

Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



Date: Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Time: 4.00 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, Tessa Fitzjohn, Martin Fodor, Lorraine Francis, John Geater, Paul Goggin, Geoff Gollop, Zoe Goodman, John Goulandris, Katy Grant, Fi Hance, 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 Services), Kevin Slocombe (Strategic Advisor to the Mayor), Simon Cowley (Deputy Head of the Mayor's Office), Ben Mosley (Executive Office), Lucy Fleming (Head of Democratic Engagement), David Fowler (Members' Office Manager (Conservative)), Paul Shanks, Rachel Abba (Executive Support Manager), Sarah Wilson (Executive Support Manager), Louise Baker (Executive Support Manager), Sara Manix (DLT Support Manager) and Fiona Gilmour (Mayor's Office Policy Manager)

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Agenda

1. Member Forum Questions and Responses

(Pages 3 - 38)

2. Member Forum Statements Received

(Pages 39 - 45)



Member Forum

14 November 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.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christine Townsend

Subject: Islington Road

57 Islington Rd BS3 is being tenanted as a large HMO despite being a class 3 dwelling. Planning enforcement has been aware since the early summer as I have been communicating with them about it.

Your planning department do not know if this property is safe for the number of people living there, but they do know that the owner is currently breaking the law.

Q1) Why has no action been taken by planning enforcement to ensure lawful tenanting?

REPLY:

The planning department have a live planning enforcement investigation to consider the use of this property. This will establish if there is a breach of planning control in respect of the buildings use.

Officers have been in correspondence with the owner to gain access and inspect, which we hope will be within the next two weeks. Once the outcome of this site investigation officers will update all interested parties.

There is a separate case concerning house of multiple occupation licencing matters with the Private Sector Housing Team.

Q2) Following recent media reports can the administration confirm that no Children in Care are currently being housed in unregistered accommodation as per legal requirements?

REPLY:

Placement Sufficiency, particularly for teenagers, is a local and national challenge and is well documented through reports to our Corporate Parenting Panel (of which you are a member) and this was detailed in the Corporate Risk Report which went to Cabinet last week.

When the Council has to use unregistered home for a young person this is only ever agreed as a last resort and for a limited time with oversight by the Director of Childrens Services (DCS). All arrangements are reported to the Chief Executive and Ofsted. This specific issue is also reported on in detail to the Corporate Parenting Panel of the 25th September and is regularly reported to every panel.

To urgently address placement sufficiency for children with complex needs, the service has developed plans for growth through the procurement of a Strategic Partner to operate within Bristol. The Development of External Residential Children's Homes was agreed by Cabinet in September and outlines our approach to urgently increase supply.



Cabinet will consider a paper in December to approve capital borrowing to purchase two new homes from our Strategic Housing Partner, Goram Homes, with the houses due for delivery early next year.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hornchen, Brislington East Ward

Subject: Mass Transit

I have just returned from Brussels and Cologne. They both have mass transit systems that go underground when needed near the centre, due to the streets being too narrow. As a cyclist, this is a very appealing solution to me as it means we can have enough space above ground for active travel infrastructure, including mobility scooters.

Q1) Is there room for segregated cycle lanes and bus lanes on roads like Church Road and Gloucester Road if they both have above-ground, segregated mass transit routes?

REPLY:

Church Rd and Gloucester Rd are both narrow roads with many sections that cannot even accommodate one bus lane let alone fully segregated tram routes with segregated cycling facilities. Indeed, both roads are also too narrow for fully segregated cycling facilities on their own without closing the roads to traffic.

It is not a simple case of removing lanes or traffic capacity, these roads have one lane in either direction for most of their length so to provide segregation which is needed to get mode switch from cars to public transport you would have to remove the general traffic lanes completely and close the roads.

You might argue that we should close roads to facilitate mass transit and traffic will use other routes, but which routes? Gloucester Rd and particularly Church Rd have very limited alternative routes. Closing these roads would move thousands of vehicles including HGVs onto other unsuitable routes such as Ashley Down Road, Kellaway Avenue and Whitehall Rd Closing these roads would bring the city to gridlock.

One other option is to knock down half of the buildings along the road and widen it but that is also not realistic and would be hugely damaging to local communities along those corridors.

I am sure you are as surprised as I am that the opposition parties all fail to support the underground option which is the only way of delivering segregated mass transit. I'm sure you're also as surprised as I am that the Tories and Greens support the closure of Gloucester Road, Church Road, Two Mile Hill, St Luke's Road and Malago Road amongst others in the current WECA plan.

The reality is the Overground mass transit will never be delivered due to the chaos it would cause to people movement in the city the costs of overground development impact on utilities, compulsory purchase etc.



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

Subject: CONFRONTING RISE IN ANTI-SEMITISM

Following the brutal attack carried out by Hamas on 7th October, in which 1400 Israelis lost their lives, and 240 civilians were taken hostage, there has been an horrific rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes and commentary across the UK. This has seen an increase in both online and in-person incidents. Sadly, too many people seem to equate all Jewish people with the actions of the Israeli government. Now, large numbers of our Jewish community are fearful of expressing their faith or even coming into the city on some days.

I was proud to see that City Hall was lit up in white and blue following the terrorist barbarity of Hamas and applaud the Mayor's actions.

Q1) What support is being provided to the Jewish community in the city in the face of this anti-Semitic behaviour?

REPLY

We are working with all faith groups as we are concerned about the potential rise in antisemitism and islamophobia.

Working with all faith groups, we also lit up City Hall with 'Peace, Salam (including in Arabic), Shalom (including in Hebrew)'. This suggestion came from the faith groups and was well-received.

We continue to work with all faith groups to address any concerns.

Q2) Equally, can the Mayor confirm what assistance is available at this time to help Jewish staff within Bristol City Council?

REPLY

Through internal communications the council senior leadership has encouraged all staff who have been affected by events in the Middle East to seek support from either their line manager or the council's employee assistance scheme. We have also asked council managers to remain mindful of colleagues' wellbeing and be sensitive to how recent international events may affect colleagues and to provide support when required.

Racism of any kind, including antisemitism and islamophobia, will not be tolerated. The council has clear processes in place to deal with such unacceptable behaviour. Should any colleague experience racism in the work place, they should report it to their line manager or use the councils' whistle blowing procedures.

Any allegation we receive will be thoroughly investigated and disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. Council staff also have access to the embRACE staff network, which promotes and supports the council in taking positive actions for race equality and inclusion in the workplace.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kent, Hengrove and Whitchurch Park

Subject: NHS Dentists

Q1) How many dental practices in Bristol are currently open to new NHS patients (not including the specialist referral units) and do we know how many Bristol residents are without an NHS dentist?

REPLY:

In Bristol there are 57 practices providing NHS dental services.

From June 2021 to June 2022 the access rate for the adult population of Bristol (37.3%) was in line with the access rate for England as a whole (37.4%).

We have contacted the ICB as commissioner to determine the number of practices accepting new NHS patients but you're welcome to write to the chair yourself and ask the same question.

Q2) What actions can the Council take, along with our partners, to ensure that all residents have an NHS dentist in Bristol?

REPLY:

Responsibility for commissioning NHS dental practices passed to the integrated care board (ICB) in April 2023.

A dental care helpline for BNSSG was set up in 2019 to support NHS 111 and direct people to the most appropriate service.

Our Public Health role is to promote oral health and support equality of access to services, including:

- Supporting the ICB with dental care strategy to address health inequalities and support prevention
- Assessing population oral health needs
- Commissioning interventions, e.g., the Oral Health Promotion Service
- Embedding oral health in our services (e.g. Public Health Nursing)

Hope you will support the motion before council later in the meeting to better coordinate Bristol's health services in the face of growing demand.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Jubilee Pool

Q1) Councillors in Area 5 Committee have viewed the bid from Jubilee Pool for some construction funds from local CIL. Given that these are supposed to be locally devolved funds will the mayor give an assurance that he will not seek to interfere or get officers to do so if Councillors back the granting of funds?

REPLY

Area committee decisions are delegated from the mayor, and as such are reviewed in the mayor's office and in the relevant service areas.

Q2) Jubilee Pool has been successful in some funding applications and continues after a year of independence to perform well. They have prospects of larger grants from bodies other than this council. Given the public support for this institution does the mayor agree that it is the duty of this council to provide support to attract funds into Bristol?

REPLY

We were successful in securing £22k for Jubilee Pool from Sports England. While there are opportunities to attract funds into Bristol and we support them, it is important to acknowledge that we should try to direct funds into areas where we agree priorities.

With specific reference to Jubilee Pool, this was removed from the city's leisure offer as it did not meet the criteria of footfall and supporting areas of deprivation. As a result, we focused on those pools that met that criteria and need sustainable funding to ensure Bristol's leisure offer is inclusive and effective.

Therefore, when considering funding opportunities, we will prioritise the sports and leisure centres that we have set policy to promote, such as Horfield Leisure Centre's £4.2million planning submission last week as part of a £9million investment.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Patrick McAlister**Subject: Western Harbour, St George Primary School**

Q1) What progress has been made so far towards the establishment of the refreshed Western Harbour Advisory Group, and what potential will there be for local figures such as community association chairs, business representatives and councillors of affected wards to take part?

REPLY:

In the New Year we will begin the application process for the refreshed advisory group. As with the original advisory group we will look to have representatives from the local area and across the city who will champion this exciting opportunity. The group will be appointed at the same time we tender for masterplanners for the project's next phase.

The St George Primary School site is now being used by a school that disproportionately serves wealthier families. This is evidenced by the free school meal statistic of 16.9% compared to the national statistic of 25.9% which is less than Bristol's average.

Q2. What consideration, if any, was given to the potential for Bristol City Council to use the site for in-house services, such as using the building for SEND provision which Bristol is severely lacking in?

REPLY:

We are committed to strengthening Bristol's educational offer for children and young people with SEND as such this project is ongoing.

In 2022 Bristol City Council assessed the suitability of the St. George Site for use by pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND). Unfortunately, due to the design and accessibility of the building, it was deemed that it would not be appropriate for SEND provision.

Phase 1 of the Specialist Provision Project has delivered an additional 142 specialist provision places across the city. Phase 2 is in delivery and we anticipate a further 130 specialist provision places, over the next calendar year. We have also delivered 83 placements with projects through Elmfield School for Deaf Children, Knowle DGE and City of Bristol College. This work, as well as maximising opportunities within our usual commissioning activities, will see Bristol City Council deliver a total of 418 places against the 450 pledged.

We agreed a temporary use of the site to enable a local school additional capacity so that refurbishment works can take place on the school's permanent site. Bristol Cathedral Choir School is also our most oversubscribed for parents' first choice. This will support our aim to constantly improve the number of those who achieve their first choice.



It is also worth noting that the school wasn't closed but merged with St Michael's on the Mount to become Willow Park Primary. Only 15 children who went to St George's were in receipt of free school meals.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hornchen, Brislington East ward

Subject: Rough Sleeping

I am appalled that the Home Secretary is looking to stop charities giving tents to homeless people, some of the most vulnerable people in our society. Not addressing rough sleeping is a political choice, as shown by the 'Everyone In' policy during Covid and the fact that rough sleeping decreased by 75% under the last Labour Government.

Q1) What does the council need to end rough sleeping in Bristol?

REPLY

I agree, and clearly the Prime Minister did too. The now former Home Secretary's statement, calling rough sleeping a 'lifestyle choice' was appalling. Homelessness is clearly not a lifestyle choice and it is an abhorrent way to talk about some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

An end to no-fault evictions, more protections for renters, and a form of rent controls would help tackle rough-sleeping. Likewise, we need more investment into public services that support people at risk of homelessness.

The rise in rough sleeping is symptom of the overall housing crisis, and the only long term solution to this crisis is building more homes. We launched Project 1,000, our plan to see 1,000 affordable homes built each year in Bristol, which will bring down the housing waiting list – playing a part in ensuring everyone can have a roof over their heads.

An important step towards ending homelessness in the UK is electing a Labour Government.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)

Subject: A37 WELLS ROAD BUS LANES

The A37 / A4018 Strategic Transport Corridor project envisaged the introduction of 24-hour bus lanes along the Wells Road between West town Lane and Whitchurch Village. This was reduced to 12 hours, following representations by residents and Stockwood Ward Councillors.

Q1) If bus lanes are introduced (against the wishes of Stockwood Ward Councillors), can the hours of operation be amended to ensure they are peak time only?

REPLY

I know you met my team and you made a good argument on why it should be peak hours only.

The installation of the proposed bus lanes is subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation process whereby the draft statutory orders will be advertised. The bus lanes will be advertised as 12 hours but any considerations thereafter will be considered following the 21 day advertisement period. Local residents will have the opportunity to make representations on the proposals during the 21 day advertisement period.

Happy to re-engage with you post the consultation.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christopher Davies**Subject: Traffic Offences**

There is a call for complete banning of pavement parking in Bristol. At present enforcement against this has to be done by police where they judge that an obstruction is being caused. In fact, circumstances vary widely from area to area and street to street. It is also possible that with very wide pavements 2 wheels up is possible but 4 up illegal.

Q1) Does the mayor agree that whilst a citywide order could be made it should only be enforced where a clear and stable proportion of local residents demand it in a street? This compromise would reduce the burden on the police, get clear pavements where possible and the cost of enforcement could be covered by transgressors.

REPLY:

This would be a very haphazard and confusing approach.

A citywide ban on pavement parking would be universal and would have to be enforced in all locations. Officers cannot pick and choose where and when to enforce restrictions - irrespective of local wishes.

It is possible to introduce local restrictions where this is appropriate, but these would need Traffic Regulation Orders and each location would need to be signed on street. Funding for such measures would need to be identified and any work would have to be prioritised in line with existing work programmes.

There are no plans to make a city wide order to ban pavement parking

After many years of lobbying from the LGA power to enforce against moving traffic offences has been given to councils. So far, no actual enforcement has taken place in Bristol despite over a year having passed.

We have numerous examples where the public would welcome enforcement, but can I bring to the attention of the mayor a clear example of part of Kingshill Road Knowle Park where regularly we have anti-social drivers going the wrong way up the one-way section. Signage is in place, but some use it as a cut through and it is dangerous.

Q2) Will the mayor instruct officers to work with us to start enforcement at this location.?

REPLY:

Driving the wrong way on a one-way road is not a moving traffic offence, this is a matter for the police.

We, as the Highways authority, were granted powers from the DfT to enforce Moving Traffic Offences for six specific sites. Since July officers have been analysing the infrastructure required and are in the process of formalising the designs. These need to be procured and



installed with the appropriate hardware and any necessary supporting software. Officers anticipate that this process will be complete, ready to begin enforcement next year.

We are aware that there are many potential sites for moving traffic enforcement but the legislation is clear that enforcement should be the last resort.

We will use the information from the first six sites to inform future sites and officers will share this with members when it is available later next year.

The infrastructure required to enforce is also expensive so we have to prioritise sites. An alternative, avoiding funding for additional hardware installation, could be cameras being moved between sites on a cyclical basis as compliance is achieved.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Active Travel

The council has committed to being an Age friendly city and prioritising Active Travel, walking, cycling, plus people with additional mobility needs.

Q1) What is the strategy and delivery of both programmed and responsive drain [gully] clearance this winter?

REPLY:

We currently have two gully cleansing crews working in Bristol, with one crew working during the day and the other overnight. These crews are delivering both the cyclical and inspection created gully cleansing. We also have an emergency call-out arrangement with the contractor, who must attend site as directed within two hours.

We also have a third crew who work periodically as required, working alongside a tow truck to clear gullies which are not accessible due to parked cars.

Q2) What arrangements are there for prompt clearance of concentrations of leaf mould and fallen leaves in autumn?

REPLY:

Bristol Waste have additional resources clearing fallen leaves during the autumn. If there are incidents where leaves have fallen from the trees and have clearly not been collected before they start to decompose, residents can report this through the council website or by calling the customer services centre.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hulme, Horfield Ward**Subject: Gloucester Road**

Councillors are familiar with the problems that arise from the privatised bus network. Horfield residents and I want a reliable, efficient, sustainable public transport.

There are a lot of unanswered questions about overground only options for mass transit. As a councillor for Horfield, I am aware of the congestion issues we already have on residential streets.

Q1) If key transport arteries like Gloucester Road are closed to traffic, where do buses, HGVs, and cars go instead?

REPLY

Thank you for raising your concerns, there are two aspects that are unclear.

Firstly, closing streets while building and secondly any long term closure.

Closing while building as you would have to do for a tram type solution would mean diverting all traffic including buses and HGVs onto surrounding roads such as Ashley Down Rd and Kellaway Avenue. This would be hugely damaging to public transport that would be stuck in the congestion caused for the whole length of these diversions.

Closing long term would see benefits to public transport on the Gloucester Road when the scheme is built, but there would be severe congestion on surrounding routes which would have a huge impact on local people on those alternative routes. This would also impact public transport routes along those corridors such as for example the number 70.

Q2) If main roads like Gloucester Road are closed to traffic, is it possible to introduce Liveable Neighbourhoods in surrounding areas to mitigate displaced traffic?

REPLY:

No, it simply would not be possible to adopt that approach to reduce rat running and make other active travel interventions.

Liveable neighbourhoods depend on main roads to act as just that, main roads. The removal of through traffic that delivers the benefits of the scheme is reliant on some traffic relocating to main roads that are more suitable for this traffic while local shorter trips can be made on foot or by cycle. Without the wider network being available to manage displaced traffic these sort of schemes cannot work.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)

Subject: TRAFFIC MITIGATION MEASURES

Transport Officers have proposed that the right-hand turn from Wells Road to West Town Lane should be banned for cars. This is against the wishes of Stockwood Ward Councillors, as motorists will obviously use less suitable residential roads in Stockwood Ward instead. This will impact many of the roads between Staunton Lane and West Town Lane.

Q1) Have Transport Officers assessed the nature and scale of the traffic mitigation measures required for these roads, and the likely cost?

REPLY:

The volume of traffic turning right at the Wells Road / West Town Lane junction is a small proportion of the overall traffic going through this junction. The overwhelming majority of traffic continues straight ahead.

We are aware that there is an existing issue with rat-running through the adjoining roads between Wells Road and West Town Lane. Due to the geography of the area and fact that motorists won't have to wait at the lights, these roads will currently be attractive to use an alternative to turning right at the junction.

As previously discussed, we will therefore consider traffic calming measures as part of the overall corridor project to prevent this.

While I accept your concerns, its really important to think about the overall effectiveness of a strategic route, making sure efficient use of the road space to reduce congestion.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor James Crawford

Subject: Transport Projects CIL

We have recently been informed by officers that the effects of inflation on current local CIL projects are still unknown but will be covered by the Integrated Transport Block budget.

Q1) What is the estimated cost and what else would this budget have been used for?

REPLY:

Thank you for raising this. With this notice we were attempting to reassure all councillors that despite the pressures on budgets, we would look to protect projects by supporting agreed schemes with Integrated Transport Block.

There is a large number, and variety, of schemes and therefore the exact costs are not yet known. Further work will be required to determine the impacts of inflation as well as to check contractor availability. Officers estimate it to be in the region of £200-400k.

The Integrated Transport Block is used to fund a variety of transport projects and is provided every year. Where schemes are delayed or underspent, funding can be reallocated to other projects and it is envisioned this is where the funding will come from.

Q2) What is the estimated timescale, and is this one or more years of the Integrated Transport Block that will be affected?

REPLY:

Similar to the above, there is a range of projects and factors, but we would expect schemes to be delivered by the end of 2024/25. Further funding could be provided, if available, in future years if needed but would need agreement from the appropriate body.

Future schemes that have not yet been developed to the point of delivery will however be expected to cover any increase in costs from area committee CIL allocations.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Cole, Ashley Ward

Subject: Community Asset Transfers

I am pleased to see the Coach House Community Asset Transfer coming to Cabinet. Black South West Network do fantastic work in the community - allowing them to take this building into community ownership will make the Coach House an even better asset for the St Paul's.

Can the Mayor outline the benefits of this Community Asset Transfer, and other Community Asset Transfers the Labour administration has completed both in the Ashley ward and Bristol as a whole?

REPLY:

I am proud that this administration have approved 62 Community Asset Transfers, given to a huge range of different organisations right across the city. These CAT provide exceptional social and local economic value to the city.

In the case of the Coach House, their benefit to the local economy from the start up and growth of Black and Asian-led enterprises is estimated at £712k GVA p.a. rising to a £1m after refurbishment.

Of course this doesn't quantify the less tangible, but significant, social and cultural value to be derived from the project over the long term.

The potential entrepreneurs, businesses and cultural projects being supported have close links to disadvantaged communities in St Paul's and Ashley ward, and to under-represented groups in enterprise, who face considerable barriers to establish and grow businesses successfully.

We can supply the table outside of this meeting of all the CATs and their locations.



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

Subject: A4 PORTWAY ROUTE “TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS” CONSULTATION

Q1) Can the Mayor explain why in the ratings system used for each of the sections the public are being asked to comment upon (ranging from “very good” to “very bad”) there isn’t actually an option to reject the possible changes?

REPLY:

The question format does not allow respondents to ‘reject’ each proposal. There also isn’t an option to “accept”.

However, the style of the consultation questions in the survey does allow respondents to select from a range of answers which demonstrate whether they think that element of the scheme they are commenting on is ‘very good to very poor’. These rating scales allow respondents to select to a variety of statements covering many different emotions and include those who may be ‘neutral/fair’.

There is also a free text box for question where people can comment if they wish to express a support or rejection of the scheme.

Q2) Can the Mayor confirm when the usage of the carriageway and shared path was surveyed?

REPLY:

As part of the development of the business case process, five surveys have been completed over the past year. This has including traffic counts, pedestrian and cycle counts and traffic turning counts.

We can share further information with you if there is something specific you want to look at.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tessa Fitzjohn

Subject: Development Control

Q1) All applicants for planning permission are waiting long times and a priority has been to reduce these waiting times. What is being done to address this and what effect is it having on waiting times?

REPLY:

Clearing the backlog is (alongside getting an updated Local Plan in place) the planning department's number highest priority.

Our new chief planner has been working to implement a recovery plan with her teams. This will be discussed in detail at the Growth & Regeneration scrutiny committee on 27 November. The focus to date has been on rebuilding capacity in the team after some staff changes this financial year on top of a ~35% reduction of the team members over the course of last financial year.

To minimise the impact on the city as a whole, the team are prioritising major applications and those of community importance (e.g. health care and education facilities, employment provision etc).

The wait time for other applications to officer allocation are now slowly improving. They currently stand at 20 weeks (vs 24 weeks at peak over the summer).

Q2) Last time we were given any statistics Bristol was close to the bottom of the league with comparator authorities regarding Planning enforcement, and residents are concerned that some developments undertaken without permission have not been tackled. The situation has even been described as the "wild west". What is being done to address this and how many enforcement actions have been completed in the last 3 years?

REPLY:

The issues identified in answer to your first question equally apply here, meaning that prioritisation has to be constantly applied and reviewed on a community impact basis.

The service has struggled with recruitment into enforcement to date. A post for a senior enforcement officer is currently out to advert (closing 19/11) which members could encourage suitable applicants to apply to.

We continue to carry out Planning Enforcement in accordance with the local enforcement plan. This is subject to ongoing review to make sure it is fit for purpose, and members may wish to contribute through the scrutiny process.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Cole, Ashley Ward

Subject: Highstreets

Local high streets are crucial for local economies, but sadly, nationally we have seen their steady decline. The council has invested a significant amount of funding into Bristol's highstreets and the campaign showcased businesses in St Paul's and Mina Road in Ashley, which is to be welcomed.

Q1) Please could the Mayor provide a statement regarding the council's investment into highstreets both in Ashley and Bristol as a whole?

REPLY

From 2020 to 2023 over £24.2m of investment has been allocated to Bristol's high streets.

Support is ongoing, examples include:

- **Business Development** – 1:1 visits to businesses to understand their needs (1,049 businesses engaged, of which 483 have been provided further support).
- **Vacant Property Grant** – businesses can apply for up to £10,000 to bring a vacant commercial property into use. 104 applications have been approved.
- **Marketing** – including the Where's It To? campaign and Shop Local Bristol social media, promoting independent businesses.
- **Culture and events and street scene and greening** – within the City Centre and nine priority high streets. Filwood Broadway regeneration has received £14.5m from the Levelling Up fund which we're now working with community to deliver.

Ashley Road/Grosvenor Road is one of three new priority areas. Engagement on potential improvements is being planned for the New Year. It will be great to get your support as we continue to engage with residents and businesses.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris (Stoke Bishop)

Subject: A4 PORTWAY ROUTE “TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS” CONSULTATION

Q1) Have the results of any transport impact or corridor study on the Portway – which presumably was the basis for this planned upgrade – been published?

REPLY:

The West of England Joint Transport Study was published in October 2017. This informed the subsequent Joint Local Transport Plan 4, published in March 2020. This then informed the Strategic Outline Business Case for the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, which is funding the Portway project.

The development of the outline and full business cases will include further assessment into the strategic case for the proposals and the value for money assessment.

Specific bus passenger numbers will also be included in the business cases and part of the value for money assessment. This will include the impact on all road users including private motorists.

Q2) What are the latest figures for passenger numbers presently using the existing 24hr bus lanes? How do these compare with the estimated average number of motorists using this route?

REPLY:

These lanes are also used by coaches, taxis and motorcycles in addition to the main bus service on the corridor.

Overall, the number of motorists on the Portway will be greater than those using the bus lanes, but the principle of providing these lanes is to promote more sustainable travel modes that will drive up usage and lead to reducing congestion and make it easier for those that have to drive.

The Portway of course has space for a segregated bus route as well as private cars. Have you expressed concerns to your group leader about the closure of major arterial routes to private car caused by overground mass transit routes?



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Hathway**Subject: Clifton East TRO, Licensing Database****Clifton East TRO Review**

Kings Parade Avenue is a back street which has over recent years had several infill developments. Residents there have frontages directly onto the street, and they have been suffering from people parking directly outside their windows, or else blocking exit from the street. We had raised this with the council several times, but there was reluctance to amend double yellow lines on Kings Parade Avenue or Kings Parade Mews due to the cost of reviewing the TRO and the fact the Police Station was on the street. The police station has since closed, and we have only just been informed that the Clifton East TRO is out for review, but the chance is not being taken to amend either of these streets.

Q1) Can the review be adapted to include changes to the DYLS on these streets?

REPLY:

We are aware of the concerns that recent development on Kings Parade Avenue has intensified parking demand in the area. We are undertaking a full review the overall RPS policy.

The proposed changes that are being advertised relate to the access to individual properties or the removal or installation of disabled parking bays where wider engagement is not required.

I will ask the Transport Cabinet member to explore Double Yellow Lines to the road if that is supported although a consultation will be required.

Licensing Database

Getting a response from the premises licensing team can take several weeks. Our area is densely populated, with a thriving nightlife, and these occasionally come into conflict. It is helpful to know the conditions of a premises license to be able to challenge when these are not being met. We were told last year that an online database similar to the planning portal was under development to relieve officers of having to respond to these queries.

Q2) Can you give a timeline for that being available?

REPLY:

Unfortunately, since the previous response, the Licensing Service has sustained a period of high turnover of staff meaning resources have been concentrated on processing licences rather than rollout of further technology.



In an effort to improve staff retention a Service Review has been undertaken and the Service is currently in the process of recruiting additional resources.

Once these are in place and trained, we will have a better understanding of when the technology rollout can re-commence. Because of this there is no firm commitment can be made. In the meantime individual enquiries will continue to be responded to.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jackson, Filwood ward

Subject: Housing

I'm disappointed that Cllr Wilcox 'called-in' the Cameron Centre development in Lockleaze, which provides 50% larger community and retail space as well as 37 council homes on brownfield land, because the building is four storeys tall and visible from some parts of a park.

The Green Party continue to say they support housing but seem to oppose every scheme that comes forward. It's looks like another case of them supporting the concept of everything but the delivery of nothing.

Have they ever offered any clarity on their position on housing delivery?

REPLY:

I've seen no clarity from them. They are the party that supports everything in concept but nothing in practice.

This is council housing on brownfield land and should be supported. Despite pressures on the planning service, which his colleagues have highlighted in this very member forum, the councillor wanted to call it to committee because of the view from a park.

The Green councillors claim to support house building, but frustrate much needed homes. They oppose or abstain on all the key issues at the moment of having to make a decision. It's the same with heat networks, affordable homes on the Zoo site, liveable neighbourhoods, expanding cemetery space which is essential for multi-faith and Muslim burial space.



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

Subject: A4 PORTWAY ROUTE “TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS” CONSULTATION

Q1) Can the Mayor tell me the recorded level of footfall/cycling currently using the shared footpath on the Portway?

REPLY:

Levels of walking and cycling vary along the corridor but are low because of the quality of the provision. Improving this to be a safe alternative will be essential to generate growth in walking and cycling.

Surveys are taken at specific points on the corridor, for example, at the junction of the Portway and Barrow Hill Road there was a daily count of 219 pedestrian and cycle movements on the shared path at this location.

Q2) What is the rationale behind the idea that many more people will choose to walk or cycle along this largely disused amenity if it is widened?

REPLY:

People walk and cycle when quality facilities are provided for them to do so. This is well expressed in the Government’s Cycling Strategy – Gear Change.

In recognition of the relatively low numbers currently using the shared path, the proposals in the consultation are not to seek segregated facilities for cyclists, but to widen the path at particular points, to meet minimum standards for such facilities set out in the Government guidance note LTN1/20.

Addressing pinch points along the route will make facility a much safer and more pleasant offer for cyclists and pedestrians, and encouraging growth in these travel modes.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Paula O'Rourke**Subject: Parking Permits**

In July, I met with the cabinet member for Transport to discuss a solution to the misuse of customer parking permits in my ward. It has been a problem since the RPZ was introduced but we reached an agreement to write to businesses to inform them that the number of permits would be reduced by 10% when they next apply for them, as the high number of permits was never intended to be anything more than an aid to transition for worried business owners. All parties at the meeting agreed on the simple action. Two senior highways officers from both Transport teams, the Councillors, and the Cabinet member all agreed that this was the action that was needed.

However, having agreed it all, the cabinet member said that before it could be actioned, a paper would have to go to the Mayor's Office. I was fairly astonished to hear this as I am aware of the loss of about 40% of 'back office', so I could not understand why it was necessary to use up staff time to write a report for the Mayor's office on this simple matter. This report has never actually been written. When I chased progress on it, I was told it was being wrapped up into a more general parking paper which was coming to Cabinet. It has never come to Cabinet.

Q1) My residents want to be able to park near their homes without having to compete with commuters masquerading as customers, can the Mayor explain and justify these delays?

REPLY:

As you question highlights, there are still considerable variances and inconsistencies across Clifton and several other RPS areas. Rather than dealing with individual issues one at a time, and bringing each one to a separate cabinet meeting, we have asked for an encompassing paper which will review and standardise the policies. It will also consider the pricing structure and usage practises to better drive modal shift away from private car ownership, which residents parking zones support. In an area like Clifton it is important that all road users can access parkiner with a balance between residents and customers.

The report is due to be brought to January Cabinet and will include the recommendation that Customer permits in Clifton Village RPS will be reduced by 10% (where businesses have more than the standard 7 permits).

Q2) Can I have a date by when the letters will actually be sent to businesses, so I can let residents know that some action is being taken to put a stop to the misuse of permits?

REPLY:

Officers have been considering alternate means of supporting businesses who have Customer permits and are exploring the potential to provide a digital service which would eliminate the need for paper permits and allow for more effective enforcement. Any changes of this nature may need formal consultation.

In addition, all businesses with customer permits were written to last year to remind them of their obligations. Additional enforcement took place in some specific locations in Clifton Village and officers were satisfied, at the time, that there was no ongoing misuse in those locations, this exercise will be repeated.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Rippington, Brislington East ward

Services

There's a lot of development planned in Brislington soon. It's clear that the only route out of our housing crisis is building more homes, but we need to ensure that social infrastructure keeps up with the new homes, not only for the benefit of existing residents, but new residents too. The delivery of new infrastructure is fragmented, with different organisations being responsible for new healthcare, or new schools, and so on.

Q1) How can we ensure we get the right level of service provision to keep up with our growing population?

REPLY:

This is what the ICB process is looking to do. Our new draft Local Plan looks at all of these issues and the Integrated Care Board was set up to deal with these very issues and apply better holistic approach.

The motion tabled for the meeting looks at how we can embed this into all our work with other partners.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Henry Michallat (Stoke Bishop)

Subject: A4 PORTWAY ROUTE “TRANSPORT IMPROVEMENTS” CONSULTATION

Q1) Has any comparative cost benefit analysis been undertaken on the impact of road space reduction or reallocation?

REPLY:

A cost benefit analysis will be undertaken during the development of the business cases. In order for these proposals to come forward the cost benefit analysis will need to demonstrate appropriate value for money in line with the DfT guidelines and the West of England Combined Authority assurance process.

The Portway has room for both a bus lane and traffic lane – unlike Gloucester road, St Lukes, Church road and Malago road, which is why an overground, segregated mass transit solution will need to close them. I hope you will raise your concerns about road space reallocation in the motion debate later.

Q2) Does the Mayor recognise that many motorists really do need to use private vehicles for work, business, or leisure and that this fact seems to be continually ignored by transport planners in this city?

REPLY:

Yes, which is why our transport planning officers don't support closing Church Road, Two Mile Hill, Gloucester road, St Lukes and Malago road, unlike your party leader.

We recognise that people need to drive for various reasons. We know that the Portway is an important strategic route for motorists. The project will consider this alongside the need to improve sustainable transport and effect modal shift for those that can, to deliver the wider benefits of reduced congestion and improved air quality.

If we are to deliver improved public transport, and in future mass transit routes, we need to reallocate road space from cars to public transport. It is hard to see how these questions fit with the silver motion proposed by your party - if you are not willing to go underground and not willing to create segregated routes above ground for public transport then how can a proper mass transit system be provided.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ed Plowden**Subject: Royal Mail**

Recently Royal Mail services in South Bristol and pockets across the wider city have been highly unreliable. Some people have been experiencing waits of two weeks or more for letters to be delivered, and deliveries are sporadic and unpredictable at best. Royal Mail has been trying to recruit additional staff, but their efforts seem to have made no difference. Parliament imposes on Royal Mail a 'universal service obligation': letters delivered to every address 6 days a week. First class mail is supposed to be a next-day service with at least 90% reliability. Royal Mail is clearly failing on both counts.

It seems to be especially affecting older people who rely on postal communication to manage their utility bills, communicate with their banks, and manage their healthcare appointments and other crucial services. Whilst this is not a service in which the Council has any powers to intervene, the ongoing poor performance of Royal Mail is adding people's difficulties, affecting their ability to access many services and having a detrimental impact on people's lives across large parts of Bristol, with an especially detrimental effect on equalities groups.

Q1: Is the Mayor aware of the situation and sought any statistics and explanation from the Royal Mail?

REPLY:

This is a private sector business and we have no powers, so I am not sure why you are asking me.

Only the universal service obligation is accountable to the government and we have no involvement in that. You will have seen they were fined £5.6m by OFCOM for failing their delivery targets with only 73.7% of 1st class mail delivered on time in the last 6 months.

Q2: Would the Mayor write to the Royal Mail on behalf of the City Council, and the citizens of Bristol, to raise the issue and demand a response?

REPLY:

There is no point writing to Royal mail who have just had an OFCOM imposed fine. This is not a local issue.

It is worth noting that the union CWU was right in its campaign against privatisation of the postal service and in the warnings they made in their strike to protect service standards and jobs terms and conditions. I was proud to support them at the time.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Massey, Southmead Ward**Subject: CIL**

We recently held an Area 2 Committee meeting to look at how to allocate money to improve the life of residents in these wards. As the poorest (in terms of funding for allocation) Area Committee in the City, we could not allocate any money to improve the life of citizens living in this area, apart from tree planting which comes from a different budget.

Q1) Does the Mayor agree that the Committee Model Working Group should be looking to make changes to the way CIL monies are distributed, to ensure it is more equitable and deprived areas like Southmead get their fair share of funding?

REPLY:

Not for me to instruct the Committee's work directly. I would caution them against reviving an old structure which tended to concentrate decision making to unaccountable, unrepresentative individuals with the time, resources and connections to attend meetings.

The future system of governance must be accountable and maintain a city level view of the decision making while being responsive to public opinion.

CIL is for communities that have development in their area, so a "fair" share of funding is always going to be for areas with higher rates of development. It will never have a direct relationship to deprivation or demand. What we need instead is fairer funding for Local Government, so that places can make their own decisions about allocating funding and services to areas which need them.



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

Subject: CLEAN STREETS ENFORCEMENT – FLYPOSTING

1. Can the Mayor confirm the full range of powers and penalties currently available to the Authority to tackle the menace of environmental crime, particularly flyposting?

REPLY:

The full list of penalties can be found on the BCC website [Clean Streets Enforcement Campaign \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/clean-streets-enforcement-campaign) and powers are listed under Paragraph N of the [Growth & Regeneration Scheme of Delegations](#).

Fixed penalty notices can be served on the spot where an authorised officer witnesses an offence, or following an investigation where a council officer can prove beyond reasonable doubt that an offender has committed an offence that can be consider appropriate action under the [Bristol City Council Enforcement Policy](#).

2. In my Ward, I regularly see cycles of illegal postings appearing overnight, often tied to places which are difficult to access, advertising 'driveway' installation services. Presumably, it should be relatively easy to identify, apprehend, and prosecute the individuals who benefit or trade this way simply by using the contact information supplied by these notices. Please can the Mayor state what action is taken to deter this activity (because it is clearly not working)?

REPLY:

On 14 November 2023 the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team is running "Operation Solar" to address fly posting across the city, with a focus on installation service fly posted signs. When officers find these signs, they will identify the companies advertising their services and write asking them to remove their signs. If the signs are not removed, then prosecution will be considered.

The difficulty for the council is that these companies are not always legitimate as advertised and for enforcement to take place the council has to be able to identify a beneficiary who can be held to account. Of the current group of companies that enforcement will target on 14 November we are aware that one has been dissolved and another is in the process of being struck off.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Massey, Southmead Ward

Subject: E-scooters

The public will be aware of the issues concerning privately-owned scooters, which are often used in an antisocial manner and sometimes modified to exceed speed limits.

The Government has long promised to bring in legislation to regulate private e-scooters. As a major UK city and highways authority, I would hope that it would have consulted with the council about this planned legislation.

Q2) Does the Mayor / Cabinet Member for Transport have any further information concerning the planned legislation to regulate private e-scooters?

REPLY:

The Government has signalled its intention to legalise e-scooters but has not given a timescale for this and it is not scheduled to be done before the next General Election. The Government recently announced that the current trials of rental e-scooters will be extended to at least May 2026.

The Government intends to consult on plans to legalise personal e-scooters and will separately consult on plans to regulate rental schemes. They have not given a timescale for the consultations yet. The use of private (personal) e-scooters remains illegal and any issues around their use and antisocial behaviour should be raised with the police.

The Current TIER on-street and long-term rental e-scooters are the only scooters that can legally be used on Bristol's roads.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)**Subject: PLANNED STRATEGIC BUS CORRIDORS**

The original plans for the strategic corridors work saw no provision for crossings south of Manston Close for Stockwood Ward. I have asked officers, in Council, and at Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny if the Authority could install secure pedestrian access on these arterial routes. This is the priority. We are now hearing that there is nowhere on the No. 2 bus route where having zebra crossings is allowed. Woodlands Academy pupils cannot safely cross Sturminster Road. Bus passengers cannot cross Craydon Road to use bus services. Stockwood Lane and Stockwood Road bus travellers have too few places to cross the road.

Q1) Can we please review the work to ensure the needs of pedestrians and bus patrons are put first and we find some locations to enable the public safe access to bus stops?

REPLY:

Following the public consultation exercise, the project is proposing a number of interventions in and around the Stockwood area to improve crossing facilities such as zebra crossings, dropped kerbs at side roads and new and upgraded central crossing islands.

The project team looked at installing zebra crossings more widely, however it's not possible because of site constraints.

The interventions that are being proposed were beyond the scope of the original project and we need to be mindful of the overall project budget envelope.

Q2) The plans will create a significant amount of displaced traffic from parking. What plans are being put in place to minimise disruption to residents please?

REPLY:

There may be an impact on parking availability, but not on displaced traffic.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sharon Scott (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: Westbury Car Park Charging TRO

Q1) The last update we received was that a TRO would be published for consultation "in the Autumn". Can the Mayor provide an update please on when this might be published?

REPLY:

We expect the scheme to go out to consultation early next year.

Q2) If the consultation comes out over the Christmas and New Year holiday, please could additional time be allowed for responses?

REPLY:

While not relevant here, the standard consultation period for a Traffic Regulation Order is 21 days. It is standard practice to extend this period when the consultation period includes Bank Holidays. We would add an extra working day for each Bank Holiday.



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

	Name	Subject
CS01	Cllr Andrew Brown	Statement on Agenda Item 14 - Appointment of Independent Persons
CS02	Cllr Richard Eddy	Ancient Hedgerow Destruction at Yew Tree Farm
CS03	Cllr Patrick McAlister	Israel – Gaza Conflict
CS04	Cllr Mohammed Makawi	Israel – Gaza Conflict
CS05	Cllr Emma Edwards	Yew Tree Farm

CS01

Members Forum statement from Cllr Andrew Brown

Subject: Statement on Agenda Item 14 - Appointment of Independent Persons

At the time of writing, there is not anticipated to be a debate on this item, so I am therefore taking the unusual step of submitting this statement for the record.

I welcome this paper as it will “regularise” the position of Independent Persons in the complaints regime and I will be supporting it when it is voted on.

However, it is regrettable that it took persistent questioning by members of the public and others to identify that there was an issue with this aspect of the complaints procedure; and I believe the council could have been clearer in their responses to them and others at various points on the journey to today. In addition, there is clearly a broader sense of dissatisfaction with the current workings of the system.

Along with colleagues on the Values and Ethics Committee, I will continue to work to improve the system, and to improve the reporting made to the committee in future years such that it is provided with assurance that the system is working as it should so that justice is both done, and seen to be done.

With regard to the Independent Persons appointed: I would have liked to have seen a more detailed “potted biography” in the information put before the chamber.. I would further recommend that as and when future appointments are made that the (independent) chair of the V&E committee at the time should have some involvement in the process.

Cllr Andrew Brown
Chair, Audit Committee
Member, Values and Ethics subcommittee

CS02

Members Forum statement from Cllr Richard Eddy

Subject: Ancient Hedgerow Destruction at Yew Tree Farm

As the Mayor and Cabinet will know, an abortive attempt to destroy protected ancient hedgerow was made earlier this year. The outrageous action was only stopped due to the heroic acts of the farmer at Yew Tree Farm - allied with citywide supporters - and the ensuing 'stand-off' was widely reported in the local media.

Nevertheless, the incident revealed that Bristol City Council had lamentably failed to uphold its obligations to protect ancient hedgerow - enshrined in national legislation - due to a bureaucratic error, in that it had failed to respond to the legal landowner's application within the prescribed period of time. The Council's Legal Services and Development Management Officers acknowledge this manifest failure but claim Pontius Pilot-like that they are now unable to do anything meaningful to protect ancient hedgerow here - which was recently accorded the status of a local Site of Nature Conservation Interest.

On Tuesday, 7th November 2023, contractors engaged by Longmoor's destroyed ancient hedgerow at Yew Tree Farm, claiming the previous Planning regime gave them the right to do so. I understand that Planning Enforcement Officers attended on the day.

This gives rise to three related points:

Firstly, now that Longmoor contractors have achieved their vandalism at Yew Tree Farm, does Bristol City Council intend to take action against the landowner due to their abject failure to create the breach in the location indicated in the original application (contrary to Regulation 6 of the Hedgerow Regulations)?

Secondly, if not, why not (contrary to national legislation)?

Thirdly, I understand there is a proposal to plant 250 metres of replacement hedgerow somewhere else on site. Is Bristol City Council aware of this and have relevant Officers been consulted about this proposal, given that the site is now designated a SNCI?

CS03

Members Forum statement from Cllr Patrick McAlister

Subject: Israel – Gaza Conflict

I condemn the horrific outpouring of violence in Israel and Palestine over the past several weeks, and call upon Bristol City Council to do everything it can to urge the UK government to encourage peace, restraint and respect for international law in this conflict.

The murder of 1,200 Israelis by Hamas on October 7th has rightly been universally condemned by the political institutions and parties of the UK. The targeting of civilians runs contrary to every moral principle and we all surely hope for the safety and release of those kidnapped and taken hostage.

Since then, the Israeli government has engaged in disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks on civilians in Gaza. This has included artillery strikes, sniper attacks, and the denial of food, water, medical supplies and fuel to the Gaza Strip – this is collective punishment and a breach of international law. Over 11,000 people have been killed in Gaza since October 7th - nearly 5,000 of them were children.

Horrifying stories are emerging from hospitals in Gaza, where surgery is being conducted by the light of phone torches, anaesthetics are running out, and patients in intensive care - including babies in incubators - die when the power does.

Attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank - a territory not controlled by Hamas - by Israeli settlers, with the backing of the Israeli state and military, have intensified. Over 120 Palestinians there have been killed. These settlements are illegal under international law, as recognised by the UK and UN, among many others.

The United Nations has described Israel's actions as amounting to ethnic cleansing, and there is clear evidence of war crimes having been committed by both sides of the conflict. Extremely disturbing rhetoric has been issued by Israeli government officials, politicians and institutions. These include the statements such as "We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly" (Defence Minister Yoav Gallant), "This is a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle" (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu), and "We are now rolling out the Gaza Nakba" (Israeli Security Cabinet member Avi Dichter).

It is shameful that the government of the United Kingdom continues to uncritically support the actions of the Israeli state as it violates international law and human rights day after day, and openly declares its intention to continue doing so. There is never an excuse for war crimes, no matter the provocation.

Violence only breeds more violence - whether the violence of the gun and bomb or the violence of occupation and oppression. The only way forwards towards a just and lasting peace is an immediate ceasefire, a release of hostages, democratic dialogue and an end to the illegal occupation. The British government should be advocating for these ends through every means possible, as it did upon Russia's invasion of Ukraine; that it does not is

extremely telling about the priorities of those in power in this nation. Instead, it has sent UK military forces to support Israel, making this country directly complicit in the ongoing destruction of civilian lives.

Throughout all of this, the contemptible surge in antisemitism, Islamophobia and the violence from the far right we saw in London over the weekend, shamefully encouraged by the Home Secretary, continues, posing real worry and danger to millions of innocent citizens of this country.

I urge Bristol City Council to use every means it has at its disposal to call for a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and to support the communities most impacted here in Bristol. And I urge fellow councillors of all stripes to use their voices within their respective parties to call for the same: a ceasefire, an end to the siege, and for a just and lasting peace.

CS04

Members Forum statement from Cllr Mohammed Makawi

Subject: Israel – Gaza Conflict

The city of Bristol is a sanctuary of 91 languages and dialects that includes people from all over the world. Bristol, I am addressing you with the voice of humanity and justice for the defenceless residents of Gaza, a voice that rejects the rhetoric of bombs, bullets, murder, and crimes against humanity committed against them.

Since the war began, more than 11,180 Palestinians have died, including no less than 4,609 children, 3,100 women, 700 elderly people. 28,200 have been wounded, and a million and a half displaced.

They are not just numbers, but innocent souls that were bombarded by warplanes in their homes and hospitals, not military barracks. Their bodies were buried under the rubble. Children, the same as our children. Mothers & fathers, the same as our mothers and fathers.

As democratically elected representatives, we must stand with justice and reject wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, war crimes, forced displacement, and occupation.

The Green party called for cease-fire from the beginning of the conflict, & I hope the Mayor & my fellow councillors will do the same and listen to the people of Bristol & around the UK who have come to the streets week after week to demand an immediate cease-fire & stop to the mass killing of the people of Gaza, as well as an end to the occupation to free Palestine for good.

Let's do the right thing and be on the right side of history before it's too late.

Thank you.

CS04

Members Forum statement from Cllr Emma Edwards

Subject: Yew Tree Farm

Earlier this year councillors from all parties in this chamber came together to vocalise their support for Yew Tree Farm, Bristol's last working farm, when it came under threat from developers. Many members even visited the farm to show support for the owner, Catherine Withers, and the ancient hedgerow which supports wildlife and is under threat from developers.

Only two weeks ago in this chamber the draft local plan was voted for, also with cross party support. A local plan which would strengthen protections for Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and take Yew Tree farm off the table for consideration for development. In light of this, I hope councillors from across the parties join me in condemning the actions of contractors this week who, without warning, took a chainsaw to the hedge and cut a larger-than agreed upon gap in it, in a location also not agreed upon.

What does it say about this council that such actions can take place, can't be prevented and now, no remedy is offered? This is nothing less than ecocide and goes against this council's own policies and ethos about environmental protection of SNCIs.

The destruction of this ancient hedgerow is a direct result of incompetence within the council and was sadly inevitable once it had failed to fulfil its duty to deal with the application by Newcombe Estates appropriately. Information that should be shared has been withheld, leading to preventable mistakes.

The Green Group is calling for a full report of the actions and decisions that lead to this destruction, and to see steps being taken to make sure something like this never happens again. I invite members of the other parties, members who stood with me along the hedge back in the summer to show their support, to join me again in condemning this act and calling for a report.