

# Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



**Date:** Tuesday, 9 January 2024

**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, 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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Date: 8 January 2024  
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# Agenda

**1. Member Forum Questions and Responses**

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**2. Member Forum Statements Received**

**(Pages 31 - 36)**



# Member Forum

## 9 January 2024

### 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 Martin Fodor**

**Subject: Missed recycling services caused by parking obstructions**

The weekly recycling service promises regular resource collections to addresses across the city. When streets are missed week after week or several weeks running the council isn't delivering what it promises and contracts for.

With many areas this seems to be a problem; streets in Redland ward - and several other wards recently reported by residents on public forums too - have recurring the missed collections. These are often caused by parking obstructions at corners with no double yellow lines and no parking management.

The council is letting people down and creating litter, risk of vermin, and walking obstructions on a regular basis for reasons it's responsible for.

Managing parking to enable routine and emergency services access around our highways should be the council's strategic responsibility taken corporately by services working together [ie joint work by waste, highways, legal, parking]. It should not be left to chance or local expense for an area to bid to allocate funds from developers instead of choosing to invest in community facilities.

1. What plans are there to identify the streets where remedial action to allow routine public services or emergency access is in the hands of BCC?
2. When can we promise our residents that the council is planning to address highway obstructions it has powers to tackle in a joined up way?

**REPLY:**

1. We always review road safety concerns and consider appropriate actions. Members of the public and council teams are encouraged to use [our online tool](#) so that we have a centralised record of the issues and can communicate what action is necessary.

Ward councillors know their wards, as well as the appetite for parking restrictions. You can make the case for the interventions to improve things and commission Double Yellow Lines in any area that needs.

If you want a centralised team to co-ordinate these, then I suggest you consider proposing a budget amendment to establish that.

2. Just for clarification there have been missed collections in the last few weeks, but most have been caused by nothing more exciting than the change in schedule and the Christmas/New Year period.

As in the first answer, we are always addressing highways issues. But it's a challenge, we have lots of highways, a growing population and stretched budget.



I suggest that's one of the reasons we need a mass transit system to support modal shift, and one that doesn't close main roads of Gloucester Road, Church Road and St Luke's and Malago Road and forcing all vehicles onto surrounding residential roads.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ali, Frome Vale Ward**

**Subject: Barton House & Lawrence Hill Station**

**Barton House**

Please could the Mayor provide an update on Barton House?

**Lawrence Hill station accessibility**

I will be campaigning to have the West of England Combined Authority expedite their plans to make Lawrence Hill station more accessible. Does the Mayor support my campaign?

**REPLY**

1. We will be providing a fuller update on Barton House on Wednesday, and I will ensure all Members receive this. As you know, we have committed to informing our residents first about next steps, and we will be meeting them Wednesday to do so.

We have now received the final reports from the additional investigations of the building from Ridge and Arup. These support our position, explained on 18 December, that the building can be made safe for residents to return.

In the meantime, we continue to provide temporary accommodation and support to residents, including free food and travel. This will continue until Barton House is ready for people to return to. We continue to urge residents not to return until it is safe to do so, particularly as we need to test unoccupied flats for legionella. We also need to make sure that contractors have the required access to flats so as not to delay any works.

We know some residents may be worried about returning, and we will do all we can to reassure residents and keep them well informed. The judgement on safety will be based on the work of the expert engineers and the view of the Fire Service.

2. Yes, I do support this call. It is essential we have a modern, accessible transport network. It is great that the new stations coming forward are accessible, but there is work to do with the existing ones to bring them up to standard.

Delivering a fully accessible modern mass transit system for the city would be a game changer for communities across the city who have been excluded in the past.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris (Stoke Bishop)****Subject: RECYCLING RATES**

Along with other parts of Bristol, the collection of recycling has been repeatedly late in areas of my ward with Thursday collections not taking place until Saturday afternoon. Most of my residents are patient and leave the recycling out, as I and my fellow ward Councillor have asked them to do. However, it does look messy and after a couple of days delay some residents take the recycling back and place it in their black bin. With this in mind:-

1. Has there been any recent adverse impact on recycling rates, which presumably are tracked on a monthly basis?

**REPLY**

The recycling rate for this year, as up to the of November 2023, was 46%. Over the past seven years, Bristol has had the highest recycling rate of English Core Cities. However, I recognise there has been a recent issue. While it is too early to identify if the missed collections have negatively impacted the recycling rate, I would expect there to be an impact as you describe, but we are waiting for the figures to come back from Bristol Waste.

I'll ask Bristol Waste to arrange a session with Cllr Marley Bennett and councillors who are having issues with collections in their wards. In the lead up to that, I'd like councillors to share the experiences of their residents with Bristol Waste and Cllr Bennett so we have a bank of evidence.

We have ambitious goals to increase Bristol's recycling rate further and welcome the opportunity to work with councillors to realise that. We are clear Bristol Waste need to operate in a way that continues to drive increases in recycling rates.



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

## Subject:

## 1. Libraries

Can the mayor please provide information on how many hours, broken down per month, that branch libraries have been closed across Bristol during the year 2023?

## 2. Community Litter Picking

In 2023 The Whitchurch Wombles litter picked over 1500 bags of rubbish from streets and parks from the communities they are active in, a 50% increase on 2022. Does the mayor know if Bristol Waste and the Parks service keep a record of how much waste is litter picked by volunteers, and if so, can he share that information?

## REPLY

1. 800 libraries across the UK have been closed permanently since 2010, thanks to the national austerity which your party started in government with the Conservatives. We are proud have protected libraries and other frontline services in Bristol since 2016, and have consistently highlighted the impact of almost fourteen years of national austerity too.

Month	No. of open hours planned	No. of hours closed	% of hours closed
Jan-23	3005.5	113.75	3.8%
Feb-23	2894	196.5	6.8%
Mar-23	3240.5	282.5	8.7%
Apr-23	2813	174.75	6.2%
May-23	3011	83.25	2.8%
Jun-23	3116	105	3.4%
Jul-23	3159.5	189.5	6.0%
Aug-23	3121	199.58	6.4%
Sep-23	3163.5	103.5	3.3%
Oct-23	3121	99.25	3.2%
Nov-23	3121	197.5	6.3%
Dec-23	2945	599	20.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36711</b>	<b>2344.08</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

2. That's a fantastic achievement by the Whitchurch Wombles and they've made an incredible contribution and thank them for it. We thank everyone across the city who have been involved.

We have information from Bristol Waste Company, who manage the Clean Streets Litter Picking Scheme. Between 1st January 2023 and 30th September 2023 - 3,123 volunteers collected 2,960 refuse and recycling bags of waste. This compares with 3,471 volunteers who

collected 2,735 refuse and recycling bags of waste 1st January 2022 and 30th September 2022.

## MEMBER FORUM

## KCP. QUESTION 1

### Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

#### Subject: Clean Air Zone

1. given that the declared aim of the caz is to improve air quality can the mayor consider in a review (understanding the need for central government agreement.)

A whether the boundaries may be adjusted

B whether charges may be amended to reflect the level of excess pollution emitted by vehicles.

C whether compensation payments to individuals and crucially small not for profit organisations and charities needing to obtain compliant vehicles can be adjusted.

2. it has always been a concern that some vehicles, although unsuitable for continued use in a dense urban environment, have a potential useful life elsewhere but are scrapped.

A far more useful outcome for some of these vehicles would be donation to Ukraine for use in relief and paramedic work.

There are signs of this alternative idea progressing with government agreement. Can the mayor give an assurance that he will make efforts to have Bristol join in?

## REPLY

1. The aim of the Clean Air Zone is to achieve legal compliance in the shortest possible time. No changes can be made which either lengthen the amount of time, or jeopardize compliance.

There is no ability to change charging rates.

We have increased the threshold for people to apply for support for anyone earning up to £30k a year. We will be sharing a full report next week on the full support we've provided Bristolians.

These are exactly the concerns we emphasised during the negotiation with government departments at the time.

2. Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has asked the government for a change in national regulations to allow for such donations.

However, we don't have a scrappage scheme here in Bristol, so if you can explain in more detail the proposal you're suggesting then we can take a look.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Hathway****Subject: Streetlights**

Some streets in our area have the old heritage style lamp posts, which tend to be fewer and further between, leaving dark stretches on streets during the dark winter months. This is exacerbated when streetlights are out and take many weeks to be repaired. The rollout of LEDs could go some way towards addressing this issue, but might not go far enough for some residential streets.

1. Can you provide an updated timeline on the LED rollout in Bristol and if there is any funding available for additional lamp columns where dark spots are still likely to be an issue?
2. Can you advise how many outstanding street light repairs there currently are with a breakdown of how long they have been outstanding?

**REPLY:**

1. We have 15,000 existing units now changed to LED lanterns and Central Management System nodes. The good news is that project is reducing the street lighting energy consumption: saving £2 million a year and 20,000 tonnes carbon dioxide over 10 years.

The installation of heritage style lanterns, and special design application lanterns, has been programmed to start April 2024, as we have targeted the higher wattage lanterns in the first phase of the replacement, which gives better energy saving and faster payback. The LED roll out completion date is January 2025.

There is no funding currently available for additional lamp columns and lanterns where it is deemed poor lighting levels exist and it is feasible to install new columns. The team will consider areas of concern after the LED roll out has been completed. The team will work with local councillors and use historical information to prioritise the areas that need the additional lighting but additional lights would be steel columns. The works will be phased due to limited budget per financial year.

2. We currently have 1.35% of the lighting stock as faults falling outside the target date, i.e. older than five days.

We are recycling materials to avoid spending excess budget on repairs for the lanterns which will be replaced in six months' time.

**Additional Information:**

We are also finding the older heritage equipment is proving difficult to get spares, subsequently lead times on certain components is now months and not weeks. The repairs are currently in a transition period while the new LED lanterns are being installed.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Breckels, St George Troopers Hill****Subject: Active Travel investment & Climate Action****Chandos Road**

I'm disappointed to hear that the ward councillors for Cotham do not want the council to invest in Chandos Road by pedestrianizing it to make it more welcome for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as create more space for businesses on the road. Will the council push ahead with plans for pedestrianizing Chandos Road, or can we spend the funding elsewhere? – if the latter there are plenty of places in my ward where the money could be spent.

**Climate action**

Green Party Councillors seem to be under the impression that passing a motion, making a declaration, or voicing their support for something is the be-all and end-all for making change. Can the Mayor outline the work the Labour administration – which they themselves claim they are unable to influence – has done to combat climate change since 2016?

**REPLY**

1. It is important to work with communities on changes to their areas. When it comes to the local ward councillors, their opposition is not surprising. Just like we've seen in Barton Hill with the East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood pilot, and more widely on housing delivery and mass transit solutions, the Green Party Group support everything in principle and nothing in practice.

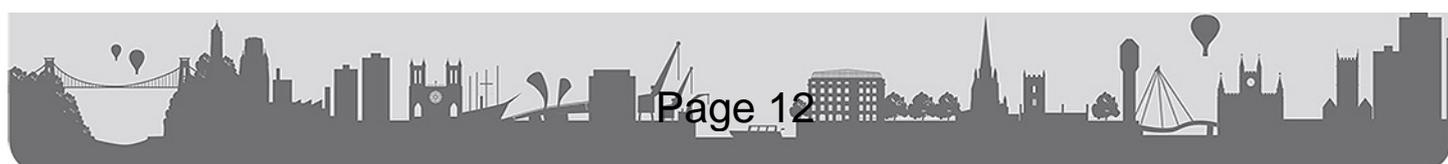
We'll continue to work with the community and traders of Chandos Road to explore their appetite for improvements.

2. We have delivered at scale across the city to reduce carbon emissions and make the city more resilient to the impacts of the climate and ecological emergencies that we declared and are acting on. These have been set out in the Climate Emergency Action Plan 2019 and 2022, with the current plan including nearly 60 actions. A few highlights are:

- Set a very ambitious target for the council's direct emissions to be net zero by 2025. BCC's emissions have reduced by 62% since 2015/16 and plans are in place to deliver substantial further investment. In September, Cabinet allocated £12m of further investments and we have applied for further government grants. We are not aware of another large council that is working towards a target that is so ambitious.
- The Streetlighting LED Replacement Project – this project started in April 2023 and to date we have replaced 15,390 lanterns of the 26,900 existing functional units to be replaced. This has so far led to a 19% year-on-year reduction in energy consumption.
- We developed the One City Climate Strategy which we launched just before the pandemic and have funded an officer who has been working with partners on its implementation.
- Set up the independent Bristol Advisory Committee on Climate Change
- We have chaired the Core Cities' Climate Change Group and represented the Core Cities on the Government's Net Zero Local Forum at a political and senior officer level, making the case for government action to support action by cities.



- We have delivered a programme of community engagement including creating the Bristol Climate Hub where Bristolians are telling their stories of climate action – from the hospital working using a BCC loan electric bike to cycle to work to the young people of the Empire Fighting Chance Gym talking about the action they are taking.
- We have worked with partners to secure over £2 million to support community climate action, with initially six and now more communities and this has laid the foundations for our most recent external funding success in securing funding from Innovate UK to work with communities to secure investment into climate action in their neighbourhoods.
- Increasing our understanding of the vulnerability to the impacts of summer overheating by mapping the city to identify the areas of the city/ people that are most vulnerable and now developing plans to reduce this vulnerability.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy (Bishopsworth)****Subject: CHARGEABLE HOUSEHOLD WASTE**

Last year, a Ministerial statement was made that households would not have to pay to get rid of DIY waste. On Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> June, Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said: *“We want to make it as easy as possible for people to dispose of their waste properly and that’s why we are removing the financial burden on doing the right thing with DIY trash.*

The abolition of such charges by all local authorities were to come into effect later in the year.

In his response to Members Forum questions in July, the Mayor indicated that the Authority was awaiting further guidance on this matter which, at that time, was expected in September.

1. Is the Mayor now in a position to confirm how this ruling will impact Bristol residents?
2. When will these changes come into effect?

**REPLY**

The Government released a statement in June 2023 about abolishing DIY charges but there was significant concern from Local Authorities because it was uncoded. Some geographically larger local authorities estimated significant additional burdens each year, such as:

- Hampshire County Council: £2m
- Devon County Council: £1m
- Norfolk County Council: £1m
- Suffolk County Council: £500k

DEFRA undertook consultation with Local Authorities during July-September 2023 to understand the impact and risks around potential abuse of free depositing of DIY waste at the recycling centres. As a result, the amendment to The Controlled Waste Regulation 2023 was released at the end of November 2023, which will enable residents to deposit DIY on four different occasions (of x1 large item or x2 bags of rubble) in a four-week period for no charge.

Bristol Waste have amended their booking system in line with the new regulations.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies**

**Subject: Broadwalk / Redcatch Quarter**

The planning consent for the Broadwalk/Redcatch quarter redevelopment has finally been issued.

This followed a positive officer recommendation, committee support and a waving through from central government and crucially the support of a majority of local residents.

The development as well as rebuilding our commercial centre and providing much needed accommodation and 106 benefits is estimated to produce £4M in CIL payment to this authority and nearly £2 m a year in ongoing council tax.

1. Can the Mayor confirm his strong support for this scheme and ensure that if there is an attempt by a vocal minority to block this, sufficient resources will be made available to officers to ensure an efficient defence of the council decision.

2. my colleague is today submitting a petition to ask for some of the strategic CIL money available for parks to be allocated to Redcatch park. Given that the development will actually border on to the park and bring a significant number of new residents to the area and is expected to raise millions in strategic CIL for the council, can the mayor please confirm that he regards Redcatch park as a very suitable beneficiary of parks strategic CIL and that as local Cllrs we should expect discussions with us to begin shortly over plans.

**REPLY**

1. Following the committee decision, we are pleased that the notice has been issued.

I have supported the development and investment in Broadwalk to make it an improved and vibrant retail space at the heart of the community, while also bringing forward homes. I felt that the planning application was a difficult one but, on balance and considering the housing crisis, think the decision was the correct one.

2. Decisions on CIL will be taken in the normal way, including the portion decided by the area committee. This is a great opportunity for investment in Knowle.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ed Plowden**

**Subject: Waste Collections**

1. Has there been an increase in missed collections as a result of the recent adjustments to the waste collection rotas?
2. Will further changes be required and what learning has been captured from the changes?

**REPLY:**

1. On 13 November 2023, Bristol Waste Company undertook a re-route and rebalancing of the refuse and recycling rounds. This is the first large-scale change since 2011/12.

The aim is to improve efficiency and make sure citizens are getting an equitable service. There is a period of adjustment and the service is recovering from the Christmas/New Year peak too.

This rebalancing has resulted in missed collections during the mobilisation period before Christmas. Approximately 20,000 households received changes to their collection days.

2. Lessons have been learnt especially around capturing more collection knowledge from drivers and crews.

We work collaboratively with Bristol Waste to undertake further small-scale changes where needed to optimise the recycling collections to ensure reliable and consistent collections.



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

**Subject: Gilton House**

I recently had a meeting with the residents of Gilton House about the much-needed refurbishments to their block of flats.

It was recently found that the insulation in the flats needed to be replaced as it was not safe. The residents have no problem with this. However, the manner in which it is being replaced is causing an environmental impact and the work to replace the insulation is taking much longer than expected.

The old insulation has been removed but not yet replaced. Consequently, the residents have been living without adequate insulation through the winter months. I have had people tell me of massive increases in energy bills, and of flats so cold that either they stay at their relatives at night and stay in bed all day as the storage heaters cannot cope with the lack of insulation. Some flats have even been really badly affected with mould, which was not there in previous years.

They are asking for a compensation to cover their bills and discomfort and for the council to listen to their complaints. Is there a clause in the council's contract with the developer that fines them on lack of due diligence and delays to work?

**REPLY**

The issue of increased heating costs associated with temporary cladding removal is being reviewed across the service as part of the current business planning process. We recognise and acknowledge the pressure faced by residents. As part of the budget setting process for the HRA, a support scheme will need to consider financial sustainability and equality for all residents to be treated equally.

Any residents experiencing damp and mould issues should contact the project's Client Liaison Officer and BCC will investigate the possible causes and look to put in temporary measures to resolve the problem.

We accept the refurbishment of Gilton House has had some significant challenges: some outside of our control, and others we could have handled better. We are continuing to invest and improve our housing stock.



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

**Subject: WHITCHURCH WAY CYCLE PATH**

The Whitchurch Way Cycle Path in Stockwood Ward is well used by both pedestrians and cyclists. Unfortunately, it is also used illegally by speeding motorcyclists who put the safety of the public at serious risk.

1. Can signs be erected at access points warning that the use of motorcycles is prohibited, and will result in action being taken against offenders?

**REPLY**

I recognise and share these safety concerns. Incidents should be reported to the Police so they may be able to build a case for proactive measures to try to address this.

The use of this path falls under the 'byelaws for pleasure grounds, public walks and open spaces' which state motorcycles are not permitted in this area or along the path. However, this is difficult to enforce due to the need to be present to witness this when it occurs.

Additional signing could be provided but is unlikely to have a positive impact as those riding along here already know that this is not allowed.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor David Wilcox**

**Subject: Special Responsibility Allowances**

On the 11 of October 2023, Cllr Tom Rehnard was selected to be the Labour Party Group Lead. On Cllr Rehnard's councillor page on Bristol City Council's website, he is described as the Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homelessness, which is confirmed by a press release from the council on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. The page on the council website regarding Councillors' allowances and payments "Councillors are only eligible for one special responsibility allowance even if they serve in more than one role".

3. Can the mayor assure members that due process for receiving Special Responsibility Allowances is being followed?
4. Can the Mayor confirm which SRA Councillor Rehnard is receiving?

**REPLY:**

1. I understand that all processes relating to Special Responsibility Allowances have been followed.
2. Councillor Renhard is receiving an SRA for his role as Cabinet Member.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jackson, Filwood Ward****Subject: Housebuilding & Household Support Fund****Housebuilding**

I note that Priced Out, an organisation campaigning for more housebuilding to tackle the housing crisis, named the Green Party as the winner of their 'Nimby of the year' award. Is the Mayor surprised by this?

**Household Support Fund**

The Government is set to cut the Household Support Fund from next year onwards. Please could the Mayor set out what this means for Bristolians, and does he agree with me that this harmful Tory cut should be reversed?

**REPLY**

1. I am not surprised, but continue to be disappointed every time they vote against building new homes during a housing crisis. It is important for the people to have the Green Party's record highlighted. Too often the Green Party Group are treated as a fringe party, given the space to support everything in principle and nothing in practice while holding contradictory positions.

Just to clarify their Bristol record:

- Voted against affordable homes being built on the former zoo car park.
- Voted against social housing and a new public park on the site of the former zoo.
- A Green Councillor described the decision of choosing between social housing and a building she didn't like as being 'stuck between a rock and a hard place'.
- Another Green Councillor objected to Romney House, a council-owned development that has won affordability and sustainability awards, for being a few metres too tall.
- Another Green Councillor objected to Dovercourt Road, a council-owned development on brownfield land, for not having enough access roads.
- Another Green Councillor called in an application to build seven self-contained flats for people at-risk of homelessness, due to traffic issues relating to HGVs – despite the application being MMC, and therefore constructed mainly off-site.
- Another Green Councillor called-in the Cameron Centre, but has since seen the light.
- Another Green Councillor leaflet, recognising that there's a housing crisis while blocking housing. First side: 'A lot of people can't afford to buy [...] their homes' Second side: 'I share those concerns' (about a housing development leading to parking problems)

2. The Conservatives' refusal to confirm the continuation of the Household Support Fund beyond March is deeply troubling. Cutting the fund would have devastating consequences for some of Bristol's worst-off. Our administration uses the £8 million fund for measures including:

- Free School Meals and/or Pupil Premium over all school holidays
- The Local Crisis Prevention Fund, which gives grants to Bristolians for items such as white goods and school uniforms in emergency situations.

- Targeted support for people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds'
- Vouchers to assist care leavers and foster children with food and heating costs.
- Emergency support for older people who are struggling in the cost-of-living crisis.
- Targeted financial support through Feeding Bristol for households experiencing food poverty, vulnerable households experiencing energy insecurity, pensioners in receipt of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and financial support for disabled people experiencing food / fuel poverty.

It is emblematic of this Government that it is seemingly pushing ahead with this cut whilst floating the idea of abolishing inheritance tax – which only the wealthiest circa 4% of households pay.



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

**Subject: PORTWAY NOISE POLLUTION**

Residents have told me that the A4 Portway improvement consultation is very limited in the feedback sought and has no questions on environmental issues and in particular noise pollution caused by traffic on the A4 and how any improvements to the A4 should deal with this. Many residents would welcome any upgrade to include resurfacing the residential parts of the A4 with so called 'quiet tarmac'. This would bring with it major environmental benefits for all not just bus users and cyclists.

1. Will the Mayor ensure that this view is relayed to those working on the A4 Portway improvement scheme and highlighted as a priority?

**REPLY**

Thank you for sharing the issue with me, we've shared this with the project team.

As you are aware, the consultation for the A4 Portway, held between October and November 2023, sought views of residents and local stakeholders on the changes being proposed as part of the project.

The scheme has proposed a range of measures that aim to encourage the modal shift from private vehicles to sustainable travel modes. Reducing the volume of vehicles, and the speed in which they are travelling will have improvements on the noise levels.

In delivering the proposed measures the project will be resurfacing areas of the Portway. The exact locations of the re-surfacing and the materials to be used for the resurfacing will be determined at the detailed design stage of the project, and we'll consider the points you've raised.

The potential benefits of the scheme, including the improvements to noise levels, will be captured in the business cases for the project.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Rippington, Brislington East****Subject: St Anne's House & Transport Funding****St Anne's House**

Bristol City Council recently signed an agreement to lease St Anne's House in Brislington to the community arts organisation Bricks for a period of five years. This is fantastic news for our community. Myself and Cllr Hornchen promised to bring more community resources to our ward of Brislington East at the last election and we are really pleased to have been instrumental in bringing this about, with a good deal of the help from Cllr Renhard and housing officers.

The use of this building for community purposes makes possible a variety of activities such as youth engagement, a community gym, social prescribing and sessions for older people to come together in a safe and welcoming environment. I know that Bricks also have a desire to bring forward some community housing on the site in the longer term – does the Mayor support this and does he have any update on progress with the longer term future of the building?

**Transport funding**

When the Government decided to cancel the Birmingham to Manchester leg of HS2, a decision which looks likely to result in more investment into roads, more haulage using roads, and less people using public transport – we were promised the funding allocated to this sorely-needed project would be invested elsewhere in the UK.

Has the Mayor received any further details of transport investment into Bristol, as a result of HS2 being cancelled?

**REPLY**

1. The Council shares Bricks Bristol's aspirations to bring forward an element of housing at St Anne's House, to co-exist with the existing community uses. This could be a community led approach to housing, delivered in partnership with a Registered Provider.

The site has challenges to residential development such as the risk of flooding, however the Housing Delivery Team are working with Bricks and the flood risk specialists to devise a scheme that is workable, and acceptable to the Environment Agency.

There may be potential for a Community Asset Transfer to open up the potential for housing, and officers will continue to discuss this with Bricks. However, it should be noted that the asset currently sits within the HRA.

A piece of feasibility work has been commissioned, in collaboration with Bricks, which is considering the residential potential for the site. The outcomes of this will be known shortly.



The feasibility work will inform initial internal decision making, and then ongoing dialogue with Bricks, ward councillors, and the Cabinet Lead, to determine the most appropriate way forward for potential new homes at St Anne's House.

2. No we haven't. But we should put money into Mass Transit, per the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.

Money has been ringfenced for Mass Transit by WECA, but not yet allocated. If it is not, I fear that nothing will be delivered as the authority and opposition parties in this chamber pursue an undeliverable overground options which requires compulsory purchase of land and buildings and the closure of key road network routes.



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

**Subject: CLOSED LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT DECEMBER**

Most of our local libraries have been closed wholly or in part throughout the last month, ostensibly attributed to staff shortages as a result of reduced budgets.

1. Can the Mayor explain the system or formula used to determine the patch-work pattern of closures which have taken place?
2. Will the Mayor commit to ensuring that the branch network will be allocated sufficient funding to prevent a recurrence of this loss of service in his final draft Revenue Budget proposals?

**REPLY**

1. Staff are moved from library to library to cover where practical. Library closures have been mainly determined by vacancies, sickness and other absences. Not all closures are full or part days, many are lunchtime only.

Across the country 800 libraries have closed permanently since 2010 as a consequence of your party's austerity and local government underfunding. If you are concerned about library availability in the country, I suggest you write to the Prime Minister to express your concerns.

2. The Library Service's revenue budget includes sufficient funding for staffing for advertised opening hours across its branch network.

If you see any risks you consider unacceptable you can submit a budget amendment in the usual process.



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

**Subject: COLSTON HALL PROFIT SHARING SCHEME**

I understand that the Council have entered into an agreement with the Bristol Music Trust to receive a share of the profits from the Colston Hall.

1. Can the Mayor provide me with the following information?
  - The period covered by the agreement.
  - The percentage share of the profits attributable to the Council.
  - The amount of money the council expects to receive.
  - The timeline of the expected cash flows.
  - What the council intend to do with the money upon receipt.

**REPLY**

The Heads of Terms have been agreed. Completion of the new contract is due by the end of February 2024.

- The repayment period will start after the first two full years of operation. The repayment period will be 27 years from 1 April 2026.
- The calculation for repayment amount is not based on percentage of profits. The terms of the agreement were published in the papers at scrutiny on 2 November 2023.
- There will be an annual review of the deemed amount due, conducted by the Council, on an annual basis for the final 27 years of Bristol Music Trust's lease.
- The use of funds received from BMT will therefore be decided by future administrations.



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

**Subject: LANE RENTAL SCHEMES**

Lane rental schemes are a proven, very effective tool for reducing congestion caused by works undertaken by utility companies. This is because it provides a clear financial incentive for them to expedite matters. Last September, in response to the Conservative golden motion tabled on this subject, Council signalled its support for exploring introducing such measures.

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not transport planners/officers responded to the last Government consultation on the future of lane rental?
2. At Full Council, it was argued that such traffic management measures can only be applied to 5% of the city's road network. Can the Mayor confirm that this ceiling is strictly correct as previous DfT guidance suggested this figure was essentially a typical or advisory limitation? In other words, provided there is sufficient justification given to pursue clear objectives, a larger proportion is permissible.

## **REPLY**

1. A Department for Transport (DfT) survey was sent to Local Authorities at the end of October 2023 to gauge their interest in lane rental. Bristol City Council did provide a response to this.
2. Lane rental guidance suggests 5% as a typical figure of an authority's network that could be included in a lane rental scheme. If it can be sufficiently justified that the figure should be more, a larger figure/extent of the network could go out to consultation. Recent lane rental applications by other authorities have been higher than 5%. The percentage of roads that could be included also depends on the type of authority and their network e.g. rural or urban.

The DfT are revisiting the lane rental guidance and we await this new guidance which may include changes to suggested network percentage. It should also be noted that applying a greater length of network would also increase the revenue strain on the authority who are also liable for lane rental charges.



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

**Subject: LANE RENTAL SCHEMES**

1. Whilst LRS are not designed for the purpose of raising revenue but to reduce or minimise disruption of the highway, will officers look at this issue again and formulate a bid in the wake of successful pilots in London and Kent?
2. As a means of further encouraging utility companies to conduct efficient street works, does the Mayor agree there is a need to extend and increase the fines levied through fixed penalty notices?

**REPLY**

1. A feasibility study into a Bristol lane rental scheme has been commissioned and a report is expected late summer 2024. An application to the DfT to introduce a scheme would not be possible before 2025.
2. Fixed penalty notice charges are statutory charges set by DfT and therefore not something that can be amended locally. The charges are currently too low to be an effective deterrent and the DfT have recognised this and started to have discussions with industry groups such as the Highway Authority & Utilities Committee (HAUC). We are feeding into this discussion through local HAUC meetings.



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

**Subject: FUNDING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING**

1. Can the Mayor explain why precisely he considered the emergency oversight meeting of WECA to be improper or potentially unlawful?
2. Given the finding of fact **in the report into** this incident, does the Mayor not think it might be appropriate for the Regional Mayor to consider personally reimbursing the £10k wasted on this bus wrap?

**REPLY**

1. We do not believe that holding a meeting without the Metro Mayor is quorate or proper.

WECA officers made errors in calling this meeting in the way that they did – but this is a matter for the WECA committee.

2. Despite the fact we did not think the meeting was proper, the report, and its recommendations, were considered by the committee. Any further questions should be submitted to the committee.



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

**Subject: SUPPORTING COUNCIL TENANTS**

Twice in one week recently I had dealing with council tenants who are so down and demoralised with their support they both threatened suicide.

1. Can the Mayor advise on what more the Authority can do to ensure better support for existing Council tenants?

**REPLY**

I am sorry to hear about that experience.

That's why we've made housing our top priority. Good quality homes is the single most important policy tool we have to improve lives and outcomes for people and build a better Bristol. That means building quality, affordable homes, working with our existing stock and improving the private rented sector.

It is difficult to comment without further details, I propose you meet with Cllr Kye Dudd to discuss the cases and understand the specifics to share with housing officers.

Being this point of contact, and hope is an important role of councillors and its good you were there for them.



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

**Subject: STRATEGIC CORRIDORS UPDATE**

The local Councillors for Stockwood Ward would greatly appreciate being kept up to date on the proposals for the strategic corridors impacting their Ward.

1. Can the Mayor explain why is there no regular dialogue between Councillors and the Administration on its progress to maximise the benefits expected from the proposals? For example, we have not received confirmation around the actual or pending submission of the Outline Business Case.

**REPLY**

The Outline Business Case will be circulated when it is prepared. You can ask Transport Officers for an update any time you like, and my office are happy to discuss at any time.



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

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Subject</b>
CS01	CLlr Gary Hopkins	Rejuvenation of Town Centre
CS02	CLlr Patrick McAllister	Western Harbour Advisory Group
CS03	CLlr Martin Fodor	Missed Recycling Services - our council's responsibilities.
CS04	CLlr Tessa Fitzjohn	Public Rights of Way and Greens committee

**CS01**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Gary Hopkins**

**Subject: Rejuvenation of Town Centre**

We welcome the issuing of planning consent for the rejuvenation of our town centre. I will be asking for money for our next door park from central cil funds.

Although parks in knowle have an above city average approval rating 90.2% v 71.6% and better usage 73.1% weekly or more compared to 56% this is down to local effort and not central council funding. In fact the last time we had significant funds was prior to the first mayor with the combination of city wide parks funding and locally generated funds from PGSS producing a major boost.

As local cllrs we have a long track record of getting value for money and have a draft list which includes new play equipment including for a wider age range

Outdoor gym  
Refurbished toilets  
Pavillion improvements  
Path repairs  
Some drainage work.

The new development brings in a huge amount of money to this council and we are asking that some of it is spent in the next door park and hopefully on other supporting facilities. We look forward to discussions.

**CS02**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Patrick McAllister**

**Subject: Western Harbour Advisory Group**

The Western Harbour Advisory Group (WHAG) is currently being refreshed. This group will provide essential oversight and direction for one of Bristol's largest and most defining regeneration and infrastructure projects in decades. It is essential that it is done right, both to ensure strong decision-making and democratic legitimacy for the development of the Western Harbour area.

It was therefore disappointing to see that the Mayor's Office has decided to not permit local councillors to take places on the group. This is contrary to the expressed sentiments of councillors who attended the officer briefing on Western Harbour in late November, where the overwhelming feeling was that elected representation on WHAG was vital. It is also not what residents around the project area want – people want to know that their elected representatives have the ability to monitor and help steer this major development.

I ask that the administration reconsider its stance to exclude elected representatives from the Western Harbour Advisory Group.

**CS03**

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Martin Fodor**

**Subject: Missed Recycling Services - our council's responsibilities.**

My statement regards the need for our authority to prioritise and address issues affecting our own core services to the residents we serve.

The weekly recycling service is one of the highest profile ways we serve every home in the city every week, all year.

This authority promises regular collections of materials across the city, protecting public health and managing resources. It has performed relatively well but recently many councillors will know it has been having problems of reliability. Whole streets are sometimes missed - week after week or several weeks running - for reasons that the council itself should address; the council isn't delivering what it promises and our contractor can't do their job. Vehicles aren't able to access the road due to chaotic parking.

Look at reports from many wards on social media – you can see that this service seems to be experiencing recurrent problems: for instance streets in Redland ward and several others are regularly reporting whole streets with missed collections week after week. The knock on effect means repeated trips are then needed to try and gain access the next day - otherwise full recycling boxes are left abandoned on the pavement.

I asked about this last year; the Mayor acknowledged that this recurrent problem hadn't been monitored so that if the same street - like Melbourne Rd, Redland ward - crops up week after week it should get logged as such, not considered a single isolated incident every time. But that improved monitoring hasn't been analysed or acted on.

When this service failure is caused by parking obstructions at corners with no double yellow lines and no parking management the council should take responsibility and act. The council is letting people down and creating litter, risk of vermin, and walking obstructions on a regular basis for reasons it's responsible for.

So we know this is happening. What else can we do? In my ward:

- We've discussed this with the crews and their supervisors and we're told they aren't allowed to take the time to leaflet obstructive vehicles when the truck has to turn back.
- We've talked to the police and they're willing to keep an eye out for obstructive parking but they have to be present to witness and prosecute offenders. This isn't realistic or a practical way to run council services weekly, however.
- We've talked to the frustrated residents about action they could take when commuters and others storing vehicles at their street corners but don't believe this is the right way to manage our services and could create risks for them.
- We could tell residents the Mayor says they need to bid to allocate community infrastructure funds from developers to pay locally to make room on streets for our core services instead of choosing to invest in community facilities – but this is frankly unjust and some areas simply have no funds.

Managing parking to enable routine and emergency services access around our highways should be the council's strategic responsibility.

We'd like to see joined up action taken by services working together [ie convene joint work by the waste client and contractor, highways officers, legal services, and parking services]. But the council, despite sharing a draft parking strategy publicly in 2019, still lacks one. The resultant chaos is now undermining our own weekly services.

That inaction is why I'm here suggesting that the administration needs to start giving attention to deal with these routine issues of managing and maintaining day to day operations. Let's get the basics right before prioritising attention elsewhere. We've said before that investing to save and maintain operations [supposedly a budget priority, but a neglected part of the current spending plans ] should not be so far behind invest to grow. I want to be able to, promise our residents the council will now collaborate to identify solutions so these problematic street corners are treated. We need the legal and highway resource put together to ensure they get tackled and services get delivered as scheduled on the promised day.

Hence my questions:

Q1: what plans are there to identify the streets where remedial action to allow routine public services or emergency access is in the hands of BCC?

Q2: when can we promise our residents that the council is planning to address highway obstructions it has powers to tackle in a joined up way?

Please work with us and don't wash your hands of this any longer.

## **CS04**

### **Members Forum statement from Cllr Tessa Fitzjohn**

#### **Subject: Public Rights of Way and Greens committee**

Public Rights of Way and Greens committee does important work protecting and restoring invaluable short cuts across our cities and the rural landscape. They hold the history of centuries of walking, for many the only way to move around, and now increasingly for pleasure and health and they need our protection.

The Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee is responsible for the registration and protection of common land and grants permission and licences for work or changes. All the statutory committee Chairs receive a special responsibility allowance. These are discretionary payments intended to recognise the responsibility, accountability, time and effort required from those Members of the Council who perform duties significantly over and above what might reasonably be expected of them through the basic allowance.

I would like to draw Councils attention to the fact that PROWG has never been awarded an SRA, which means there is less incentivisation to Chair and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the scale and importance of the work to the officers and councillors involved.

In my view this is essential work, which is recognised by Council as demonstrated by the fact it is one of the two Development Committees. For example, if there is a public right of way, on land for development, planning permission can be stalled until negotiations have been successful in re-routing costing council and landowner money and time.

The PROWG team has two full time officers and is managed by Duncan Venison. The role includes at present addressing a considerable backlog of public path orders which officers have reduced by re-prioritising outstanding applications from 1998 and reviewing enforcement actions on longstanding obstructed paths.

A little-known fact is that PROWG works with two linked groups, Joint Local Access Forum and the Public Rights of Way Liaison Group. Together the three groups cover highway authorities, landowners, user interest groups like The Ramblers and public access issues across Bristol, B&NES and South Gloucestershire. This means we have the full understanding and connection to the strands that support the preservation of all aspects of PROWG.

The PROWG committee also oversees Town Green Applications. One such application is the Stoke Lodge Village Green Application which came to committee on May 24, 2023, with a confidential briefing on Wed 17 May. This application required considerable legal and essential work from the PROWG committee.

Since becoming Chair, Councillors have been encouraged to profile restored public rights of way in the press, and the Chair now receives the minutes and attends the meetings of the two linked groups when possible. This work has raised the profile of PROWG, and Officers and Councillors feeling valued.