & potholes especially in the Autumn & Winter season, we have seen recently heavy rains that lead to local flooding and cause inconvenience to residents, pedestrians, and road users, and the huge expenditure of the council's budget on road repair throughout the year.

CS04

Members Forum statement from Cllr Katy Grant

Subject: Water Quality

We have learnt recently from the Trout in the Trym community group (made up of volunteers from Sustainable Southmead, Sea Mills Climate Action, Sustainable Henbury & Brentry, Sustainable Westbury on Trym and others) that sewage in Bristol is a really significant problem. Recent national media on this - a multi million pound fine for Southern Water, a debate in Parliament, etc - didn't affect Bristol and its waterways, but it could very well have done.

Here are figures for Bristol in 2021 (the data is from water companies, collated and published each year by the Rivers Trust):

Constituency - Number of overflows of raw sewage; Duration of overflows (hours); % of combined sewer outflows actually being monitored

- Bristol East - 448; 302; 75%
- Bristol North West - 2,588; 6,203; 95% <<< mainly in the Trym
- Bristol South - 169; 277; 57%
- Bristol West - 287; 361; 59%
- Bristol Local Authority area - 3,492; 7,144; 80%

These are all spills of raw sewage into the watercourses within the city boundary. Many children swim and paddle in these streams as well as countless dogs. Warning signs from the Council are not in evidence. The One City Plan (Goal 188) says that all Bristol streams will be healthy for wildlife by 2031 - but without oversight of the main polluter how will this be achieved? It is really important that the Council provides regular, robust oversight of what Wessex Water is doing. Data is published annually, the next due April/May 2023 for 2022; if pollution levels are not improving, Wessex Water need to be challenged on this, on their plans (what, where, when, with what impact) and on their progress. The Council needs to be doing this at least annually and keeping the public informed.

Trout in the Trym say that they have sent this data to the Cabinet member for climate and ecology, but have not had a reply. It would be helpful for all of us councillors, and for the residents of Bristol, if the Council could take action on water quality, hold water companies to account – and share more information with the public about this.