

Summons to attend meeting of Full Council



Date: Tuesday, 9 January 2024

Time: 2.00 pm

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

To: All Members of Council

Issued by: Oliver Harrison, Democratic Services

City Hall, PO Box 3399, Bristol, BS1 9NE

Tel: 0117 3526162

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

Date: Friday, 29 December 2023

www.bristol.gov.uk



Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

(Pages 11 - 13)

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest

To note any declarations of interest from the Councillors. They are asked to indicate the relevant agenda item, the nature of the interest and in particular whether it is a **disclosable pecuniary interest**.

Any declarations of interest made at the meeting which is not on the register of interests should be notified to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.

(Pages 14 - 27)

5. Lord Mayor's Business

To note any announcements from the Lord Mayor

6. Public Petitions, Statements and Questions

Members of the press and public who plan to attend a public meeting at City Hall are advised that you will be **required to sign** in when you arrive, and you will be issued with a visitor pass which you will need to **display at all times**.

Public forum items can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city. Submissions will be treated in order of receipt and as many people shall be called upon as is possible within the time allowed within the meeting (normally 30 minutes).

Further rules can be found within our Council Procedure Rules within the Constitution.

Please note that the following deadlines apply to this meeting:



a. Public petitions and statements: Petitions and written statements must be received by **12 noon on Friday 5 January 2024** at latest. One written statement per member of the public is permitted.

b. Public questions: Written public questions must be received by **5pm on Wednesday 3 January 2024** at latest. A maximum of 2 questions per member of the public is permitted. Questions should be addressed to the Mayor or relevant Cabinet Member.

Public forum items should be e-mailed to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

7. Petitions Notified by Councillors

Please note: Up to 10 minutes is allowed for this item.

Petitions notified by Councillors can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city. The deadline for the notification of petitions to this meeting is **12 noon on Monday 8 January 2024**.

8. Petition Debate: Israel - Gaza Conflict

Recommendation: That Full Council debates the petition and refers it to the Mayor / relevant Cabinet member for a formal response. **(Pages 28 - 30)**

9. Youth Council Update Report

Recommendation: That Full Council note the report. **(Pages 31 - 33)**

10. Council Tax Base 2024/25

Recommendation: Agree, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2024/25 shall be 134,752. **(Pages 34 - 39)**

11. Collection Fund Surplus / Deficit 2023/24

Recommendations: **(Pages 40 - 52)**

1. That an estimated surplus as at 31 March 2024 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £0.835m be declared for 2023/24 and



shared between this Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion to their 2023/24 precepts on the Collection Fund.

2. That an estimated deficit as at 31 March 2024 on the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) element of the Collection Fund, net of grants, of £4.545m be declared for 2023/24 and shared between this Council, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) in proportion to the appropriate year demands (Bristol 95%, WECA 4%, Avon Fire and Rescue Service 1%).

12. Flax Bourton Mortuary Bylaw

Recommendation: That Full Council pass a byelaw enabling the council to commence charging for storing of deceased people at Flax Bourton Mortuary where the funeral director delays collection. **(Pages 53 - 75)**

13. Members Allowance Scheme

Recommendation: That Full Council adopts the Members' Allowances Scheme for publication within the Constitution. **(Pages 76 - 88)**

14. Local Government Ombudsman Decisions

Recommendation: that Full Council note the report. **(Pages 89 - 128)**

15. Audit Committee Half Year Report

Recommendation: That Full Council accepts the report of the Audit Committee and notes the key areas the Committee is monitoring to support improvements required in internal control, risk management and governance. **(Pages 129 - 136)**

16. Constitution for the Committee Model

Recommendation: That Full Council adopts the Constitution for the Committee Model of governance which will come into effect on 6 May 2024. **(Pages 137 - 575)**

17. Motions

Note: **(Pages 576 -**



Under the Council’s constitution, 30 minutes are available for the consideration of motions. In practice, this realistically means that there is usually only time for one, or possibly two motions to be considered.

603)

With the agreement of the Lord Mayor, motion 1 below will be considered at this meeting, and motion 2 is likely to be considered, subject to time.

Details of other motions submitted, (which, due to time constraints, are very unlikely to be considered at this meeting) are also set out for information.

MOTIONS RECEIVED FOR FULL COUNCIL

GOLDEN MOTION (GREEN PARTY): MAXIMISING THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING FROM EXISTING BUILDINGS AND COUNCIL LAND

Full Council notes that:

1. UK Government data released in March 2023 identified 1.2m families on housing waiting lists across England [1] Meanwhile the costs of providing temporary accommodation have increased by 62% in the last five years to £1.7bn. [2]
2. UK Government data released in October 2022 shows that over one million homes were classed as unoccupied in England, with over 300,000 of those reported as being long-term empty - vacant for six months or longer. [3]
3. Savills have identified that there is an oversupply of retail space nationally of approximately 150 million square feet. With the average UK flat being 625 square feet, this is enough floor space to provide up to 240,000 average size flats (including 96,000 in long term empty retail space). They forecast that the level of excess retail space will double by 2030 as the retail economy continues to evolve. While some vacant space may be valuable to diversify local centres and high streets with new uses, much could offer housing opportunities.
4. It is common for commercial letting agents to inflate quoted prices of empty properties beyond the rateable value, and/or gatekeep interested businesses from making offers, resulting in properties being empty for longer periods. This also results in areas not having the retail offering required to support sustainable communities.
5. In Bristol there are around 21,000 families are on the housing waitlist and the cost of providing temporary accommodation remains a significant budget pressure. Shelter have recently estimated that on any given night in Bristol in 2023 there are approximately 3,224 people in some form of homelessness, the overwhelming majority of whom are in



temporary accommodation. This is an increase of 639 compared to 2022. [4]

6. In Bristol, between 2022/23, almost 400 council homes were empty at any one time, whilst some 400 private sector homes were brought back into occupation over the same period. [5] Live table 615 on vacant Local Authority dwelling stock- maintained by central government - show that on 3rd October 2023, 5,251 mostly privately owned dwellings in Bristol were shown as vacant, of which 1,881 were classified as long term vacant. [6]

7. In Bristol, Savills have identified some 185,000 square feet of long-term retail voids (over half of which have been vacant for over three years) – equivalent to almost 300 average size flats. Cost pressures to retrofit existing retail space, coupled with increasing use of online retail, may well see additional floorspace become available for residential use. At present over 90% of Bristol City Centre retail stock is EPC rating C or worse – with cost estimates of up to £220m to reach EPC rating A as retail. As a result, many of these retail spaces may no longer be viable. Similarly, there is a general over supply of office space.

8. In Bristol in 2021 there were around 13,500 homes with planning permission – with around 3,000 under construction and some still due to begin construction or subject to s.106. This still leaves thousands of homes that are failing to be delivered, in many cases due to viability issues. [7]

9. Bristol City Council owns or controls considerable assets including buildings, land and property amounting to over one million square metres of floorspace and over 3,600 hectares of land. Within this portfolio, that is essentially held in stewardship by Bristol City Council on behalf of the citizens of Bristol, brownfield sites that could be redeveloped should be subject to the highest levels of social value and social housing delivery.

10. An estimated 278,000 homes nationwide could be delivered via Community Land Trusts, directly involving and empowering local communities in the delivery of housing that meets their needs. 80% of these homes would be additional – they would not be built without Community Land Trusts. [8]

Full Council believes that:

1. The recently submitted Local Plan focuses on sites for the delivery of new homes. But, to reduce pressure on communities and valued green space, there is a clear need to identify the potential to bring existing empty homes into use, to convert and reuse existing buildings, and to ensure homes already with planning permission are being delivered.



1. It needs to develop its understanding, approach and prioritisation of the wider definitions surrounding empty homes, free from the boundaries that council tax definitions currently provide. Second homes for example, may be a crucial area of focus.
2. In Bristol, a combination of potential sources of new homes which is not just reliant on new planning permission is required in order to make the most efficient and effective use of the limited land the city has available.
3. There needs to be a clear understanding of how council assets can be best utilised for the benefit of the city and its residents. This includes ensuring that council owned land and buildings are only developed with the highest levels of social value provision, with a commitment to provide social housing at policy compliant levels and above. Council assets should be used strategically to ensure communities are provided with the resources and facilities required to create sustainable communities.
4. The existing Empty Homes team has already performed well, being identified as an example of best practice by the Local Government Association.
5. Whilst additional enforcement measures will undoubtedly add to the available options for an authority when encouraging empty homeowners to return their properties to use, the vast majority of empty homes brought back into use will be down to the intervention, engagement and encouragement initiated by an Empty Home, or other relevant, officer. By increasing officer capacity within the team or by increasing headcount, greater exposure of the issue locally will also allow for sustained and targeted work, often required to see some of the most challenging cases successfully resolved.

Full Council Resolves to:

- 1) Request the mayor to consider with officers expanding the remit and responsibilities of the Empty Homes team, including looking to other examples of best practice, and benchmarking to councils where numbers of empty homes across all categories are similar.
- 2) Request the mayor to establish a Redundant Buildings Task Force alongside the Empty Homes team to work with Bristol retail and commercial offices providers and relevant organisations to bring forward opportunities to convert unviable retail and/or office floorspace into residential use where no longer suitable for their existing use. Long term empty retail units should be advertised in line with their rateable value to ascertain if they are truly unviable. Officers should explore the potential for retailers to part fund this task force and explore how empty units could be utilised for the benefit of the community, such as through use



as a different usage classification as grocery retail, small business or creative use.

3) Request that the Mayor sets up a dedicated team to identify stalled sites with planning permission in order to increase the proportion of existing planning permissions being brought forward for delivery. This should include identifying additional sources of grant funding to ensure affordable homes continue to be delivered whilst recognising recent economic pressures in construction. The potential for part funding of this team by the development community should be considered.

4) Protect council owned land and assets as public owned assets, ensuring that when council owned land and assets are made available for redevelopment, this is done with a commitment to retaining council ownership wherever possible, and to provide the highest possible levels of social value and social housing delivery.

5) As and when council owned land and/or property is considered for potential development or disposal, those overseeing the process should consider if there is the potential to increase further the proportion of housing delivered via community led housing schemes – by involving communities in the provision of housing co-designed and/or co-delivered by the community including the potential transfer of long-term leaseholds on suitable council land to local communities.

Notes

1. https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fassets.publishing.service.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2F6571b86933b7f20012b72038%2FLocal_Authority_Housing_Statistics_2022_23_SectionsACEFGHI_J.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK
2. <https://www.housingfestival.org.uk/blog/ta-anger-to-hope>
3. <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/practical-approach-councils-dealing-empty-homes>
4. https://assets.ctfassets.net/6sxvmndn0s/18pRJpckz76jqH6Eruryj0/895745f92d5007dbeb177e92bc9cdc1f/Publishing_version_of_2023_Homelessness_in_England_report_FINAL.pdf
5. <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/1840-bristol-key-facts-2022/file>
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants>
7. <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/3235-bristol-housing-delivery-test-action-plan-2022/file>
8. <https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/State-of-the-Sector-2023-PRESS-1.pdf>



Motion submitted by: Cllr Tony Dyer

Date of submission: 20th December 2023

--

SILVER MOTION (LIBERAL DEMOCRATS): OPEN OUR LIBRARIES

Bristol City Council is proud that it has protected libraries from closure and notes that in many parts of the country many libraries have been lost.

Council is pleased that previous closure plans were scrapped and strongly supports retaining the branch library network as a free, affordable, warm, and safe space where people can access knowledge.

Council notes and supports the previous work on welcome spaces in the city - and notes that for many that is their local branch library.

Council is very concerned that the recruitment freeze, enacted by officers following consultation with Labour Cabinet Members, has created a stealth closure of branch libraries with many now being forced to close once or twice a week.

Council calls on the Mayor's administration to instruct officers to immediately end the recruitment freeze for the library service and ensure they have the staff available to ensure branch libraries remain open.

Motion to be moved by: Cllr Kent

Date of submission: 20th December 2023

Signed



Proper Officer

Friday, 29 December 2023



