

# Summons to attend meeting of Full Council



**Date:** Tuesday, 17 January 2017

**Time:** 2.15 pm

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

**To: All Members of Council**

Members of the public attending meetings or taking part in Public forum are advised that all Full Council are now filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the council's [webcasting pages](#). The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items) and the footage will be available for two years. If you ask a question or make a representation, then you are likely to be filmed and will be deemed to have given your consent to this. If you do not wish to be filmed you need to make yourself known to the webcasting staff. However, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now means that persons attending meetings may take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on the meeting (Oral commentary is not permitted during the meeting as it would be disruptive). Members of the public should therefore be aware that they may be filmed by others attending and that is not within the council's control.

**Issued by:** Ian Hird, Democratic Services  
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**Date:** Monday, 9 January 2017



# Agenda

## 1. Welcome and safety information

Please note: if the alarm sounds, everyone at the meeting should please exit the building via the way they came in, via the main entrance lobby area, and then the front ramp. Please then assemble on the paved area in front of the building on College Green by the flag poles.

If the front entrance cannot be used, alternative exits are available via staircases 2 and 3 to the left and right of the Council Chamber. These exit to the rear of the building. The lifts are not to be used. Then please make your way to the assembly point at the front of the building.

Please do not return to the building until instructed to do so by the fire warden(s).

## 2. Apologies for absence

## 3. Minutes of previous meeting

To agree the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 13 December 2016 as a correct record.

**(Pages 11 - 23)**

## 4. Declarations of interest

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

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

## 5. Lord Mayor's business

To receive and note any announcements from the Lord Mayor.



## **6. Public forum (public petitions, statements and questions)**

Please note:

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item.

Public forum items should be e-mailed to [democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk)

Public forum items can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city.

Please note that the following deadlines apply to this meeting:

a. Public petitions and statements: Petitions and written statements must be received by 12 noon on Monday 16 January 2017 at latest. One written statement per member of the public is permitted.

b. Public questions: Public questions must be received by 5.00 pm on Wednesday 11 January 2017 at latest. A maximum of 2 questions per member of the public is permitted.

## **7. Petitions notified by councillors**

Please note:

Up to 10 minutes is allowed for this item.

Petitions notified by councillors can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affects the city.

The deadline for the notification of petitions to this meeting is 12 noon on Monday 16 January 2017 at latest.

## **8. Collection fund - estimated council tax and business rates surplus 2016-17**

To determine the estimated Collection Fund surplus as at 31 March 2017. **(Pages 24 - 31)**

## **9. Removal of council tax discounts on discretionary unoccupied and unfurnished properties**

To consider and approve proposals regarding changes to existing council tax discretionary discounts. **(Pages 32 - 34)**



## **10. Revised criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women**

To consider and approve revised criteria (as recommended by the Audit Committee) for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women. **(Pages 35 - 38)**

## **11. Corporate Parenting Panel annual report 2016**

To receive and consider the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Panel. **(Pages 39 - 80)**

## **12. Annual report from Youth Mayors and Youth Council**

To receive and consider the annual report from the Youth Mayors and Bristol Youth Council. **(Pages 81 - 92)**

## **13. Motions**

To consider motions as follows:

### **1. Bristol Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) – Protect our NHS and Social Care services**

Motion to be moved by: Cllr Gill Kirk, Labour, Lockleaze ward

“Full Council notes that:

1. The government is dividing the NHS in England into 44 areas or 'footprints', each of which has a 'Sustainability and Transformation Plan' (STP).
2. Government requires these STPs to deliver collective cuts of at least £2.5bn nationally this year, and £22bn within the next five years, to wipe out the NHS' 'financial deficit' by implementing 'new models of care'.
3. The former head of NHS commissioning, Julia Simon, has denounced the STP process as 'shameful', 'mad', 'ridiculous' and the plans as full of lies [1].
4. Locally it is envisaged that there will be a cumulative funding gap of about £305 million by 2020-21 and that the STP will need to change service provision to eliminate it [2].



5. Demands for the area STPs have been imposed by NHS England, with short deadlines, and senior health staff and managers have been expected to pull complex plans together, without the time or resources to carry out proper consultation with clinical staff, councillors or the public. This has led to a lack of transparency, and loss of trust in a process that has been imposed top down. The documentation made publicly available has been lacking detail and though an initial report on the STP has been made to council scrutiny committees there has been insufficient clarity about the power of democratically elected councillors to adapt, amend or influence the plan and its implementation.
6. Although closer integration between health services and the local authority is in principle a sound idea likely to result in better outcomes for residents, it cannot be achieved whilst at the same time making the huge cuts demanded by central government. It will be impossible for the STP for the area to make these cuts without measures which will seriously impact on the health and welfare of the local population. Pressure on acute services will not be reduced unless councils get the extra investment in social care, public health and early interventions to prevent ill health.

This Council believes:

1. That the cuts demanded by central government of £305 million are unfeasible and that there is no safe way of implementing such reductions.
2. That the only way to provide adequate integrated health and social care is through adequate funding.
3. That central government should increase NHS funding to at least 10.1% of GDP, to match the average of other EU countries.
4. That the government must address the crisis in social care funding, to allow councils to provide the adult social care needed to keep people well in their own homes and reduce the unnecessary costs of keeping people in acute hospitals when they could be supported in the community.
5. The STP does not have democratic accountability. BCC will have no accountability for the STP as it is 'owned' by Health. We are named as a delivery partner but our only entitlement is to question and scrutinise. We are expected to participate in a cost cutting process that will negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of our citizens, with no democratic power to change it, to pass it or reject it. This disempowers democratically elected councillors and the public.



6. Although the authors of the local STP have tried to minimise the impact of these cuts, published the plan in full and opened it to democratic scrutiny, any consultation on the plan or on individual elements of the plan is essentially meaningless if there is no option to refuse the cuts. The only way to resist these cuts, which will seriously damage the health of the people of Bristol, is for the people of the City to learn what is being planned and to be able to respond vigorously.

Full Council resolves to ask the Mayor to:

1. Write to thank the BNSSG STP group for their efforts in trying to meet impossible demands.
2. Write to the relevant government Ministers to make them aware of this motion and of our opposition to their unreasonable funding cuts.
3. Write to the City's MPs asking for their support. Particularly in pressing for cross party talks to resolve long term issues of health and social care funding and in calling for an increase to NHS funding.
4. Empower the appropriate Scrutiny bodies (being the Health & Wellbeing Board, and People and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny in the case of Bristol) to identify the health impacts of changes outlined in the proposed plan, and to collaborate with neighbouring Councils by establishing a formal joint Scrutiny process to be set up as a matter of urgency.
5. Publicise likely impacts on key services and our opposition to these funding cuts to the people of Bristol and encourage them to make their views known and campaign against the national cuts to the NHS."

[1] <http://www.gponline.com/shameful-pace-stp-rollout-risks-financial-m%eltdown-warns-former-nhs-commissioningchief/article/1410546>

See also <http://www.nationalhealthexecutive.com/Health-Care-News/just-16-of-finance-directors-think-sustainable-stps-achievable-by-2021>

[2] [https://www.bristolccg.nhs.uk/media/medialibrary/2016/11/bnssg\\_stp\\_10-2016\\_M722a8w.pdf](https://www.bristolccg.nhs.uk/media/medialibrary/2016/11/bnssg_stp_10-2016_M722a8w.pdf)



## 2. Living Rent

Motion submitted by: Cllr Charlie Bolton, Green, Southville ward

“Full Council notes:

- The desperate situation faced by many Bristol residents in the private rented sector. While welcoming recent government moves to stop up-front letting agent fees, there is clearly a need to take further action to limit the amounts tenants are forced to pay out just to have somewhere to live.
- That the London Assembly is consulting on proposals for a 'Living Rent', after both Sian Berry (Green) and Sadiq Khan (Labour)'s mayoral campaigns focused on getting a better deal for renters.

Full Council resolves to ask the Mayor to:

1. Investigate the pros and cons of introducing a Living Rent in Bristol.
2. Report back to Council the progress in Bristol towards setting up and resourcing a Bristol Renter's union to support the implementation of a Living Rent.
3. Determine the level at which such a rent should be set and produce a plan to determine how best to make such a 'Living Rent' fully effective, including whether it should apply to the whole private rental sector or a subset (as London's is proposed to do);
4. Lobby MPs and Government for the power to implement such a 'Living Rent'."

### Note:

**Under the Council's constitution, 30 minutes are available for the consideration of motions. In practice, this realistically means that there is usually only time for one, or possibly two motions to be considered. With the agreement of the Lord Mayor, motion 1 above will be considered at this meeting, and motion 2 may be considered subject to time. Details of other motions submitted, (which, due to time constraints, are very unlikely to be considered at this meeting) are set out below for information.**



### 3. Parking

Motion submitted by: Cllr Gary Hopkins, Liberal Democrat, Knowle ward

“This Council believes that parking on grass verges and pavements is a widespread problem that requires localised solutions to find the right balance between the needs of pedestrians, particularly disabled and parents, and those seeking to park their vehicles. In some areas the need for effective enforcement is clear and it is the lack of appropriate regulations that is the easily identifiable problem. In others, the balance of need is less clear.

This Council therefore calls upon the Mayor to thoroughly examine and, unless found to be unsuitable, adopt the strategy used in Milton Keynes. This is to have one blanket traffic regulation order but to only enforce where there is clear, positive local demand to do so.

This approach could reduce cost, remove traffic officers from having to make difficult value judgements and allow local residents to help find solutions.”

### 4. Call for changes to council tax exemption scheme covering student households

Motion submitted by: Cllr Mark Weston, Conservative, Henbury and Brentry ward

“This Council welcomes the success of our internationally acclaimed Universities in attracting students to live and study in the city.

Whilst recognising that this is generally a positive development which contributes greatly towards enriching and promoting Bristol’s unique identity, it also has to be conceded that a student population of over 50,000 places a strain on local infrastructure and services.

Students in full-time education enjoy a 100% exemption on paying Council Tax under the current rules and regulations governing discounts and dispensations. This potentially represents a very substantial loss of income to local authority coffers. Given the extraordinary amount of student accommodation springing up around the city, this position is financially simply unsustainable.

Accordingly, Council calls on the Mayor to make representations to central government for changes to be made to the Council Tax exemption scheme covering student households. This should aim to enable at least a proportion or percentage of this charge to be levied on all student occupied properties.”





## 5. Clause 21 – The Bus Services Bill

Motion submitted by: Cllr Eleanor Combley, Green, Bishopston and Ashley Down ward

“Full Council notes:

1. That the Bus Services Bill currently passing through Parliament, as originally proposed, included Clause 21 that will effectively “prohibit a local authority from forming a company for the purposes of providing a local bus service”.
2. The House of Lords voted for an amendment that got rid of clause 21.
2. That the Localism Act (2011) provides general powers of competence to local authorities.
3. That municipal bus companies like Reading and Nottingham provide some of the best bus services in the country and have a successful track record of increasing bus passenger numbers and providing high quality bus services.
4. That polling by We Own It found that a majority of the public (57%) oppose clause 21, whilst just 22% support it. The opposition to Clause 21 is consistent across voters from all political parties.

Full Council believes:

1. Clause 21 contradicts the general powers of competence and the spirit of the Localism Act 2011.
2. If there is a need and a demand from their public, then Councils should be able to provide their own bus services.
3. Should they wish, Councils should be legally able to follow the model developed by Reading and Nottingham.
4. Consequently Clause 21- or any clause to a similar effect - should be omitted from the Bus Services Bill and the government should refrain from bringing such a clause back into the Bill as it goes through the Commons.

Full Council resolves to ask the Mayor:

1. To write to Lord Ahmad and to call on the Department for Transport to omit Clause 21 – or any ban of new public bus companies - from the final legislation.
2. To write to all Bristol MPs to ask them to oppose or continue to oppose Clause 21 or similar in the House of Commons and ask them to write to Lord Ahmad and the Department of Transport to raise concerns about Clause 21.
3. To publicise our opposition to Clause 21 and any ban on public ownership of buses in the local media.”



Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. Baya', written in a cursive style.

Proper Officer  
Monday, 9 January 2017



## Bristol City Council Minutes of the Full Council

13 December 2016 at 2.00 pm



### **Present:**

Jeff Lovell, Lord Mayor; Marvin Rees, Mayor

**Councillors:** Peter Abraham, Donald Alexander, Lesley Alexander, Nicola Beech, Harriet Bradley, Mark Bradshaw, Mark Brain, Charlie Bolton, Fabian Breckels, Tom Brook, Clare Champion-Smith, Tony Carey, Craig Cheney, Barry Clark, Jos Clark, Stephen Clarke, Harriet Clough, Eleanor Combley, Chris Davies, Mike Davies, Carla Denyer, Kye Dudd, Richard Eddy, Jude English, Martin Fodor, Helen Godwin, Paul Goggin, Geoff Gollop, Margaret Hickman, Claire Hiscott, Helen Holland, Gary Hopkins, Chris Jackson, Carole Johnson, Steve Jones, Tim Kent, Sultan Khan, Gill Kirk, Cleo Lake, Mike Langley, Brenda Massey, Olly Mead, Graham Morris, Anthony Negus, Paula O'Rourke, Steve Pearce, Celia Phipps, Ruth Pickersgill, Liz Radford, Jo Sergeant, Afzal Shah, Paul Smith, Clive Stevens, Jerome Thomas, Mhairi Threlfall, Estella Tincknell, Jon Wellington, Mark Weston, Chris Windows and Mark Wright

**Aldermen:** Arthur Massey, John McLaren

### **1. Welcome and safety information**

The Lord Mayor welcomed all attendees to the meeting, and made a safety announcement in relation to the fire/emergency evacuation procedure.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowden-Jones, Goulandris, Hance, Keen, and Melias.

### **3. Minutes of previous meetings**

#### **a. Minutes – Full Council – 8 November 2016**

On the motion of the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Abraham, it was



**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 8 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor.**

**b. Minutes – Extraordinary Full Council – 29 November 2016**

On the motion of the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Eddy, it was

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Extraordinary Full Council held on 29 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor.**

**4. Declarations of interest**

None.

**5. Lord Mayor's business**

**Alderman Iris Gillard**

The Lord Mayor informed members of the recent death of Alderman Iris Gillard.

Councillor Abraham then addressed the Full Council, paying tribute to Alderman Gillard's life and her work as a former councillor and as an Alderman.

The Full Council then observed a minute's silence in memory of Alderman Iris Gillard.

**6. Public forum (public petitions, statements and questions)**

**Public petitions:**

The Full Council received and noted the following petition:

Petition PP 01 – "Lower the speed limit on the Portway at Hotwells"

Petition organiser – Becky Gilbert

**Public statements:**

The Full Council received and noted the following statements (which were also referred to the Mayor for his consideration/information):



PS 01 - Jendayi Serwah – Representation of Afrikan heritage communities in Bristol

PS 02 - David Redgewell – Transport issues

PS 03 - Tom Hathway – Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy

PS 04 - Nigel Biggs – Tall buildings policy

PS 05 - Christina Biggs & Martin Garrett – Transport / devolution / joint spatial plan

PS 06 - Elinor Ni Chathain – Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy

PS 07 - Olivia Nunn – Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy

PS 08 – Elisabeth Winkler – Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy

PS 09 - John Sergeant – Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy

PS 10 – Edward Bowditch - Congestion

Within the time available, statements were presented by individuals present at the meeting.

**Public questions:**

The Full Council noted that the following questions had been submitted:

PQ 01 - Ashley Hill station

- submitted by Martin Garrett

PQ 02 - Temple Meads bus stops

- submitted by Martin Garrett

PQ 03 - Getting safely to and from Oasis Academy Brightstowe

- submitted by Head Girl, Oasis Academy Brightstowe

PQ 04 - Getting safely to and from Oasis Academy Brightstowe

- submitted by Head Boy, Oasis Academy Brightstowe

PQ 05 - Trees at Bedminster Green

- submitted by Dianne James

PQ 06 - Council tax arrears

- submitted by Michael Owen



PQ 07 - Bristol wood recycling project / Cattle Market Road site  
- submitted by Kaleb Debbage

PQ 08 - Bedminster Green development  
- submitted by Nick Townsend

PQ 09 - Controlled parking zones  
- submitted by Edward Bowditch

Within the time available, the Mayor responded to the following questions (also responding to supplementary questions when asked): PQ 01, PQ 02, PQ 03, PQ 04, PQ 05, PQ 07 and PQ 08.

## **7. Petitions notified by councillors**

The Full Council received and noted the following petitions:

Petition CP 01 – “Save the school crossing patrols in Bristol”  
Petition presented by Councillor Phipps

Petition CP 02 – “Traffic calming measures on York Road, BS5”  
Petition presented by Councillor Pickersgill

Petition CP 03 – “Harden Road car park”  
Petition presented by Councillor Jones

**ADJOURNMENT** – At this point, the Lord Mayor advised that the Full Council meeting would adjourn for a 20 minute refreshment break.

## **8. Treasury management mid-year report 2016-17**

The Full Council considered the treasury management mid-year report 2016-17.

Councillor Cheney, Cabinet member for Finance, Governance and Performance moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.

Councillor Barry Clark seconded the report

Following debate, it was:

**RESOLVED:**



**That the report be noted.**

## **9. Approval of council tax base 2017-18**

The Full Council considered a report seeking approval of the amount to be calculated by Bristol City Council as its council tax base for the financial year 2017-18.

It was noted that further to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's consideration of this matter (meeting held on 8 December 2016), a supplementary note had been circulated providing additional information in relation to student council tax exemptions and comparing previous council tax base forecasts against actuals, as requested by the Board.

Councillor Cheney, Cabinet member for Finance, Governance and Performance moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.

Councillor Smith seconded the report.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED** (57 members voting in favour, none against, and with 1 abstention):

**That it be agreed that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Bristol City Council as its council tax base for the financial year 2017-18 shall be 124, 083.**

## **10. Capital receipts flexibility**

The Full Council considered a report seeking approval of the strategy for the flexible use of capital receipts.

Councillor Cheney, Cabinet member for Finance, Governance and Performance moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.

Councillor Mead seconded the report.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED** (53 members voting in favour, none against, and with 1 abstention):

**That approval be given to the strategy for the flexible use of capital receipts as set out in paragraphs 14 - 18 of the report.**



## 11. Review of Minimum Revenue Provision policy

The Full Council considered a report seeking approval of an updated minimum revenue provision policy.

Councillor Cheney, Cabinet member for Finance, Governance and Performance moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.

Councillor Brook seconded the report.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED** (53 members voting in favour, none against, and with 2 abstentions):

**That approval be given to the updated minimum revenue provision policy as set out in appendix B of the report.**

## 12. Appointment of external auditor for 2018-19

The Full Council considered a report from the Audit Committee seeking approval of arrangements for the appointment of the Council's external auditor, for the 5 financial years commencing 1 April 2018.

Councillor Mead, Chair of the Audit Committee moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.

Councillor Stevens, Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee seconded the report.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Full Council confirms the recommendation of the Audit Committee to accept Public Sector Audit Appointments' (PSAA) invitation to 'opt in' to their sector led scheme to enable the PSAA to appoint an external auditor to audit Bristol City Council's financial statements for 5 financial years commencing 1 April 2018.**

## 13. Human Resources Committee - terms of reference

The Full Council considered a report from the Human Resources Committee seeking agreement that the terms of reference of the committee be amended to delegate to the committee the responsibility of agreeing the salary of the Senior Coroner for the Avon coroner area.

Councillor Godwin, Chair of the Human Resources Committee moved the report and the recommendation set out therein.





Councillor O'Rourke, Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee seconded the report.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the terms of reference of the Human Resources Committee be amended to delegate to the committee the responsibility of agreeing the salary of the Senior Coroner for the Avon coroner area.**

**14. Motions**

**a. Motion 1 – Bristol's schools funding**

Councillor Hopkins moved the following motion:

“Council views with great concern the impending cuts in funding to Bristol schools' budgets.

Over the last 15 years, Bristol schools have dramatically improved, being previously judged one of the worst services it is now performing far better than equivalent areas. Huge effort, over a prolonged period, with all party support, has produced a dramatic positive change and over the last few years the pupil premium has helped to reduce inequalities in results and improve funding in Bristol schools.

The freezing of school budgets by the new government has presented challenges to schools but this is added to dramatically by the huge threat that the reallocation of school grants present.

Bristol will be the hardest hit authority in the country. A cut of £28m to the city's schools' budgets will see the loss of around 1000 teachers and teaching assistants. A loss on average of £577 per pupil in the city.

Bristol Cathedral Primary School, just recently praised as part of the Council's Ofsted report, will see a funding cut of over £1600 per pupil, over a quarter of their funding. Ashley Down Primary school will see a funding cut of over £1000 per pupil and Oasis Academy John Williams over £700 per pupil.

Council also notes with concern the pressure on the SEN budget, that large cuts to SEN funding continue to be implemented to cope with increasing demand and underfunding by Westminster.

Council condemns the proposed cuts in Bristol's schools funding by the Conservative Government.

Council calls on the Mayor and the Cabinet member for Education to meet with Government Cabinet Members and negotiate a better deal for Bristol's schools.

Council requires the Mayor and Cabinet member to report back with a written report to Full Council within 4 months detailing the results of any talks, and the impact of any changes on Bristol's schools.”

Councillor Kent seconded the motion.

Councillor Pickersgill then moved that the motion be amended to read as follows:



“Council views with great concern the impending cuts in funding to Bristol schools’ budgets. Over the last 15 years, Bristol schools have dramatically improved, being previously judged one of the worst services it is now performing far better than equivalent areas. Huge effort, over a prolonged period, with all party support, has produced a dramatic positive change and over the last few years the pupil premium has helped to reduce inequalities in results and improve funding in Bristol schools.

The freezing of school budgets by the new government has presented challenges to schools but this is added to dramatically by the huge threat to school grants at present. Along with most core cities, Bristol has been funded above the national average of all local authorities. However a move to a single national funding formula is likely to result in a substantial reduction in funding for Bristol schools.

The Council notes the previous coalition Government and the current Government have not increased the national allocation to the Schools Block. With pressure from staff increments and other inflationary pressures, this freeze on income represents a real terms cut for our schools.

Council also notes with concern the pressure on the SEN budget, that large cuts to SEN funding continue to be implemented to cope with increasing demand and underfunding by Westminster. We further note Bristol, along with most local authorities, is experiencing pressure on its High Needs block spending. As a result, we note the Schools Forum has agreed to reduce the funding allocated for individual top up applications. This represents an additional cut in income for most schools in Bristol.

In addition we note the Council has historically received an Education Services Grant to fund the Council’s education duties. The Government has announced that this Grant will be ended. In 2017/18 the Grant level will reduce significantly and be taken from the Dedicated Schools Grant which will further reduce the funding available for per-pupil formula.

The Council Resolves to:

Calls on the Mayor and the Cabinet member for Education and Skills to meet with Government Cabinet Members to argue that funding for Bristol schools is increased to take into account inflationary pressures and levels of deprivation, and is protected in the proposed revisions to the National Formula.

Calls on the Mayor and the Cabinet member for Education and Skills to join with other core cities to lobby for a more realistic level of funding for students with High Needs, based on their explicit needs.

Calls on the Mayor and Cabinet member to report back with a written report to Full Council within 4 months detailing the results of any talks, and the impact of any changes on Bristol’s schools.”

Councillor Massey seconded the amendment.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the amendment was CARRIED.



It was then

**RESOLVED:**

**Council views with great concern the impending cuts in funding to Bristol schools' budgets.**

**Over the last 15 years, Bristol schools have dramatically improved, being previously judged one of the worst services it is now performing far better than equivalent areas. Huge effort, over a prolonged period, with all party support, has produced a dramatic positive change and over the last few years the pupil premium has helped to reduce inequalities in results and improve funding in Bristol schools.**

**The freezing of school budgets by the new government has presented challenges to schools but this is added to dramatically by the huge threat to school grants at present. Along with most core cities, Bristol has been funded above the national average of all local authorities. However a move to a single national funding formula is likely to result in a substantial reduction in funding for Bristol schools.**

**The Council notes the previous coalition Government and the current Government have not increased the national allocation to the Schools Block. With pressure from staff increments and other inflationary pressures, this freeze on income represents a real terms cut for our schools.**

**Council also notes with concern the pressure on the SEN budget, that large cuts to SEN funding continue to be implemented to cope with increasing demand and underfunding by Westminster. We further note Bristol, along with most local authorities, is experiencing pressure on its High Needs block spending. As a result, we note the Schools Forum has agreed to reduce the funding allocated for individual top up applications. This represents an additional cut in income for most schools in Bristol.**

**In addition we note the Council has historically received an Education Services Grant to fund the Council's education duties. The Government has announced that this Grant will be ended. In 2017/18 the Grant level will reduce significantly and be taken from the Dedicated Schools Grant which will further reduce the funding available for per-pupil formula.**

**The Council Resolves to:**

**Calls on the Mayor and the Cabinet member for Education and Skills to meet with Government Cabinet Members to argue that funding for Bristol schools is increased to take into account inflationary pressures and levels of deprivation, and is protected in the proposed revisions to the National Formula.**

**Calls on the Mayor and the Cabinet member for Education and Skills to join with other core cities to lobby for a more realistic level of funding for students with High Needs, based on their explicit needs.**



**Calls on the Mayor and Cabinet member to report back with a written report to Full Council within 4 months detailing the results of any talks, and the impact of any changes on Bristol's schools.**

**b. Altered Motion 2 – Affordable housing strategy**

Councillor Clarke moved the following altered motion:

“This Council notes that:

1. The Mayor of London has set out a long-term strategic objective to make half of all new homes built in London affordable.
2. In Bristol, the figure for permissions granted for affordable homes in 2015/16 is only 21% and, of those actually built, less than 10% were affordable.
3. There have been a number of very high profile recent developments where the schemes have included very few affordable homes (culminating in the Chocolate Factory scheme in Easton which initially offered zero).
4. The current viability reporting process which is used to decide on the percentage of affordable housing delivered through the planning system is secretive, open to varying interpretation and widely mistrusted by citizens affected by these decisions.

This Council believes that:

5. The Mayor of Bristol should be no less ambitious than the Mayor of London in his vision for affordable homes in this city.
6. The viability process needs a significant overhaul to make it fit-for-purpose.
7. A ‘one size fits all’ approach does not help achieve our ambition of more balanced communities.

This Council resolves:

8. In the case of schemes which do not comply with the Council’s guidance on affordable homes; to instruct planning officers to make all information used in the viability process, whether it arises from a council appointed surveyor or a third party, available publicly in good time before a planning application is to be considered.
9. To instruct council planning officers to continue to look for innovative ways to encourage and incentivise developers to include a mix of affordable and mixed tenure homes in their plans.
10. To make strong representations to central government to:
  - a. remove the borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account and
  - b. allow the council to charge Council Tax on plots in Bristol with planning permission which have not been built on if they have not been developed within a reasonable timescale.
  - c. provide greater flexibility to spend right-to-buy income on developing or commissioning new homes.
  - d. devolve more authority to Bristol over the spending and priorities of the Homes and Communities Agency.



11 To develop a programme of compulsory purchase orders for stalled housing sites where the owners have no clear intention to develop new homes.”

Councillor Smith seconded the altered motion.

Councillor Eddy then moved that the altered motion be amended to read as follows:

“This Council notes that:

1. The Mayor of London has set out a long-term strategic objective to make half of all new homes built in London affordable.
2. In Bristol, the figure for permissions granted for affordable homes in 2015/16 is only 21% and, of those actually built, less than 10% were affordable.
3. There have been a number of very high profile recent developments where the schemes have included very few affordable homes (culminating in the Chocolate Factory scheme in Easton which initially offered zero).
4. The current viability reporting process which is used to decide on the percentage of affordable housing delivered through the planning system can be perceived as secretive, open to varying interpretation and widely mistrusted by citizens affected by these decisions.

This Council believes that:

5. The Mayor of Bristol should be no less ambitious than the Mayor of London in his vision for affordable homes in this city.
6. The viability process needs a significant overhaul to make it fit-for-purpose.
7. A ‘one size fits all’ approach does not help achieve our ambition of more balanced communities

This Council resolves:

8. In the case of schemes which do not comply with the Council’s guidance on affordable homes; to instruct planning officers to make all information used in the viability process, whether it arises from a council appointed surveyor or a third party, available publicly (providing such disclosure is not contrary to law, planning guidelines or reveals commercially-sensitive material) in good time before a planning application is to be considered.
9. To instruct council planning officers to continue to look for innovative ways such as the Bristol Housing Delivery vehicle secured in the last annual budget to encourage and incentivise developers to include a mix of affordable and mixed tenure homes in their plans. Here, emphasis needs to be given to the supply of ‘key-worker’ housing in new developments.
10. To make strong representations to central government to:



- a. remove the borrowing cap on and other restrictive features of the Housing Revenue Account and
  - b. Provide greater flexibility to spend right-to-buy income on developing or commissioning new homes.
  - c. Devolve more authority to Bristol over the spending and priorities of the Homes and Communities Agency.
11. To assess best practice on housing delivery through the planning system in London and other cities and how it may be applied in the Bristol context.”

Councillor Jones seconded the amendment.

Following debate, upon being put to the vote, the amendment was LOST.

The Full Council then voted on the altered motion (as moved by Councillor Clarke and seconded by Councillor Smith) and

**RESOLVED:**

**This Council notes that:**

1. **The Mayor of London has set out a long-term strategic objective to make half of all new homes built in London affordable.**
2. **In Bristol, the figure for permissions granted for affordable homes in 2015/16 is only 21% and, of those actually built, less than 10% were affordable.**
3. **There have been a number of very high profile recent developments where the schemes have included very few affordable homes (culminating in the Chocolate Factory scheme in Easton which initially offered zero).**
4. **The current viability reporting process which is used to decide on the percentage of affordable housing delivered through the planning system is secretive, open to varying interpretation and widely mistrusted by citizens affected by these decisions.**

**This Council believes that:**

5. **The Mayor of Bristol should be no less ambitious than the Mayor of London in his vision for affordable homes in this city.**
6. **The viability process needs a significant overhaul to make it fit-for-purpose.**
7. **A ‘one size fits all’ approach does not help achieve our ambition of more balanced communities.**

**This Council resolves:**

8. **In the case of schemes which do not comply with the Council’s guidance on affordable homes; to instruct planning officers to make all information used in the viability process, whether it arises from a council appointed surveyor or a third party, available publicly in good time before a planning application is to be considered.**



9. To instruct council planning officers to continue to look for innovative ways to encourage and incentivise developers to include a mix of affordable and mixed tenure homes in their plans.
10. To make strong representations to central government to:
  - a. remove the borrowing cap on the Housing Revenue Account and
  - b. allow the council to charge Council Tax on plots in Bristol with planning permission which have not been built on if they have not been developed within a reasonable timescale.
  - c. provide greater flexibility to spend right-to-buy income on developing or commissioning new homes.
  - d. devolve more authority to Bristol over the spending and priorities of the Homes and Communities Agency.
- 11 To develop a programme of compulsory purchase orders for stalled housing sites where the owners have no clear intention to develop new homes.

Meeting ended at 4.55 pm

CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_



Full Council  
17 January 2017



**Note:** this report is also being submitted to the Cabinet on 10 January 2017

**Report Title:** Collection Fund – Estimated Council Tax and Business Rates Surplus 2016/17

**Ward:** Citywide

**Strategic Director:** Anna Klonowski – Interim Strategic Director Resources

**Report Author:** Denise Murray - Service Director - Finance

**Contact telephone no. & email address** 0117 3576255  
denise.murray@bristol.gov.uk

**Member presenting report:** Councillor Craig Cheney, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Governance

**Purpose of the report:**

*To determine the estimated Collection Fund surplus as at 31 March 2017.*

**Recommendation for the Full Council's approval:**

1. That an estimated surplus at 31 March 2017 on the Council Tax element of the Collection Fund of £4.604m be declared for 2016/17 and shared between this Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and the Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion to their 2016/17 precepts on the Collection Fund.
2. That an estimated surplus at 31 March 2017 on the Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) element of the Collection Fund of £13.173m be declared for 2016/17 and shared between this Council, the Secretary of State and Avon Fire and Rescue Service in proportion to current year demands (Bristol 49%, Secretary of State 50%, Avon Fire and Rescue Service 1%).





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## The proposal:

1. The Local Government Finance Act 1992(as amended) requires the Council to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax by 15 January. This will enable the precepting authorities (the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and Avon Fire and Rescue) to take into account their share of any surplus before finalising their precepts for 2017/18.

Similarly, following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme from April 2013, in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, the Council must determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates prior to 31 January.

2. Income from Council Tax and Business Rates are fixed at the start of each financial year. Any variations from this are realised through the Collection Fund and are distributed in the following two financial years (based on estimated in the following year and actuals in the subsequent year.) The Council is required by statute to maintain a Collection Fund separate from the General Fund. The Collection Fund accounts independently for:

- Income into the Fund: the Fund is credited with the amount of receipts of Council Tax and (Non Domestic Rates) NDR it collects.
- Payments out of the Fund: in relation to Council Tax payments that are made to the Council and the two major precepting authorities (Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Avon Fire and Rescue ). In relation to NDR payments that are made to the Council, the Secretary of State and the Avon Fire and Rescue.

### **2016/17 Estimated Surplus for Council Tax**

3. The forecast of the Council Tax Collection Fund Balance for the year ending 31 March 2017 is an estimated surplus of £4.604. This is comprised of an in year (16/17) estimated surplus of £3.627m and an adjustment for the previous year of £0.977m.
4. The estimated surplus is due to a combination of factors, the most significant of which relate to a more buoyant than expected housing market and a reduction in the number of benefit recipients receiving council tax reductions.
5. Since calculating the Council Tax Base for 16/17 (in October 2015), 1,899 (1,541 Band D equivalents) new residential properties have come on to the market in Bristol. Growth of this magnitude was not anticipated at the time. Indications suggest the house market will remain buoyant during 2017/18. The Tax Base for 2017/18 allows for this continued growth.
6. In addition, the value of benefits awarded through the Council Tax Support Scheme has fallen from an estimated £39.910m to £37.000m. This is following a trend identified over the last few years. The table shows the split between the budgeted and likely actual cost of the scheme split between working age and pensioner claimants.

	Value of benefits claimed		
	Working Age	Pensioner	Total
	£m	£m	£m
Council Tax Base Estimate for 2016/17	25.544	14.368	39.912
Estimated Outturn 2016/17	24.168	12.832	37.000
Difference	1.376	1.536	2.912
Percentage Reduction	5.39%	10.69%	

7. Conversely, in line with a growing tax base, discounts and exemptions have also increased. Student exemptions, for example, are estimated to have increased by £1m over the original budgeted for 2016/17.
8. The estimated surplus is distributed to the major precepting authorities in proportion to the current year's demands and precepts on the Collection Fund. A detailed determination of the estimated Council Tax Collection Fund surplus for 2016/17 is shown in Appendix A and the allocation of the estimated surplus to each of the major precepting authorities is summarised below:

	£'000
Bristol City Council	3,945
Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner	477
Avon Fire Authority	182
	<u>4,604</u>

#### 2016/17 Estimated Deficit for Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

9. The introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme from April 2013 has increased uncertainty and volatility in Council funding. The estimation of the NDR base in January sets the amount of NDR to be distributed from the Collection Fund to preceptors in the following year. Any variances to the base during the year will be borne by the Collection Fund and distributed to preceptors in future years through the declaration of a surplus on the fund.
10. Any year-end estimated surplus/deficit is distributed to the Secretary of State and relevant precepting authorities in proportion to the current year demands and NDR payments on the Collection Fund. The percentages are fixed in accordance with The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013. The forecast of the Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund Balance for the year ending 31 March 2017 is an estimated surplus of £13.173m.
11. The business rates income which each billing authority collects is determined by reference to local rating lists maintained by the Valuation Office Agency. These lists are subject to variation between revaluations as a result of physical changes (either to the property or the locality) and appeals. The amount of business rates income collected by billing authorities therefore varies year on year. The major factors giving rise to changes include:

- 
- Reductions to the rateable value of business properties arising from appeals. Once settled the appeal may be backdated resulting in the Council having to refund several years rates from a single year's income.
  - Changes in the rateable values of very large business properties such as power stations or hospitals can have a material effect.
  - Business properties switching between rating lists. Large business properties which cross boundaries, such as ports, appear in the list which contains the largest area. Changes in these properties could lead to large amounts of rateable value switching from one list to another. Similarly locally rated business with infrastructure covering large areas of the Country, for example telecommunication companies, may apply to switch to the national list.
- 12.** Although there is an estimated in-year loss of £5.342m reported for 2016/17, the estimated overall surplus for distribution in 2017/18 is principally due to the volatility around Business Rates appeals. Concerns around, potentially, very large appeals during 2015/16 resulted in the assumption that, as at the end of March 2016, there would need to be a significant increase in the provision for appeals. This was primarily attributable to a request for mandatory business rates relief submitted to the Council during 2015/16 on behalf of NHS Trusts. This is a national issue, for which the Council subsequently received advice which resulted in an alternative accounting treatment being applied at the end of the last financial year. The reversal of this sum back into the Collection Fund makes up the majority of the surplus as reported. The Council continues to monitor the situation.
- 13.** The Council is required to provide for potential appeals from its business rates income. Calculations for the provision are based upon the Valuation Office Agency "Settled and Outstanding" proposals at end March reports. These reports show all appeals that have been lodged for each authority against the 2010 valuation listing including those which were agreed, dismissed, withdrawn or are still outstanding. This list is analysed into "types" of appeal. The average success rate and the percentage reduction in rateable value for those appeals which were successful is considered along with the potential for the backdating of any appeals decisions and the estimated annual cost was then adjusted by the ratings multiplier for the relevant year. Local intelligence is used alongside statistical modelling to inform decision making.
- 14.** As the amounts involved can be significant the Council takes a very prudent approach when calculating any likely impact of an appeal. Officers are satisfied as to the robustness of the estimated additional contribution to the appeals provision of £7.1m. The provision has been compared to that of both our nearest neighbours and similar sized authorities nationally. Bristol's appeals provision is very close to the national median, which would suggest the provision has been well calculated.
- 15.** The detailed determination of the estimated NDR Collection Fund surplus for 2016/17 is shown in Appendix B and the allocation of the estimated surplus to the Secretary of State and the relevant precepting authorities is summarised in the table below.

		£'000
Bristol City Council		6,455
Central Government		6,586
Avon Fire Authority		132
		<u>13,173</u>

### Consultation and scrutiny input:

- a. Internal consultation:**  
Revenues Manager, Revenues and Benefits – Citizen Services
- b. External consultation:**  
Not Applicable

### Other options considered:

None

### Risk management / assessment:

There are a number of risks associated with estimating the amount of Council Tax and Business Rates collected during the year. These include;

- Reductions to the rateable value of business properties arising from appeals. Once settled the Council may have to settle several years business rates from a single year's income.
- Changes to the rateable values of very large business properties such as power stations or hospitals can have a material effect on business rate collection.
- Business Properties switching between rating lists. This can include large cross boundary properties switching from one list to another or joining the central list.
- Difficulty in estimating Council Tax discounts and exemptions, including the take-up of the Council Tax Support Scheme.

### Public sector equality duties:

There are no proposals in this report which require either a statement as to the relevance of public sector equality duties or an Equalities Impact Assessment.

### Eco impact assessment

Not applicable

### Resource and legal implications:

### Finance

#### a. Financial (revenue) implications:

The estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund will carry forward to 2017/18 and will impact on the Council's budget position for that year.

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**Advice given by**      **Tony Whitlock (Finance Manager – Corporate Finance)**  
**Date**                      **December 2016**

**b. Financial (capital) implications:**

Not applicable

**Advice given by**      **Tony Whitlock (Finance Manager – Corporate Finance)**  
**Date**                      **Not applicable**

**Comments from the Corporate Capital Programme Board:**

Not applicable

**c. Legal implications:**

The Local Government Finance Act 1992(as amended) requires the Council to determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Council Tax prior to 15 January in order that the precepting authorities (the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and Avon Fire and Rescue) to take into account their share of any surplus before finalising their precepts for 2017/18.

The Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, the Council must determine the estimated surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund in respect of Business Rates prior to 31 January.

**Advice given by**      **Shahzia Daya – Service Director Legal and Democratic Services**  
**Date**                      **December 2016**

**d. Land / property implications:**

Not applicable

**e. Human resources implications:**

Not applicable

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A – Estimated Council Tax Collection Fund Account 2016/17**

**Appendix B – Estimated Non-Domestic Rates Collection Fund Account 2016/17**

**Access to information (background papers):**

Working papers held in Corporate Finance

Council Tax Collection Fund Adjustment Account

APPENDIX A

2014/15		2015/16	2015/16	2016/17
Actual		Estimate as per		Estimate
£'000		Feb '16 Budget	Actual	December
		Report	£'000	2016
		£'000		£'000
	<b>Income</b>			
(195,553)	Council Tax Income	(201,210)	(202,668)	(215,032)
	<b>Expenditure</b>			
	<b>Precepts</b>			
160,076	Bristol City Council	169,026	169,026	178,403
19,709	Police	20,819	20,819	21,560
7,510	Fire	7,933	7,933	8,216
	<b>Bad and Doubtful Debts</b>			
1,837	Write Offs	1,600	2,081	3,226
<b>189,132</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>199,378</b>	<b>199,859</b>	<b>211,405</b>
<b>(6,421)</b>	<b>(Surplus)/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(1,832)</b>	<b>(2,809)</b>	<b>(3,627)</b>
(5,617)	Accumulated (surplus)/deficit Bfwd	(7,266)	(7,266)	(5,406)
4,772	Distribution of prior years estimated surplus	4,669	4,669	4,429
(6,421)	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	(1,832)	(2,809)	(3,627)
<b>(7,266)</b>		<b>(4,429)</b>	<b>(5,406)</b>	<b>(4,604)</b>
	<b>Distribution of estimated Collection Fund surplus:</b>			
(3,992)	Bristol City Council	(3,785)	(4,624)	(3,945)
(490)	Police	(466)	(570)	(477)
(187)	Fire	(178)	(212)	(182)
<b>(4,669)</b>		<b>(4,429)</b>	<b>(5,406)</b>	<b>(4,604)</b>
	<b>Split of the 2016/17 estimated surplus</b>			
	Balance brought forward from 2015/16			(977)
	Distribution of 2016/17 estimated surplus			(3,627)
				<b>(4,604)</b>

## Business Rates Collection Fund Adjustment Account

## APPENDIX B

2014/15		2015/16	2015/16	2016/17
Actual		Estimate as per Feb '16 Budget Report	Actual	Estimate December 2016
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
	<b>Income</b>			
<b>(209,982)</b>	<b>Business rates income</b>	<b>(210,000)</b>	<b>(210,975)</b>	<b>(224,748)</b>
	<b>Expenditure</b>			
	<b>Payments to Preceptors</b>			
102,419	Central Government	104,028	103,677	108,137
101,368	Bristol City Council	100,645	101,604	105,974
2,054	Avon Fire	2,089	2,074	2,163
5,619	Disregarded amounts	5,713	0	4,094
723	Cost of collection allowance	721	721	722
	<b>Bad and Doubtful debts</b>			
1,862	Write offs	1,279	1,775	1,900
	<b>Appeals losses and provision</b>			
3,514	Increase/(decrease) in appeals provision	10,000	(2,916)	7,100
<b>217,559</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>224,475</b>	<b>206,935</b>	<b>230,090</b>
<b>7,577</b>	<b>(Surplus)/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>14,475</b>	<b>(4,040)</b>	<b>5,342</b>
	<b>Accumulated (surplus)/deficit</b>			
7,464	Accumulated (surplus)/deficit BFwd	9,476	9,476	(2,586)
(5,565)	Distribution of prior year estimated deficit	(8,022)	(8,022)	(15,929)
7,577	(Surplus)/deficit for the year	14,475	(4,040)	5,342
<b>9,476</b>		<b>15,929</b>	<b>(2,586)</b>	<b>(13,173)</b>
	<b>Distribution of estimated collection fund surplus</b>			
4,011	Central Government	7,965	(1,293)	(6,587)
3,931	Bristol City Council	7,805	(1,267)	(6,455)
80	Avon Fire Authroity	159	(26)	(132)
<b>8,022</b>		<b>15,929</b>	<b>(2,586)</b>	<b>(13,173)</b>

Full Council  
17 January 2017



**Report Title:** Removal of Council tax discounts on discretionary unoccupied and unfurnished properties

**Ward:** Citywide

**Service Director:** Patsy Mellor Service Director Citizen Services

**Report Author:** Tim Potter and Simon Davis Council Tax Group Leader's

**Contact telephone no. & email address:** [0117 975 5784](tel:01179755784)  
[tim.potter@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:tim.potter@bristol.gov.uk) [simon.davis@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:simon.davis@bristol.gov.uk)

**Member presenting report:** Cllr Paul Smith, Cabinet member for Homes and Communities

**Purpose of the report:**

*To consider and approve proposals regarding changes to existing council tax discretionary discounts.*

**Recommendation for the FULL COUNCIL's approval:**

**To approve proposals for the removal of the discretionary 10% and 5% discount for unoccupied and unfurnished properties.**





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## The proposal:

The Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Order 2012 was introduced in order to allow further localism at Council level.

As a result the following discretionary council tax discounts were approved by Bristol City Council on 26 July 2012.

- 10% discounts for unoccupied and unfurnished properties for 6 months followed by
- 5% discount for unoccupied and unfurnished properties for the following 18 months.

The proposal is to remove these discretionary discounts from 1 April 2017.

Bristol City Council currently has a housing stock of circa 27,500 properties. There are numerous tenancy changes throughout the year which result in the HRA account being charged £750k+ for vacant periods. With the assumed 4% increase in council tax, for 2017/18, this will rise to £780K+ and with the removal of the above discounts this will result in an additional charge of circa £80k year on year.

## Consultation and scrutiny input:

### a. Internal consultation:

Neighbourhood Leadership Team  
Martin Smith, Revenues Manager  
Cllrs Paul Smith and Asher Craig

### b. External consultation:

Corporate strategy consultation 2017-2022

## Other options considered:

None

## Public sector equality duties:

There are no proposals in this report which require either a statement as to the relevance of public sector equality duties or an Equalities Impact Assessment.

## Eco impact assessment

Not applicable

## Resource implications:

Not applicable

## Finance

### a. Financial (revenue) implications:

The removal of the discretionary discounts will result in additional income to the collection fund of £420k in 2017/18. This will be distributed to the City Council and the precepting Authorities in 2018/19, with an on-going benefit in future years.

**Advice given by:** Tony Whitlock Principal Accountant.

**Date:** 7 December 2016

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**b. Financial (capital) implications:**

Not applicable

**Comments from the Corporate Capital Programme Board:**

Not applicable.

**c. Legal implications:**

Not applicable

**d. Land / property implications:**

Not applicable

**e. Human resources implications:**

Not applicable

**Appendices:**

None

**Access to information (background papers):**

None



# Full Council

17 January 2017

**Report of:** Audit Committee

**Title:** Revised criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women

**Ward:** Citywide

**Member presenting report:** Councillor Mead, Chair of Audit Committee

## Recommendation

**That Full Council considers and approves the revised criteria set out in paragraph 10 governing the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women.**

## Summary

The Audit Committee has reviewed the criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women. The committee has recommended revised guidance to be applied in respect of future nominations. This requires Full Council approval.



### **Context and Proposal**

1. Under section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council may confer the title of Honorary Alderman/woman upon former members of the Council who, in the opinion of the Council have rendered “eminent service” to the Council as a past member of the authority or a predecessor authority.
2. The resolution to confer the title must be passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of members present at a specially convened Full Council meeting.
3. An Honorary Alderman/woman may attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide. They are not entitled to receive any members’ allowances or other payments of allowances, expenses etc. Honorary Aldermen/women substitute for the Lord Mayor or Deputy Lord Mayor on a relatively infrequent basis. They are also invited to all major civic events, church services and can attend/observe Council meetings (they have no vote at Council meetings).
4. The Act does not define “eminent service” to the Council and it is therefore at the discretion of individual councils to determine what this might constitute for their individual authority. A number of councils have developed criteria designed to ensure a consistency of approach whilst at the same time allowing the flexibility to recognise what might constitute “eminent service” to the Council in all its many forms.
5. The Full Council is responsible for approving the policy and criteria governing the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women. The Audit Committee is responsible for ensuring that all nominations meet these criteria, as part of its role in ensuring ethical standards and probity within the City Council.

### **Revision of criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women**

6. The Audit Committee reviewed the criteria for the appointment of Honorary Aldermen/women on 29 January 2016.
7. The committee’s recommendations from that meeting were accepted by the Full Council at their meeting held on 15 March 2016. The criteria approved by Full Council on 15 March 2016 were as follows:

**An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderman/woman provided that he/she is no longer a serving councillor with Bristol City Council and has provided eminent service to the Council throughout a long and distinguished period of public service by either:**

**a. Serving as a Bristol City Councillor for an aggregate total period of at least 10 years;**

*or*

**b. Holding a significant position of public responsibility with Bristol City Council as either:**

- Lord Mayor;
- Elected Mayor;
- Deputy or Assistant Mayor;
- Leader of the Council;
- Executive Member;
- Any other position attracting the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance under the Council's approved members allowance scheme (excluding attendance at the Appeals Committee).

8. During the debate at the March 2016 Full Council meeting, it was suggested that in *any future review of the criteria*, the Audit Committee might wish to consider the following factors:
- a. The issue of whether it might be appropriate to define the qualifying length of councillor service in terms of the number of electoral terms served rather than in terms of the number of years served.
  - b. In relation to the issue of qualifying by virtue of having held a significant position of public responsibility with the Council, consideration might be given as to whether this should be subject to a minimum "length of office."
9. At their meeting held on 23 September 2016, the Audit Committee further reviewed the criteria, taking into account the comments of Full Council from the 15 March 2016 meeting.
10. On 23 September, the committee agreed to recommend that Full Council should consider and approve the following, revised criteria:

**An individual will be eligible for nomination and appointment to the role of Honorary Alderman/woman provided that he/she is no longer a serving councillor with Bristol City Council and has provided eminent service to the Council throughout a long and distinguished period of public service by:**

- a. **Serving for a minimum period of two electoral terms as a Bristol City councillor (i.e. having been elected twice as a councillor).**

**AND**

- b. **Holding a significant position of public responsibility with Bristol City Council, for a minimum period of one calendar year or one municipal year, as either:**
  - Lord Mayor;
  - Elected Mayor;
  - Deputy or Assistant Mayor;
  - Leader of the Council;
  - Executive Member;
  - Any other position attracting the payment of a Special Responsibility Allowance under the Council's approved members allowance scheme (excluding attendance at the Appeals Committee).

**OR**

**c. Long service as a Bristol City Councillor for an aggregate period of at least 10 years.**

**11.** The Full Council is therefore asked to consider and approve the revised criteria as set out in paragraph 10 above.

**Other Options Considered**

Not applicable

**Appendices:** None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:**

Audit Committee minutes – 29 January 2016; 23 September 2016

Full Council minutes – 15 March 2016



# Full Council

17 January 2017

**Report of:** John Readman- Strategic Director People

**Title:** Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016

**Ward:** Citywide

**Member presenting report:** Cllr Clare Campion-Smith, Cabinet member for People and Chair – Corporate Parenting Panel

## Recommendations

1. That the Mayor and all Bristol City Councillors, as Corporate Parents, support the actions identified to further promote good outcomes for children in care and care leavers in 2017.
2. That progress and challenges are noted.
3. That the Mayor and Councillors, in exercising the responsibilities of office, take action to provide opportunities that support children in care and care leavers and promote the achievement of good outcomes.

## Summary

The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 sets out progress against delivering the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the renewed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers. The report describes key areas of work aimed at delivering the promises made in the Pledge and the impact on improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers. It also sets out the Corporate Parenting Panel priorities for the year ahead.

## The significant issues in the report are:

The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 is provided at Appendix A.

The Council has made good progress in 2016 against the promises made in the Pledge.

Challenges remain, specifically, the need to improve health and educational outcomes for children in care, to continue to improve the percentage of care leavers in education, training and employment, to reduce offending, and to improve completion of life story work by reducing social work caseloads.



## Policy

1. The Corporate Parenting Strategy and renewed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers was approved by Cabinet and endorsed by Full Council in November 2015. To strengthen city leadership of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, the following multi-agency boards ensure that Corporate Parenting is a priority, and are responsible for ensuring that the relevant Corporate Parenting Strategy objectives are achieved:

Board	Area of Responsibility	Strategic Objectives
Children and Families Board	Early Help	Objective 1 - Support more children to live safely with their family and reduce the need to be cared for by intervening early
Safeguarding Children Board	Safeguarding	Objective 2 - If children cannot remain in their parents' care, look to their extended family for support first
		Objective 3 – Ensure that children receive the right services and only remain in care for as long as they need to. Make sure that this is informed by an assessment and plan which they and their family understand and which they have been able to contribute to
		Objective 4 - Ensure that being in care is an enriching experience for children and that we equip them for a successful and fulfilling future
		Objective 5 - Ensure enough good quality placements for children by recruiting, retaining and commissioning sufficient foster carers to offer children placement choice, to keep children placed locally and to achieve high levels of placement stability
		Objective 6 - Ensure that all young people are in safe and secure accommodation by offering appropriate accommodation to 16-18 year olds who meet the threshold for care
Learning City Board	Education	Objective 7 - Close the attainment gap for children in care by ensuring that they receive good quality education and that we support them to have high aspirations
		Objective 8 - Improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including increasing the percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training
Health and Wellbeing Board	Health	Objective 9 – Improve the health and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers, and provide services of a high standard to support their needs

## Consultation

2. **Internal**  
 Corporate Parenting Panel  
 Directorate, Extended and Senior Leadership Teams.



3. **External**  
People Scrutiny Commission.

### Context

4. The Council acts as corporate parent to 675 children in care and 365 young people who have left care.
5. Bristol's Corporate Parenting Panel ensures that the City Council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent of children in care. The Panel is a group of cross-party elected members, Bristol City Council officers and other partners. The Chair is the Cabinet Member for People. The group includes representatives of looked after children, their carers, and other stakeholders.
6. The Corporate Parenting Panel acts as a hub of engagement, leadership and scrutiny of all work associated with meeting the needs of children in care and care leavers.

### Proposal

7. The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016 is provided at Appendix A.
8. Over the past year, the Council has made progress in key areas:
  - Whilst we do everything we can to support children to live within their birth families, for those children who need our care, a foster family is the preferred placement type for most children. In 2016, a greater percentage of children lived in a foster family and, for those children in our long term care a greater percentage lived in stable placements.
  - Improving education, training and employment outcomes at all stages with more young people at university than ever before.
  - For care leavers, improvements have had to be focussed and swift to address weaknesses identified by the Ofsted Inspection in 2014. The Council is now regularly in touch with more care leavers than ever before, the majority are suitably housed, with many staying put with their former carer.
  - The views and influence of children and young people have been strengthened, most notably by the establishment of a partnership with Barnardo's to deliver a care leavers participation group and strategy
9. As corporate parents, officers and members continue to hold high aspirations and to be ambitious for our children and young people. Work will continue with Council services and with partners across the city to deliver on our vision for children in care and care leavers. Improvement priorities for the forthcoming year include:
  - Closing the attainment gap between children in care and their peers at all key stages
  - Improving performance in reported health and dental assessments
  - Promoting fostering as a positive choice for adults who can care for children and young people

- Reducing offending rates of children in care and care leavers

10. Key improvement activity is included in the Year 2 Children’s Services Improvement Plan, approved by Cabinet in November 2016, which is overseen by the Children’s Services Improvement Board. This provides continued support and challenge to ensure delivery of improvement targets.

### **Risk Assessment**

11. The Year 2 Children’s Services Improvement Plan ensures that risks around delivering required improvements and meeting inspection framework requirements are mitigated.

### **Public Sector Equality Duties**

12. Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
  - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
  - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons’ disabilities);
  - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
  - tackle prejudice; and
  - promote understanding.

The nature of this work does not require an equality impact assessment. A full equality impact assessment will be produced and used for any material changes to services for children, young people, their families, and carers.

## Legal and Resource Implications

### Legal

The term “corporate parent” is an informal term used to describe the relationship between a local authority and a child who is “looked after” within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or between a local authority and a child or young person who was looked after by them and in respect of which the local authority has ongoing duties and powers under sections 23A to 24D of the 1989 Act. This latter group of children and young people are informally known as “care leavers”. It also describes the collective responsibility of the Council, members, employees, and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care for looked after children.

The Children and Social Work Bill, due to be enacted in 2017 places corporate parenting principles on a statutory footing.

The annual report sets out in detail how the Council is meeting its duties and future plans so that members can review progress, service priorities and outcomes for the children they have corporate parenting responsibility for.

(Legal advice provided by Nancy Rollason, Service Manager – Legal Services)

### Financial

The direct costs of delivering the Corporate Parenting Panel are contained within the current Care & Support – Children budget envelope and the recommendations in the report will not change the budget requirement in the short or medium term.

(Financial advice provided by Michael Pilcher, Finance Business Partner)

### Land

Not applicable

### Personnel

Not applicable

## Appendices:

Appendix A - The Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

### Background Papers:

None

# Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2016



BE YOURSELF  
AND BE  
YOURSELF  
☆  
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🌸  
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BELIVE!



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## **1 Forewords**

### **1.1 Councillor Clare Campion-Smith Cabinet Member for People and current Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel, and Councillor Brenda Massey former Assistant Mayor and Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2016**

Bristol is an exciting and vibrant city to grow up in, offering opportunities for children and young people to play, learn, and develop. As consecutive Chairs of the Corporate Parenting Panel and Assistant Mayor's for the People Directorate, it has been our job to ensure that the same opportunities are available to children in care and care leavers as they are to other children in the city.

The term 'corporate parenting' emphasises the collective responsibility of the Council, both members and officers, to ensure good parenting and good outcomes for all children in their care, and care leavers. Alongside partners across the city, we are committed to improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.

This report provides an overview of corporate parenting and the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2016, a panel comprising a cross-party group of councillors supported by officers, partners, children in care and care leavers, all committed to ensuring robust leadership, management and governance of services to the children in and leaving our care. We have had oversight of the council's improvement work, have challenged and supported as well as provided a focus that reminds all councillors of their corporate parenting responsibilities to ensure that children in our care are well looked after and supported to achieve their potential. As well as setting out achievements and challenges, it sets priorities for the forthcoming year and offers an open invitation to councillors to join the Panel and support our work for children in care and care leavers.

Over the past year, the council has made progress in key areas:

- Our focus is always on doing everything we can to support children to be cared for within their birth family however, when this is not possible, most children do best if they live with a foster family. In 2016, a greater percentage of children in our care lived in a foster family and, for those children in our long term care a greater percentage lived in stable placements.
- Improving education, training and employment outcomes at all stages and more young people at university than ever before.
- For care leavers, improvements have had to be focussed and swift to address the difficulties highlighted by our Ofsted Inspection in 2014. We are pleased to report that the council is now regularly in touch with more care leavers than ever before, that the majority are suitably housed, with many staying put with their former carer and most engaged in education, employment or training.
- Children and young people's voices are central to our work and have been strengthened this year with the establishment of a care leaver group alongside the Children in Care Council and their attendance at Corporate Parenting Panel.

As corporate parents, we will continue to hold high aspirations and to be ambitious for our children and young people. We will continue to improve and will work with partners across the city to deliver on our vision for children in care and care leavers. In the forthcoming year we will focus on a number of priorities including:

- Closing the attainment gap between children in care and their peers at all key stages
- Improving performance in reported health and dental assessments
- Promoting fostering as a positive choice for adults who can care for children and young people
- Reducing offending rates of children in care and care leavers

Above all, we need the passion, compassion and commitment of members, officers and partners to delivering the best for children in and leaving our care. By working together, we will succeed.

## **1.2 Charece Anderson – Care Leaver and member of Care Leavers United Bristol**

Charece displayed her work and sang at the Care Leavers' United Hear Us Out Exhibition, an exhibition that aimed to challenge some of the negative stereotypes that surround care leavers. She subsequently entered her words in a competition at the national Young People Leaving Care Benchmarking event in October 2016 and won. To remind us all that children in care and care leavers are a diverse and talented group, who should be celebrated, her words are reproduced below as the young person's foreword to this year's Corporate Parenting Report:

"I want to see more young people walking confidently in their identities. Unfortunately, we live in a society where everyone wants to fit into the same box so we tend to put up a front...

In reality life isn't perfect, we should acknowledge that our experiences in life are what shape us, they make us who we are.

It's ok to be you.

It's ok to not know what the next step is.

And its ok not to fit into the box that society tries soo hard to put you in!

WE ARE WHO WE ARE"



## 2 Overview of children in care and care leavers in Bristol<sup>1</sup>

Bristol is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest city in England outside of London. It is a young, vibrant and diverse city with a median age of 33, over six years below that of England as a whole. It is also a rapidly growing city, most notably in the under 17 age group, which grew by 14.5% over the ten years to 2015, and within the child population those under 4 years grew even more rapidly, showing an increase of 29.9% over the same period.

Set against this context, Bristol's children in care population has remained relatively steady in terms of numbers and, in terms of rate per 10,000 of the under 18 population, it has reduced from 78 in 2012 to 73 in 2016. This brings Bristol's rate per 10,000 closer to the national average of 60 and below that of its statistical neighbours and the core cities, possibly reflecting the impact of prevention and early intervention work aimed at supporting more children to live successfully within their birth family. The Bristol picture differs from the national picture where the rate per 10,000 and number of children in care has grown in recent years. In terms of the number of children in care in Bristol, there were 675 children in care on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, five fewer than in March 2012. Other characteristics of the children in care and care leaver population include<sup>2</sup>:

- Bristol's children in care are slightly older than those across England with 69.8% aged 10 or above, compared with 62% across England. This is in line with an increase in 16-17 year olds and reduction in 1-4 year olds since 2013.
- There is an even gender split, which has been the case for the past five years and is different to the national picture where there are slightly more boys than girls in care.
- The legal status of children in care in Bristol is similar to the England figures, with 65% having a Care Order or Interim Care Order. Slightly more children are accommodated by voluntary agreement under the Children Act 1989 in Bristol (28.6%) and slightly fewer under a Placement Order (5.8%) than nationally.
- Like the city itself, Bristol's child in care population is growing in diversity and includes a small but growing number of unaccompanied children and young people who have sought sanctuary in the city.
- The number of children entering and leaving care has increased over the past five years and particularly in the last year, as more children move through care to permanent arrangements either returning to parents or to adoption and special guardianship.
- 12.85% of children exited care to Adoption and Special Guardianship compared with 13.43% nationally.
- 10.7% of children in care were subject to a caution or conviction during the year. This figure has grown since 2013/14 and is not in line with the percentage nationally which has fallen over the same time period.

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<sup>1</sup> See also, Section 15 - Performance

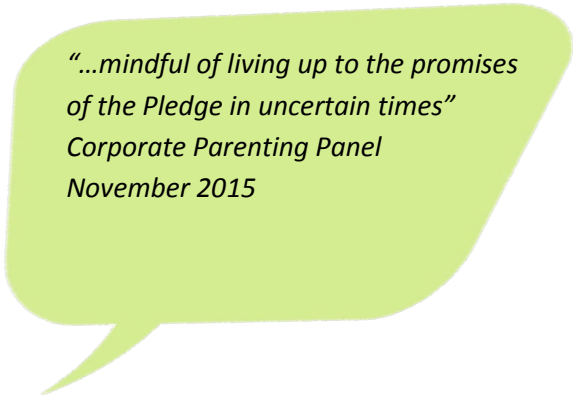
<sup>2</sup> All statistics are for March 2016 unless stated otherwise

- More children in care in Bristol (82%) live in a foster family compared to 74% nationally and, more Bristol children continued to live with former carers in a staying put arrangement beyond the age of 18.
- For some children, living in a foster family is not the right option and Bristol makes use of its own children's homes as well as the independent sector to meet their needs. 6.8% of children live in a children's home or residential school compared with 8.6% nationally.
- 81% of children in care in Bristol live within 20 miles of their home address compared with 77% for all children in care in England. However, more children who started to be looked after in 2016 were placed more than twenty miles away as their first placement, reflecting some of the challenges locally and nationally in finding suitable foster carers.
- Bristol was in touch with more of its care leavers (97.1% of 19-21 year olds) than in previous years and more than the 2016 national figure (87.3%).
- More care leavers were in education, training or employment than in 2015, above the national figure of 52%, and more care leavers were considered to be suitably housed.

### **3 Bristol's Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers - performing on our promises**

In the autumn of 2015 Bristol launched a refreshed Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers, supported by a new Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Informed by children and young people, it set out an ambitious agenda for achieving our aspiration to be an excellent corporate parent and to engage the city in being the best extended family to children and young people in and leaving care. Using the headings from the Pledge, the next section sets out what's been achieved in the last year to deliver on our promises.



*"...mindful of living up to the promises of the Pledge in uncertain times"*  
Corporate Parenting Panel  
November 2015

### **4 Physically and emotionally healthy so that you feel good about yourself**

Bristol's health services specifically for children in care include Children Looked After Nurses (CLAN) and a Designated Doctor. There is also a dedicated team, Thinking Allowed, who work with children and carers to support the emotional and mental health of children in care and act as the gateway for referral to the full range of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the city. An annual health report is presented to Corporate Parenting Panel outlining the work of these services in meeting the health needs of children in care.

All children entering care have an initial in-depth health assessment within the first 28 days, with a follow up assessment every 6 months for those under 5 years old and annually for those over 5. Bristol's recorded figures for the percentage of dental checks and health assessments undertaken on time during the 2015/16 have fallen by 11.5 and 9.4 percentage points on the previous year respectively. 71% of children were recorded as having had a dental check and 82% as having had a health assessment. This takes Bristol's performance below the national figure for 2014/15 and is the subject of improvement work in 2016/17 which is overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and which, as a strategic priority sits jointly under the Children and Families and Health and Well-Being Boards. The percentage of children recorded as having up-to-date immunisations, however, has risen by 10.1 percentage points to 93.5% over the same period.

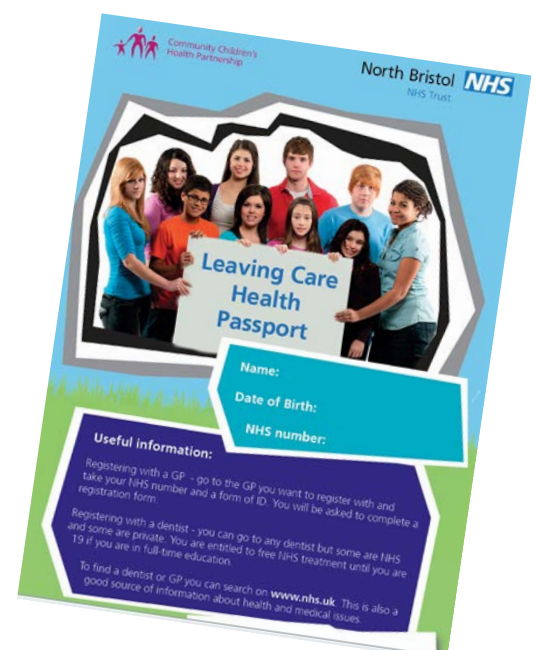
A strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) is used to assess children's emotional and behavioural health. The SDQ is a short behavioural screening questionnaire that cover details of emotional difficulties; conduct difficulties; hyperactivity or inattention; friendships and peer groups; positive behaviour; and impact. The SDQ is an internationally validated method of assessing children and young people's risk of experiencing emotional and mental health difficulties; it is completed by the child's carer on an annual basis and is scored on a scale from 0-40. Any score above 17 alerts the child's social worker to consider a referral to Thinking Allowed. In 2015/16, 76.3% of children had an SDQ completed and returned by their carer.

Whilst children in care are recognised nationally as a vulnerable group, paper based notes mean that there has been little aggregated information available regarding the physical and mental health status of children and young people in care in Bristol. In order to learn more, to set a health baseline and to consider the quality and quantity of information available in Bristol an audit of the health assessment notes of looked after children was carried out in 2016. The audit demonstrated that:

- Initial and review assessments are carried out regularly and comprehensively.
- The physical health of looked after children is well managed and as a group, they do not appear to have higher or unmet physical health needs.
- There was good evidence that children and young people understood how to keep themselves healthy.
- Fewer looked after children were overweight than the comparable general population.
- There was a higher rate of smoking
- Where appropriate, young people were asked about issues relating to sexual health with nearly all recorded as having a good understanding of how to keep safe.
- Main concerns relate to mental health, where children appear to be experiencing a disproportionate level of mental distress with nearly half of the children in the audit sample having concerns recorded about emotional health and wellbeing, including attachment disorders and behavioural concerns.
- Where young people had been in a consistent placement for longer term periods, there was often a resolution of or reduction in emotional and behavioural issues.

Additional funding has been allocated to build capacity in mental and emotional health services for children and young people. Training is also taking place to ensure that social workers, foster carers, GPs and others know about the range of services and how to access them as well as the delivery of enhanced training and development for social workers, foster carers and residential childcare workers focussed on sexual health and on suicide and self-harm.

For care leavers, access to health is generally through universal services, with the first point of contact being the young person's GP. For young people who have moved and whose history may be fragmented, information about family history and childhood illnesses and immunisations is essential. Over the past year, the Health Service has piloted and introduced the use of a health passport for all care leavers as part of a number of measures it has taken to improve the health of children and care leavers.



## 5 Safe from harm, valued and cared for and supported

One of the most important factors in keeping children safe is the quality and stability of the relationships they hold with others; whether that's with a carer, a social worker or personal adviser or with another trusted adult, relationships that last, that offer stability and unconditional regard, matter.

Having the same carers and a stable place to live throughout a child's time in care and until ready to leave are important indicators of future success. There are three key performance measures that help us to monitor how well we are doing in this regard. The first measures the number of moves a child experiences<sup>3</sup>, the second, considers the length of placement<sup>4</sup> and the third considers the percentage of young people who are supported to continue to live with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 in Staying Put arrangements. This year, 11.6% of children had three or more placements and over 72.4% of children in long term care lived with the same carers for at least two of the last two and a half years. These figures show a slight downturn in short term placement stability but a continued upward trajectory of the percentage of children living in long term care.

Similarly, more young people stayed with their former carer beyond 18 than ever before. Staying Put offers young people leaving care the opportunity to leave home in a way that is more akin to the experience of their peers and is one of the best ways of enabling young people to lay down the foundations from which they can go on to achieve their full potential. Bristol's figure over 61.5% compared with 54% nationally. Bristol continues to support more young people in such arrangements at the ages of 19 and 20 with 41% of Bristol's 19 year olds staying put (compared with 30% nationally) and 19.5% of 20 year olds (compared with 16% nationally).

The number, range and quality of placements are important factors in being able to identify the right placement at the right time and in the right area for a child. In July 2016, after full consultation with a range of stakeholders, including children, young people and in-put from the Corporate Parenting Panel, the Children and Families Trust Board adopted Bristol's Sufficiency Plan 2016-19 which sets out how Bristol aims to deliver sufficient placements for children in care and care leavers.

### 5.1 Social work remodelling

In June 2016, the specialist long term services for children in care and care leavers remodelled into smaller through care teams comprising social workers, personal advisers, a support worker, administrator and practice lead. The new service was designed with staff and young people to support long term relationships with workers and to help deliver on the Pledge promise to minimise the disruption caused by changes of worker and team. Now, children and young people with the long term service will receive all their support from the team to which they are

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<sup>3</sup> NI62 PAF A1 measure: percentage of children who have experienced two or more moves in the previous twelve month period

<sup>4</sup> NI63 PAFD78 measure: The percentage of children looked after aged under 16 at year end who had been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years who were living in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together last for at least 2 years.

allocated, thereby reducing handovers and enabling joint working that maximises the beneficial impact for children and carers of working with people who they know and trust.

## **5.2 Missing from care**

Children and young people run away for a variety of reasons, with children in care running away more frequently than their peers. When children leave or don't return home as expected, they are considered missing and will be reported to the police as such. Often, there are both push and pull factors that influence a child who goes missing, with children in care more vulnerable to some factors than others. For example, children in care are more likely to go missing to be near birth family members. Children who go missing will be more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. It is important therefore, that adults listen carefully to children and young people in order to understand and take the right action to address the individual reasons for going missing.

All children in care who are reported missing are offered a return interview within 24 hours of return with the interview being undertaken by someone other than the child's main carer. Over the past year, work has been undertaken to improve systems to enable better recording of missing data and the outcomes of return interviews, with 93 being recorded as having a missing episode, that's 9.1% of the total number of children looked after during the year. The seven most common reasons given for running away in the past year are as follows:

- Running to friends
- Peer influences
- Family difficulties
- Running to family
- Suspected/victim to sexual exploitation
- Issues with education
- Placement problems

Following a return interview a plan or strategy will be developed aimed at reducing the risk of repeated periods of going missing, with partner agencies involved where appropriate. Additionally, all children in care have an independent review meeting at least every 6 months which is chaired by an independent reviewing officer. This meeting will review plans and actions taken to address any missing episodes; it will check that the child's care plan addresses the risk and will consider the impact of actions taken to reduce that risk.

It is also important that we don't stop at the individual child level and ensure that, by sharing information and looking for patterns in the data about children who go missing, we are better able to identify and take action to disrupt the formation of networks of adults who will harm children.

## **5.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Bristol works with Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation (BASE), the police and other agencies to tackle child sexual exploitation and support the children and young people affected. In the past year, much has been done to better understand the prevalence of CSE across agencies and,

through use of improved screening and predictive analysis, to better identify those most at risk. At the end of March 2016 31 children in care were understood by agencies to be the children most at risk of or victim to CSE.

#### **5.4 Children in care and the youth justice system**

The Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 established that children remanded to custody should become looked after children. This was followed by amendments to the Children Act Guidance and Regulations, recognising and responding to the vulnerability of children whose offending behaviour brings them into contact with the criminal justice system. Earlier this year, the Prison Reform Trust published *In Care, Out of Trouble*, its review into the overrepresentation of children in care throughout the criminal justice system chaired by Lord Laming. It made a number of recommendations for government, local authorities, the police, youth offending teams and other agencies as to how to better protect children in care and care leavers from unnecessary levels of criminalisation.

In Bristol, rates of offending by children in care decreased between 2010 and 2014. Since that time however, the rate has increased and in March 2016, 10.7% of children in care had been subject to a youth justice disposal in the previous twelve months. This trend differs from the trend across England which has continued to decrease. The figure for all Bristol 10-17 year olds will be available in January 2017 for further analysis.

To better understand the Bristol picture, an audit was undertaken of the offending patterns of children in care as well as an audit of Bristol's performance against the recommendations made by Lord Laming. Taking action to reduce the offending of children and young people in care will form one of the priority areas of work for the forthcoming year and will be overseen by the Children's Services improvement Board and Corporate Parenting Panel.

## 6 The best education possible

All children in care are students of the HOPE Virtual School which has both a head teacher and governing body. There are close links between the Virtual School Governing body and the Corporate Parenting Panel, with the former chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel now the Chair of Governors. Focussed on attendance, attainment and reducing exclusions, the HOPE promotes and supports the delivery of a quality education for all children in care for whom Bristol is the responsible authority and for those children placed and educated in Bristol by another local authority. Over the past year, the focus has been on educational attainment with good results at Key Stages 1 and 2, but worsening performance at Key Stages 3 and 4 (2015 results).

### 6.1 Messages from research

2015 saw the publication of the first major study in England to explore the relationship between educational outcomes, young people's care histories and individual characteristics<sup>5</sup>. It looked at the key factors influencing low educational outcomes for children in care at secondary school and how a better understanding might contribute to improving outcomes. The study found the following factors influence attainment:

- Time in care. Those who have been in longer-term care do better than those 'in need' but not in care, and better than those who have only been in short term care – so it appears that care may be a protective factor for children educationally.
- Placement changes. Each additional change of care placement after age 11 is associated with one-third of a grade less at GCSE.
- School changes. Young people in care who changed school in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.
- School absence. For every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE.
- School exclusions. For every additional day of school missed due to fixed-term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE.
- Placement type. Young people living in residential or another form of care at age 16 scored over six grades less than those who were in kinship or foster care.
- School type. Young people who were in special schools at age 16 scored over 14 grades lower in their GCSEs compared to those with the same characteristics who were in mainstream schools. Those in pupil referral units with the same characteristics scored almost 14 grades lower.
- Educational support. Young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support for them but teachers suggest that they need more training to do this effectively.

The HOPE and Children's Social Care are working with this knowledge to support and educate those working with children in care and to minimise disruption for children, particularly in Years 10 and 11 in order to deliver on the following practice and policy messages:

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<sup>5</sup> [The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data](#), 2015. Rees Centre. Oxford University.



- The progress of children in care shows much variation, which suggests that any interventions need to be tailored to the characteristics and experiences of the individual. Every child in care has a Personal Education Plan (PEP), detailing their individual needs, attainment targets and how the child will be supported to achieve.
- Education needs to be supported at a much younger age and while children are still living with their birth families, in order to reduce later difficulties relating to adolescence.
- Greater focus on progress over time is needed and recognition that some young people take longer to make significant progress.
- When placement moves are essential, school moves should be avoided especially in the final years of schooling.
- Children in care should be placed in mainstream schools with appropriate support wherever possible.
- We need to support young people in care to achieve high attendance at school and we need to support schools not to exclude them.
- Schools that benefit all children are likely to benefit those in care so prioritising their admission is justified.
- Teachers need better understanding of children's social, emotional and mental health problems; social workers need better understanding of the education system.
- Schools and local authorities should use extra help such as paired reading and one-to-one tuition that are supported by evidence.
- The Virtual Schools, schools, social workers and foster carers should work closely together and involve the young person in decisions affecting them.

## **6.2 HOPE Virtual School achievements**

- Improved outcomes at KS4 (2016 - unvalidated) with those attaining maths GCSE up 8% on 2015 outcomes and those attaining both maths and English also up 8%. This is a real achievement as 43% of children taking GCSEs and measured in the cohort had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational Need. In part, the improved performance is as a result of the structured work of the HOPE in collaboration with schools, including support and challenge of visits from a dedicated Child in Care School Improvement Officer. Over 100 rigorous and diagnostic quality assurance visits were undertaken in school and other education settings in 2015/16.
- Improvements in the quality of Personal Education Planning (PEP) from Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) to Post 16 and complex SEN. Paper work now enables quality planning and includes the voice of the child or young person. Aspirational and rigorous targets are set with 95% of PEPs now assessed as good or better. A Clear flowchart for PEP roles and responsibilities has been established and is being followed by all professionals in the team around the child.
- More targeted use of Pupil Premium Plus is delivering measurable improvements in outcomes both in terms of children's engagement in learning and the percentage obtaining GCSE A\* to C.

- 1:1 support in core subjects happening more frequently and having a positive impact
- Better targeted support for Y11 students with a named advocate in HOPE to oversee intervention, support and educational pathway planning has resulted in improvements in securing Y12 destinations and take up of the National Citizen Service<sup>6</sup> (NCS). In the summer of 2016, 20 Children in Care took part in NCS. Feedback has been positive, particularly from the young people themselves who have valued the opportunities such as outdoor pursuits, team working and community impact projects.
- Early indications of those in Y12 show 80% are in education, employment or training, an improvement on previous year's performance.
- Improved relationships and contact with Out of Authority Schools. Feedback from schools is that advice from the HOPE SENCO has been valuable.
- There continue to be no permanent school exclusions of children in care and in the past year there has also been a reduction in numbers not receiving full time education and classified as pupils missing education from 52 to 39. Procedures for pupils being on part time timetables and absence in term time have been tightened by the HOPE working collaboratively with schools, education settings and children's social care.
- Over 440 professionals participated in HOPE education training with some schools receiving whole school training on attachment.
- Protocol developed with Social Care for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children entering education.

### 6.3 Challenges

- Continual improvement to raise achievement of children in care in all sectors.
- Reduce fixed term exclusions and persistent absence
- Promoting innovation that further embeds aspiration and achievement at the heart of corporate parenting responsibilities for schools, carers and social care colleagues.
- Developing the role of the HOPE in relation to adoption and the development of a regional adoption agency.
- Ensuring unaccompanied children and young people are welcomed and supported in school without drift or delay.
- Restructure the HOPE and sustain improvement.
- Implement the comprehensive HOPE development plan approved by Governing Body in October 2016.

Over the past year, Bristol's offer to care leavers entering higher education was reviewed and re-launched. More care leavers are in higher education than ever before, with 12% (44) of care leavers aged over 18 currently studying a course of higher education. This compares with 8% (31) in 2015 and 6% in 2014. Bristol has worked closely with its local colleges and universities to ensure that courses and the support needed to progress to and maintain a course of higher education (including financial support) is as accessible as possible. This has included delivering

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<sup>6</sup> The [National Citizen Service](#) (NCS) is a British voluntary personal and social development programme for 15–17 year olds in England and Northern Ireland.

training to foster carers and others in order to raise awareness and build the knowledge of those who will be supporting young people to consider higher education as a viable option.

## 7 Have a voice and take part

*“As a member of the CICC I feel my views are always heard. You get to find out about new things and learn from different members of different organisations who come in and meet with us. I feel like anything I say is listened to and followed up as when we meet up later on things have changed.*

*Any child in care who is interested in joining the council should definitely join as you get to learn new techniques, meet new people and you get to socialise with other people your own age and eat lots of nice food.” Kiki, member of CICC.*

The voice of children and young people is central to our Pledge and Corporate Parenting Strategy. Children and young people influence all aspects of their care plan and are supported to play a full and positive role in their community, the city and nationally. Over the past year, the voice of children and young people in service development and delivery has been strengthened in the following ways:

- Children in Care Council (CICC) meet regularly and have worked on a number of priority areas which they have then presented to councillors and senior managers at Corporate Parenting Panel. Currently, the CICC is working on a project to improve understanding and challenge stereotypes around body image and self-esteem.
- A CICC representative and Care Leavers’ representative sit on Corporate Parenting Panel and have a standing slot on the agenda in order to discuss their work and priorities.
- Children in care and care leavers have presented to Corporate Parenting Panel on a number of important issues over the past year ranging from the importance of financial support and preparation for independence to the promises that should be included in the new Pledge
- CICC worked with the young people’s magazine Rife to stage the successful creative intervention, ‘Lost and Found’, at the Watershed in autumn 2015. The exhibition that resulted allowed members of the public to respond to the items, poems, stories and art work of children in care who had written their own stories exploring things they had lost and found as a result of being in care.
- In partnership with Barnardo’s, Care Leavers United Bristol (CLUB) has been established and meets regularly at the Station. CLUB is a participation group for care leavers and as such has forged links with CICC. The group has delivered a number of fun activities, offering different opportunities to different groups of young people, including unaccompanied children. In addition to this, CLUB members have helped develop

Bristol's offer to care leavers which is now published on the RVoice web-site, and produced the 'Hear Us Out' multi-media exhibition at Paper Arts Gallery aimed at challenging some of the negative stereotypes of care leavers.

- Bristol joined New Belongings<sup>7</sup> in May 2015 and undertook a survey of care leavers' views in order to better understand what actions would have the greatest impact on improving the lives of care leavers. Young people's responses informed the actions identified in Bristol's Children's Services Improvement Plan 2015/16 and a specific Care Leavers' Improvement Plan that was also developed.
- Young people are involved in recruitment and selection of staff members with whom they will work or who will hold senior positions.
- Young people are involved throughout the commissioning cycle for services relating to them. This means young people have been involved from consultation through to tender evaluation, contract monitoring and quality assurance of commissioned services such as Youth Links and care placements such as independent fostering and children's homes.

*Poem from Lost and Found*  
Sometimes in life things get left behind  
Our best jeans, love letters, our old peace of  
mind  
But does this make room for dear new  
things to find?  
Or just leave us dreaming life had a rewind?



Pictures from Lost and Found exhibition 2015.

<sup>7</sup> DfE funded initiative with the Care Leavers Foundation Apr 2015-Mar 2016, aimed at improving local authorities' support for care leavers by developing a more integrated, accessible service model, embedded within local communities and focused on making a tangible difference to the lives of care leavers.

- Bristol's R-Voice web-site is developed by and for children in care and care leavers was redesigned in 2015/16 following feedback from children and young people. The new version was launched earlier this year. It is more accessible for smart phone and mobile technology users and now includes a gallery for children to display their art work. The site is managed by Reconstruct who deliver Bristol's participation, advocacy and independent visiting service for children in care.
- Bristol's commitment to improving care leavers' participation and education, employment and training outcomes, saw the development of a Care Leaver Ambassador post within the Through Care Service. An apprenticeship, it involved promotion and participation work as well as business skills development and qualification.
- Councillors and Senior Managers meet with children in care and care leavers at a variety of events including summer fun days and care Fun Days and the Care Leavers Celebration of Achievement.



Kyla and Charece (centre left and centre right) receiving their awards from Councillor Clare Hiscott, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills (left) and John Readman, Strategic Director for People (right) at this year's Care Leavers' Celebration of Achievement event.

## **8 Know who you will live with**

As with any child, children in care require a happy, stable home life if they are to achieve their potential. Those children who cannot live with their parents do best if they can live with a family member or other person connected to their family and for all children in care, a stable, well-matched placement where the child can live until prepared and ready to leave, is the single most influential factor in improving children's outcomes and creating the conditions from which they can go on to live successful adult lives.

Bristol City Council commissions foster care, residential care and post-16 supported accommodation placements from a mixed market of internal and external providers. Such placements are costly and it is important that Bristol manages the market to ensure that placements are cost effective and of the highest quality. Effective commissioning will improve placement choice, reduce placement breakdown, support integration between children in care services, universal and specialist services and may reduce numbers of children coming into care whilst delivering value for money.

In July 2016 Bristol published its placement [Sufficiency Plan 2016-19](#) setting out its commissioning intentions to deliver placements for children in care and homes for care leavers.

### **8.1 Placement types**

#### **8.1.1 Foster care**

The percentage of Bristol children in care in foster placements (including relative and friends placements) has risen between 31 March 2012 and 31 March 2016, from 79% to 82%. This is higher than the 2016 figure across England of 74%. Of these children, the percentage placed with relatives or friends has grown slightly, as has the percentage placed outside of Bristol.

This year Bristol City Council was one of the few councils in the UK to be awarded Fostering Friendly status by the Fostering Network. This award recognised the value the council places on supporting its foster carers with a revised career structure together with its fostering friendly employment practices. This, together with a number of other recruitment campaigns has resulted in a positive year for fostering in Bristol with increased numbers of carer enquiries and approvals. We also celebrated the achievements of our existing group of dedicated carers with an awards ceremony in October. Members of Corporate Parenting Panel have supported all our activity and have helped value and promote fostering over the past year. The Panel's priorities for 2017 include a commitment to continue to support and raise awareness of the need for carers.

Bristol's fostering service has maintained its capacity with 424 children placed across 240 carer households in March 2016. A further 164 children were placed with independent fostering agencies.

Recruitment of foster carers has targeted carers for those children where demand is greatest. Bristol is ambitious, setting targets aimed at growing the foster carer population. By building

capacity we aim to be able to offer greater choice and therefore the best opportunity to match carers to child/ren. Progress is monitored by the Children's Services Improvement Board.

Priorities for recruitment and recruitment activity have included:

- Carers for sibling groups. Bristol ran a 'better together' campaign on radio and social media to encourage prospective carers who felt they could offer to care for siblings.
- Work with BME and faith communities in Bristol to encourage people in these communities to consider fostering. We have worked with community and faith leaders, to produce a specific leaflet for the BME community, have used radio and attended cultural, faith and community events to promote Bristol as a fostering city.
- We will continue to work with all community groups in an endeavour to reach the city's population, particularly as we try to build capacity for children in the city and those seeking refuge upon arrival in the city.
- Older children feature too, with 69% of children in care aged over the age of 10, and our campaign Teenager Rock involved an open event, social media and wider press coverage. We used the campaign to focus on the positives of looking after older children and heard from carers who wouldn't do anything else!
- More recently, our focus has extended to seek carers for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and we have had a tremendous response from the people of Bristol. An information session will take place in November that will also include information about supported lodgings and mentoring options.

### **8.1.2 Children's homes and residential special school placements**

At March 2016, 46 children and young people lived in a Children's home or residential special school. There has been little change in the number of children living in Bristol's children's homes with 21-24 children resident at the end of each quarter in 2015/16 and about the same number living in an independent children's home, often at distance. There has been an increase over the past two years in the number of children living in an independent children's home or residential provision. Such provision is generally specialist and often includes integrated education and therapy. Bristol's growing use of such provision, whilst still below the level of use for all England reflects the growing complexity of the child in care population.

Very few children are placed in residential special school with a high percentage of independent children's homes providing education and therapy or other health services. In 2013 the council closed a five bed children's home for 11-14 year olds and invested in a treatment fostering scheme with the intention that fostering should work for more children and young people in our care. Since that time, five children's homes have remained, each with a capacity of five beds.

In the second half of 2016, Ofsted inspections have highlighted the need to modernise and improve our homes to ensure they are able to deliver a high quality service in the future.



### 8.1.3 Short breaks for disabled children

In addition to full-time placements, Bristol also provides a range of short breaks for disabled children including short break fostering and residential care. From 2015, Bristol reduced its residential short break provision from 15 to 10 beds across two homes, and invested in an increased number and range of alternative short breaks for disabled children and their families. In Quarters 1 and 2 of 2016 Bristol had:

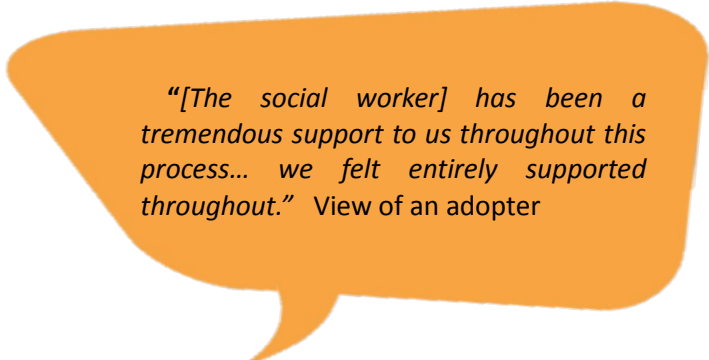
- 32 foster carers approved to provide short breaks for disabled children.
- 8 Buddies provided care and support children (not overnight)
- 35 children and young people received a regular fostering or buddying short break
- 258 short break sessions were delivered in Quarter 1 of 2016/17 and a similar number in Quarter 2
- At the end of September 2016 a further 5 carers were progressing through the fostering assessment with the aim of becoming short break carers
- 51 children and young people accessed a regular short break at one of Bristol's two residential short break homes

## 8.2 Adoption and achieving permanence

All children should grow up in a permanent, safe and loving home. Where this cannot be provided by a child's parents or wider family and friends (often through a Special Guardianship Order), adoption may be considered as a possible route to permanency. Bristol's Adoption Service recruits, assesses and approves adopters with the aim of ensuring that every child who needs an adoptive family is found one. The adoption service also provides on-going support for children and their adoptive families, through applications made to the Adoption Support Fund. Support is available to children who have experienced a difficult early life and their adoptive family until the child is aged 21 (or 25 with an EHCP).

In addition to this, Bristol provides independent support to birth families and supports contact between birth families and adoptive families through provision of Letterbox<sup>8</sup> and supervision of direct contact arrangements where this has been agreed.

Prospective adopters have spoken positively about their experiences of assessment and training in Bristol this year, and those being matched with children have reported that meetings with the adoption medical advisor were helpful, particularly where the adopted child had identified health needs.



*"[The social worker] has been a tremendous support to us throughout this process... we felt entirely supported throughout."* View of an adopter

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<sup>8</sup> Letterbox is a scheme that enables birth relatives and adoptive parents to stay in contact by exchanging letters and photographs.

Feedback from the Chair of Bristol's Adoption Panel has also been positive. She has commended the overall quality of reports and has highlighted those occasions where additional information is required in the Child's Permanence Report. Over the coming year, the adoption team and Panel will collect and assess the quality of adoption practice and reporting, taking action to address any deficits noted.

Over the past two years, Bristol has developed its use of Fostering for Adoption placements as well as a number of foster carers being approved to adopt children in their care. Both options have provided children with greater stability and minimised any delay in achieving permanence for the child.

Over the past five years, there has been a decrease (excluding a spike in 2015) in the percentage of children placed for adoption (from 6% to 1%), bringing Bristol below the England average of 4.2%. In 2015-16:

- 46 adoption orders were granted
- 18 adoptive families were approved
- 40 children were approved for adoption
- 28 children were placed with adoptive families.

The most recent Adoption Scorecard published by the Department for Education measured data from the years 2012-2015 and showed that:

- Bristol placed 12% of children who left care with adopters, compared to a national average of 16%. This is partly balanced by the higher percentage of children in Bristol placed with Special Guardians making a total of 25% of children in Bristol who exited care to a placement with a permanent family compared to 27% nationally.
- The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was 471 days compared to a national average of 593 days; making Bristol the 11th most timely of 152 local authorities across the country.
- The average time between court authority to place a child with adopters and a match being made with an adoptive family was 148 days in Bristol compared to a national average of 223 days, making Bristol the 21st most timely local authority on this measure.
- 68% of children were placed with their adoptive family within 16 months of the child entering care, compared to a national average of 47%, placing Bristol 8th best performing local authority on this measure.

## 9 Becoming independent – a good standard of living

In October 2014, Ofsted found that Bristol's performance for care leavers was inadequate with caseloads for leaving care workers too high, too many young people not engaged in education, training and employment and too few recorded as being in regular contact with services. Since that time, Bristol has implemented a cross cutting improvement plan, overseen by the Children's Services Improvement Board and reported on at Corporate Parenting Panel, aimed at building capacity and improving outcomes.

In 2016, reported performance improved significantly on figures reported in 2015. Bristol's performance is now in line with or above UK figures for 19-21 year olds. The table below, provides a comparison between the two years and with the national picture for 2016.

	Bristol 2015	Bristol 2016	National 2016
In touch	86%	97%	87%
<b>Not</b> in education employment or training	45%	42%	40%
In suitable accommodation	76%	91%	83%

Moreover, Bristol has implemented a number of measures to improve the quality of the service available to care leavers and to ensure their voice is heard. Bristol's improvement work was considered by the Department for Education in January 2016 and subsequently commended by Edward Timpson, then Minister of State for Children and Families.

Improvement work has centred on the following outcome areas:

- The Local Authority as an active, strong and committed corporate parent
- Access to education, employment and training
- Care Leavers are positive about themselves
- Young people leaving care receive help and support

Strong Governance arrangements have assisted the delivery of improvement work, strengthening a shared accountability across the council to improve outcomes for care leavers. Improved data quality and monthly reporting of key performance information has also engendered a sharper focus on delivering improvements for care leavers.

Bristol joined the New Belongings Programme<sup>9</sup> in April 2015, undertaking a survey of care leavers and establishing a care leaver participation group in partnership with Barnardo's which helped set the priorities for the focus of our improvement work as well as providing

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<sup>9</sup> DfE funded initiative with the Care Leavers Foundation Apr 2015-Mar 2016, aimed at improving local authorities' support for care leavers by developing a more integrated, accessible service model, embedded within local communities and focused on making a tangible difference to the lives of care leavers.

opportunities to share our learning and learn from other local authorities. The programme is now at an end with its impact positively evaluated<sup>10</sup> and its legacy in Bristol and the South West being an established care leaver and local authority group that will continue to work on care leavers' priorities.

Working with young people to articulate plans and aspirations and outline the support needed to achieve those aspirations is an important part of helping children and young people to achieve. For care leavers, this is called Pathway Planning. Over 90% of Bristol's care leavers now have a Pathway Plan, with Personal Advisers trained in their completion and recent audits evidencing an improvement in their quality. In addition to this, and in response to the New Belongings Care Leaver survey, Bristol worked with ASDAN to develop an accredited independence training programme that was piloted over the summer and that will be launched in the New Year. It offers young people opportunities to practice independence skills and to gain a qualification at the same time.

### **9.1 Education, Employment and Training**

Supporting children to achieve their potential and become successful members of society must start early and, through restructure and additional capacity, The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care and School Improvement Team have provided much greater challenge and support to schools, education and training providers to ensure year 11 and post 16 pupils are tracked and supported. This lays strong foundations for provision beyond age 18 and supporting young people's chosen progression route. Improved support is available from an Education Training and Employment worker and an enhanced careers education, information, advice and guidance service for care leavers who change from their original path.

As detailed previously, there has been a continued focus on widening participation and supporting care leavers into Higher Education with 31 (8%) care leavers in higher education in 2015/16, compared to 24 (6%) 2014/15.

### **9.2 Suitable Accommodation**

The proportion of care leavers judged to be in suitable accommodation has increased since March 2015 and is now above the national figure (see previous table) with more young people than ever before benefitting from a staying put arrangement with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18. There is more work to do to ensure the pathway from care to suitable supported accommodation is a smooth one that moves at the young person's pace and secures accommodation of a high quality at the end of it. To that end, children's social care are working closely with strategic commissioning and housing services on the accommodation pathways project to deliver a unified pathway to accommodation for young people in 2017.

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<sup>10</sup> [New Belongings: an evaluation. Research report. October 2016. Jo Dixon and Claire Baker. DfE.](#)

### **9.3 Bristol's Care Leaver Offer and celebrating achievement**

Over the past year, Bristol has worked with young people to revise its offer to care leavers, including a revised offer for young people progressing to higher education. That offer is now published on the [R Voice](#)<sup>11</sup> web-site. It has also held a number of events over the course of the last year which provided opportunities for young people to come together and have fun such as the summer fun day and meal, through to a series of activities and an evening celebration of achievement event that took place in National Care Leavers' week 2016.

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<sup>11</sup> Bristol's web-site for children and young people in and leaving care and contributed to by young people and officers.

## 10 Leadership, management and governance

Bristol’s [Corporate Parenting Strategy](#) was developed as part of Bristol’s response to the Ofsted Inspection of Bristol’s services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in 2014, which considered that “The corporate parenting plan does not provide the focus and drive needed to improve services for looked after children and care leavers” and recommended that Bristol City Council “publish and implement an updated corporate parenting plan to drive improvement in the quality and coordination of services to address the current poor outcomes for looked after children and care leavers”. It was launched in November 2015 alongside [Bristol’s Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers](#) and outlines our vision, aims, and the actions we will take as a council and a city to improve outcomes for children in our care and those making the transition to adulthood.

In addition to delivery on the objectives outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy, a Children’s Services Improvement Plan targets areas where more focussed improvement work is required. This plan is overseen by the Children’s Services Improvement Board, chaired by the Strategic Director for People with the Corporate Parenting Panel ensuring that the City Council effectively discharges its role as a corporate parent. To strengthen the city leadership of outcomes for children in care and care leavers, the following multi-agency boards take responsibility for ensuring corporate parenting is a priority and that the relevant Corporate Parenting Strategy objectives are achieved:

Board	Area of Responsibility	Corporate Parenting Strategic Objective
Children and Families Board	Early Help	Objective 1 - Support more children to live safely with their family and reduce the need to be cared for by intervening early.
Safeguarding Children Board	Safeguarding	Objective 2 - If children cannot remain in their parents’ care, look to their extended family for support first.
		Objective 3 - Ensure that children receive the right services and only remain in care for as long as they need to. Make sure that this is informed by an assessment and plan which they and their family understand and which they have been able to contribute to.
		Objective 4 - Ensure that being in care is an enriching experience for children and that we equip them for a successful and fulfilling future.
		Objective 5 - Ensure enough good quality placements for children by recruiting, retaining and commissioning sufficient foster carers to offer children placement choice, to keep children placed locally and to achieve high levels of placement stability.

<b>Board</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Strategic Objective</b>
Safeguarding Children Board	Safeguarding	Objective 6 - Ensure that all young people are in safe and secure accommodation by offering appropriate accommodation to 16-18 year olds who meet the threshold for care.
Learning City Board	Education	Objective 7 - Close the attainment gap for children in care by ensuring that they receive good quality education and that we support them to have high aspirations
		Objective 8 - Improve outcomes for children in care and care leavers, including increasing the percentage of care leavers in education, employment and training.
Health and Wellbeing Board	Health	Objective 9 – Improve the health and wellbeing of children in care and care leavers, and provide services of a high standard to support their needs.

## **11 Challenge and quality assurance**

### **11.1 Independent Reviewing Service**

All children in care have an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) whose primary focus is to quality assure the care planning and review process for the child and to ensure that their wishes and feelings are given full consideration. The role is an important one as it should enable the local authority to achieve improved outcomes for children. An annual report is written by the Senior Reviewing Officer and presented at Corporate Parenting Panel.

Over 95% of children take part in their review in Bristol, contributing in a variety of ways, with some taking charge and chairing their meeting. This year's annual report highlighted the following strengths:

- The IROs have developed their relationships with children enabling IROs to be confident they know the child's wishes and feelings.
- Longevity of IROs involvement in reviewing individual children.
- IROs with a more reasonable case load of 70 have been able to maintain greater oversight and be more involved in cases.
- Being involved in extra meetings for children has aided the on-going oversight of the child's case.
- Evidence of challenge and scrutiny has improved through the use of the audit and case notes.
- Audits of the IRO service have been mostly positive and issues raised are generally issues the service is aware of and addressing.
- The introduction of audit has allowed managers to quickly see any concerns and to recognise areas of good practice.
- The relationship between IROs and the local authority is respectful. There is a greater understanding of the role of the IRO.

- The courts have become more aware of the role of the IRO and now request their input.
- More parents have been involved, at varying levels, in their children's reviews.
- Improved knowledge of the use of S20 Children Act – voluntary agreement to accommodate a child in care.
- Feedback forms

The service also identified the following concerns and priorities for future work:

- Life story work, life storybooks and later life letters is not always undertaken and completed in a timely way. IROs now keep cases open following adoption when life story and later life letters have not been completed for children. An audit of children's reviews showed that 32 of 126 (25%) children needed life story work. The reason recognised by the local authority is that higher caseloads mean social workers cannot always carry this work out in a timely way. This remains very concerning.
- 1.5 IRO posts will be lost in January 2017 when temporary funding ends. This will result in caseload increases to 80 per IRO which will adversely impact on service delivery.
- Ensure consistent use of the IRO case note by IROs.
- Children who are studying for their GCSEs and A levels not having access to a computer at home.
- Some children need more support to maintain relationships with significant people when they move.

## **12 Developing Professional Practice**

In 2016, Bristol's services to children in care and care leavers were unified under a single Head of Service and the long-term social work teams remodelled into through care teams better equipped to know and support children and young people from the point at which they join the service through to their entry into adult life. Building on the learning from Bristol's Social Work Practice pilot, the structure of these teams aims to enable social workers and leaving care personal advisers to be more available to children and young people and to reduce unnecessary changes of worker, by providing dedicated admin support and a Practice Lead, whose focus is just that.

Social Workers now have a career structure that supports progression and together with Personal Advisers the additional development needs identified by them are being met in a number of ways:

- Specific training in leaving care for personal advisers and social workers
- Education, Employment and Training information and awareness raising session at whole service day
- Development of Signs of... methodology, an adaptation of the use of Signs of Safety (strengths based approach to managing risk with families) for children in and leaving care



- New service structure is supporting managers and practitioners to become more confident and competent with the use of Signs Of Safety methodology (strengths based approach to managing risk with families) to support practitioners develop skills and understanding
- Training for all in working with children and young people around suicide and self-harm, and on-going group sessions for those becoming workplace champions

## 13 Legislation and policy development

### 13.1 The Children and Social Work Bill

In May 2016 the Government published the [Children and Social Work Bill](#), closely followed by the publication of a new care leaver strategy in July 2016, [Keep on Caring, Supporting Young People from Care to Independence](#) in July 2016. The Bill, expected to become law in 2017, introduces a number of changes in relation to children in care, care leavers and adoption to strengthen the corporate parenting responsibilities of councils and other government agencies:

- A set of standards, seven Corporate Parenting Principles will apply to all local authorities aimed at ensuring children in care are supported through to adulthood.
- Local authorities will be required to publish a local offer to care leavers setting out the services to which they are entitled
- An extension to the right to a Leaving Care Personal Adviser to make sure care leavers receive the support they need to 25 for all care leavers who want one.
- An appointed individual in every school with responsibility for care leavers, adopted children and children on Special Guardianship Orders to achieve positive outcomes
- The requirement to better evidence that a child's care plan takes account of a child's need for stability and support with recovery from trauma.
- A new duty on courts to have regard to a child's existing relationship with his or her prospective adopters when considering appeals to a Placement Order or challenges to the making of an Adoption Order.
- The ability to allow government to dispense with primary child welfare legislation or regulations at the request of a local authority.

### 13.2 The regionalisation of adoption<sup>12</sup> – Adoption West

In line with Government policy, Bristol is one of six local authorities working together with voluntary aided adoption agencies to form a single adoption agency for the northern region of the South West to form 'Adoption West'. The five other local authorities are: South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Gloucester and Wiltshire and the voluntary adoption organisations and support agencies are CCS, Action for Children, Barnardo's, After Adoption, PAC and Adoption UK. The service being developed is one for permanence service for permanence and will include both adoption and Special Guardianship. The provisional start date for Adoption West is April 2018, although it is possible that this may alter. It is also possible that some parts of the service may begin at different times.

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<sup>12</sup> [Regionalising Adoption](#). DfE. June 2015.

[Adoption: A vision for change](#). DfE. March 2016.

## **14 Corporate Parenting Panel**

### **14.1 Membership of the panel**

All Bristol City Councillors and the elected Mayor are corporate parents and as such are invited to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Panel is chaired by the lead member for People who, in the first half of 2016 was Councillor Brenda Massey and in the second half of the year has been Councillor Clare Champion-Smith.

The core membership of the panel in 2015-2016 has included the following councillors:

- Councillor Clare Champion-Smith (chair June 2016 to present)
- Councillor Brenda Massey (chair to June 2016, continues as Panel member)
- Councillor Harriet Clough (present)
- Councillor Eleanor Combley (present)
- Councillor Gill Kirk (present)
- Councillor Celia Phipps (present)
- Councillor Harriet Bradley (present)
- Councillor Tony Carey (present)
- Councillor Anna Keen (present)
- Councillor Carole Johnson (present)
- Councillor Glenise Morgan (to May 2016)
- Councillor Sam Mongon (to May 2016)
- Councillor Helen Holland (to May 2016)
- Councillor Tim Malnick (to May 2016)

Partners and officers:

- Professor David Berridge - Bristol University – external challenge and expert advice
- Inge Sheppard – Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group
- Rachael Pryor – Head Teacher, HOPE Virtual School
- Suzanne Davies – Reconstruct for Children in Care Council
- Rosie Fortune – Care Leaver Ambassador
- Hilary Brooks – Interim Service Director, Care and Support, Children and Families
- Ann James – Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers
- Karen Gazzard / James Beardall – Manager Placement Services
- Avon Foster Carers Association Member

### **14.2 Role and work of the Panel**

Established in 2007 the Corporate Parenting Panel operates as a Panel of Full Council to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its role as corporate parent of children in care and care leavers. It meets five times each year and is an effective cross party working group of elected members, senior officers, partner agencies and children in care, care leavers and foster carer representatives.

The Panel undertakes its work by championing children in care and care leavers across the council and evaluating how well the corporate parenting responsibility is discharged. It will act to hold all parts of the City Council to account for the delivery of improved outcomes in every area of a child or young person's life by:

- Overseeing the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the development of integrated services for children in care and care leavers
- Progressing the implementation of national and local policy for children in care and care leavers, including maintaining a focus on prevention and services supporting children in their birth families and particularly those on children on the edge of care.
- Scrutinising performance reports on the City Council and partners' key performance indicators for children in care and care leavers, taking action where necessary to drive improvement.
- Producing the Annual Corporate Parenting Report to Full Council, including an analysis of city council and partner's performance in respect of corporate parenting and developing an action plan for the following year.
- Taking lead responsibility for ensuring effective participation arrangements for children in care and care leavers in City Council and partnership work.
- Considering regular reports on the way in which the Local Authority discharges its parental responsibility in practice through residential, family placement, adoption and case holding services provided or procured by the Local Authority.
- Taking an active role in ensuring effective quality assurance arrangements are in place for children in care and care leaver services, including a robust representation, compliments, complaints and independent reviewing arrangements.
- Identifying specific areas for exploration in order to engage in areas of specific interest and improvement.

### **14.3 Progress on Priorities 2015**

In 2015, the following priorities were set by the Corporate Parenting Panel, next to it is the update detailing progress to date:

- Review corporate parenting arrangements and refresh the Corporate Parenting strategy and Pledge. Achieved with new Pledge and Strategy launched in October 2015.
- Keep children and young people's voices at the heart of developing services, including representation at Panel. Achieved and continuing (see section 'Have a voice and take part').
- Continue to take an outcome focussed approach. Achieved with Panel taking a themed approach across the outcome areas and interrogating the impact of activity – asking, "what difference does this make to a child's life?"
- The panel will provide challenge and support to the whole council as corporate parent. Achieved and ongoing; examples of which include the work of the Panel to request care leavers be prioritised in the Social Value Clause of council awarded contracts and in

championing apprenticeship and work experience opportunities for children in care and care leavers.

- Continue to encourage more councillors to become involved in the corporate parenting agenda. Achieved and ongoing; the Panel comprises a strong and committed group of councillors who, together with colleagues evidence their commitment to improving the lives of children in and leaving care. Examples include the commitment to developing work experience opportunities for children in care and care leavers, of supporting foster carers in the city and of supporting community and faith groups in the city to provide care and support to unaccompanied children seeking refuge in Bristol.
- Continue to oversee the important strategic and operational work of the council as corporate parents with a focus on employment and training of care leavers, attainment and progression of children in care, recruitment and retention of foster carers. Achieved and on-going as detailed in this report to Full Council.

#### **14.4 Priorities 2016-17**

Building on work to date, the priorities of the Panel will be to:

- Helping to protect children by:
  - Supporting children and young people with another chance when they make a mistake and working to reduce the offending of children in care and care leavers
- Keep children and young people's voices at the heart of developing services by:
  - Continuing to include young people at Corporate Parenting Panel
  - Meeting regularly with children and young people at CICC and CLUB as well as at Fun Days and other events –listening carefully and acting on key messages
  - Support an annual survey of young people's views
- Focus on improving health outcomes including emotional and mental health and well-being by supporting improvement work
- Supporting children and care leavers to always have 'somewhere to come home to, to someone who will listen and be an advocate' by:
  - Supporting the recruitment and retention of foster carers and supported lodgings providers as VIPs in the city
  - 7 Supporting 'Good' quality provision - providing a stable, safe environment that allows children and young people to be the best they can be
  - 5 Hearing from foster carers about what good placement support looks like
- Hold high aspirations and promote the education of children in care and care leavers by:
  - Tracking progress at all levels
  - Ensuring our children get a 'good' education at the best schools
  - Monitoring absence rates and targeting a reduction in authorised absences

## 15 Performance<sup>13</sup>

Children in care – Bristol	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Bristol target 2015/16	Latest England Average
Rate per 10,000 of children looked after aged under 18 years (as at 31 March)	78	80	77	76	73	-	60
No. of children in care (as at 31 March)	680	715	695	700	675	-	
No. of children looked after continuously for at least 12 months as at 31 March	480	490	495	485	455	-	48,490
No. of children who ceased to be looked after, yr ending 31 March	285	275	325	310	380	-	31,710
%Looked after children with SEN Without Statement/Support	34.9	34.5	31.8	31.9	-	-	32.9
%Looked after children with SEN With Statement/EHC Plan	32.1	32.2	33.2	31.9	-	-	27.6
Stability of Placements - % with 3 or more placements in year 2015 Onwards **	-	-	-	8.0	11.6	8.5	10.0
Stability of Placements - % looked after for at least 2.5 yrs and in same placement for at least 2 yrs 2015 Onwards**	-	-	-	68.0	72.4	72.0	68.0

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<sup>13</sup> Taken from [Local Authority Interactive Tool](#), Bristol's 903 return/Government [Statistical First Release for looked after children](#) and Corporate Parenting Scorecard

Stability of Placements - % with 3 or more placements in year Pre 2015**	<b>13.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	-	-	-	<b>11.0</b>
Stability of Placements - % looked after for at least 2.5 yrs and in same placement for at least 2 yrs Pre 2015**	<b>69.0</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>72.0</b>	-	-	-	<b>67.0</b>
% of children looked after at 31 March, placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside LA boundary	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>14.0</b>
Crime - % of children looked after (aged 10+) convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year	<b>10.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.7</b>	-	<b>5.0</b>
% Looked after Children Missing from Care	-	-	-	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.1</b>	-	<b>8.6</b>
Persistent Absence (PA) - % children looked after for at least 12 months classed as persistent absentees (6 terms from 2013)	<b>6.9</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.8</b>	-	-	<b>4.9</b>
Exclusion - % of children looked after for at least twelve months with at least one fixed term exclusion	<b>17.2</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>15.0</b>	-	-	-	<b>10.3</b>
PE219b Health assessment				<b>91.2</b>	<b>81.8</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>90.0</b>
PE219a Dental checks				<b>82.3</b>	<b>70.8</b>	<b>82.0</b>	<b>84.1</b>
PE258 Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire completion				<b>80.0</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>74.9</b>

PE142a Care Leavers in suitable accommodation					<b>90.5</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>83.9</b>
PE036a Care Leavers in Education, Training and Employment					<b>57.5</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>52.3</b>
PE202 School aged children in care for 6 months or more with a Personal Education Plan					<b>65.2</b>	<b>90.0</b>	





# Full Council

17 January 2017

**Title:** Annual report from Youth Mayors & progress report on Youth Council manifesto

## Recommendation

**To note and acknowledge the annual report and recommendations of the Youth Council:**

**The recommendations of the Youth Council are:**

1. To request continued support for Bristol City Youth Council, Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament.
2. One evening per month, Bristol City Youth Council to host other youth participation groups and youth forums at City Hall (City Hall Youth Takeover).
3. To support the next youth council elections which will take place on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 and encourage Bristol's schools and young people to get involved.

## Summary

This is the exit report of Bristol City Youth Council and Bristol Youth Mayors.

**The significant issues in the report are:**

Highlights of the impact of Bristol City Youth Council and Youth Mayors Including:

Freedom of Mind Festival  
Contribution to Youth Strategy and Children and Families Partnership Strategy  
Bristol's Shadow Safeguarding Children's Board  
Public Transport and meetings with First Bus  
Shadow Councillor Scheme  
Should Bristol be a Sugar Smart City?



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## Policy

### **Children and Families Partnership Strategy 2016 – 2020**

Ensure that children, young people, families and communities, including the most vulnerable, lead in how to deal with challenges and are involved in citywide decision making.

Children and Young People Have a Voice in the City

### **Bristol City Council adheres to the National Youth Agency Hear by Rights Standards**

If your organisation provides services for young people it is vital that you make sure that they take part in the decision-making process, and their voice is heard. Hear by Right helps you follow best practice on the safe, sound and sustainable participation of children and young people in the services and activities they take part in.

## Consultation

### **1. Internal**

Bristol City Youth Council, Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament work closely with all departments of Bristol City Council and with many external organisations. Bristol City Youth Council, Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament are available to be consulted. There are protocols for consultation. Please contact the Participation and Involvement Team for more details.

Complementary to Bristol City Youth Council, Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament is the Children and Young People's Voice Network. This is a forum for lead workers who support youth voice work in the city. There are currently over 20 organisations represented. Minutes can be available on request. This network increases the reach of Bristol City Youth Council to well over 100 young people.

### **Proposal / recommendations from Youth Council**

Continued Support for Bristol City Youth Council, Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament  
Bristol City Youth Council would like Bristol City Council to pledge further support for the duration of the term of office for the newly elected 28 young people from Feb 2017 to Jan 2018 and to strengthen the voice of children and young people the city.

Bristol City Youth Council would like to host other youth participation groups youth forums at City Hall under the banner #cityhallyouthtakeover one evening per month. This is an opportunity to pull together key youth forums such as the Children in Care Council, Young Carers Voice and Unity (BME Youth Forum). This would increase reach and ensure that minority voices are heard. This could be paid for by the Youth Council's working budget.

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## **Other Options Considered**

Bristol City Council could decide not to invest in Bristol City Youth Council, Bristol Youth Mayors and UK Youth Parliament. There may be other ways to ensure that children and young people's voice is heard and that children and young people are involved in decisions.

Bristol City Youth Council could be outsourced to an external organisation and not delivered through the council. This is a possibility, however, it is important that the Youth Council is seen as a key and integral function of Bristol City Council and is also seen as having political independence at all times.

## **Risk Assessment**

All staff that work with children and young people are based in the Early Help Teams, part of the Early Intervention and Targeted Support division of the People Directorate. This ensures that all staff are working within a safeguarding framework. The highest safeguarding standards are adhered to at all times.

## **Legal and Resource Implications**

### **Legal**

Not Applicable

### **Financial (a) Revenue**

The Youth Council has £76k of direct staffing costs and over £25k of overheads such as management time and democratic services.

In addition, there is budget of £39k for CYP voice and Youth Council work. This includes the costs of running the elections, travel and expenses for the young people attending events locally and nationally. The annual elections cost around £12k , attendance at equality forums and events around £10k , the two annual residentials are costed at £5k. The UK Youth Parliament costs are approximately £4k. The balance includes travel and support costs.

A small budget of £2k has been provided by commissioners for the Freedom of Mind events this autumn. The money will be held for them by Off the Record, (local voluntary sector organisation that provides free and confidential mental health support to young people 11-25)

*(Financial comments provided by Michael Pilcher, Finance Business Partner)*

### **(b) Capital**

Not applicable.

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**Land**

Not applicable.

**Personnel**

Not applicable.

**Appendices:**

**Youth Mayors' report / Bristol City Youth Council's Report**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:** None

# APPENDIX

## Bristol City Youth Council End of Office report 2016 Chair

Within this report I am going to cover what we have achieved as a youth council during our term of office. We've achieved a lot over the last two years and so I'll try to cover as much of it as possible.

- In February 2015 over 10,000 young people voted on who they wanted to represent them on the Bristol City Youth Council. Since then we have had some of our young people leave to pursue various opportunities like university and so we voted in some new members.
- Our manifesto has been used to contribute ideas towards various different strategies, including the Children and Families strategy.
- After Nigel Evans from Ofsted took part in the regional UK Youth Parliament Question Time debate myself and a previous member of Youth Parliament for London, who now lives in Bristol, attended a regional meeting of Ofsted, to give ideas on student voice and how to listen to young people during Ofsted inspections. This led to young people who represent youth voice in the South West being offered the opportunity to elect representatives to the FES Reference Group. This group represents colleges of further education, independent learning providers, independent specialist colleges and providers of community learning and looks at how well Further Education providers are doing and how Ofsted inspects them.
- Members of the Youth Council were involved in interviews for positions of the Safeguarding Board.
- Members of the transport subgroup met with First Bus to discuss issues facing young people who use public transport
- Members of the Youth Council have been involved in the Councillor Shadowing Scheme working alongside councillors and attending special events. At the end of this they were invited to the Lord Mayor's Mansion House in celebration of the programme.

- In order to keep up to date with how well the youth services of Bristol are running we secured quarterly updates from Bristol Youth Links. This meant we were in constant contact with BYL and rather than them just coming to chat to us and then nothing coming from the conversations it meant that we got to know the outcomes of any suggestions or ideas.
- Bristol Young Heroes Awards is an annual gala dinner to celebrate the best of Bristol as found in the lives of its young people. We were invited to the dinner in both 2015 and '16 and have had members nominated for awards and presenting at the awards.
- We've also had members who made the Rife Magazine list of 24 Influential Bristolian's Under 24 in both 2015 and '16.
- Prior to the mayoral elections earlier this year we attended a mayoral hustings at the Station specifically aimed at young people. It was a really useful and informative evening.
- Earlier this year a couple of us attended the Learning Everywhere conference in which we had conversations about learning outside the classroom. Many of the adults in attendance were staff of primary schools so it was very useful being there as we gave the perspective of slightly older students.
- We sent representatives to the British Youth Council Annual Council meeting in Coventry and submitted three motions: 'Stop and Search Rights', 'Corporate Sustainability' and 'Involvement in local level politics', all of which passed.
- We have taken part in many consultations including the Budget Consultation, the Youth Strategy Consultation, the Young People's Housing & Independence Plan consultation and the Place Scrutiny Consultation offering the viewpoints of younger people.
- Finally, we hosted a debate recently on whether Bristol should be a SugarSmart city. The debate covered some interesting points including education and advertising.

Whilst this final report covers a lot of what we have done it is only a very short list of points and we have taken part in a lot of special events. If you have any questions about anything else we may have achieved we would be happy to answer them.

## Youth Mayors

In our one year's term as Youth Mayors, I would say that Elise and I have played a part in making progress on several key issues, including Mental Health, Work Experience, and Education. I would summarise our key achievements as:

- Working alongside the Mayor to ensure that providing a range of high quality work experience placements is a priority for businesses in Bristol. This was achieved, in part, by raising it at the 'City Office', a network of some of the largest employers in the region, so that they understand how crucial Work Experience can be in preparing young people for working life.
- Raising the profile of mental wellbeing for young people in Bristol, in a number of ways. After discussing the issue with the Mayor, we decided that the best way to improve awareness of mental wellbeing was to improve education for young people in Bristol, both in terms of maintaining positive mental wellbeing, and recognising signs of mental health conditions in themselves and others. Following on from this, Elise and I have drafted a letter detailing how we feel the city should go about this, and we intend to send this letter to city leaders on the subject, to try and create some traction. Going forward, I feel the best way to achieve a tangible change would be to meet with the Primary and Secondary Heads' associations, to try and encourage them to adopt mental wellbeing education as part of their curriculum.
- Engaging more young people in discussions about diet and health. Elise and I were recently involved with running a debate for young people, regarding the idea of Bristol becoming a 'Sugar Smart' city. The debate enabled us to discuss the issue on local television and radio, which will hopefully start conversations locally about sugar intake, and diet more generally. I would like to see the Youth Mayors play a large part in the development of the 'Sugar Smart' initiative, as it is an issue that disproportionately impacts young people, and having a young person's input could help it be as successful as possible.
- Supporting the Mayor in his efforts to make PSHEE a compulsory part of the school curriculum. Improving Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) provision in Bristol schools was a priority for me and Elise going into our term of office, and seeing it being taken so seriously not only by the Mayor, but also the Police and Crime Commissioner and other city leaders is a positive step in achieving real change. We plan to take this further, not only by meeting with the PCC, but also by contacting other youth councils regionally and nationally, to try and put it firmly on the political agenda.
- Utilising the Mayor's influence to improve youth engagement in politics. Working with Marvin, we have tried to improve communication with schools, and encouraged them to participate in schemes such as the UK Youth Parliament's Make Your Mark Ballot, and Bristol's Big Youth Vote (which takes place in February). We also organised a successful event with the Speaker of the House

of Commons, John Bercow, who spoke to, and answered questions from, young people representing several youth groups and forums. The ambition behind these efforts is to reduce youth disengagement in politics, a key issue in the years ahead. In future, I would like to see more work done in this area, especially in terms of improving political education and communication between schools and democratic bodies (the City Council/Local MPs).

Over the course of our term of office, I feel we have successfully campaigned on a wide range of issues, including those we prioritised at the start of the year. Against a backdrop of budget cuts and political uncertainty, the progress we have made in our campaigns is more significant than I had expected, and I hope that this continues in the last few months of our term of office, and beyond.

I would like to close this report by thanking the City Council for its continued support of the Youth Mayors, and youth democracy more generally.

## Ella Marshall

My time as a Member of the Bristol City Youth Council has been the most formative and empowering period of my life so far. I would not be the confident, outspoken person I am today, and I would definitely not have gained the contacts and support network I now have without BCYC and tireless work of Martin, Claire, Carl and Pete. In terms of the impact we have had as a political, democratically elected body, I am slightly more skeptical. Often it has felt as though the Youth Council are overshadowed by the roles of the Youth Mayors and this has left little room for us all to have our voices heard. Moreover, I feel our campaigns have been limited due to us not being allocated money to spend - and I would strongly advocate the creation of a budget to be spent by the Youth Council campaign groups in the next term. I also believe there is work to be done in terms of improving communications with the wider youth community in Bristol. I believe it would be in the Bristol City Council's best interests to invest some time in raising the profile of the BCYC, which would not only increase the number of young people who vote in the next election but would also provide a more far-reaching and credible platform for them to consult young people in the future.

In instances where individual Youth Council members have discovered their areas of interest and pursued these, I think we have been hugely effective - with one example being my own founding of Freedom of Mind Festival. Without being a Member of the Bristol City Youth Council and a Member of Youth Parliament, Freedom of Mind C.I.C. simply wouldn't exist. Through the UKYP mental health campaign, I became familiar with a whole network of mental health campaigners and groups in Bristol, which allowed me to express and act on the frustrations I had based on my own and my peers



experiences of stigma and insufficient mental health services. The platform of the Bristol City Youth Council also allowed me to access and bid for funding, which was crucial in making Freedom of Mind the large, citywide event that it became. My original vision was largely regarded as too ambitious but, along with the strong team of volunteers I recruited along the way, we pulled it off. I would encourage the council and all its related committee boards to fully invest in and support any future “ambitious” ideas that Youth Council members have from the offset - more than verbally, if possible. Freedom of Mind Festival was an all-encompassing eleven day series of events that initiated conversation, education and change around the way that many Bristolians view and speak of their own mental health. It fostered positive attitudes and deconstructed stigma - every one of our events was either nearly full or oversubscribed, and many we were able to put on for free due to the generosity of various organisations. Freedom of Mind is testament to the power of young people in terms of making change - and I look forward to continuing the Freedom of Mind partnership with the Bristol City Youth Council for years to come.

#### Jack Payne

In February, I was elected as one of the MYPs for the city of Bristol. Since speaking in May to the newly elected Bristol city council, I have achieved a lot. I was elected to be the youth parliament representative for the south region on the NHS National Youth Forum. The campaign I was elected on for the NHS Youth Forum was disability rights which coincide with my youth parliament campaign. I have so far been on two residential with the NHS Youth Forum. In July I went to the annual sitting where I passed a motion which went into the UK Youth Parliament Manifesto. The motion was passed on the idea of a more inclusive politics for disabled people. In October I was chosen to deliver a speech at the dispatch box at the annual UKYP sitting at the House of Commons. This speech was based on a better kinder democracy, but focused on the idea of a more inclusive politics for disabled people. I delivered the speech on the 11th of November at the dispatch box in the House of Commons. In Conclusion, I have triumphantly campaigned for the issues that I was elected on, Disability rights. From speaking at the House of Commons to being involved in an national NHS policymaking group, this year has been successful.

#### Ebony Clark

I'm a member of Bristol city youth council representing South Bristol it's been a busy year not just for me but for all of the youth council and I can safely say I've enjoyed

every minute of it and im pretty sure everyone else has too! These are memories I will carry with me for life.

I have recently been named as one of Bristol's 24 most influential people under the age of 24 –that; and being named Bristol's overall young hero for 2016 is an honour and a privilege and in having the privilege to be Bristol's overall young hero for 2016 it has only proved that people are not only passionate about giving young people in Bristol a voice but also opportunities as well.

Many of the Youth council took part in the councillor shadowing scheme where we shadowed our local councillors I shadowed Helen Holland it was a great insight into the daily politics of Bristol and what goes on in our neighbourhood. Shadowing Helen was very fun I learnt a lot and had experiences that will last a lifetime, infect it was so fun that we went over the hours we were supposed to we were supposed to do 10hrs worth but ended up doing about a months' worth! Through the shadowing scheme we have developed links with some of our neighbourhood partnerships and we hope we can develop these contacts in the future.

In this time I have become a learning city ambassador in which every month there's a new theme and at the start of the year I created my learning story.

We have taken part in many debates including the recent should we become a Sugar Smart City which I have to say was very fun. We have had the chance to take part in many presentations and I've also recently attended the listening partnership and I sat in front of many important people at that meeting.

I have worked at developing links with the listening partnership and have worked with developing new youth groups for young disabled people. In which I have made contacts with people like Nikita Singh and many others.

I have become an equalities Champion in my community, whereas young people we looked at ways of tackling discrimination. It is my hope that the new youth council will roll this out into more communities within our city, So that we can all take a lead on challenging discrimination in all forms.

We have sat on interview panels interviewing people from doctors to many of your managers to some of the highest people in the council , many of us have contributed to Young Healthwatch and have been involved in decision making, we've sat on the shadow safeguarding board and have done so much more.

I have recently started writing for Rife magazine on disability. This is just another way of getting my voice heard and speaking out for many other young disabled people in Bristol. Recently I have learnt to embrace my disability and through rife I can help young disabled people who read the magazine.

In the two years I have been on the youth council I have become a more confident person and with the elections coming up in February there's an opportunity for more young people's voices to be heard. I am standing again so hopefully ill be speaking to you all and nagging councillors again soon.

## Neha Mehta

I represent the North of Bristol. Two years ago Thanushan and I were elected as Youth Mayors on our campaigns of tailored work experience and improved careers advice. We were fortunate enough to have the opportunity to sit on the learning city partnership board with key influential leaders that represent all sectors in the city from education to business. Within merely two years I feel I have learnt so much and achieved a lot.

Thanushan and I both became learning ambassadors where we helped develop, promote and celebrate the learning opportunities in Bristol. We attended meetings where we discussed new ideas and strategies to really advocate learning throughout all ages and ways to bring communities together by learning.

I had the amazing chance to share my learning story and speak at the Bristol Girls Make It campaign launch, an organisation that encourages the uptake of STEM subjects by women and challenges the stereotypes associated with these careers.

Another highlight from our two-year involvement with the board was inputting and observing the development of the Engagement Hub. At meetings we discussed the imminent and potential problems and ways to fully utilise the space to fit students' needs. At the Engagement hub launch I was able to ask Leigh Hughes from Bouygues UK about how to develop the local workforce and what his company has done to do that. I also asked Sally Apps from Bristol Metropolitan why she thought it was important for young people to have experience outside school and how her school creates these opportunities.

We have both thoroughly enjoyed our time on the Learning City Partnership Board and have really got an insight into how much work and planning goes on behind the scenes.

We want to thank all the board members and look forward to seeing what Bristol Learning City will look like in the future.

## Molly Flitcroft

Hi. I'm Molly. I am going to talk about the Bristol Safeguarding Childrens Shadow Board. So far this year we have been working on recruiting people to join the board and the 'our opinion' survey. We have made a model of what the board will hopefully look like. We hope to have a chair and vice chair, 5 people from equalities groups, one person each from: a charity group, a health group, a homelessness group, a neighbourhoods group, schools, from BCYC and a media rep. All of these people will represent their groups and feedback to and from them, they will also all have deputies in case they are not able to make the meetings. We will also have adults to support the young people. We created an application form, to send out to schools and different youth groups, from our membership criteria. After we have had the application forms back in, we aim to have a 'mock' meeting for the short listed applicants and individual interviews. We have decided to have monthly meetings rather than our original once a quarter meetings. So far this year we have also been working on the 'our opinion' survey. This is a survey about safeguarding that will be sent out to schools around Bristol which we aim to have sent out soon along with the application forms.