

Member Forum



Date: Tuesday, 13 December 2016

Time: 1.00 pm

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

To: All Members of Council

Issued by: Ian Hird, Democratic Services

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Agenda

1. Questions and replies

Questions received from councillors are set out in the attached document, together with the replies from the Mayor (or relevant Cabinet member where applicable).

2. Statements

Statements received from councillors are set out in the attached document.



Member Forum

13 December 2016

Questions and replies



Procedural note:

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- Councillors are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions each.
- The questions submitted and written replies are attached.
- Councillors are also entitled to ask a maximum of 2 supplementary questions at the forum.
- If a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics. All supplementary questions must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- Via the group leaders / whips, questions have been submitted in priority order.
- At the forum, the asking of questions will be rotated between the political groups that have submitted questions, taken in priority order.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LAB. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant

Subject: Conduct of Private Landlords

1. Does the Mayor share my deep concern at the actions of private landlords who evict families from their homes, in order to maximise profit by renting out a family home by the room? I have a case in my ward where a family with four young children will be made homeless in early January, at quite probably the coldest time of year and the landlord is advertising rooms in that very house to rent on Facebook.
2. Would the Cabinet Member for Homes and Communities confirm that he intends to fight the increasing practice of evicting families in order to maximise profit on the rental of family-sized houses, by finding ways to regulate smaller houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), in a similar ways to the larger properties commonly used as HMOs?

Reply:

1. Of course I would like to see landlords renting their homes ethically. We need to find ways to promote ethical lettings and encourage landlords to sign up to the charter.
2. There is a change in the law currently being proposed which will allow the council to extend its regulation regime to smaller HMOs. This will allow us to ensure that the relevant health and safety legislation is being followed.

The council however has no power to stop a landlord evicting a tenant provided they are following the law and the conditions of their tenancy agreement. We have recently changed our approach to people threatened with eviction, providing support as soon as they are aware eviction proceedings are being taken rather than at the point at which they become homeless. This gives us an opportunity to negotiate with the landlord to seek try and sustain the tenancy.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION: Con 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: BRISTOL ENERGY COMPANY

1. Can the Mayor tell me whether or not the 7.6m earmarked in his draft Capital Budget for the energy company is going to be borrowed by the Council and transferred it?
2. If so, what revenue ramifications are there in this or is it coming from reserves and forcing us to borrow for other capital projects?

Reply:

- The Council's capital programme incorporates £7.6m for investment in the Energy Company. A specific earmarked reserve has been set aside to finance this investment. It is not planned, at present, to use prudential borrowing.
- Using earmarked reserves in this way will lead to a loss of interest on the Council's cash reserves, which are currently generating a return of 0.59%. This application of reserves and reduction of investment interest is factored within the existing capital financing budget.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

GRN. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: Statutory services

Can the Mayor confirm what is the level of spending needed (in approximate terms) to fulfil our statutory duties as a council?

Can I also have my answer in writing please.

Reply:

Local authorities do not, and are not required to, account for statutory and discretionary services. To undertake a thorough exercise that would be reliable would require a review of each service area provided with the service managers, legal and financial colleagues to identify the statutory and discretionary elements of each the various services and in what depth the service is provided.

This is impossible to do as there is no absolute cast iron definition available and we would also need to refer to case law.

Libraries are a really good example of why it is impossible. The council has a statutory responsibility to provide a comprehensive service but there is no detail of how the service has to be provided.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION LD.1

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

Subject: Regional spatial plan

1. I have submitted a Motion today to Full Council putting forward concerns with regards to the Whitchurch extension as part of the regional spatial plan and whether enough thought about sustainable travel has been given. I have asked that you extend the consultation by a month to give organizations, communities and individual resident's time to think through the proposals and respond.

Will you be willing to talk with the other Leaders about extending the time given to consultation into January on the Regional Spatial Plan?

2. The current Local Plan states that up to 1000 houses will be built at Hengrove Park. Previously residents were promised that 30 hectares of open space would be preserved as part of a new destination park.
Can you confirm that Officers are currently working on plans that deliver up to 1000 houses on Hengrove Park on up to 20 hectares, and that will preserve at least 30 hectares of open space?

Reply:

- I have agreed the timetable for the preparation of the Joint Spatial Plan with the Leaders of the West of England. This has included 6 weeks of consultation on the emerging spatial strategy which includes the Whitchurch extension. An extension to this timetable would delay the preparation of the Joint Spatial Plan which is intended to be published for further comment in the early Autumn 2017.
- The consultation and engagement process has included a number of opportunities in the Whitchurch area in both Bristol and B&NES, and officers of the two authorities have sought to ensure that local organisations and residents have had the opportunity to comment individually and through the Neighbourhood Partnership, and the Whitchurch Parish Council.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION LAB 02

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

Subject: The Council's Finance

1. In his State of the City Speech, the Mayor announced the launch of an independent review, to be carried out by Dr Steve Bundred of the Local Government Association into the Council's finances to identify how the council came to be in its current financial state and what lessons we can learn. Can the Mayor tell me when will this independent review will report its findings and will the review be seeking evidence from councillors and senior officers?
2. Many of my constituents were concerned to here that the Council's spending freeze is set to continue. Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member responsible finance provide councillors with an update regarding the council's financial situation and as part of his answer will he confirm we are reviewing all non-essential spending so the council can continue to provide essential services to our residents?

Reply:

- The latest Finance Report (period 6) to cabinet on the 6th December provides an update regarding the Council's financial situation.
- The recently announced spending freeze is a positive action to protect the Council finances for the medium and longer term in a controlled but effective manner as well as to focus the minds on necessary savings.
- This is specifically extending the freeze on non-essential spending to support balancing the Council's annual budget and prepare for a five-year £92m financial gap from next April.
- As a result, all non-essential spending is being reviewed and essential spend protected.
- I asked Steve Bundred to undertake an independent review of the council's financial situation and the strength and weaknesses of the financial processes that have left us in this situation. We are determined to get a grip of the finances so that we can be confident that the decision we make about council services and the role we play with partners in the city are on a firmer footing. We will publish the report once it is complete.



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CON. QUESTION 2

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop
NEW CAMPUS IN TEMPLE QUARTER**

1. Can the Mayor explain in more detail the nature of this partnership announced with the University of Bristol?
2. What equitable or beneficial interest will the Authority retain in this expensively acquired site?

Reply:

- The partnership with the University of Bristol is intended to secure for our city a new campus initially comprising a Digital Innovation Hub, a ‘business school of the future’, and a student residential village. We are also progressing with the University Engine Shed 2.
- The new campus is a £300 million project for Bristol University. We expect to see early progress with open in time for the start of the 2021/22 academic year.
- The partnership will see early progress of real scale and quality in this key area for city regeneration. We expect this to be a catalyst for UK economic growth, job creation and opportunities for Bristol’s communities.
- The heads of agreement provide for a conditional purchase of freehold land comprising the former Royal Mail site, and the balance of the Arena Island land. This depends on planning consent being granted for a scheme that will now be master planned. It also depends on the University securing the necessary funding.
- The land price will provide the city and EZ project with a capital contribution that represents a return on the investment made when the Council secured the land for the regeneration programme. The early development of the land will also deliver a business rates contribution ahead of previous forecasts under our City Deal evaluation.
- This major project will have an exact fit with our objectives the growth in our city based on technology and digital content, linked to continued improvement of our learning city.
- We fully expect that the new university campus will directly lead to increased growth in attracting top quality businesses and employment opportunities to Bristol, which in turn will grow our business rates revenue.



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QUESTION GRN.Q2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Cleo Lake

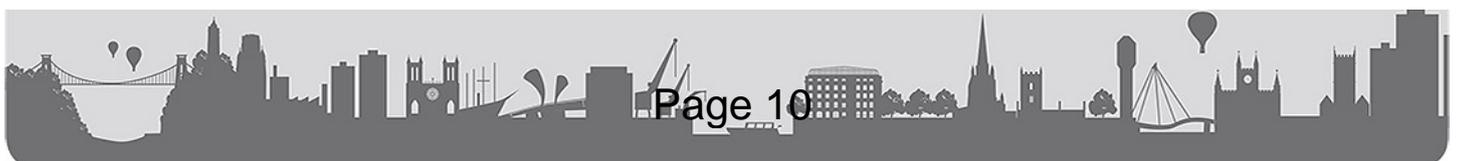
Subject: TRANSPARENCY AROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

With regards to private housing developments and the financial viability of providing any affordable housing, let alone the 40% requested in our council policy, it is essential to have more public transparency with regards to the information used by our own consultants or third parties in making financial viability calculations.

Can the Mayor tell me what scope there is for the Council to be more open and clear about the information and assumptions used in the viability assessments used by developers and our own consultants? Can the Mayor commit to ensuring that in future viability assessments are available in the public domain, and if not why not and what we can do about this?

Reply:

- Viability assessments have for many years been considered to contain commercially confidential information, and therefore have been exempt from public disclosure. However, recent court challenges have resulted in the courts concluding that public disclosure of specific viability appraisals was appropriate.
- We are aware of work being undertaken in some London boroughs regarding the public disclosure of viability assessments, and my Cabinet Lead Paul Smith has asked officers to investigate approaches to making viability assessments publicly available in Bristol.
- In the meantime officers are endeavouring to make as much information as possible available, by ensuring that the advice received by consultants acting for the Council is published on the website, as was the case in respect of Elizabeth Shaw Chocolate Factory. It is important to note that it is the advice received from Council commissioned consultants that form the basis of committee recommendations and not the information submitted by applicants.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LD. QUESTION 2

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

Subject: The Mayoral System

1. Can the Mayor list the specific extra powers and amounts of money that are available to him, that have come specifically, because of Bristol introducing the Mayoral system, that would not have been available to a Council Leader?
2. The citizens of Bristol are now facing unacceptable cuts in services and the Council is facing internal turmoil and an LGA investigator is finding that impressions of this Council through press releases over years do not match the reality.

How much of this does the present Mayor attribute to the lack of checks and balances in the Mayoral system?

Reply:

As I am sure you are aware, there are no specific extra powers or money available to a directly elected Mayor. The purpose of the introduction of the system was to increase democratic accountability by centralising, not increasing powers.

I have no idea what your second paragraph refers to. I have appointed Steven Bundred to carry out a review of Green Capital and Council's finances. This report will be made available to members as soon as it is completed.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LAB. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Marg Hickman

Subject: Food Poverty during School Holidays and Breakfast Clubs

1. Food Banks across the country have recently reported that cash-strapped parents are struggling to feed their children during school holidays. Can the Mayor update the Council on the measures that are in place to help families in Bristol put food on the table during the school holidays?
2. Poverty proofing the school day is one of our aims and objectives as a council. However the financial situation means the council cannot do this alone. Can the Mayor update the council on what discussions he has had with our city partners to help deliver breakfast clubs to every school in Bristol?

Reply

1- Working through the city office business leaders from Bristol's churches are working to fund and deliver breakfast clubs for every primary school that wants one. This work is underway right now.

2 – We are looking to develop the sophistication of this, to extend into after school and holidays.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION Con Q3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Peter Abraham

Subject:

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not the funding formula for schools has been decided or released?
2. Has the Mayor received any notification of what the figure per pupil is likely to be?

Reply

- The funding formula for schools has not yet been finalised. A provisional budget was discussed at the Schools Forum on November 22nd. Further work was requested. In addition, confirmed pupil numbers are now available and so budget projections are being updated. In some aspects of the school funding the Schools Forum has decision making powers; in other aspects the Forum must be consulted by the Council holds the decision powers.
- In recent years, Bristol has been able to add to the core per pupil funding as a result of historic underspends in the Dedicated Schools Grant. This additional funding is now spent and so schools will receive less per pupil funding in 2017. The proposed schools budget will be discussed by Schools Forum on 10th January 2017.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

GRN. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Clive Stevens

Subject: Accommodation for homeless people

I am told that last winter the previous Mayor arranged for homeless people to be accommodated within empty council buildings, could the Mayor please outline what arrangements are being made this year?
Thank you.

Can I also have my answer in writing please.

Reply:

Street homelessness is one of the key challenges being taken on by the City Office. We have set the challenge to people from business, the public and voluntary sectors to set out an offer that nobody who has the ability to accept help will have to sleep rough from January 1st.

This is a significant challenge for Bristol, and people are rallying to meet the cause. A number of Bristol's leading churches are going to be opening up their halls to street sleepers on consecutive nights for a 4 week period.

As for Council's empty properties, and information about BCC empty buildings currently in use by homeless households, and those planned to come in to use in 2017 – We will provide details in writing separately due to freedom of information considerations.

In addition to these, there is a request out via the City Office initiative for owners of private empty buildings to offer them for similar uses. As yet none has been secured, but we are hopeful.



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LD. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus (Cotham)

Subject: Sharing Information with our Citizens.

1. The ten-page spreadsheet of savings across directorates that I understand has been circulating through Facebook makes bleak reading in many areas. Such unauthorised documents are more likely to upset citizens.

Will the Mayor tell us when this document, appropriately developed, and others that will make clear the extent of the proposals to address this Council's financial deficit will be officially released as a public paper for scrutiny within Commissions and across the city and the whole Council, without which we are paralysed?

Reply:

- The only spreadsheets known to be in the public domain are those that have been released on efficiency savings to Scrutiny. These were made publically available on Wednesday 30th November and a version with additional information requested by the OSM lead member was made available at the OSM meeting on the 8th December.
- The council is currently out for consultation on the budget that closes on the 5th January after such time information will be made available via the production of the budget cabinet report.
- If Cllr Negus is aware of another spreadsheet I would strongly urge him to share this with us.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016**QUESTION LAB 4****Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kye Dudd****Subject: Agency staff**

1. Between April and September of this year the council spent £6.05m on agency staff and we are projected to spend a further £6 million in this financial year. At present 610 FTE agency staff, around 10% of our workforce, are currently employed by the council. Ideally agency staff should only be used on a short term basis. However most are employed longer than 13 weeks and 57 have been employed longer than a year. As a Council we aim to reduce the use of agency staff from the current level. Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member responsible for Finance give the council his assessment as to why the numbers of agency staff is so high and can he detail what measures are being put in place to redeploy permanent members of staff rather than employing agency workers and why in particular 57 have been employed under this arrangement for more than a year?

2. While we appreciate this situation is not of the Mayor's making, many people will be concerned that the council is spending significant amounts of money on agency staff, while it also spends significant sums to make permanent staff redundant. One particular area of concern is Adult Social Care. Can the Mayor or Cabinet Member responsible tell the council how many agency workers we employ in Adult Social Care and as part of his answer can he provide details of how the costs of directly employing temporary care workers compare with employing a care worker through an agency?

Reply:

- I completely agree with the sentiment of your question.
- Spending significant sums on agency staff while making permanent staff redundant is unacceptable as a principle. I have asked for this to be urgently reduced.
- Spend on agency staff for the period October 2016 to March 2017 (inclusive) will be significantly less than in the first half of the year given the Council's commitment to reduce spend in this area and particularly in light of the recently announced spending freeze. November spend on temporary workforce overall is already down considerably on October's spend by £305k.
 - Business Change spend down by £195.5k on October.
 - Neighbourhood spend down by £46.5k
 - People spend down by £33k
 - Place spend down by £30k

- The minutes of the recent HR Committee meeting will show that the figure of 610 full-time equivalent (FTE) agency staff was formally withdrawn following discovery of a calculation error. Data for the period April to September 2016 shows 161,892.5 hours of agency time were paid during this time, which equates to employing **167.83** FTE staff for the 6-month period. As at 30th September 2016, the Council employed 5,635.38 FTE

on permanent or fixed term contracts (excluding staff employed in schools). Agency staff therefore made up **2.89%** of the Council's workforce at this point.

- As at 30th September 2016, 46% of agency staff (157 individuals) had been employed for less than 13 weeks; 37% (128 individuals) had worked for between 14 weeks and one year; 17% (56 individuals) had been employed for more than one year. Work is currently underway between HR, the agency staff supplier and hiring managers to review and where appropriate end long-term agents arrangements or convert them into fixed term employment contracts.
- Redeploying permanent staff to temporary vacancies would not be considered Suitable Alternative Employment in law, and in many cases it would not be an attractive proposition for the individuals concerned.
- All those leaving in the recent voluntary severance process volunteered to leave.
- Data for the period 1st April to 30th September 2016, shows that 1,641.75 agency hours were paid for qualified social care agency staff, which equates to employing 1.70 FTE throughout the 6 month period. For unqualified social care staff, the figures were 8,314 hours, or 8.62FTE.
- The hourly pay rate for qualified social care agency staff is between £18 and £34. For unqualified social care staff it's normally at or around £8.25 (i.e. the Living Wage Foundation Living Wage). The costs of employing agency staff can be lower than directly-employed staff who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (because of the cost of the Employer Contribution to the LGPS).



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION CON. 04

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

Subject: Recycling Box Replacement Costs

Please can the Mayor confirm the cost of replacing broken boxes and the estimated average lifetime of these containers?

Reply

- As the Councils Waste Service provider, Bristol Waste Company is responsible for providing new and replacement recycling boxes to Bristol Householders.
- Approximately Bristol Waste spends £26,000 on recycling boxes each year.
- Boxes can require replacement as a result of damage, occasionally loss or due to general wear and tear, but looked after boxes can last for a number of years.
- Although replacement boxes can be seen as a significant expense, it is important to offer all residents free replacement boxes as this encourages recycling and avoids far greater landfill costs.
- You can't have clean streets if you don't have the equipment.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION GRN.Q4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Clive Stevens

Subject: USE OF CIL MONIES PAID BY DEVELOPERS

Given that 80% of CIL is held centrally by the Mayor for projects such as the arena, and given delays in the arena project, would the Mayor support the redistribution of CIL to local projects in areas of deprivation?

Reply:

- The operation of CIL is tightly controlled by government regulations. Government is clear that the strategic element of CIL (the 80%) is to be spent on infrastructure to support the growth identified in the Council's Local Plan. The decision made by Cabinet in the previous administration to apply £8 million of strategic CIL to infrastructure to support the development of Arena Island is fully in accordance with this requirement.
- Arena Island, now rebadged as part of the Temple Meads East development, which will include housing, commercial uses, the new University Campus as well as the Arena itself.
- The £8 million allocation is not anticipated to be available in full until spring / summer 2018 in any event. To divert this to other projects would not only delay the ability to provide the infrastructure to support growth in the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, but it would also be sending out a negative message about the importance of delivering the Arena, the University Campus and other important redevelopment of housing and business in the area.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LD. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus (Cotham)

Subject: Making Scrutiny more fit for purpose.

It is essential that the decisions of this Mayor are properly scrutinised and that this process is efficient and effective, after languishing for some time I convened a meeting with all-party Scrutiny Chairs to examine delivering better outcomes, with more focus and a lighter touch. This produced much consensus and it is intended that these improvements could work within the current constitution for the time being.

Will the Mayor welcome a thorough review of Scrutiny by Councillors and instruct the Senior Leadership Team to support such an initiative?

Reply:

- I would welcome any review that ensures that scrutiny is able to meaningfully contribute to improving outcomes for the council and the city. This is one of the reasons why I have redesigned our decision pathway to enable scrutiny input at the earliest stages of policy development. I am therefore happy to support this review and I would like to contribute to this where appropriate.
- The focus on policy development will enable scrutiny commissions to influence the policy direction of the Council but would not undermine the call in function of Council.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LAB. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Whistleblowing process

1. With central government's funding cuts hitting frontline services, what efforts are being made to promote the Council's whistleblowing process, so that staff members with serious legitimate concerns about their departments can report them and have the problems remedied?

Reply:

Our employees already utilise our current whistle blowing procedures.

The Human Resources Team is introducing a new online process in the New Year which enables whistleblowing disclosures to be raised easily and confidentially. This is for all employees and will ensure cases can be tracked securely and managed by HR.

A revised and streamlined Whistleblowing Procedure is being introduced and widely communicated to all staff early in 2017 following full Trade Union consultation. It will also reflect the key recommendations contained in “The Francis Report” (as a result of the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust scandal). The changes we are making are designed to raise the profile of our whistleblowing policy and make it straightforward for staff to raise serious and legitimate concerns about problems in their service area.

The Audit committee will receive periodic reports as to the effectiveness of the new procedures as part of its assurance responsibilities in relation to the Council’s governance framework.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

CON. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

THE COUNCIL HOUSE

1. The Mayor will recall in response to my previous questions on reverting to this building's original name that he was going to undertake a consultation (ending in September) over this move. Please can he tell me the outcome of this exercise and whether any decision is being made?
2. As the Mayor is aware, his predecessor never went through any formal process with English Heritage on this rebranding. What is the estimated price of reversing this gimmick and might he consider invoicing George Ferguson for any such costs incurred?

Reply:

1. I undertook to have a conversation with party group leaders, I did so. And as I have said before, it is not a priority for me.
2. If it is a priority for you, then you have the ability to move a motion, and in doing so clarify the costs. As it took place four years ago I would suggest the councillor should have taken up the cost with the former Mayor.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

GRN. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jude English

Subject: Developing the old sorting office

I welcome the news that Bristol University plans to build a new business, law and digital innovation campus on the old sorting office site. I hope we see an award winning sustainably designed eco campus fit for the 21st century.

Please can BCC councillors be informed:

- How much Bristol City Council purchased the site for, how much we sold the site for and whether this was in line with our strategic goals for land sales?
- What are the freehold/leasehold arrangements that have been made with the University and how will the income be used to offset our current financial crisis?

Can I also have my answer in writing please.

Reply:

- Bristol City Council purchased the former Royal Mail site plus the whole of Arena Island for a combined total BCC capital investment of £6 million. Additionally, a grant payment from DCLG was involved of £5.425m which was taken as grant in kind, meaning that BCC acquired Arena Island and 1-6 Bath Road for a peppercorn rather than the agreed £5.425m.
- The agreed basis for a conditional sale to the University includes the former Royal Mail site plus about one third of Arena Island, namely the part shown in the outline planning consent as being for mixed use development.
- The price will not be finalised until key variables become certain. Variables include the size of the buildings and abnormal costs such as land remediation, flood management works etc. However the price will be more than what the council has originally incurred in its purchase.
- The receipt may equal the “high” estimate of residual market value stated in the March 2016 cabinet report Arena Island Development.
- The land receipt may be delivered by 2020 or earlier when the project starts on site. It will be a capital receipt so cannot directly be used to meet our revenue pressures. It will however reduce our need to borrow and thus avoid borrowing costs.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

LD. QUESTION 5

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

Subject: Local Neighbourhood Partnerships Decisions & Structures (Knowle).

1. At Salcombe Road in Knowle a previously underused piece of open land has, because of local decisions, been converted into 1/3 school playing field, 1/3 is currently having 35 affordable homes built on it and the remaining 1/3 is due to be upgraded to a local park. The money for this upgrade and for a list of other local parks schemes has been provided from the sale funds to the Housing Association. Several hundred thousand also went to central parks funds.

Can the Mayor justify his decision to halt these schemes and give me a clear assurance that this block will be removed forthwith so that the schemes funded from locally generated money can proceed without further delay?

2. Neighbourhood structures should enable efficient spending on local facilities and services by well-informed Councillors working with local residents.

Could the Mayor explain why at our last neighbourhood partnership I was in the position of explaining to the public that although we are employing significant numbers of staff they are not performing the core task and that even the money we generated locally has been frozen so the Council cannot deliver?

Reply:

Question 1

- In order to address the financial challenges it faces, the council deepened its spending freeze on 30th November to include non-essential maintenance, recruitment and new or renewed contracts for goods and services. The voluntary spending freeze will remain in place until the council has firm plans for a balanced budget this year and next, along with a more developed five-year plan. Parks maintenance and development work was specified as an area where spend is frozen.
- The spending freeze applies to a significant amount of council spend. Council officers are doing further work to clarify the impact of the spending freeze on individual projects such as the work in Salcombe Road. There is a capital receipt associated with Salcombe Road, 66% of which is due to be devolved to the Neighbourhood Partnership and 33% of which was to come to the parks department. Officers are currently looking at how the spending freeze affects this project and will clarify the situation as soon as this is confirmed. (Peter Webb / Robert Orrett, property services, are working on this).

Question 2

- During the spending freeze officers will continue to support the spending of s106, and will also continue to support neighbourhoods to deliver their neighbourhood plans. They will use any additional time that is available to them to do more work with citizens to support people to take their own actions locally and to strengthen local interactions between neighbourhoods.



- Some devolved money is affected by the spending freeze and some is not; for example NPs can still allocate and spend their s106 funding but not their devolved CIL funding.
- There is no statutory requirement that the decision as to how to spend CIL money and allocation of CIL money itself has to be delegated to NP committees. The requirement is that LA's must allocate at least 15% of levy receipts to spend on priorities that should be agreed with the local communities in areas where development is taking place.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

LAB 6

Subject: The design of new buildings in Bristol

1. With significant developments being proposed for the TQEZ and other parts of central Bristol, many of them likely to be promoted by BCC as landowner, will the Mayor commit to trying to attract good and interesting designs that befit a dynamic city like ours, rather than bland, soulless Lego-block monstrosities?

Reply:

I wish to build a fair and equitable city that benefits all, and the Bristol Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone represents a unique opportunity to demonstrate that commitment through delivering quality development that benefits all of Bristol. I am also fully committed to achieving good design and transformational development in areas around Bristol. Where we own land we can drive up design quality whilst recognising the need to deliver an economically viable scheme which supports and transforms the local communities.

We all have a role in delivering good and interesting design whether it is making policy, shaping opinions, setting budgets, assessing proposals or determining planning applications either as an officer or as a committee member.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

CON. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tony Carey

COST OF COMPLYING WITH FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

1. Can the Mayor confirm the number of FOIs received by Bristol City Council in the last three years?
2. What is the estimated cost of dealing with these enquiries?

Reply:

1. Bristol City Council receives approximately 1,900 FOI requests each year, and therefore a total for 3 years would be around 5,700.
2. In terms of officer time spent dealing with FOI's submitted to Bristol City Council, this is currently estimated to be in the region of £150,000 pa.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION GRN 06

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Paula O'Rourke

Subject: A vibrant city for the future

It is clear to anyone reading the recent financial report that funding from Central Government is not going to maintain Bristol as the vibrant city it is. The recent announcement of a spending freeze could be considered to be a type of voluntary s114 Notice. Does the Mayor agree it is time to ask Whitehall for a structured transitional relief programme so that in 2020, when we are dependent on business rates for funding, we will still have a city that businesses want to locate to?

Can I also have my answer in writing please.

Reply:

- Of course the government cuts impact on the city and will continue to do so until there is a change of policy. However whilst we know that the cuts often have the most adverse impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people, the government grant is not what makes Bristol a vibrant city. People in the city have a sense of purpose and don't just live to receive services. The council needs to provide services, but Bristol City Council is not the city. As city leaders we need to see our responsibility to work with city partners to build and maintain a vibrant city for all.
- The current spending freeze is a positive action to protect the Council's finances for the medium and longer term in a controlled but effective manner. The outturn forecasts within services continue to demonstrate an outturn deficit and the freeze also serves as a tool to focus the minds of everyone on the need to find savings and shape city government and the local authority differently for the future.
- Although there are potential solutions that can balance 2016/17, some are at the detriment of reserves balances. A S114 notice will not be required if the ongoing development of a balanced 2017/18 budget proposal, based on developed business cases, is available early in 2017. Officers continue to work through options and proposals with cabinet members to ensure this top Council priority is achieved.
- I remain open to the councillor's and her party's proposals to balance the budget.
- As yet, details relating to the transition to full business rates retention have not been published by the government, and are still being developed.
- The Council has applied to be a business rates retention pilot authority, which may afford limited addition resources coming to the Council.
- In the meantime the Council will continue to promote Bristol through planning, economic development (and associated policies) as a city where businesses want to locate to.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION: CONQ7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

Subject: Scotland Lane Update

1. Can the Mayor please provide an update on Scotland Lane? The lane has been closed for over two weeks now and I would like to know the longer term plans for this route please? I cannot stress how important this lane is to Stockwood residents as it is the only other way out of Stockwood using BCC roads.

Reply:

Scotland Lane provides a link from Stockwood Lane, Stockwood to the A4 Bath Road, Brislington. It has a history of flooding at its lowest point, due to the run off of surface water from what is privately owned adjacent land.

The four gullies at the lowest point on Scotland Lane link to a single manhole and then connect to a 850mm culvert through a 150mm pipe, which runs approximately 170 metres across land which subsequently has been used for land fill. The land fill has increased the depth of the 150mm pipe to around 14m.

Through investigation it has been established that the 150mm pipe has a blockage and or is broken at a distance of 140m from Scotland Lane. It has also been determined that the pipe is blocked with calcium deposit at the point where it connects to the 850mm culvert.

Coloured dye has been passed through the 150mm pipe, but none has been detected at the connection with the 850mm culvert. This suggests that the 150mm pipe is severed.

Currently the four gullies and their connections are cleared on a monthly basis to aid what has been a slow running system over a number of years. The function of the 150mm pipe seems to have deteriorated to a point where it is no longer running.

The long term plan will be determined by how we solve the short term problem. Various solutions are being considered:

1. Raising the road on top of a crated system to allow for the storage of surface water under the road. Water would eventually run off down the slow running pipe. This option would cost in excess of £250k and is partially dependent upon the limited functionality of the existing 150mm pipe.
2. To install a new pipe at an elevated level to connect the gullies to an existing manhole chamber providing access to the 850mm culvert. This would require the installation of a pump station. The cost of that would be in excess of 250k with the ongoing maintenance cost of the pump station, which is not considered desirable.
3. Auger Drilling to pull a new pipe (possibly of a larger diameter) through the existing 150mm pipe. Again the cost would be in excess of 250k with the risk of working at depth in ground of unknown makeup, with the chance of escalating costs.



4. We are currently waiting for an estimated cost of installing a new pipe similar to item 3, but at a higher level. This may also come with some risk due to the unknown surround material of the landfill.
5. To carry out further investigation. This would involve a person gaining entry into the 850mm culvert to try and clear the calcium at the connection with the 150mm pipe. That would enable jetting of the remainder of the 150mm pipe to the point where it is broken. That would cost up to £15k, but is unlikely to provide a cure as the dye testing suggests that the pipe is severed. (It should be noted that gases within the culvert may pose a risk and that man entry should be carefully considered.)

It is important that we consider all options which need to include continuing to manage the situation in lieu of carrying out any engineering works.

Having laid out these options, we'd be happy for you to come back with your preferred proposals or any other suggestions.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 DECEMBER 2016

GRN. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: Further funding for Bristol

'In an item in the Post on Friday 2nd December entitled 'I'll balance the books', it was said of Mayor Rees that:

'The mayor balked at the idea of getting involved in high-profile protesting. He said it was his job to negotiate with Government for more funding'

Q1: what negotiations has he had with government?

Q2: How much more funding has he won?

Can I also have my answer in writing please.

Reply:

1. I'm not going to respond to comments that people have said of me. We're working with the Core Cities group and jointly negotiating with the government on a raft of issues, including more funding. I have had a meeting with, and have a second meeting diarised with the Secretary of State DCLG.

2. We are in dialogue with the government and have offered ourselves up to pilot business rates as part of our negotiations. Also the Government is revisiting the social care precepts as a result of combined pressures.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION CON. 08

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

Subject: Waste on Land

Can the Mayor please confirm how this provision works, what the Service Level Agreements are and whether we believe that the service is working well? My experience is that the recharge process is convoluted and time consuming resulting in work not being carried out in an effective manner.

Reply:

- The Council is currently reviewing the Waste on Land service as a result of some reported instances where there has been some confusion between departments and the Bristol Waste Company as to the scope of this service. As part of this review we will identify any gaps in service provision and put a clear process in place, accompanied by a suitable charging process to ensure that jobs can be ordered and completed effectively.
- The Council is currently preparing the terms of a new Waste Service Agreement with the Bristol Waste Company and this service will be specified clearly as part of this contract. The Council aims to have a process in place where jobs can be ordered and there is a Service Level Agreement between the different departments and the Waste Company which is clear on costs and timeframes so as there is clear communication between all parties on what would be happening.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION GRN Q8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: The use of Ashton Gate Park and Ride for Stadium Parking on football and rugby match days

The Mayor will be aware of the issues around parking in large swathes of South Bristol when matches are on at Ashton Gate stadium. Before every home game as crowds are increasing to 20,000 and beyond, large numbers of cars are cruising Ashton and Southville looking for spaces and I personally know of numerous recent incidents where residents have been intimidated by visitors desperately looking for parking and have been blocked into their drives and houses during matches.

One of the major potential parts of a solution to this issue is Ashton Gate Park and Ride which has 1600 spaces often lying unused during matches. I know there are complications with the operator's contract, the location of the facility just over the border in North Somerset and finding a safe walkway to the ground but surely these could be overcome if the issue was prioritised by all concerned.

My question is: what is causing the delay in these empty spaces being used while local residents are impacted so heavily by this issue?

Can I also have my answer in writing please?

Reply:

I completely agree that we need to progress this issue and utilise those spaces. Officers continue to progress detailed discussions with the site operator to find an optimal solution to the long term management of Long Ashton Park and Ride, which includes work relating to the Operating Agreement dating from 1997. The use of the site for football and rugby supporter parking forms part of the plan for the future and this involves planning and land ownership considerations which are also being progressed.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 December 2016

QUESTION Cons Q9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Liz Radford

Subject: SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FUNDING

1. Can the Mayor/Cabinet Member tell me what steps have been undertaken to involve Bristol's schools in managing any changes to these resources?

Reply:

- The Local Authority has set up an Inclusion Reference group with representatives from Head Teachers, Inclusion Leads and SENCos from different phases and different parts of the City. The aim of this group is to be an effective partnership between schools and the Local Authority to identify best practice, advise the Local Authority and ensure support is available to schools.
- The Reference group is overseeing the development of an Inclusion Audit which is designed to support schools to evaluate their provision and help them to create clear actions plans for developing their practice within the context of limited resources.
- Briefings have been given for Sencos and Head Teachers on recent changes and there is a regular Senco newsletter. A Senco conference is planned for the Spring 2017.
- Each school has an inclusion contact in the Local Authority to offer advice and guidance.
- The Local Authority is encouraging groups of schools to work together to help address the resource challenge by sharing capacity and expertise.
- One of the causes of pressure on the High Needs funding historically has been permanent exclusions in secondary schools. The secondary Head Teachers community have worked closely with the local authority to devise a new approach to managing behaviour. As a result there have been only 2 permanent exclusions from secondary schools compared to 17 in the same period last year. This should be welcomed.
- My cabinet lead Cllr Hiscott has commissioned some research on the factors that make Bristol an 'outlier' in special needs requirements e.g. A children's hospital, community make up etc. and compare us to similar cities. This report is due in late January with a view to going to government with an evidence base for asking for extra funding. This is also due to be part of the scrutiny work programme.
- We are still waiting for the 2nd consultation of the National funding formula (the minister's office says it will be out before Christmas). We will then respond through the Schools forum, the Learning City partnership and a cross-party group of councillors.



MEMBER FORUM – 13 September 2016

QUESTION CON. 10

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

Subject: BRISTOL ENERGY COMPANY

1. Can the Mayor confirm the mitigation measures in place to protect local taxpayers from the financial risks involved in this venture?

2. Is the Mayor prepared to consider a partnership model for this company?

Reply:

1.
 - As some of you may be aware, Bristol Energy are operating in a challenging trading environment as a result of price volatility in the Energy market. This is true of all energy companies.
 - One of the key ways in which these risks are mitigated, is that they have implemented a responsible trading strategy of forward buying energy to avoid gambling on wholesale price movements, ensuring they can always supply their current customers. This is known as hedging and the independent shareholders have given assurance about this.
 - Recent tariff launches of the 'Bristol Tariff', as well as a green tariff and a social tariff are encouraging more customers to sign up. The support of members is crucial to increasing the customer base.
 - This week, the Shareholder Group will be considering the next iteration of Bristol Energy's business plan. The Business Plan will then be reviewed confidentially by Overview and Scrutiny Management board, to allow it to make recommendations to Cabinet in January as part of budget setting.
 - Mitigation measures and scenarios will continue to be tested in order to come up with a number of different options for the future direction of the company.

2.
 - As in all areas of the Council's activities, we are not closed to any options at the present time.



Member Forum

13 December 2016

Statements from councillors



Procedural note:

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).

The following member statement has been submitted – full details are attached:

CS 01 - Cllr Ruth Pickersgill – Funding of Bristol's schools





STATEMENT CS 01

I am sure Members have all seen the headlines relating to the National Union of Teachers' report, which compared 2014/15 and 2016/17 funding for schools, and found that 83% of schools are worse off, **and that Bristol schools were the worst hit in the whole country being £540 worse off per pupil under this Government.** The report showed that the most deprived schools were worst hit, losing £297 per pupil at primary level and £338 at secondary, compared to the least deprived losing only £93 and £178. Funnily enough Labour authorities like ours seem to be worst hit! This is at a time that Philip Hammond has just announced £240 million in the Autumn statement to expand grammar schools. 1000 LA schools nationally and 100 Academy Trusts are already in debt - there is a crisis in education funding and it is impacting on our children and their life chances.

The methodology for allocating schools funding is incredibly complex, and much of the difficult decision making takes place through the Schools Forum, who are expected to deal with the devastating impact of the Government's policies. I wanted to make this statement to ensure all Members are aware of what is going on in two particular areas:

- We have a crisis in High Needs funding (funding for those children with additional needs, some of the most vulnerable in our City). At the end of 15/16, we were £4.6m overspent. This is not due to mismanagement, but due to increasing demand and the Government's cunning plan to give responsibility to Local Authorities for post 16 and 19-25 high needs pupils' funding, without giving the level of resources needed to do it. Our children have increasingly complex needs, and having specialist provision like the Children's Hospital and Claremont special school mean parents are keen to live here. The number of schools applying for what is called 'top up funding' is increasing dramatically (this is when they don't feel they can support the child's effectively with their basic funding, as they may need a Learning Support Assistant or other help). This is a human rights issue, and it can't be done on the cheap, and our schools have a good reputation for including children with really complex needs in mainstream settings, but we can't expect schools to subsidise this support with their already overstretched budgets. In addition, there has been a rise in the number of permanent secondary exclusions which lead to costly alternative provision. (Ironically if academies exclude, the LA then picks up the bill for alternative provision).

The Schools' Forum has had to make drastic decisions and has already cut funding to special schools by 5% from Sept, and has reduced the rates for top up funding, and officers are working with schools on reducing exclusions through a new panel, but we are still looking at a 1.9m deficit. Our schools are not getting the funding they need to support our most vulnerable children, and

there is so little we can do to improve the situation. We are being forced to do the Government's dirty work for them.

- The other pernicious, politically driven cut is to the grant that the LA gets to fund the central services that support our mainstream schools from £113.17 per pupil in 14.15 to £15 a head in 17/18, reducing our Education Services Grant by £2.2 million. This is the money we have to use to support our strategic planning, work on key areas such as health and safety, equality, education welfare, HR, asset management. This is a deliberate attempt to force us to give up on supporting our maintained schools so they are forced to become academies, which we will not do!

I am calling on the Mayor to make the strongest representations to the Government on their deliberate, politically motivated policy of starving schools and local authorities of resources, a policy which is already hitting the most disadvantaged children as well as those with additional needs.

Councillor Ruth Pickersgill