

Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



Date: Tuesday, 20 March 2018
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Council Chamber, City Hall

Issued by: Democratic Services
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Date: 20 March 2017



1. Questions and replies

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2. Statements

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Member Forum

20 March 2018

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 Don Alexander (Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston)

Subject: Energy

1. The council's plans to invest in renewable energy make both economic and environmental sense and demonstrate this Labour administration's clear commitment to tackling climate change.

Can the Mayor provide an update on the £14.5 million of renewable energy investment which all of the opposition parties, including the so-called Greens, last month voted to axe?

2. The recent cold snap further highlighted the difficulties faced by the tens of thousands of Bristolians who live in fuel poverty, struggling to heat their homes.

Can the Mayor detail the efforts of this administration to support people living in fuel poverty and outline what more he would like national government to be doing on this front?

REPLY:

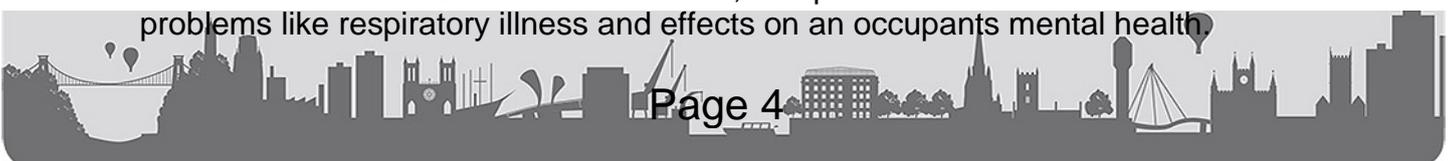
1. The £14.5m of additional capital approved by Full Council in February will be invested in energy-related projects that will help keep Bristol on track to be run entirely on clean energy by 2050 whilst generating a financial return for the council.

The council's Energy Service is working on a number of investable energy-related opportunities and will be bringing the first of these, which relates to the further build out of the council's low carbon heat networks, for Cabinet's consideration in the near future.

2. The latest available figures show that the proportion of Bristol households in fuel poverty is 12.9%, higher than the national average. Figures from 2010 indicate that this figure is down from 15% but it's important to note that the definition of what constitutes fuel poverty changed in 2013, which caused the number of people (somewhere between 800k and 2m nationally) officially classified as being in fuel poverty to drop significantly.

Each year in Bristol around 108 million pounds is spent on heating homes, a third of which could be saved if all houses were insulated in line with current building standards. That's the equivalent of the UK average annual heating bill of 140,000 houses.

- 1 in every 8 households is in fuel poverty in Bristol.
- Fuel poverty is widespread, and it is estimated that cold homes and fuel poverty cost the NHS a £3.6m per day.
- There's a known causal link between cold, damp homes and a number of health problems like respiratory illness and effects on an occupant's mental health.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop

Subject: BRISTOL ARENA

1. Does the Mayor agree that given the importance of this capital project to the city, it is essential that elected representatives have an adequate opportunity to shape determination of the most appropriate site before any decision is made?

2. Now that the Mayor has confirmed the date for this decision – Tuesday, 1st May – can you confirm how you intend to address the concerns of Members from all four political parties (recently expressed through OSM) about meaningful engagement in the value-for-money review and selection process as well as providing the date when information pertaining to this issue will be shared with scrutiny?

REPLY:

- We're undertaking the value for money review and we'll share more about that in the debate. I'll say now, and will say again later, this should have been done years ago.
- I will make the decision in May based on the evidence, and we'll make sure there is engagement in the process.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Cleo Lake

Subject: Safer Bristol Drug Consumption Room and Heroin Assisted Treatment

I am happy to understand that the Safer Bristol Executive and our Council's Substance Misuse Team will be beginning a feasibility study to assess whether there would be net social and economic benefits for Bristol from delivering Heroin Assisted Treatment and/or a Safer Drug Consumption Room. I urge that the study draws on existing research to assess the likely impacts on: drug related deaths, street drug use, discarded drug litter, anti-social behaviour, health, crime etc. It should also indicate which budgets, both within the council and beyond, would make cost-savings - e.g. policing, emergency services, hospital admissions etc. This is to identify stakeholders who could be asked to contribute financially, to ensure fair, sustainable, long term funding that benefits all those involved, and Bristol as a whole. Can the Mayor confirm that he will be committed to fully implementing the findings and recommendations of the feasibility study so that the people of Bristol benefit as soon as possible - especially our most vulnerable citizens?

REPLY:

Reducing the harm caused by substance misuse remains a Public Health priority.

The recommendations from the study will be considered by the city's Safer Bristol Executive and the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2018.



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

Subject: Special Needs Provision

The leaflet sent out with the Council Tax bills states that there is funding for ‘increasing our Special Educational Needs (SEN) school provision’

Please will the Mayor supply details of this?

REPLY:

In March 2017 the DfE announced capital funding for all Local Authorities to support children and young people with special educational needs. Capital funding is money that can be used to provide more places, better spaces and buy equipment that will support curriculum access. Bristol has an allocation of just over £2.5m over 3 years.

Further information about how Bristol wants to use the additional funding is available through our Local Offer Website, [Findabilitybristol.org.uk](http://www.findabilitybristol.org.uk):

http://www.findabilitybristol.org.uk/blog_articles/1728-send-capital-grant?term=SEND+Capital+Grant



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce (St George Central)

1. Much has been made in the press, including by Jeremy Corbyn, of the progress made and prosperity unlocked by Preston Council over the last few years. At the start of their journey, just 14% of Preston's procurement spend was with organisations based in the city. What is the current figure for Bristol City Council?
2. 'Anchor' organisations are crucial to the success of community wealth-building models like those practised in Preston and around the world. What conversations have the Mayor and cabinet members had with City Office partners to contribute to building a more inclusive economy which benefits Bristol?

REPLY:

- 1- The latest figures on localising procurement spend within Preston indicates that since 2013 they have increased the percentage of procurement spend within the Preston Local Authority District (LAD) from 14% to 29.4%

In comparison, a high level assessment for Bristol indicates that in 2013 we spent 31% and in 2017 37% on suppliers based within the BS1-16 postcodes.

That equates to £262m and represents an increase of 17.5% which needs to be viewed in the context of reducing budgets. Please note we do not record if a supplier is SME

- 2- We have an overarching aim of delivering inclusive economic growth. That goes from making Bristol a living wage city, so that the economy isn't just one for higher qualifications and we drive opportunities into local businesses.

It will be in the One City Plan where we have brought together the collective power of Bristol's key organisations to make a bigger impact in solving the key challenges.

Through the city fund we are working to ensure the wider city procures in Bristol and also secure corporate social spending in Bristol along with attracting wider investment to promote an inclusive growth economy. One of the city fund's priorities will be stimulating entrepreneurship and employment in more deprived areas.

I raised this at the Local Enterprise Partnership yesterday, referencing the big infrastructure projects coming through. I said it needs to be a part of the regional industrial strategy and I also made the point about how the west of England growth hub should have clear targets to support businesses coming out of some of our poorest communities.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

Subject: TACKLING MODERN SLAVERY

1. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 announced a requirement for all businesses with a turnover in excess of £36m to provide a Transparency in Supply Chain (TISC) report. Can the Mayor confirm whether Bristol City Council have a legal duty to provide such annual statements?

2. In the event that a local authority is not deemed a commercial organisation for the purposes of this legislation, will the Mayor consider voluntarily taking part in this registration scheme?

REPLY:

- Local Authorities do not have a legal duty to provide a statement. So there is no legal duty of Bristol City Council.
- We are willing to voluntarily produce an annual statement.
- Measures are already in place. Procurement currently use the standard selection questionnaire from the Crown Commercial Service which asks:
 1. Are you a relevant commercial organisation as defined by section 54 ("Transparency in supply chains etc.") of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 ("the Act")?
 2. If you have answered yes to question 1 are you compliant with the annual reporting requirements contained within Section 54 of the Act 2015? If Yes, Please provide the relevant url. If No, Please provide an explanation. If N/A, Please also state N/A in the comments box.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: Council Tax Reduction Scheme

During the budget meeting in February 2018 the Mayor said in response to the Tory amendment that “the time isn’t right” to cut Bristol’s Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Greens are committed to protecting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, not just this year, but also in the years to come. Does the Mayor agree, and if not when, in the Mayor’s view, is the right time to disproportionately increase taxes on the poorest people in this city?

REPLY:

- I find it hard to accept that you are committed to protecting the CTR. You had one opportunity to vote for the council tax reduction scheme by voting for the budget that contained it. You, the Green party, voted against it along with the Tories and the Lib Dems.
- So, while the Greens talk about it, the Labour party is doing it. We are the party that is actually delivering the CTR scheme.
- The CTR scheme is subject to annual public consultation. We’ll continue to look at better ways of managing the budget while protecting the poorest and most vulnerable from government cuts. In the absence of a better solution we will continue to protect the Council Tax Reduction scheme.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Clough (Hengrove and Whitchurch Park)

Subject: Digital Inclusivity/Accessibility

Almost two years after first being elected, personal access requirements (related to the readability of documents supplied to me, the majority of which are publicly accessible) still require significant personal investment effort to ensure compliance.

1. Does the Mayor think this is a reasonable situation, and what measures are being taken to ensure those with disabilities are not left behind in the council's race to 'digital first' / 'digital as default'?
2. When was Bristol.gov.uk last tested, and does it currently meet industry standards for accessibility?

REPLY:

1. I expect that all reasonable efforts are made to support your requested access requirements. If you have specific requirements I would ask you to speak to Democratic Services who can liaise with IT to review.

ICT are currently doing work that includes a review of Accessibility.

The 'digital first' approach is not a zero sum game. It is intended to free up staff and resources to spend more time dealing with people who are less able to access digital services.

2. When the current website was built the Shaw Trust was asked to audit the site for accessibility.

The Trust reported in February 2016 with a list of suggested improvements. We adopted these recommendations where possible immediately, while some are to be carried out.

As we re-build digital services on the website they are tested to meet accessibility standards.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

Subject: Waste

Q1 Can the Mayor also confirm the amount raised from collecting bulky waste as well as from fines for littering and other offences, which enforcement was stepped up for late last year?

Q2 Figures show that the council spends almost as much on disposing of fly-tipping as it does on administering enforcement action. Analysis suggests that this environmental scourge is mostly due to commercial, not residential, dumpers. Can the Mayor outline plans in this area, including on how we change behaviour and increase income from enforcement fines for fly-tipping?

REPLY:

Q1 Income from the collection of bulky wastes in 2016/17 was £285,000 (this is the gross figure and does not include the cost of collection and disposal).

Income from enforcement actions for littering and other offences was £152,705 for 2017/18 (this is the gross figure and does not include the cost of collection).

Q2 We have a Clean Streets campaign focused on behaviour change, developing the collections methodology and clean-up of Bristol Waste, volunteer clean ups, and fines.

BCC are already working with partners and companies on this and BWC always investigate all reported flytips and search all waste to determine its place of origin. All such information is then passed to BCC enforcement teams to investigate further.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

Subject: LOCAL TRIAL OF RECYCLED PLASTICS FOR ROAD RESURFACING

1. Can the Mayor confirm the latest available annual figure for the amount of plastic waste generated in our city?
2. In light of successful projects which have been conducted in this country by Cumbria County Council and the London Borough of Enfield, into using plastics as a road repair material, is the Mayor prepared to task officers with looking into the possibility of holding a similar trial in Bristol?

REPLY:

1. The quantity of plastics collected by Kerbside recycling, on-street recycling bins and activities at our HWRCs amounts to around 3,000 tonnes each year. This figure is the total tonnage for the amount of household tonnage collected and recycled by BCC and therefore 'under our control' but does not constitute the total amount generated in the City.
2. We are aware of a number of current projects that seek to use plastics as a road repair solution, as well as generally increasing the amount of recycled materials in road construction. We are working with our industry partners to develop new technologies and keep abreast of any developments. We are awaiting evidence of the longer term benefits of using recycle plastics.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jude English

Subject: St Agnes Park and environs safeguarding issues - why are we failing in our duty of care?

I am very concerned about the dreadful situation in St Agnes Park and the surrounding adventure playground, church and currently squatted park keeper's cottage. Every day volunteers and staff clear masses of drugs litter and human excrement and worry for the safety of children (and everyone else).

St. Agnes lodge, a BCC property due to be sold, has been trashed and is currently being squatted. In St. Agnes Park and environs vulnerable people are dealing and injecting in view of families, children and bereaved funeral goers attending the church. A child has received a needle injury.

People who live and work in this area are in despair. Emails don't get answered, the police are under resourced, and the problem is getting much worse.

Question:

Can the Mayor explain why Bristol City Council is not fulfilling our duty of care to park goers, our tenants at the playground, the purchasers of the Lodge and most importantly the vulnerable people sleeping rough and injecting in the park?

I urgently request that we find the resources for this before a serious incident occurs

REPLY:

Bristol City Council Property Services has sold St Agnes Lodge. This premise has been squatted by illegal occupiers for the past year. Possession proceedings were brought in the County Court and an eviction warrant was executed on 15 March 2018. The property has been re-secured and the asset transferred to Green Room with immediate effect.

We are aware of the impact austerity measures is having across public services in the city and are consulting with citizens for a plan for the future of our parks and green spaces. We continue to work closely with the Police to ensure citizens of Bristol remain safe and continue to feel safe in their neighbourhoods.



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

Subject: Bristol Libraries

It is clear from the briefing information that members have been allowed to hear this, and from that which they have not been allowed to see, that the study into the future of Bristol libraries is limited to the model previously set out in the rejected consultation and against the recommendations from the task and finish group endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and approved by Council.

1. Is the Mayor prepared to confirm that all the work carried out by the consultants in preparing their report and findings, including submissions by officers, executive member and the staff and their unions, will be made available for scrutiny in sufficient time for their consideration?

The Music Lending Service which loans musical score and music sets to the public in Bristol from a collection built up from donations and revenue from Bristol taxpayers was set to be given away to North Somerset on 1st April. The nett annual cost of this service to Bristol City Council is £4200 which equates to 28p for each of the 15,000 users. It appears that no-one had thought to approach the Bristol Music Trust -not only a major music champion in the city but also an arms-length associate of the Council - until I asked if they could help, to which they responded positively.

2. Will the Mayor unequivocally refute the claims that North Somerset has already taken their pick of this collection that takes up approximately 100 m of shelf space and confirm that this and that those responsible for future cost-saving measures will adopt a standard approach of reaching out to those most affected and to any Bristol organisations (commercial, not-for-profit or voluntary) who may be in a position to provide advice or practical solutions.

REPLY:

1. No decision has been made on the future of the library service; the consultation has not been rejected and will be taken into account when a decision is taken.

We would welcome input by Scrutiny and will make available the parts of the report which we are able to disclose legally, once the final report is received.

2. I confirm North Somerset have not taken any sets.

The Performing Arts Library (PAL) based in Yeovil does provide an equivalent service which our users could access, and some of the music that are users currently borrow from us is sourced from PAL.

We are discussing with PAL whether it takes our existing Music Sets as it is an existing specialist music lending library based in the Libraries West Area and therefore available to all Bristol citizens.



We are also discussing the collection with Bristol Plays Music, which is part of Bristol Music Trust. Bristol Plays Music is not a lending library, but is located in Bristol.

No decision has been reached but we will inform all music groups in 1 April 2018.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Chris Jackson

Subject: RPZ Parking

1. This Labour administration is busy delivering across the board on our election-winning 2016 Bristol manifesto.

Can the Mayor provide an update on our progress in removing the charge for permits used by health and social care and other essential workers in RPZs?

REPLY:

- We provide residents who have short term and long term care needs with the most appropriate combination of essential visitors' permits (which can be used in any vehicle) and additional visitors' permits according to their individual care plan. These permits are provided free of charge and can be used by friends/family as well as professionals, giving maximum flexibility to residents.
- All re-ablement workers who work in RPZ areas have been issued with permits.
- It was a mayoral pledge to freeze RPZ charges until 2020, and we won't increase them.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows

Subject: ANIMAL WELFARE IN HIGH RISE BLOCKS

1. Does the Mayor support his Party's plan to give all tenants a 'default' right to keep pets?
2. What impact would such a policy have on this Authority's ostensible rules and regulations against the keeping of dogs in high rise housing?

REPLY:

1. Yes, I do support Labour's plan. The considerable issues in the housing market leave many people no choice but to rent. I am pleased that nationally Labour is championing the interests of renters to have pets.
2. Council tenants currently have a right to keep pets, unless they live in blocks where a vote has been taken to ban them.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Terms of reference for the Arena study

At the 23rd January cabinet members forum I asked the question of the Mayor, “Can the Mayor say what are the terms of reference for the Arena study to be carried out by KPMG?” I was told I would receive these but to date neither I nor any of my councillor colleagues have received a reply to this question. It is unfortunate that no answer to this question has been forthcoming given the level of public interest. While we believe that we should be getting on with the building of the arena as soon as possible, we also believe that any decision to rethink the location of the arena should be an informed, democratic and transparent, not a decision taken behind closed doors and potentially unduly influenced by big business and shaped by inappropriate criteria.

At the OSMB meeting of 8 March some of the terms of reference of the KPMG study were revealed but these are far from comprehensive. All that councillors have been told to date is that KPMG is undertaking a technical value for money study on the Temple Meads arena as shared in the OSMB papers for 8 March.

However we also understand from the discussion during and after the OSMB meeting that what KPMG are also doing is undertaking a direct comparison on the respective strengths and weaknesses of the Temple Meads site versus the Filton site. We believe that KPMG are also revisiting the spatial plan for the Temple Quarter area if the arena is not to be built there. We do not know who KPMG are talking to, nor what the brief is for these additional pieces of work.

In addition we do not believe that the various studies will look at whether the current proposed site at Temple Meads is affordable for the Council, nor how it might be paid for if the costs of the build have risen.

It is quite possible that this KPMG study has been completed before anybody in the city apart from the Mayor and a handful of his colleagues have been told what is being studied. I would like to ask again for the terms of reference for the KPMG study on the location of the arena, as I have not received this information since I asked for it at the January Cabinet meeting.

Can the Mayor also please clarify:

- 1) What opportunities there will be for councillors and Bristol’s citizens to comment on the terms of reference of the KPMG study (in order to be of any use the answer on this will need to be provided before the study is completed).
- 2) What opportunities will there be for councillors and Bristol’s citizens to input to any study?

REPLY:

1. You’ve answered your own question – the terms of reference were circulated to OSMB
2. We’re having a debate on the arena later and will clarify the engagement process for Councillors.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Cllr Jos Clark (Brislington West)

Subject: Grit Bins

1. Can the Mayor tell me what the arrangements are to refill the roadside grit bins, as bins in crucial locations were left unfilled even though the city had plenty of notice of the cold snap?

I understand that parts of the city had grit delivered and left on the pavement in anticipation of bad weather, but to my knowledge none was delivered to Brislington.

2. Can the Mayor tell me why we did not get any extra grit delivered and can he assure me that in future we will get some delivered so that roads can be kept open and traffic kept moving?

REPLY:

1. Grit bins are regularly inspected as part of the highway inspection regime and bins that are less than half full are topped up. We request that if councillors or the public notice any bins that are empty or low they report them to the council via the website.
2. Grit bags were delivered to 41 locations that have identified volunteer Snow Wardens. On receipt of a severe weather warning, the Civil Contingency Team may contact snow wardens and deliver a quantity of grit to an agreed location.

We need more volunteer snow wardens and request that residents consider volunteering.

Can I suggest that Cllr Clarke volunteers and I also encourage her constituents to sign up. Further detail can be found at: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/en_US/crime-emergencies/volunteer-to-be-a-snow-warden or by emailing emergency.planning@bristol.gov.uk



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Bradshaw (Bedminster)

Subject: GDPR

1. Please can the Mayor provide an update on the Council's preparedness for the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), coming into force on 25th May 2018?
2. Will the Council and its various commercial entities be fully compliant with GDPR from 25th May?

REPLY:

1. GDPR is the biggest change to data protection rules in 20 years and the changes are wide ranging. My Deputy Mayor has raised our compliance as an issue that we must address.

A project has been set up and, as from Feb 2018, the Executive Sponsor is Service Director Legal and Democratic Services Shahzia Daya who is also the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO).

2. We will be in a stronger position on the 25th May. The key building blocks required will be in place, including:
- a. New ways to report data breaches
 - b. All staff will be trained in the new rules
 - c. Key documentation will have been reviewed/produced

There is a programme of work to make the required changes in each service area.

The companies are Data Controllers in their own right and compliance is a matter for their boards. However, as a shareholder, the project team is checking on their progress. We do not yet know the likely position and we will support and advise where appropriate to do so.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

Subject: STALLED NEW TRAFFIC REGULATIONS FOR DURDHAM DOWNS

As the Mayor will know, the Downs is one of the city's greatest leisure assets, regularly used by residents from all over Bristol. There are important parking/ Highway issues outstanding from the parking restrictions introduced some time ago. Even though further TRO consultations were concluded last year, officers advise that they cannot implement the recommendations considered as the Mayor has told them to focus exclusively on Metrobus.

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not this explanation for delay is this true? If so, when will some resource be allocated to enable implementation?
2. If this assertion isn't true, when will the long awaited recommendations be brought into effect?

REPLY:

1. No, it is not true.
2. The original Downs Order was put in place some time ago, but there was a need to make some changes to deal with a few unintended consequences from the original parking restrictions. When these proposed changes were advertised last year a number of objections were received and officers have been reviewing these responses to determine a way forward. An update will be issued in the autumn.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jude English

Subject: Digital and data infrastructure

The recently adopted corporate strategy had little to say about BCC's vital and valuable digital and data 'estate'. As we become a leaner, more agile authority in a twenty-first century business and trading environment it is imperative we manage this asset base with care. I have concerns that we are failing to do this as a corporate body.

It is important we keep up to date on the status of the Council's digital and data infrastructure and associated data asset register, and make explicit that what we are doing is both safe and legal.

Question:

What oversight and scrutiny of this register is available to councillors?

REPLY:

It is up to Scrutiny to pick this up as an issue if it wants to.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Clough (Hengrove and Whitchurch Park)

Subject: Orbital Bus Routes

1. First Bus has recently reduced services in my ward again (under the guise of increasing service on the in town portion of the route); while Metrobus will be a welcome addition to routes into the City Centre for my residents, those who are the most vulnerable will require orbital services to reach where the Metrobus service is proposed to start. One kilometre doesn't sound very far, but when you need a break every 20-50m, I assure you it is a very long way indeed; will the Cabinet Member for Transport undertake to monitor the situation in South Bristol to ensure that when Metrobus comes online, appropriate pressure is applied to First to retain the orbital bus routes rather than remove them to drive (the able-bodied) onto Metrobus at the cost of the elderly and disabled, in an area with minimal dial-a-ride provision?

REPLY:

- Our Cabinet Member for Transport is of course always monitoring the bus services in the city, with the aim of increasing connectivity and eliminating transport poverty. The Cabinet Member is exploring all the powers and resources we have through the Combined Authority to get us a top class bus network.
- It is worth remembering that the bus services were deregulated in 1986 and we don't have control of them.
- It is anticipated that the background bus network will be affected by the introduction of MetroBus services, particularly where there is any overlap with current provision. However, the full impact will not be known until after the launch of MetroBus. The Council has already spoken to First and will continue to monitor the network provision with all bus operators to try to ensure continuity of the existing services.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant (Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston)

Subject: Libraries

1. Does the Mayor agree that, bearing in mind the roles that branch libraries can play, as outlined below, in a by no means exhaustive list, Bristol City Council needs to adopt a more strategic approach to the future of Bristol's Library Service?

Reading

There is an assumption that libraries now have less purpose because fewer books are being borrowed, are cheaper to buy and other entertainment is available. However:

- Reading is a vital skill that improves everyone's life chances.
- Young children enjoy the tactile nature of books.
- Some children have very little access to reading material outside of school.
- Being read to gives young children access to ideas before they are able to read to themselves.
- Reading improves the quality of life for older people, especially those with/at risk of dementia.
- Reading groups have therapeutic value and allow people to share ideas.

Digital inclusion

In addition, for some residents, a branch library provides their only means of internet access, in order to receive vital services such as:

- Council services, e.g. Homechoice
- Job seeking
- Benefits applications, particularly the forthcoming Universal Credit
- Other help, such as debt advice

Social inclusion

Some parts of the city boast few community spaces and residents rely on their local library (during opening hours) for a cost-free way to socialise or get support, such as:

- Community meetings
- Informal gatherings/having someone to chat to
- Hobby groups
- Support groups
- Councillor/advice surgeries
- Tutor sessions

Without free and public spaces, these events and activities might not be able to take place, leading to greater social isolation, which has serious physical and mental health implications.

Library campaigns

Recent anti-closure campaigns (including the establishment of Friends groups) have raised the profile of various branches across the city. Wick Road Library, users of which have mounted a strong campaign, recently hosted an event for families that attracted around 70 people. This suggests that greater promotion of libraries will increase usage across the city.



Conversely, it suggests that decline in use may be in part due to poor promotion of the service by the Council.

REPLY:

- I do believe in delivering the outcomes libraries contribute to.
- We have taken a strategic approach to Bristol Libraries and the whole budget.
- The service has grown over time without a strategic plan of operation and continues to operate an out of date structure from several decades ago.
- I guarantee you the future decision on the shape of the library service will be strategic as it takes into account consistent opening hours, geographic spread throughout the City and areas of need and how it fits within the wider network of community assets.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tony Carey

Subject: UPDATE ON BUSINESS/COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEME

1. I recall that the Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities previously expressed confidence in her ability to secure more than enough businesses to sign up to this scheme to compensate for the closure of 18 public conveniences at the end of January 2018. Please can you confirm how many private commercial premises have to date joined this new network of accessible loos?

2. What consideration was given to engaging with the business community to jointly 'sponsor' the maintaining of a council-owned, on-street public toilet block?

REPLY:

1. As of 31 January 2018 BCC closed 18 public toilets. 14 of these toilets actually closed with four being taken on or are in the process of being taken on by other organisations.

Since January we have recruited 28 toilets to the Community Toilet Scheme which is double the number of toilets that closed. The Community Toilet Scheme includes businesses, medical centres, voluntary organisations, arts venues and council buildings. Examples are the Arnolfini, SS Great Britain, Broadwalk Shopping Centre, Windmill Hill City Farm, Waitrose (Henleaze), Asda (Hengrove), and Sea Mills Surgery.

These organisations are happy to make their facilities available to the city.

2. We have been open to all proposals for how to invest in our publicly accessible toilets.

The Downs Committee and Suspension Bridge Trust have taken on the management of some community toilets closed at the end of January. We are in active discussion with other organisations about exploring further opportunities.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Matt Melias

Subject: MANDATORY TRAINING FOR TAXI DRIVERS

1. In light of the recent suspension of three Hackney Carriage drivers for refusing to convey a disabled child, can the Mayor explain why completion of 'gold standard' training is only required of new licensed operators?

2. Does the Mayor think that this latest incident of discrimination indicates that there is a case for all taxi drivers licensed by BCC to pass this higher level of customer care?

REPLY:

- 1) This is a Licensing issue rather than an Executive issue. But we do want the best standard in transport.

The Gold Standard Training Programme is an extensive four day programme specifically designed for new drivers coming into the taxi trade. To apply this requirement to all existing taxi drivers might be considered disproportionate.

- 2) It's worth noting that we are proactively working with taxi drivers and this year we will host our second Taxi Conference at City Hall. At the first we had around 150 drivers discussing and planning how we get a taxi service that is good for the public and the drivers. At that event, the issue of disabled people not getting picked up was raised and drivers agreed it was not acceptable. We will revisit it at this year's conference.

Besides that, the Public Safety and Protection Committee has agreed that a targeted shorter duration training programme will be developed over the next twelve months that all taxi drivers will be required to attend.

The content of this programme will focus on refreshing the skills required to make our taxi drivers ambassadors for the City and will include training on the conveying of persons with access needs.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Jones

Subject: DANGEROUS WALL IN NEED OF URGENT REPAIR

In 2016, my colleague Cllr Morris and I reported a wall in Stockwood that the council deemed to be very dangerous. It has been fenced off ever since (apart from regular vandalism) thereby costing the council additional expense and continuing to endanger the lives of local residents and visitors. The council will not fix the wall due to estimated costs of £50,000 - £80,000.

1. Does the Mayor think this apparent tolerance of a clear and present danger to the public is an acceptable state of affairs?

2. Is the Mayor aware of any Council budget, or external source of funding, that could be used to urgently resolve this issue?

Reply:

1. The wall being referred to is on Hollway Road and is part of planter walls configuration outside the shopping precinct. These walls have been repaired and rebuilt on a number of occasions, but due to vandalism are consistently being damaged and pulled down.

These walls have been fenced off to secure this site and to prevent further vandalism. This site is visited on a monthly basis and any damage to the secure fencing compound is repaired or replaced. The area is therefore constantly monitored and the appropriate action taken.

2. There is no allocated budget to undertake full reconstruction of these walls, but we will continue to look for resource. I invite you to work with us to look for resource from within and outside the organisation.



Member Forum
20 March 2018
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 statements from councillors have been submitted – full details are attached:

CS 01 - Cllr Mead – Bristol Arena

CS 02 - Cllr Bolton – CIL/destruction of neighbourhood partnerships (agenda item 12)

CS 03 - Cllr Stevens – Area committees (agenda item 12)

CS 04 - Cllr Jackson – Staff using their own vehicles during the worst spells of snow and ice

CS 05 - Cllr Negus – The real value of an Arena for Bristol



STATEMENT CS 01

Unfortunately, I will not be speaking at today's Full Council regarding the Bristol Arena. But, I feel strongly that it would be worth the Council's while looking at the planning policies, both national and local, that clearly indicate that the current site is the only viable one for the Arena. That is probably why the Filton site has never been considered before. The Filton site goes against BCS2, BCS7, BCS10, BCS12, BCS13 and BCS21 of the Core Strategy, BCAP9 and BCAP35 of the Bristol Central Area Plan, DM7 and DM23 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan and sections 2 and 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states clearly that any application for an Arena at a site like Filton should be refused by a planning committee.

It is also worth noting that there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that a location almost entirely dependent on car travel would discourage greater use of public transport. Banister, D, and Anable, J, (2009) cited on P 287 of Town and Country Planning in the UK, 15th Ed, Routledge 2015 state: "(e) Development which is near public transport interchanges and corridors have a higher level of accessibility and are less car dependent. (f) The availability of parking is a key determinant in the level of car use."

The concern agreed at the planning committee meetings in 2016 was that the inclusion of a tiny car park at the Arena would encourage people to drive to the Arena and cause chaos trying to find a parking space. Instead, the Bristol Arena would be following the sustainable transport strategies of other arenas, including Leeds and Manchester that are easy to access via public transport, but also make use of existing city centre car parks. It is also worth noting that the majority of people coming to events at the Arena are expected to come from outside the former Avon county area, and the current site is easy to access via train on the national rail network, and is easy to access from the Bus Station. It is also easy to get to from city centre hotels, and many people will choose to make a trip of their visit to see their favourite performers, just as I did when I attended a gig in Manchester last year, and will be again in April when Miss Coco Peru makes her second visit to the UK in as many years. I went by public transport and stayed in a modest priced hotel near the bus station, which was further away from the Arena than many city centre hotels in Bristol would be from our Arena, but was still easily walkable (as well as being on bus, rail and tram routes), and many people from further afield will prefer to stay the night in Bristol, than to have to travel home after a late-finishing gig at the Arena. The Filton site has very little existing public transport (the 75 bus stops somewhere near it), and would force virtually everyone attending a gig to go by car. This runs contrary to existing national and local policies.

We have an acceptable city centre site with planning permission that is ready to have an Arena built on it. We have no alternative option currently being considered that would be able to be recommended for approval by a planning committee. It would make it less likely for city centre businesses, including hotels and eating places, to benefit from the knock-on economic benefits of having an Arena in Bristol, if the local hotels etc were based in South Gloucestershire. When city centre businesses are doing well, they will pay business rates that pay for frontline services provided by Bristol City Council. We stand to benefit financially, and it is supported by local business leaders and the venue operator, Live Nation, who have a fine track

record for running successful arenas. These are people whose views are worth listening to, as they have more experience of running successful businesses than most local government politicians.

A short version of what our policies state is that new leisure, entertainment and culture venues should be located in the city centre, and should promote the use of walking, cycling, and public transport to access them. This would also help with current work being done by the administration to address the issues of congestion and air quality. BCAP9 and BCAP35 mention that the Arena is to be built in the Bristol Temple Quarter, and will be an integral part of the new development in the area. DM7 states that an out of centre site would only be appropriate if no city centre sites are available, and "the proposal would be in a location readily accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport." And also that: "Retail, leisure or office development outside of centres will not be permitted if: I. It would be liable to have a significant adverse impact on the vitality, viability and diversity of existing centres; or II. It would impact on existing, committed and planned investment." P 18 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan.

Lastly, it is worth referring to the NPPF:

Paragraph 24, P8, states: "Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable locations are not available should out of centre sites be considered."

Paragraph 27: "Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test ... it should be refused."

It is worth noting that: "The NPPF must equally have the status of a material consideration and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF must be a material consideration." Paragraph 11.56, p 187, A Practical Approach to Planning Law, Moore and Purdue, OUP 2014.

In other words, the content of the NPPF is something that should be weighed up when considering an application at a planning committee, but whether a large corporation is offering to pay for a development that goes against both local and national planning policies is not a factor for consideration. It is also worth noting that, in the event of an appeal or legal challenge, any decision taken by the Council that went against the NPPF would place us on very weak ground with the Planning Inspector or any court of law, and could lead to much-needed public money being wasted on legal fees, instead of frontline public services.

I would urge the Council to provide the leadership the city needs, and encourage the Mayor to get a move on and build the Arena in the only location currently under consideration that both adheres to planning policy, and already has planning permission for it to be built. It could lead to the creation of jobs for local people, and benefit local businesses, especially our Broadmead and Cabot Circus retail district that would benefit from additional visitors to the city.

Core

Strategy: [https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/Core%20Strategy%20WEB%20PDF%20\(low%20res%20with%20links\)_0.pdf/f350d129-d39c-4d48-9451-1f84713a0ed8](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/Core%20Strategy%20WEB%20PDF%20(low%20res%20with%20links)_0.pdf/f350d129-d39c-4d48-9451-1f84713a0ed8)

Bristol Central Area

Plan: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/BCAP%20Adopted%20March%202015%20-%20Main%20Document%20&%20Annex%20-%20Web%20PDF.pdf/d05a0c22-ab91-4530-926a-f26160ab72a5>

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local

Plan: https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/BD5605%20Site%20Allocations_MAIN_text%20V8_0.pdf/46c75ec0-634e-4f78-a00f-7f6c3cb68398

National Planning Policy

Framework: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

Councillor Olly Mead, Horfield Ward

STATEMENT CS 02

Agenda item 12 - CIL/destruction of neighbourhood partnerships

I submit this statement to register my disgust at the way this Labour administration has chosen to treat communities in Bristol, and these proposals in particular.

I believe there are all sorts of benefits to having strong local communities in all areas of Bristol.

The obvious one is that they work together to improve their local area. Less obvious are the fact that people get to know each other better, extend their range of friends and acquaintances - and therefore keep an eye out for each other more. This is particularly important to help those living alone and the elderly or vulnerable. It also works because community groups get to know the each other and the local establishment better. To put it simply, it works for individuals, it works for groups, it works for the authorities and it works for the environment (in its broadest meaning) of the area a whole.

But for this to work, those thinking of starting a community project need to feel they can actually get somewhere. There needs to be a chance of an outcome. There also needs to be a recognition that they are doing something which is supported by the council. They also need to feel there is local control of the outcome.

These proposals represent an enormous fail on these counts. Simply using warm, fuzzy words simply hides the reality that neighbourhood partnerships - which were at least LOCAL are being abolished, and replaced by much more remote and basically unfunded organisations.

In my case, I will be expected to adjudicate on proposals from Brislington and they will be expected to adjudicate on proposals in Southville. They are the length of Bristol away.

Second, the well-being grants seem to have disappeared into the sunset. The big benefit of these is that they allowed local groups to get on with it. They were seed money for them. It gave them the incentive to start.

Third, CIL - the small proportion of community infrastructure levy available to neighbourhood partnerships will now be dealt with by these much more remote bodies. In the past, local parks groups in BS3 were able to apply for funding, and numbers of projects were delivered. The idea of doing fewer projects voted on over a wide area not only destroys the local element. It makes the likelihood of succeeding that much harder.

I'd add that the larger the area, the more likely it is that decisions will be made on party political lines.

And I have to say I also reject the notion that distributing CIL over a larger area somehow promotes equality. The amounts - generally - are too small. But isn't the purpose of CIL to mitigate the local impact of development?

It is my view that the Labour administrations dismemberment on neighbourhood partnerships far exceeds what is necessary. Yes to cutting the bureaucracy, but these proposals also throw out most of the good things about neighbourhood partnerships. It is a power grab, and a centralisation of power for no good reason.

And it will also have a knock-on and negative effect, in those areas going ahead - in terms of less community cohesion. Those communities where 'local' has worked well will find it harder to do so going forward.

In essence, Bristol Labour are telling the people who care for the area they live in not to bother.

STATEMENT CS 03

Member Forum Statement for 20th March - Cllr Clive Stevens - Area Committees

Later on today, Councillors will be asked to vote for the new arrangements regarding the allocation of developer money called CIL and S106 to regarding “larger value” local projects.

The paper we are voting on has some glorious goals: “moving to community self-organisation and action” and “the Council should get out of the way”. These goals are laudable, shooting for the stars and I totally and fully support them.

But the goals are up there, this paper describes something in the depths, and builds a submarine not a rocket and is a million miles from the Council getting out of the way. Let me explain.

The Council did start getting out the way in the early days of the Neighbourhood Partnerships back in 2009/10. The public and councillors were able to fund new community groups with a little seed funding for this project or that. We were able to listen to local problems and councillors and officers would take these issues away and get things done. I was chair of the BCR Neighbourhood Partnership during those heady days, they lasted a couple of years, we didn't quite reach the stratosphere but felt we were on the way. We got things done, decisions changed and new groups started.

But then more and more bureaucracy was heaped upon us; S106, CIL and other decisions that needed a mini Council structure we were simply submerged and that was that to the exciting, community led culture. Submerged we were.

This Area Committee/CIL/S106 paper describes an efficient submarine. That's fine. It does not shoot for the stars. It does not describe anything that would encourage community self organisation and certainly not the Council getting out the way.

So lets not disguise this. The report describes an efficient submarine: one meeting a year, big projects, redistribution of money and just six areas. Any, what used to be called “well being” money, is cut and now controlled by an officer.

If the Mayor wants to move to community self-organisation and enable the Council to get out the way that's great and can even be done BUT the mechanism to do that isn't before Councillors today.

Marvin - if you truly want to do introduce something to develop community resilience

then you need a different system. These Area Committees are fine for doling out developer money but won't achieve the aims as set out at the beginning of the paper.

And as to how I'll vote? I plan to listen to the speeches. And if someone can convince me that this is actually going to reach for the stars and achieve those goals then good, but I'm very doubtful at the moment. I know a submarine when I see one.

STATEMENT CS 04

Following the recent inclement weather over the course of the last month, conditions made travel challenging. I would be grateful if the Mayor could advise members as to the risk assessments of and health and safety considerations given to Bristol City Council staff using their own vehicles during the worst spells of snow and ice – including yesterday (Monday 19 March).

Cllr Chris Jackson

STATEMENT CS 05

Statement to the Mayor at Full Council on 20th March 2018.

Cllr. Anthony Negus (Cotham, Lib Dem councillor)

The real value of an Arena for Bristol.

Important decisions should be informed by analysis, conducted by experts. Although the reason for the mayor's review of building the arena on the Temple Quarter site is all about financial viability, the questions to be answered should be about value in its broadest sense.

This is not just about value-for-money but overall value to the city and its residents. For such a big decision we should know about the value of:

- regeneration (including improvements to transport)
- job and skills creation
- cultural and lifestyle offers
- visitor increases to the city
- direct and indirect revenues - including council tax
- opportunity cost

as well as understanding the real cost of mitigating impacts such as transport infrastructure, environmental pressures and on our health and well-being. Many of these will affect and interact for and against others

Only some of this list is within the scoping document to the consultants just released for scrutiny, and they are bundled very lightly. Councillors have not been told when this study will be complete and when they can review it. At the same time another similar study has been commissioned (that Councillors have not been allowed to see!) for the Brabazon site at Filton.

This site is just within Bristol's boundary with South Gloucester where an alternative scheme is proposed by the Malaysian developers who own the adjacent huge housing site. This has poorer connectivity with public transport but better road access. It is likely to cost less as a development than the Temple Quarter site but will generate less value, or overall benefits, to Bristol. It could develop into an axis with Cribbs Causeway that in time could challenge Bristol as the heart of the sub-region.

The Mayor may consider this a reasonable price to pay to release the Temple Quarter site for a straight sale or development as a hotel/conference centre. This could deliver his arena promise, albeit devalued, and provide some spare cash. Unless the cash difference is massively more than unconfirmed estimates (and this is the information scrutiny is seeking) then I believe that the central site scores much higher.

National planning policy rules that an arena should be in the centre of the city if feasible, which it is because a 12,000 seat arena already has planning permission. But its nearest rival would be a proposed 16,000 seat arena near the railway station in Cardiff which due to mayoral fainthearts might be built first. Interestingly the Filton arena might now be argued as a challenge to Cardiff at 15,000 seats which could not be fitted on the Temple Quarter site, which might be an argument to overcome the 'sequential' planning test.

Such decisions need much weighing. The LibDem administration, of which I was a member, considered alternative sites and had the finances in place to deliver our preferred site at arena island/Temple Quarter. Decisions have been slower since and costs have risen. I fear we are going to be told that it is now too expensive to build Bristol's Arena on arena island but there will be financial consequences if it isn't. Filton may appear cheaper but cannot hope to deliver the same broad and regenerative benefits to our whole city.

This is an overview of the main considerations around this hot topic. Clearly some of them are not complementary and data and best estimates are either unavailable or being withheld. However this my view which is broadly shared by my LibDem councillor colleagues is that Temple Quarter is the better site for Bristol's Arena. It is in the better location and also brings considerably better benefits to the city – some immediate and some spread over a long time – than the Filton prospect. Both would create transport issues, but might also generate bold solutions but again the Bristol site probably scores best there too.

The Arena is a big playing piece to be best placed on our sub-region chess board. When we factor in that the city's planned focus for regeneration and development is in East/Central Bristol then surely this council must be a serious player, and demonstrate its commitment to this generational project by placing the Arena where it will do the most good for the future of our city.

Cllr. Anthony Negus