

## Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



**Date:** Tuesday, 18 July 2017

**Time:** 5.00 pm

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

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Date: 18 July 2017



## **1. Questions and replies**

Questions received from councillors are set out in the enclosed document, together with the replies from the Mayor, or relevant Cabinet member where appropriate.

## **2. Councillor statements**

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



# Member Forum

## 18 July 2017

### Questions and replies



#### Procedural note:

##### **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

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



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk**

**Subject: Weston A&E Night Closure**

1. Can the Mayor tell me what assessment has the Council been given regarding the impact the closure of Weston A&E at night will have on Bristol Hospitals?
2. Does the Mayor share my concern that the Weston A&E will be closed partly because the Trust cannot attract enough trained staff and as part of his answer can he provide his view as to whether fears of a hard Brexit, poor conditions for junior doctors and highly skilled nurses might have something to do with it?

**REPLY**

1. Health and Social care partners across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset have had detailed discussions around the impact of the Weston A&E night closure at the A&E Delivery Board and the Urgent Care Forum. There has been detailed modelling and impact modelling between the 3 Acute Trusts and the local CCGs and a shared action plan is in place which has been agreed with NHS England. It has not presented any specific risks to the Local Authority and since the closure took place the number of patients that have been diverted to other Trust A&E departments has been very low.
2. Yes, I share your view. Public sector pay restriction and lack of funding in the NHS has adversely affected the NHS's ability to attract trained staff. As we saw from the recent dispute on junior doctor's terms and conditions, there is an ongoing concern about the pressures hospital staff are expected to work in which affects both morale in the NHS and their ability to recruit into the sector. Given that the NHS has heavily relied on migration to provide trained staff in recent years, the terms of Brexit will have a significant effect.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Liz Radford

Subject: Your Neighbourhood Library Consultation

1. Is the Mayor confident in the methodology used to assess the ‘need & suitability of branch libraries in each of his three option maps?
2. The choices presented to the public exclude the possibility of maintaining a branch library or network through the use of volunteers. Can the Mayor tell me why this is not being seriously considered when such a model of provision has been successful in other cities with similar budgetary pressures?

**REPLY**

- Yes – all 26 Bristol libraries were mapped against the four published criteria. The planning of libraries in Bristol has been determined by a range of historical reasons that do not fit today’s requirements. The three options match the population of today’s Bristol and residents have the chance to select an option or provide alternative suggestions.
- Alternative suggestions are welcomed in Q2 of the library survey. Residents can offer suggestions and feedback here and we will consider these alongside the need for a statutory library service.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillors Clive Stevens and Carla Denyer**

**Subject:** Street tree budget cuts

In May, Cllrs Stevens and Negus submitted questions and statements to Cabinet about the safety and financial risks and the alternatives to the proposed budget cuts to street trees. They were reassured that the proposals would be looked at again. At the time of writing we have not heard any updates on this review.

We understand that Bristol TreeForum volunteers are looking for constructive ways to work with the Council to solve this problem, but trust is at rock bottom and each time new information emerges it gets worse.

The emergency TreeForum meeting on 4th July revealed some uncomfortable truths:

- The Council's Highways Department did not consult the Council's arboricultural officers, the TreeForum or any other relevant experts about street trees before making their decision to cut 78% off the budget.
- The budget line RS02 voted on in Full Council in February referred to £1.2m of Highways Maintenance Reductions in 17/18 and wasn't specific as to what these would be.
- Highways are justifying the decision on the basis of cutting back to a statutory service, usually doing this achieves the minimum short term cost. For street trees maintaining a statutory service level is not minimum cost as was and has been pointed out time and time again. We are still yet to see the fully costed business case and risk assessment.

1. Could the Mayor clarify whether he wants to minimise the cost of managing street trees, or does he want the service to be at a statutory level which will cost the Council more (possibly more this year as reserves might need to be allocated to cover the higher risks)?

2. Could the Mayor check with his legal officers the personal liability of himself and/or the Deputy Mayor and/or the Council should an accident occur where it is proven that the Council has a duty of care (e.g. Maintaining the highway) and that the damage is directly caused by this change in policy? Given the facts that have come to light, it seems that in such an instance it could be a case of negligence.

## **REPLY**

1. The authority has a statutory duty to ensure the safety of the highway network, that includes highway trees. We will be consulting on the Trees and Verges element of the Highways Maintenance Service and budget . Bristol Tree Forum and other groups such as local traders and community groups will be fully engaged.
2. The highway officers fully understand and adhere to legal requirements.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent (Hengrove and Whitchurch Park)  
Subject: Your Neighbourhood Consultation

The current 'Your Neighbourhood' consultation makes the following statement:

'On 21 February 2017 Full Council decided to save £1.4m from the Library service budget'

1. Can the Mayor please clarify exactly where Full Council decided this cut of £1.4m to the library service and which resolution at the meeting agreed such a cut; does the Mayor agree that as this statement is incorrect that the consultation should be ceased?
2. For residents in Hengrove and Whitchurch Park when they come to complete the Consultation on the library service they are presented with 3 options for a future library service. All 3 options involve closing Whitchurch Library – which option do you think they should choose?

#### REPLY

1. “On 21st February, as recommended in the budget report, Full Council noted the proposals for reducing costs and generating income underpinning the Council’s budgets for 2017/18 and future years in Appendix 6 to the report. Part of those savings were cumulative £1.4m savings from the library services budget. For 2017/18, £300,000 was to be saved as part of those cumulative savings. Full Council approved the budget, including that saving. Page 14 of the consultation document “Your Neighbourhood” states: “The current budget for the library service has already been reduced by £300k from 1st April 2017. The remaining budget of £4.29m will be reduced by a further £1.1m over the following two financial years to give the total saving of £1.4m. Although the budget for 2018-2020 is yet to be formally approved, this consultation is based on the need to find savings of £1.4m on an ongoing basis from the revenue budget.”

I am sure on the basis of those decisions you will agree it is right to continue consulting citizens on this matter. The consultation document is accurate and appropriately worded to allow people to understand what is proposed for the service, and to give informed views on those proposals



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2. Hengrove and Whitchurch Park residents can use Q2 to propose alternative options or suggestions if none of the options are preferred.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant**

**Subject: Housing allocation**

I receive an increasing number of requests for help from ward residents seeking to be rehoused due to overcrowding. It is understandable that, due to the UK Government's austerity policy, there are not enough affordable homes in Bristol, as with elsewhere in U.K. I would like to know if the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for Homes intend to review the policy of housing allocation with regards to restricting applicants to bidding only on properties deemed to be the right size for their household, resulting in some larger families remaining stuck in tiny properties because there are so few houses of four-beds and above available, whilst a smaller family 'upgrades' to a three-bedded home?

**REPLY**

The failure by successive recent governments to invest sufficiently in social housing has resulted in historic shortages of affordable housing across the country. Austerity policies have worsened this crisis and have left us with considerable pressure on our waiting lists.

Local authorities need the powers and resources to take on some of the causes of these issues in the longer term, so that we can build the homes the city needs and for varied and resilient communities to flourish. However we are working with developers to meet our own affordability targets.

In the short term I can confirm that we are about to undertake a thorough review of the allocations process. The first stage will be a consultation about exactly who affordable housing for. The second stage will then look at the process and rules, including the precise issue you are raising here.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from John Goulandris**

**Subject: Street Tree Budget**

1. At a meeting of the Bristol Tree Forum on 4th July, held at City Hall, senior highways officers admitted that they had not consulted the Council's in-house arboriculturalists, when setting the budget for street tree maintenance. They also admitted that they had no expertise in tree management or tree maintenance budgeting. Is the Mayor comfortable that this approach to setting the reduced street tree budget is reasonable, rational and prudent?
2. Tree professionals have opined that, if street trees are not subject to regular maintenance e.g. pollarding, this short term approach stores up costly problems for the future.  
Is the Mayor fully satisfied that the short term savings identified by reducing the street tree budget will not be more than offset by rising costs in future years?

**REPLY**

1. Given the Government's cuts to Local Government funding there is no question they are risking a whole raft of council services, including provision for trees.

We have had to set our budget based on those government reductions and have of course tried to maximise funding for life and limb services.

Our approach to the tree budget has been based on the previous financial years and an assessment of health and safety requirements. The estimated cost of the work in the first quarter is below the budget allocation at present.

Although we intend to meet our statutory duty under the Highways Act, we will need support and input from communities, traders and other interested parties including the Bristol Tree Forum. I would welcome you and your party's input and solutions.

2. We will be consulting on the Trees and Verges element of the Highways Maintenance Service and budget . Bristol Tree Forum and other groups such as local traders and community groups will be fully engaged. I would welcome you and your party's input and solutions. However, I share your concerns that the risk to trees is yet another aspect of the Government's disinvestment in cities that must be reversed. I hope that you and your colleagues will join us at our national lobby of Parliament in September.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton**

**Subject:** RPS extensions

We have been advised by officers that the council will disallow our request for an extension of the Southville RPZ to a limited number of streets south of North St (namely Friezewood, Carrington, Balfour, Truro, Ashville and Durnford streets).

My understanding is that this is because the administration will only accept extensions of RPS which have popular support and are whole new zones (Given that the area of Ashton other than these streets has off street parking, this seems to be a hard ask).

**Will the Mayor use this question as an opportunity to spell out what his policy is regarding the extension of residents parking zones?**

**E.g. Minimum size of zone, level of support required, level of proof required, likelihood of implementation, etc, etc.**

**REPLY**

- I was elected with an assurance that I would not extend the RPZ without clear community support.
- The scope of the RPZ review did not include extensions. However we have considered these where they are less than a 5% increase to the scheme and has natural geographic boundaries.
- It is absolutely right for an extension to be granted, Ward councillors must be able to demonstrate widespread public support. I would have thought for a small area this should be simpler, and not a hard ask.



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

Subject: Your Neighbourhood Consultation

Redland library, the nearest to most of my residents who have no public building in Cotham ward, is set to have its funding withdrawn in all three tweaks to the single option put out to consultation which is a far worse version of the proposal rejected in 2015.

By ruling out the value of volunteer support, which forms the basis of much successful regeneration of library services around the country, many of the heavily-used libraries in the northern part of the city cannot score highly against the weighted consultation criteria. If only to retain a single public building in the area many of the rejected building assets may be taken over by local residents and fall out of the city's family of libraries. Even if the fully-staffed only municipal model were to be maintained volunteers would make it possible to spread the same number of staff around more sustained building adjusted to those areas with fewer volunteers. Bristol could do even better than this. Why did the Mayor reject all the alternatives suggested by DCMS and presented in the M-shed briefing attended by senior officers – particularly Public Service Mutualisation?

## REPLY

- Alternative suggestions are welcomed in Q2 of the library survey. Redland residents can offer suggestions and feedback here.
- We are exploring other models of library provision including mutualisation to see what benefits they may be able to offer in future to the final core service model. However, the timescales required for developing such alternatives are longer than the timeframes allowed for delivering the savings required from the service.
- Discussions about the role of volunteers to extend access to the library buildings in terms of developing community activities will be part of developing the provision in local libraries, enabling the buildings to be used by communities beyond the staffed hours. We have a responsibility to concentrate on the core statutory provision first.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Brenda Massey**

**Subject: Abandoned vehicles**

Given the rising numbers of abandoned vehicles parked on roads across the city, can you provide details of the number of reports received over a six month period, plus the average time from receiving a report to resolution, either by the owner removing the vehicle or BCC sending it to be scrapped, etc?

**REPLY**

1. There were reports of approx. 1150 Abandoned Vehicles between July and December 2016.

When an abandoned vehicle is referred by the Police / Fire Brigade for urgent clearance as it poses a potential arson risk, these are removed within 24 hours. There are 15 to 25 of these each month.

Abandoned vehicles can also be referred by the public to the Neighbourhood Enforcement team, who will visit and assess the vehicle within 10 working days. If the Officer believes it is an abandoned vehicle then they will attach a 15 day advisory notice to the vehicle and make follow up enquiries and arrange removal if necessary. Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers will revisit the vehicle after 15 days to see if the vehicle is still in place & arrange removal if necessary.

The contractor who removes the vehicle will normally take 2-3 days to make the collection following the enforcement officers' request.



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

**Subject: HARTCLIFFE WAY AND DAYS ROAD RECYCLING CENTRES**

1. The Mayor may recall the immense satisfaction felt by other South Bristol councillors and myself when he replied to a formal question posed by myself last summer and stated his belief that the proposed Hartcliffe Way Recycling Centre would open for business in 2018. What progress has been made since that time?
2. It had hitherto been my belief that the lease on the Days Road Recycling Centre (which is not Bristol City Council property) only had a very short time left on its lease - and failure to deliver the Hartcliffe Way Recycling Centre on time would jeopardise our negotiating position. Can the Mayor confirm how long before the lease at Days Road terminates?

**REPLY**

1. This remains our ambition. We are currently procuring a multi-disciplinary design team to undertake a feasibility study to test the viability of delivering a new Hartcliffe Way Recycling Centre. An indicative delivery programme will be identified at the end of feasibility study in Winter 2017. This will include discussion with Bristol Waste Company.
2. The Council owns a long leasehold interest in the Days Road Recycling Centre. This does not expire until 2090. The Council has a shorter lease on the larger adjacent area which has been used as the waste rail interchange. That lease expires in July 2019.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

**Subject: Gloucester Road RPZ**

Ever since the start of the Redland parking scheme in July 2014 and the more recent Montpelier parking scheme, roads in my ward and formerly in my ward have been packed with commuters throughout the day, causing frequent inconvenience and risk to residents.

**What is the Mayor's answer to residents on either side of Gloucester Rd who have repeatedly been told there will be a basis for them making the case that there's support for managing parking?**

**REPLY**

- This is straightforward – there is a basis for making a case.
- Local ward members need to take a lead with a public engagement conversation with the wider community to measure the support for a scheme.
- The process will be owned and progressed by the ward members, with the support of council officers and it will be necessary for the members to determine 'overwhelming' public support for a scheme to be considered.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Knowle Library

When the library service was being reviewed in 2005 the old Knowle library which was in a poor state of repair was exchanged for a rent free period of 7 years on a newly refurbished facility in Broad Walk Shopping Centre. This was and is one of the busiest libraries in Bristol and as well as serving the local area because of better than average bus services and free parking, attracts custom from a wide area a lot of which have deprivation issues.

1. Given that the rent free period has now expired and the council is contracted to pay £31,200 rent and £15,114 service charge until 2030 without a break clause in the lease does the Mayor not agree that the numbers dictate that this should be the last library to close under his review?

2. Will the Mayor give an assurance that unlike that for Jubilee Pool any Equalities Impact Assessment on changes will be objectively written and reviewed?

#### REPLY

- We have assessed all the 27 Bristol libraries against four criteria, taking into account usage and building suitability which includes running costs. This will include the Knowle rent and service charge. However it is not all about the running costs but whether it is still the best library in an area in a reduced network.

Knowle Library is in two of the three options and we await the consultation results after September 5<sup>th</sup>.

- We are very mindful of our due regard to Equalities Impact Assessment and the impacts disclosed by residents during the consultation. All assessments will be clear, transparent and objective.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels**

**Subject: Council Funding**

Insert question details

1. Since 2010 Bristol City Council has had to make significant spending cuts on public services. However how the council is funded remains a mystery to a significant proportion of the public. To help clarify the situation and promote political literacy, please can you explain how Bristol City Council is funded in this financial year, specifically where it is revenue comes from and what proportion of its funding comes from National Government?

2. Can the Mayor or Deputy Mayor provide an overview of how the Council's budget will be reduced over the next three years and as part of his answer will he explain who is making the decision to cut our funding and what would be the consequences of setting an illegal Budget here in Bristol?

**REPLY**

1. The Council set a net budget of around £365m at the start of the financial year. That is primarily funded from Council Tax (£192) and Business Rates (£150m). The balance is made up using a surplus on last year's Collection Fund (a separate statutory account for collecting and paying out local taxes), and specific government grants (mostly New Homes Bonus £10m).

Because the Council is a pilot for Business Rate retention it does not receive any Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from Central Government. Instead it retains 100% of business rates (rather than 50% nationally), less a tariff of £54m – which is broadly equivalent to losing £41m of RSG but gaining the other 50% of business rates.

However the Council spends significantly more on local services (over £1bn per annum). For example the Housing Revenue Account, which accounts for the costs of providing Council Housing, is funded through rents and service charges (some £150m per annum). The Council also receives other local income, for example from parking (£18m) – which is ring-fenced for support to public transport and roads related expenditure.

Schools, along with some core education functions are primarily funded from Dedicated Schools Grant which is around £200m this year. Public health is also funded directly from central government grant (£33m). Excluding housing benefit subsidy, the Council receives some £275m of Government Grants – equating to 32% of gross annual spend.

2. The 2017/18 budget report sets out a programme of some £60m of savings, over the next 3 years, a number of which are part of the ongoing consultation process. However that still leaves over £20m of efficiencies to identify during that 3 year period, and a further £20-25 for the following 2 years. We are currently developing a new medium term financial strategy and consulting with members on the resourcing principles that will support that the delivery of those savings.

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As a Council we are bound by statute and the Local Government Finance Act 1992 precludes Councils from setting an illegal budget and which would inevitably lead to external intervention. Central Government would take over and impose whatever necessary measures were needed to balance the budget without any democratic accountability to the people of Bristol.

The principal of rolling out of political literacy across the city, however is much wider debate than the funding of Bristol City Council. All elected councillors, city leaders have a responsibility to reach out to citizens in a much more engaging way, on city challenges, the role of communities and individual citizens to meet these challenges and the role of the media. I would welcome a session with members on improving political literacy in Bristol.



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

**Subject:** Street Trees and the Environment

1. Mature trees absorb a huge amount of CO<sub>2</sub> and mature street trees in particular help to combat air pollution in our cities. Does the Mayor agree that Bristol's street trees play an important role in improving our environment and helping air quality?
2. If mature street trees are not maintained responsibly, their uncontrolled growth can cause problems, given their proximity to houses and the highway. As a result of the reduction in the street tree budget, a 'simple' solution to future street tree management may be the felling of mature street trees as has happened in Sheffield. This has a devastating impact on both the street scene and air pollution. It would also send out a very curious, contradictory environmental message from a recent European Green Capital City. Will the Mayor give his commitment not to fell Bristol's street trees?

**REPLY**

1. I agree, street trees are an important part of the street scene environment. Although different species vary on the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> they can absorb and they do offer an important part of the solution in helping air quality in the city.
2. We will be consulting on the Trees and Verges element of the Highways Maintenance Service and budget. Bristol Tree Forum and other groups such as local traders and community groups will be fully engaged. However there is no doubt that it is the government cuts to local authority funding that is at the root of the problem. It maybe that you can use your own influence with the government to argue for adequate money for Bristol, and also join us at our Parliamentary lobby in September.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton**

**Subject: Pavement parking**

In 2015, the charity Guide Dogs placed Bristol in the top ten worst cities for pavement parking. A quick walk down many streets in Southville or other wards will show you why – there are too many cases of this inconsiderate parking take up the pavement to count. For many of us this sort of parking is ‘just’ a quality of life issue – shrinking public space and cramped streets as people have to edge around cars to get around their neighbourhood.

But for those with children, vulnerable groups, or those with disabilities, pavement parking can represent a real threat. When a parent with a pushchair and toddler is forced out into the road by a car blocking the pavement the danger to life is obvious. Pavement parking creates a hostile environment for those with disabilities - wheelchair users can get blocked in, unable to go around or past parked cars. Those with sight issues might hurt themselves walking into parked vehicles or be forced to walk in the road with oncoming traffic. According to the Guide Dogs charity 87% of blind or partially sighted people have experienced trouble with a pavement parked car.

The Bristol Walking Alliance has published a petition which states:

“We call on the Mayor to ban parking on pavements in Bristol.

In particular, we ask the Mayor, councillors, officers, partner agencies and Bristol's four MPs to:

1. Raise public awareness about the negative impacts of pavement parking for all residents, but especially people with sensory or mobility impairments, children, parents and carers, frail and elderly people and other pedestrians who are either forced to walk in the road or are unable to access their destination;
2. Support proactively the Local Government Association's initiative to make pavement parking a clear offence;
3. Until such legislation is in place, use existing new Traffic Regulation Orders to end the damage to pavements, to social inclusion and to public health caused by parking on Bristol's pavements.”

**Will the Mayor act on the petition demands and ensure that Bristol’s pavements are safe and accessible for everyone?**

**Response:**

- Legally the Council can only take enforcement action against vehicles parked on a pavement that are parked in contravention of a parking restriction and on land classified as ‘adopted highway’. Examples of this are double yellow lines, residents parking bays, bus stops and pavement/footways with appropriate signs.
- Where there are no restrictions present, only the Police can take action and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for “Obstruction”. Ward members should encourage citizens to report these offences to the Police.



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- We are aware that this subject has been looked at by Government in the past 12 months, but we not aware of any outcome.
  - Bristol City Council Parking Services enforce parking restrictions under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and local Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO).



**Question(s) to the Mayor from** Councillor Clare Campion-Smith (Westbury on Trym and Henleaze)

**Subject:** Electric Charging Points

- 1) Will the Mayor please give details of the progress being made to provide electric charging points for vehicles:
  - in car parks
  - On residential roads?
- 2) How does the Council monitor the usage of those installed?

**REPLY**

1. Bristol currently manages a network of charging points for the West of England, including North Somerset, BaNES and South Gloucestershire councils. This currently includes 59 (23 in Bristol) publically accessible charging units in car parks and an additional 37 (17 in Bristol) private charge units in businesses for employees and fleet vehicles.

The Go Ultra Low West (GULW) project aims to more than double this number of charge units by 2021, to 200 in total.

Currently the GULW project team are developing a market research study to ensure that the location of the newly planned charge units is where they will be needed. As part of this they are also considering the long term revenue implications of the charge points, including maintenance and electricity supply. The results of this market research will guide the placement of new charge units, and is expected to include charge units on residential roads.

2. The current network of charging points that is managed by Bristol City council is run by Charge Your Car as part of their wider charging point network. Charge Your Car provides data on the usage of all charge points managed by Bristol City council. <https://travelwest.info/drive/electric-vehicles/charge-points>



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant

**Subject: Avonmouth village – Environment Agency decision not to award a permit to operate a processing plant for incinerator bottom ash**

**Following the news of the Day Group's intention to appeal the Environment Agency's decision NOT to award a permit to operate a processing plant for incinerator bottom ash (IBA), will the Mayor reaffirm the Council's opposition to this enterprise, with particular regard to its close proximity to Avonmouth Village and confirm that the site will be monitored by appropriate BCC enforcement officers for any evidence of unauthorised activity?**

**REPLY**

I was pleased to hear that the Environment Agency (EA) had refused to issue an environmental permit for the proposed use. I felt that it would have had an unacceptable impact for local residents. I know that Council officers submitted detailed comments to the EA when they consulted on the permit application and I also submitted a letter to the EA expressing concerns.

Whilst the appeal is against the EA's decision, and they are the lead role in defending the appeal case, Council officers are in regular contact with the EA and will have a supporting role at the appeal.

Regular monitoring of potential unlawful activity at the Days site has been carried out by Pollution Control and Planning Enforcement officers and this will continue. The City Council will also continue to liaise with the EA to ensure there is a joined up approach to enforcement if it becomes necessary.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Jones**

**Subject: POLICING ILLEGAL TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS**

Q1. Can the Mayor tell me the cost to local taxpayers of cleaning up after the 'massive mess' left by the travellers in May, following their eviction from Stockwood open space near Craydon Road?

Q2 Given the success and speed in removing a subsequent group of traveller trespassers (at the end of June) through the use of S.61 of the Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994, will the Mayor liaise with the Police to adopt greater use of these powers in tackling this form of public nuisance?

**REPLY**

1. The cost to dispose of the waste collected from the site was £3,404. A total of 50 hours of time was also required from the Parks Service to organise and carry out the clean-up.
2. A jointly agreed Unlawful Encampment Protocol is currently being developed between us and Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Each organisation will use the powers available to remove unlawful traveller encampments and tent use.

The powers available to the police in section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, enables these powers only to be used in certain circumstances:

- That the travellers have caused damage to the land or property or used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour to the occupier or owner or his agent
- That those persons have between them six or more vehicles on the land

The police are able to ask them to move off the land, but are unable to use these powers if these conditions are not met.

The Unlawful Encampment policy should be signed off by both organisations by the end of August 2017.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eleanor Combley**

**Subject: Proportional Representation**

In the recent General Election, the 'First Past the Post' voting system again failed to live up to its reputation of providing strong and stable government.

This election delivered the second minority government in a decade; yielded a wildly disproportionate allocation of seats with, for example, the Democratic Unionist Party gaining 10 seats from 292,316 votes while the Liberal Democrats gained 12 seats from 2.4 million votes; spectacularly failed to match votes to seats with 27,930 votes required to elect one MP from the Scottish National Party compared with 525,371 votes to elect one Green Party MP; and resulted in 68% of votes being 'wasted' i.e. having no effect on the outcome of the election.

Proportional voting systems are used effectively in countries around the world as well as in the UK devolved parliaments and the London Assembly. Nobody should be disenfranchised because of where they live and you cannot have a fairer society without a fair electoral system.

**Will the Mayor publically support proportional representation as the national electoral system and inform local MPs, leaders of all political parties represented in the UK Parliament, and the media of this decision?**

**REPLY**

- Proportional Representation (PR) and other voting systems is primarily a national issue and I know you as a party have campaigned on this, for many years. PR is simply a change to voting systems and my view is there are greater challenges to the political system that need to be met as a priority. Key areas for me include the dis-engaged communities who do not vote.
- My priority is to ensure we achieve greater and more diverse engagement in the political processes rather than simply change a system that does nothing to challenge the status quo.
- I'm sure the Green Party are pleased to see the gender, racial, class diversity we've already brought to leadership at the council, as well as the cross party working we are all developing, as an improvement to the political system in this City. All of us need to challenge ourselves on the issues of race, class and gender and inclusivity in politics.
- I have been leading work, with partners in Bristol to work towards these aims. Last week saw the conclusion of the 5th City Leadership Programme. This aims at developing the next generation of city leaders and aims to give young people from across the city the coaching and mentoring to develop into potential leaders.



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- We are working on the Stepping Up programme which is designed to enable BME individuals with aspirations to reach the most senior roles across Bristol within 1-3 years, so that the leadership landscape more readily serves the communities in Bristol. Stepping up Programme will establish an Employer Consortium which will source individuals from within their own organisations who they believe have the talent and potential to reach a Senior Leadership role in Bristol.
  - I would invite you and our colleagues in the chamber to be involved in these initiatives next year.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from insert details**

**Subject:** Hope Virtual School

The Hope Virtual School serving the needs of looked after children in the city has been required to send over £200,000 back to the ESFA because of an apparent failure by finance dept.

1) Can the Mayor give the exact figure that was returned to the ESFA and explain how he has allowed this to happen on his watch?

2) How will the Mayor make up the hole in the budget for these children and which budget will he be raiding and service cut to make up the shortfall?

**REPLY**

- The Pupil Premium funding returned to the ESFA at the end of the previous financial year was £278,260
- The HOPE Virtual School (VS) allocates Looked After Children Pupil Premium Grant three times during the financial year in order to target monies as accurately as possible.
- Pupils experience high levels of mobility and the aim is to provide funding as accurately as possible.
- Since the last Children Services' Inspection, more robust arrangements have been put in place for paying Pupil Premium to schools for individual Looked After Children. This has been used as a key lever to improve the focus of support for these vulnerable learners and improve their education outcomes.
- More schools are taking longer to meet the conditions of the grant and there is a lag between when funding for an individual learner is identified and to when it is received.
- There were specific circumstances this year which have meant that an element of funding has not been spent as planned. There include:
  - Some proposed projects to support Looked After Children did not materialise within the necessary time frame as there were more spending controls in place
  - Some places on activity commissioned with this funding were not taken up
  - Some proposals to allocate funding against activity for this academic year but in the 2017/18 financial year were deemed to be ineligible for expenditure. The unhelpful use of financial years for this funding return rather than academic years has been raised with the DfE by the national network of Virtual Headteachers.
- We are working towards a stronger liaison between BCC and Hope Virtual School to ensure that no funding is returned to the EFSA from this Grant in this financial year
- On a separate note, we don't 'raid' any budgets. The budget is all our collective responsibility as city leaders and phrasing your contribution in this way is unhelpful.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoffrey Gollop**

**Subject: BRISTOL ARENA UPDATE**

1. Can the Mayor advise when his value-for-money assessment into this important project will be published or widely circulated?
2. In the event that this Mayoral priority is eventually delivered, can the Mayor confirm that sufficient contractual safeguards will be put in place to protect the taxpayer from any operational losses?

**REPLY**

1. Tenders are being assessed and we will award the contract in the first week of August. The value-for-money work is expected to take 8-10 weeks. We will make a summary and/or a redacted version available publically.
2. The Agreement for Lease with the Operator ensures that the operator pays an annual rental to the council, which is index-linked. Operational losses by the facility are an operator risk; the rental does not reduce if the Arena financial performance is worse than that forecast by the operator in their business plan.



**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Combley**

**Subject:** School Funding

Has the Mayor or the Cabinet Member for Skills and Education been given any clue of the dates when either the outcome of the consultation on schools' funding or a response to your June letter might be forthcoming?

**REPLY**

- We understand that there was a very high response rate nationally to the on the Fair Funding Formula consultation. The Department for Education is currently processing the responses to the Phase 2 consultation and there is no indication of the date when the response will be announced.
- Cllr Hiscott, Cabinet Lead for Education & Skills, wrote to the Secretary of State for Education on June 22<sup>nd</sup> seeking assurance that Bristol schools will receive notification of their funding for 2018/19 in the near future and lobbying for further funding for Bristol High Needs. It is a typical to allow a month for a response.



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

**Subject: Street Trees**

At the Cabinet meeting on 16th May 2017 the Mayor and Cllr. Craig agreed to reconsider the 78% reduction in the highways budget for the maintenance and replanting of street trees and to submit new proposals to public consultation.

Since then, comments were made by the executive member at a packed meeting of Bristol Tree Forum last week about keeping the present delivery arrangements for this service, maintaining the reduction for this year (so building up problems) while reviewing future years, and putting Highways trees into a (Parks) Trust.

Will the Mayor please clarify the Administration's current thinking on this matter and confirm when this particular unresolved issue will be brought forward for consultation?

**REPLY**

- We will be consulting on the Trees and Verges element of the Highways Maintenance Service and budget. Bristol Tree Forum and other groups such as local traders and community groups will be fully engaged



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

**Subject: GARDEN WASTE SERVICE**

1. As the Mayor will be aware, from 3rd July 2017, households who subscribe to this service have had their collections changed from weekly to fortnightly in order to achieve £121k budget savings.

Is the Mayor prepared to look again at this blunt move which does not take into account variations in seasonal demand?

2. Residents have identified a far more imaginative approach to dealing with garden waste than bi-weekly collections. Instead, people have suggested that their green bins could be emptied weekly over the Spring & Summer months (April – October) but then cut back to MONTHLY during the rest of the year (November-March) when the service is rarely used. Is the Mayor prepared to trial this proposal?

**REPLY**

1.

The Collection of Garden Waste, although a paid for service, remains subsidised by the Bristol Council Tax Payer.

The decision was therefore made to reduce the costs of providing this service, by reducing the frequency instead of increasing the price that residents have to pay every year.

The move to fortnightly collections brings Bristol in line with other local authority garden waste services.

There are other options for residents who have an excess of garden waste which they need to dispose of, including buying a second bin and collection and taking Garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Customers who do not wish to use the annual subscription service can use the ad hoc Garden Sack Service.

2.

I agree with the sentiment of your idea and we have considered the seasonal differences in demand which could be managed by running a Spring-Autumn service.

While we have not ruled this out we have to consider the impact on resourcing. This would require a move from full time staff to seasonal staff and hire vehicles for the summer period only, which may not deliver the level of savings set.



Member Forum  
18 July 2017  
Statements from councillors



**Procedural note:**

**STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

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



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

- CS 01 - Cllr Anthony Negus – Neighbourhoods consultation
- CS 02 - Cllr Gill Kirk - Democratic Accountability of STPs through the council's Health and Wellbeing Board
- CS 03 - Cllr Jo Sergeant –
  - a. Kings Weston iron bridge
  - b. Consultation on libraries



## **STATEMENT CS 01**

**Statement by Cllr. Anthony Negus**

**(LibDem, Cotham)**

### **Neighbourhoods Consultation.**

The consultation document and this exercise is flawed. I have been barred from seeking to call it in because it is not a decision from this Administration. Instead this is a request to our citizens to comment upon options of such poor quality and limited range that their endorsement or rejection will tell us little. But the resulting decisions will be validated by this consultation process and then unlikely to pass the test for challenge by calling-in. So I must raise my concerns here.

Proposals to address the budget cuts to libraries, neighbourhood partnerships, school crossings and public conveniences have not been presented to Neighbourhoods Scrutiny commission despite regular requests for updates.

The proposals to implement the cuts are justified in the accompanying documents but reflect little attempt at mitigation.

Apart from the context of savings, there is no explanation for each of the single proposals with 3 minor variations. I understand why wiping out the Neighbourhood Partnerships rather than leaving the legally recognised structure across the city unfunded was considered necessary to secure central control of all of the city's CIL funding. But, politics aside, I can see no other reason why successful innovative models of libraries reorganisation, such as Public Service Mutualisation, were not suggested instead of the fully-staffed municipal model rejected in the last two consultations but now with even more devastation around the whole city. Let's be clear, the Evening Post caption "Bristol City Council is currently consulting on whether to close 17 of the city's libraries" is not accurate. The consultation is only about which 17- and even then there is little choice.

It is not acceptable for the Administration to cite the accompanying comments box in the consultation papers as an exemplar of free choice. People should be presented with the most meaningful, sustainable choice and not be faced with responding to a single solution which does not reflect their hopes. If the administration is genuine about wanting to see alternatives why have all their preferred solutions been more negative than necessary? This will sap any remaining hope. For there are other viable and sustainable options within the budget envelope which simply don't fit with the ideology of this administration. In the case of libraries, many of them are explained in the DCMS roadshow that went to only 4 UK venues, one of which was M-shed in Bristol, attended by senior BCC officers.

Hindsight may show that Brexit came out of blinkered ideology driving better judgement. If questions are to be asked of our citizens upon which a decision is to be

based we should be setting a higher standard of reasonableness and trust. I would personally wish to include imagination and research but that might be too much. This consultation has failed that test and should be withdrawn. It does not serve its purpose – or the people who have the right to expect better consideration from its civic leaders.

Cllr. Anthony Negus

(LibDem, Cotham)

## **STATEMENT CS 02**

Democratic Accountability of STPs through the council's Health and Wellbeing Board

The Local Government Association (LGA) which represents more than 370 councils in England and Wales, has found that the majority of councillors responding to its poll do not feel they have been involved with shaping, commenting on or approving the NHS's 44 Sustainability and Transformation Plans.

STPs are place based plans introduced by the government to redesign and overhaul local health and care services, to cope with increased patient demand by focusing on better integration of health and social care, and treating more patients in the community and away from hospitals. The STP for our area covers Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset.

But all STPs also include huge efficiency savings and many councillors and residents have raised concerns that these financial constraints mean that STPs cannot deliver on their objectives or bring benefits to their local communities. There has been a lack of information provided to the public and lack of involvement of local councillors (who represent their communities) in the STP process.

Many citizens are still confused by the Government's rapidly changing health policy, which includes movement towards Accountable Care Systems and the introduction in some areas of the Capped Expenditure Process (CPE) which could involve closing or downgrading wards and services, extending waiting times, restricting NHS funding for some treatments and limiting the number of operations carried out by non-NHS providers, in order to meet so-called "control total" budgets in 2017/18.

This uncertainty has been exacerbated following the General Election. Now that we have a hung parliament, and the government is likely to be preoccupied with Brexit negotiations, it may not be able to deliver the legislation it had previously intended to give STPs a statutory underpinning.

The LGA are calling for the NHS to act now to involve councillors in a meaningful way as equal partners in STPs, making the STPs more democratically accountable through local health and Wellbeing boards. Health and Wellbeing boards sit within the council and bring together political, clinical and community leaders to plan how best to meet health and wellbeing challenges of their local areas. They are able to take a holistic view of health care and argue for allocation of resources where they create most long term benefit, including prevention of ill health, and creating a healthier city through considering health in all policies of local government, including social care and housing.

I would like to see Bristol's Health and Wellbeing Board being given a chance to review local STP plans and involving local politicians as equal partners with the NHS in planning the future of our health services.

We need to have broad and open discussion on the Governments plans for Accountable care Systems and Capped Expenditure Process and how these policies will affect residents in Bristol, South Glos and North Somerset. This will enable

councillors and residents to feel they are being included and actively involved in health plans for their area.

Gill Kirk, Councillor for Lockleaze

## STATEMENT CS 03

### a. Kings Weston Iron Bridge

In the light of information received from the Transport Directorate that "as the bridge is not strategic to the transport network, it is not currently a priority for funding from within the capital programme" and that its repair is "certainly not possible within this financial year", I am very concerned that the people of Sea Mills, Coombe Dingle and Kings Weston, as well as visitors to the Kings Weston estate are going to be left indefinitely without a safe pedestrian crossing.

I am also concerned about the several reports I have received about people accessing the Bridge in its current state (I have received several reports of it being accessed in its current state).

If we are to give up on the idea of the Bridge being a pedestrian crossing, we need to know that a decent alternative will be offered to local people, including the many children travelling to and from local schools, and local residents feel that the current temporary crossing arrangement is not safe, despite officers' claims to the contrary.

I would also add that the ongoing preservation of the Bridge, as a listed structure, whether in use or not, is a concern to many, within the local community and outside of it. To that end I would hope that applications are made to all the relevant heritage bodies outside of the Council in order to identify (and apply for) any alternative sources of funding.

This should be in addition to working with neighbouring local authorities (and possibly WECA) to ensure that local businesses are discouraged from using routes that involve their large vehicles travelling under the Bridge, as well as ensuring that relevant signage is placed in appropriate locations and that satellite navigation systems are updated with alternative routes.

### b. Consultation on Libraries

The current government's austerity programme has resulted in BCC having a drastically reduced budget. This is led to a £1.4million proposed cut to the Library Service's annual budget. I understand that this is **currently** unavoidable.

However I am disappointed in the wording of the consultation that was launched last month, in that it is not sufficiently explicit about the alternatives to closures. People do not understand that no funding does not necessarily mean closure. They may feel that in order to respond they have to choose one of the three options, rather than coming up with an 'option 4'. They may also feel that they simply have to fight to keep their own library open at the expense of another library. For example, the idea of Sea Mills Library remaining 'open' at the expense of Henleaze and/or Bishopston.

My concern about the three options offered is that they will lead to the death of the culture of libraries as places of learning for many people in areas where they could be of most benefit, as well as the loss of a free and social place to go for isolated older people and parents at home with young children.

The assumption that the accessibility of Central Library and the other proposed 'area libraries' by bus will make them alternatives to a local library is in my view very flawed. It is unlikely in my view that more people will travel because many people cannot afford the time or the costs of the travel.

Whilst I understand that, in the short term it is not viable to look at ways of using the Holden Building to fund other libraries in the city and alternative models for running local libraries, I am very worried that by going down the route of one of the three options, we will be throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Councillor Jo Sergeant

Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston ward