

# Member Forum - Questions & Statements from Councillors



## Agenda

**Date:** Tuesday, 19 March 2019

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Venue:** Council Chamber, City Hall

**Distribution: all Members of Council**

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**Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019



# Agenda

## 1. Member Forum Questions and Statements

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# Member Forum

## 19 March 2019

### 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 enclosed.
- 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 supplementary questions will be rotated between the political groups that have submitted questions, taken in priority order.



## **LABOUR QUESTION 1**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mike Langley**

**Subject: St Anne's House**

1. I'm proud that Labour opened Bristol's first 24/7 homeless shelter last year. Can the Mayor provide an update on the work of St Anne's House, and our wider partnership approach with city partners to tackle homelessness.
2. We're grateful to the Mayor for working to secure and speed up the community space in St Anne's House. Will he join us in Brislington for a community meeting to discuss our priorities for the area, including new homes, St Anne's Park Station and mass transit, and further improvements to local parks?

## **REPLY:**

1. The Government's austerity programme continues to increase homelessness, we are pleased that we are able to open a 24 hour shelter amongst the programme of work we are doing.

- St Anne's Winter Shelter runs November 2018 the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
- It accommodates 30 people each night.
- 25 people have been moved on from the Shelter to longer term accommodation.

It will remain open in the spring and summer to provide a working space and activities for the local community.

The Winter Shelter will open again in October 2019 subject to sign off of the review report to planning.

In addition to this:

- This week we have opened a rapid rehousing pathway (funded by MHCLG) that provides 24 hour access to a Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub for people new to the streets with access to private sector accommodation and support.
- We are also working with all organisations and charities that support rough sleepers to agree a joint approach to reduce rough sleeping in the city that will be assimilated into the One City Plan.

2. I'd be delighted to join you to look at the achievements we are delivering and our plans to exceed our housing targets and solve the ongoing challenge of transport in East Bristol.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1**

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

**Subject: A4018 Improvements Plan**

Q1. Can the Mayor tell me which Cabinet Member was responsible for actually signing off these disastrous proposals?

Q2. What weight will be given in this public consultation to the overwhelming critical responses to this planned scheme?

### **REPLY:**

1. It's a consultation. The consultation was signed off by me. Everyone can have their say. We've had very well attended consultation events and the MP for Bristol North West Darren Jones has also started bringing people together to make constructive suggestions and we're taking those on board.

Can I ask you to leave the political hyperbole behind. The improvements to bus prioritisation are crucial to our progress towards a bus deal with First that will double bus services and benefit from both public and private investment. Doubling journeys to work by bus will be a big step towards tackling congestion as are our ongoing commitments to improving cycling and walking infrastructure. Mass transit plans will be the next transformative step.

The plans for Westbury village had been raised historically and are merely out to consultation. The administration will take seriously all contributions before making a decision on any changes.

Cllr Dudd is now leading as Cabinet Member for Transport.

2. Any decision is an interaction between transport, planning and the public's view. The expertise they have from viewing that will be important. All consultation comments will be given equal weight. Any majority feeling will be considered accordingly.

I will also take into account the views of local councillors in the area.

A consultation report will be put together when the consultation period ends and this report will be provided to the cabinet member for transport for consideration.

The cabinet member will determine with the Mayor's office what changes to make to the proposals and which elements to take forward.



## **GREEN QUESTION 1**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Cllr Fi Hance**

**Subject: Air Quality Plans**

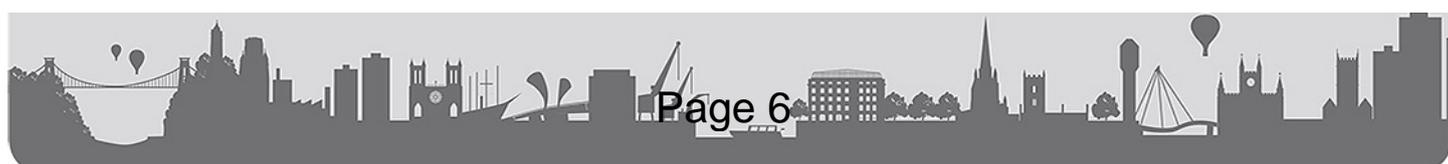
At Budget Full Council the Mayor said he will “table initial plans to improve air quality in the city in March”.

Can the Mayor confirm this – what date will these plans be published?

### **REPLY:**

The initial plans will be tabled before the end of March.

An outline business case and consultation will take place this year.



## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1**

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

**Subject: Real time information for failing bus service not fit for purpose.**

Over the last few months the normal frustration caused by the poor performance of the First bus 'service' has been made even worse by the regular failures of the real-time information/overhead display system that now does not reliably show when buses are due or even the order in which they are to arrive. Information shown on Apps does not match the displays although they are using the same satellite and base stations. The system regularly drops out leaving only scheduled times which of course are meaningless in Bristol.

This system costs Bristol city taxpayers £50,000 a year and it is not fit for purpose. Complaints usually lead to First and BCC blaming the other and the third party supplier.

1. If the Mayor cannot solve the claimed reasons for First buses being late will he commit to delivering an RTI system that at least reliably tells customers when their late bus is due?

BCC supports so-called loss-making services (but not the no.9 service to Cotham ward) at the same time as First cut or did not complete thousands of journeys last year, and every year. These ghost buses can be seen dropping off the display boards saving First a huge sum of money every year from the arrangement they negotiated with BCC while raising blood pressure, lowering spirits and wasting hundreds of thousands of hours of customers lives.

2. Is the following information known by BCC and if so why can it not be made public in a Freedom of Information request by First bus, Bristol City Council and the Traffic Commissioners?
  - Number or percentage of journeys not run or not completed each year?
  - Estimated savings each year to First bus through not running these services?
  - BCC's estimate of annual revenue shortfall to subsidise loss-making services?
  - Number or percentage of services that do not connect with the RTI system for all or part of their journeys?

## **REPLY:**

1. A new RTI System contract was awarded to Idox Software Ltd in February 2018. As part of the system migration there were reliability issues relating to the connectivity of on-street displays to the mobile network. This issue has now been resolved by Idox.

There is a separate problem with the RTI system where ticket machines had a problem.

It took us some time to convince First and their contractor that there was a problem. We are confident that the software update has worked on the route that we trialled last week. This is being rolled out across all ticket machines, this week, which gives us considerable confidence that the issue will be resolved.

However, I cannot guarantee this, as it is not in our control nor our contractor that is still resolving the problem. And I cannot guarantee no further problems as this relies on information provided by bus operators.



We are working with WECA, as the commissioning Authority to manage this situation.

In addition, First have been operating services with duplicate vehicle numbers. This causes RTI predictions to be erratic and inaccurate as the same vehicle number is being reported from two buses in two separate locations.

First have now reduced the number of affected buses from 80 to approximately 6 vehicles and the Council continues to work with First to eradicate this problem.

2. It is not a simple task to provide more specific answers to the detailed, bulleted questions. I don't know if you have raised issues direct with Transport officers rather than just raise them in a public forum.

But I can confirm that our Transport officers would be willing to work with you to clarify exactly what information or knowledge you are seeking, and then provide the data that is therefore useful.

Some of the current request is likely to be commercial intelligence that any operator would not release.



## **LABOUR QUESTION 2**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Bradley**

**Subject: Libraries**

1. A recent Lib Dem leaflet in Brislington said that Wick Road Library is facing the axe. Given the Mayor and Labour councillors visited that very library to announce that all 27 are staying open, local people were scratching their heads.

Last week, Labour voted to keep open every single library in Bristol, including Wick Road. The Lib Dems and Tories voted against funding Wick Road Library and the Green Party also refused to give our libraries a single penny.

With almost 130 libraries closed across the UK last year, more than 700 staff left or lost their jobs, and visitor numbers to libraries fell by 10 million in 2018 – is the Mayor as baffled as me that the opposition, unlike Labour, refused to vote to keep open Bristol's libraries?

2. Within hours of the Budget meeting where Labour voted to keep open all of Bristol's libraries, cabinet member Councillor Asher Craig announced the extension of Central Library's opening hours. This seven-day service is most welcome.

An engagement exercise is still ongoing in communities across the city, which is capturing ideas about how to make all of our libraries even better. Now that Labour have voted to keep all of our libraries open, can the Mayor/Councillor Craig provide an update on how we will continue to make our libraries even better?

## **REPLY:**

1. It is shocking that the Liberal Democrats are still producing false claims about libraries. You may want to address this specific part of your question to the leader of the Lib-Dem group.

I am delighted that the current library engagement has been so positively received and has reinforced the message that all the libraries will remain open, funded by the council.

2. While there is no doubt the library model is not fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century this administration has pledged to keep the library service and maintain funding while working with communities to modernise the services offered and utilise buildings as community hubs. We will continue the funding for as long as is necessary to ensure modern libraries, increased footfall and deliver services with and for communities.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2**

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

**Subject: Re-Location Of No. 75/75 Bus Stop (Previously Based By Primark)**

As the Mayor is probably aware, the bus-stop serving the No 75/76 bus services (from Cribbs-to-Hengrove) has recently been re-located from near Primark to Rupert Street. Whilst I acknowledge that the series of bus-stops near Primark was very concentrated and had problems of its own, the greater distance between Broadmead and Rupert Street is causing severe problems for No 75/76 bus-users, particularly the elderly, infirm and disabled. This has been confirmed by my substantial postbag on the issue and, I'm sure, other councillors too.

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm what consultation was done with bus-users (especially the elderly, infirm and disabled) before this re-location occurred?

Q2. Will this change be reviewed in the light of this experience and complaint?

### **REPLY:**

1. No consultation was carried out on this change – in fact we do not routinely consult with the public when we amend bus stop allocations because of the limited time available.

Because our bus market is expanding, 40-50 additional vehicles have been brought into Bristol in the last year, there is increasing pressure on stops. In the next year we anticipate that we will need to review stop allocations across the Central Area, but currently we are awaiting news from Callowhill Court and bus operator plans, both of which will have significant impact.

The 75/76 are allocated to the adjacent stop to the M1, meaning that passengers going to many parts of South Bristol have more choice of which bus to board.

2. Whenever changes are made they are always up for review. The feedback is being considered now. Any information you and other councillors can provide will help inform the September timetable change, when this can next be reviewed.



## **GREEN QUESTION 2**

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

**Subject: Bristol Airport**

In view of the fact that Bristol Airport has put in a planning application to expand their operation from 8 million to 12 million passengers a year, is the Mayor concerned about:

1. The very large extra amounts of carbon that will be produced which will make a mockery of Bristol's ambitions to be carbon neutral (especially as emissions at altitude have a greater effect on climate change)
2. The South Bristol citizens near the flight paths who will suffer additional air pollution from the planned extra 23,800 flights a year in the form of nitrogen dioxide, PM2.5 and other pollutants.

This will inevitably add to the 300 Bristolians who already die an early death from our toxic air.

### **REPLY:**

We've committed to delivering inclusive and sustainable economic development. We need both of them but sometimes they clash.

The airport is a major employer, its expansion will create up to 1,000 jobs and boost GVA to £2.9bn across the wider region by the 2030.

We have:

- An area, Bristol South facing inequality that needs jobs
- A guarantee that whatever kind of Brexit happens will negatively impact the economy.

It's a big thing to walk away from 6,850 jobs and £2.9b GVA.

If you are going to walk away from it, you have to have something to say about jobs and poverty. We recognise that by definition expanding the airport is a challenge, but you ask yourselves can we take that challenge on so that we get the jobs and GVA while taking actions in other areas to clean air and improve sustainability.

The way you frame this thinking is wrong too because you do not acknowledge carbon emissions will be reduced by the number of vehicles no longer driving from, around or through Bristol to London Airports.

We are working with the Airport and north Somerset to increase bus access and our medium term plans for a mass transit linking the city centre with the airport will have substantial carbon reduction impact.

The route to the airport is integral to the business case for mass transit, which will have a transformative effect on public transport in the city.



## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2**

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

**Subject: An Arena in Bristol**

I understand that there are couple of alternative sites being talked about for an Arena that include the Fruit Market and Avonmeads.

Although these sites are not in Brislington West they both fall very close to the boundary and local residents would be very keen to get more information about any conversations that are being had with Developers around these sites.

1. Can the Executive Member provide information on any proposals, including what stage in the conversation these are at and what size of stadium is being proposed?

### **REPLY:**

Private developers are welcome to come forward with any plans to build an arena if it means that Bristol can have one without spending public money.



### **LABOUR QUESTION 3**

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

**Subject: Filwood/South Bristol**

1. I'd like to place on the record my thanks for the work of the Mayor and his team in supporting Skemer's Gym to find a new home through the Community Asset Transfer process. I know that Skemer and people in Filwood, Knowle West, and South Bristol will want to echo that too.

Can the Mayor find some time to come out to Jubilee Hall to see Skemer and the local kids who are benefiting from his project.

2. I'd also like to welcome Councillor Steve Pearce into his new role as Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling. I'd like to thank him for continuing Labour's commitment to pushing forward with delivering the Hartcliffe Way Recycling and Reuse Centre.

Can the Mayor/Councillor Pearce provide an update on this project?

#### **REPLY:**

1. I'd love to go – get in touch with my office and they will make arrangements for us. Finding the facility and supporting the move of Skemer's Gym is a perfect example of this administration supporting public health, sport and continuing to develop more deprived areas.

2. Where other administrations have failed in the last decade, this is another example that this really is the administration of delivery.

The Council is working in partnership with the Bristol Waste Company to develop the new Household Waste, Recycling and Reuse Centre, which is proposed to be located within the existing Street Cleansing Depot on Hartcliffe Way.

Technical studies are being undertaken, including site and traffic surveys to inform the development of the outline designs. Pre-application discussions under a Planning Performance Agreement are commencing this week. These will inform design development as well as any requirements for off-site highway mitigation.

The project is still on track for construction to begin in the second half of 2019 with the facility opening in 2020.

A site for temporary relocation of the Street Cleansing Depot during Construction Works is presently being identified. A detailed report to Cabinet with details of delivery arrangements and programme will be provided following further design and cost plan development during spring 2019.



### **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3**

#### **Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Matt Melias**

#### **Subject: Avonmouth Fly Prevention & Eradication Plan**

Q1. As the Mayor will recall, I submitted a draft pollution control strategy designed to deal with this problem to the 5th March Cabinet Meeting. Have you now considered its content and whether or not you have any intention of implementing this plan?

Q2. If not proceeding in the way I have suggested, what alternative measures will Bristol City Council put in place to avoid any repetition of these outbreaks?

#### **REPLY:**

1. Thank you Cllr Melias, appreciate this proactive approach. I did try to contact you before the Cabinet meeting to talk about the challenges, so thanks for following up (I need to confirm your mobile number).

We've been in touch with people who submitted comments at cabinet to arrange a visit Avonmouth and look at the problem first hand. It would be good if you could join me. We have invited the Environment Agency to attend too.

I have asked Cllr Steve Pearce, my cabinet lead for waste, to arrange to meet you to discuss your plan in more detail.

2. I think your plan is a good start but I would suggest a conversation with Steve and the Environment Agency to prioritise the first areas for action to get the ball rolling.



### **GREEN QUESTION 3**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor**

**Subject: Green technology and clean energy**

Bristol is well known for its environmental consultancy sector, engineering expertise in renewable energy, and sustainable energy innovations in batteries, controls and storage systems. All these sectors are expected to grow and they could be a key part of the inclusive, sustainable economy in future.

1. Can the Mayor say how many jobs are thought to be in the environmental technology and clean energy sector now and what the potential is for the future?

### **REPLY:**

The latest data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that in Bristol in 2017 there were around 14,400 jobs in the Low Carbon and Environmental Goods and Services Sector.

Since 2011, this sector has grown by around 600 jobs per year in Bristol. If this trend continues, by 2029 we could expect upwards of 21,600 people to be employed in the sector.



### **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent** (Hengrove & Whitchurch Park Ward)

**Subject: Hengrove Park Neighbourhood Plan**

Following the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan you will be aware that the Planning Application submitted by Bristol City Council was rightly rejected for not meeting the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1. Rather than waste time and money on another unacceptable application will the Mayor agree to meet with members of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum and myself so that we can map out a way forward to develop a successful plan for Hengrove Park together?

### **REPLY:**

Housing remains a key priority for this administration and tackling the growing housing crisis will continue to be at the forefront of our work.

Officers are revising the Outline Planning Application to respond to the reasons for refusal outlined at Development Control Committee.

Before the application is resubmitted, officers have arranged a Community Focus Group meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 (to which ward councillors and representatives from the Neighbourhood Forum among others are invited) to discuss the amendments. This is a wider group than just the planning group as Hengrove Park is significant to a much wider area and it also involves current occupiers and services in the site. As lead for Housing, Councillor Smith will attend this meeting.

Councillor Smith continues to be available to meet with the planning group separately if they wish.



## **LABOUR QUESTION 4**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sultan Khan**

**Subject: Jobs/energy**

1. A more diverse energy mix is crucial for the future of our planet and economy. A stimulus, being talked about as a Green New Deal, could deliver the outcomes we need for both.

The £1 billion City Leap programme is a crucial part of this, offering the chance to radically change Bristol's energy infrastructure. It was sad to see all other parties – including the Green Party – voting against our £90 million investment in fighting climate change and tackling fuel poverty.

Can the Mayor/Councillor Dudd update us on continued progress in this area?

### **REPLY:**

1. An update is coming to Cabinet in early April to outline our next steps. I am grateful for the leadership Cllr Dudd has shown on this – a really positive piece of work.

This is a unique opportunity to transform the city's relationship to how we generate, transmit, use, and store energy.



## CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

### Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop Subject: Extended Use of Senior Interim Management Posts

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm the current number of interims retained in senior Council Officer positions and paid either through a Personal Service Company or PAYE?

Q2. Does the Mayor accept that the practice of filling permanent positions in this way is incredibly expensive and inefficient and therefore should only be used in exceptional circumstances for periods of less than six months? For example, longer term vacancies than this could be dealt with through employing fixed-term contracts?

#### REPLY:

1. See below for interims filling Director and Executive Director job roles. Two of the 17.

They are provided by the Council's Managed Service Provider for agency and interim workers under the following arrangements:

Payment type	Senior positions filled
Personal Service Company	1
PAYE	1

2. In line with guidance introduced last year, interim appointments beyond six months will require approval by the Head of Paid Service.

As pointed out by the LGA Peer review, we have built a stable and strong senior leadership team. We continue to make appointments as necessary for a council focused on delivery and achievement.

We have of course ensured consistent, strong leadership for financial management and brought fiscal responsibility to the Council. We continue to reduce the number of interim managers and have recruitment plans in place for permanent appointments.



## **GREEN QUESTION 4**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Clive Stevens**

**Subject: Bus services**

1. Does the Mayor agree that cheaper and better bus services targeted at areas of deprivation and so improving access to areas with jobs, schools and shops could benefit the lives of people living there?

### **REPLY:**

Yes. Bus services are one of the number of key interventions we believe are key to tackling poverty and inequality. I would add to that, growing the economy and generating the quality jobs is also important.

The Council continues to invest in bus priority schemes that are aimed at improving bus service delivery; making the network operate more efficiently and broadening the scope of commercial delivery.



## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4**

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

**Subject: Ploughing on Regardless**

Within the last few weeks we saw the unacceptable plans brought forward by this Administration for Hengrove being thrown out by Planning Committee.

It was obvious that these plans were against the Neighbourhood Plan and even if they had gone through the Committee they would almost certainly have been sent back by the Secretary of State with a large bill attached.

1. Can the Mayor explain why Officers did not pause work on their contradictory plans after the Neighbourhood Plan was approved for a referendum and how much the work cost after this point for both project and planning officer time?
2. Will the Mayor now agree to refer this matter to Audit Committee on both the waste of money issue and contravention of the purdah rules by Officers, so that they might come up with recommendations to prevent repeats?

### **REPLY:**

1. Housing remains a key priority for this administration and tackling the growing housing crisis will continue to be at the forefront of our work.

Officers are revising the Outline Planning Application to respond to the reasons for refusal outlined at Development Control Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

Before a new application is submitted, officers have arranged a Community Focus Group meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 (to which ward councillors and representatives from the Neighbourhood Forum among others are invited) to discuss the amendments.

As lead for Housing, Councillor Smith will attend this meeting.

The Planning Officer's recommendation was to approve the scheme.

2. Cabinet paper dated March 2017 sets out the project budget for Hengrove Park and Hartcliffe Campus of £1.8m which included the planning application fees.

The Outline Planning Application is not wasted and work is underway to respond to the points raised by the Development Control Committee and a resubmission is expected in the next couple of months.

The Council did not contravene the pre-election rules.



## **LABOUR QUESTION 5**

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

**Subject: Brexit**

1. I am aware that there is work underway on preparing the Council for a potential Brexit scenario, and would like to thank the officers for their recent briefing about this. BCC does have a number of employees from EU countries, and it would be helpful to have a breakdown of the number who may be considering returning to their home country if Brexit does go ahead. I am particularly concerned about people who work in social care related jobs, due to the potential impact on vulnerable people.

### **REPLY:**

Our records show we have 112 EU citizen staff members. In Bristol as a whole, there are 19,000 EU citizens.

We don't know how many staff plan to leave as a result of Brexit but we are making every effort to ensure EU citizens in our workforce feel valued and supported;

- We were one of the first councils in the country to pledge to fund the £65 cost of Settled Status Applications for staff members.
- We have written to every EU citizen in our workforce and we are running drop-in sessions throughout March to answer questions, offer reassurance and provide signposting advice.

We are particularly concerned about the impact on the social care workforce, where 9% of local carers are from the EU. Our message to the government is that the proposed changes to the immigration system could have severe consequences for the adult social care sector.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5**

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

**Subject: Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

I'm sure the Mayor will agree that trees greatly enhance a city both visually and environmentally. The city's most important trees are protected by way of Tree Preservation Orders. This affords these special trees protection including statutory protection, which requires a planning application to be submitted to the LPA by anyone undertaking works to the trees, including any works which involve cutting tree roots.

However, there have been recent instances, where planning officers have circumvented the TPO legislation by using 'personal discretion' and 'professional judgement', not for just one tree, but for a whole series of trees, some being veteran trees of national importance.

**Q1. Whilst the Mayor is not directly responsible for the Planning Department, this being a quasi-judicial function, is he concerned by this approach to TPO trees and does he not agree with me that TPO legislation should be followed rather than overridden by officers?**

My second question relates to the Council as landowner not as the LPA. Stoke Lodge Playing Fields have been used by many schools since Stoke Lodge was bought by the Council in 1947. No fence has ever been seen as necessary. When Cotham School became an academy and sought a lease of SLPF, the then Executive Member for Education, Alderman Clare Champion-Smith, made it clear on behalf of the Council as landowner that the playing fields were not to be fenced. Hence the lease drawn up by BCC was not a standard academy lease. Instead, it included community access clauses and a condition was imposed on the School not to erect any new structures such as a fence. FOI questions have confirmed that Cotham School wanted the ability to erect new structures, but the Council refused to remove or amend this clause in the lease.

Cotham School has now erected a permanent two metre galvanised steel fence, set in tons of concrete and extending to 1.5 kilometres in length. Ofsted has made it clear that a fence is not required for safeguarding pupils and the local MP has said "a fence at all costs" approach was an "overreaction to the original risk assessment taken by Cotham School".

**Q2. As landowner the Mayor clearly has the power to prevent the building of this fence. Why has the Mayor allowed the fence to be built?**

### **REPLY:**

1. As you correctly point out, I am not directly responsible for the Council's role as the Local Planning Authority.

The protection of important trees is important to the city and I have always made this clear. I have been assured that trees protection legislation has been followed in this case. If you have evidence this is not the case I would be happy for you to come and share it with me.

2. The land is leased to Cotham School. Under the terms of the school's lease, they do not require our permission to build this fence.



## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5**

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

**Subject: Rubbish Removal**

Brislington West like many other parts of the city has seen a rise in van dwelling on their streets; this has brought with it issues of site cleanliness and the disposal of rubbish.

Currently we have a small number of vans in Tramway Rd, Brislington which I have been told will not be moved on unless there is anti-social behaviour, and when I spoke to Bristol Waste on site I was told they are only required to clean every 3-4 weeks and will not clear anything more than approx. 6ft into the bushes.

There is a care home just beyond the site and staff, residents and family members are required to go past the mess to get to the home. I don't think this is the impression I want to give visitors of our area.

Local residents and shoppers have raised concerns about the state of the area and requested that Bristol Waste visit more often and with the assistance of the Travellers Team within Private Housing, ask the occupants to keep the area tidy and take some pride in the area.

1. Does the Mayor not deem this as anti-social behaviour and action to remove the problems?



## **REPLY:**

The vehicle dwelling encampment on Tramway Road has been assessed as having a high detrimental impact on the area.

Notices requiring the encamped vehicles to move within 7 days were served on 13/3/19 by Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers. A court order to remove any that remain will then be sought and any abandoned vehicles / unoccupied caravans will also be removed

Bristol Waste Company have been instructed clear any rubbish surrounding the encampment and to return when the site is unoccupied to clear all.

The cleansing in the area will be reviewed and monitored.



## **LABOUR QUESTION 6**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Don Alexander**

**Subject: Carbon emissions**

1. Please can the Mayor/Councillor Dudd provide an update on the council's progress to reduce carbon emissions from its direct activities?

### **REPLY:**

Bristol City Council has successfully achieved its corporate target to reduce carbon emissions from its direct activities by 65% by 2020.

The council has achieved this target, two years early, with a 71% reduction of carbon emissions in 2017/18 (against a 2005 baseline).

The council will soon be proposing a new, ambitious, target to cut even more carbon emissions from its direct activities.

This is the second year running that the council has exceeded its own carbon targets and this exemplar performance is largely due to making its buildings more energy efficient, investments in renewable energy infrastructure such as wind turbines and solar panels, electrifying the council's fleet vehicles and continuous upgrades to street lighting across the city.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Peter Abraham**

**Subject: Access to Confidential Information For Councillors**

I hope the Mayor believes in local government being open and transparent. The Mayor will be aware that I have been a councillor for more than 50 years and over that period I have never been denied access to sight of Council correspondence affecting my ward. Sometimes the information was provided on a confidential basis and I have always respected that confidence.

The Mayor may not be aware that for the first time in my career I have been denied access to information concerning a matter in my ward - sight of Counsel's opinion on a planning matter obtained by BCC and paid for with council tax payer's money.

This fundamentally changes the nature of the officer/member relationship.

Q1. Is this new policy of non-disclosure of information to Members sanctioned by the Mayor or mistaken overzealousness on the part of officers?

Q2. If the latter, please would the Mayor make clear in his reply that Members are entitled to information pertaining to their ward, accepting that, on some occasions, this may require the signing of a strict confidentiality agreement?

### **REPLY:**

1. There is no automatic right of access for councillors to legal advice that the Council obtains. Such advice would only be provided to councillors as exempt information when they are considering a particular matter in a committee meeting.

However I know that you would respect confidentiality and I will discuss these arrangements with the monitoring officer.



## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 6**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent (Hengrove & Whitchurch Park Ward)**

**Subject: Statutory Deadlines for Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)**

1. Can the Mayor tell us what percentage of Education Health Care Plans have been issued in the last 12 months within the legal deadline of 20 weeks?

### **REPLY:**

Bristol's 20 week timescales in 2018:

- 24.3% including exceptions - down 47.7% from 2017 (78.0%)
- 23.7% excluding exceptions - down 49.8% from 2017 (77.7%)



## **LABOUR QUESTION 7**

### **Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ruth Pickersgill**

#### **Subject: Housing**

I am regularly contacted by older residents (or their relatives) living in Bristol City Council older people's housing in my ward. They raise concerns about anti-social behaviour in the flats including prostitution, fights and drug dealing. I have raised the specific issues for over two years with various Housing Officers and PCSOs, Cabinet member and have even brought the local MP to meet them to talk about problems they face. They tell me about items stolen from communal rooms, strangers getting into the flats at night, security locks broken, doors slamming and shouting late at night, needles and blood found in toilets, visible drug dealing, people found sleeping in shared toilets-to name but a few.

Individual officers respond and try and deal with situations, and I know the number causing the problems is small, but the issue is a wider one of housing allocation, with under 60s with complex needs allocated to the flats. In the past, there were wardens who were able to manage the properties and organise social events and ensure these were places that were fit for a peaceful retirement.

I have spoken to 90 year olds too frightened to come out of their rooms in the evening, many who barricade themselves in, and relatives desperate to get their elderly family members rehoused, and I know from talking to other councillors this is not a situation unique to my ward.

I am aware there is work taking place on allocation policies, but what more can the Mayor do to ensure that no one under 60 connected with any anti-social behaviour is housed with vulnerable older people?

#### **REPLY:**

I am sorry to hear about this situation. Some of those issues you mention are not anti-social behaviour but criminal activity. Prostitution and drug dealing are not ASB and require police action.

As you note, we are in the process of carrying out a review of allocation policy. We have to think about our approach, in the context of the housing crisis we are not able to justify leaving properties empty.

There have been recent systemic social changes in the level of demand for older persons' housing; increasingly the move is toward extra care housing and a review of the future of sheltered housing. Cllr Smith is happy to speak to you about this further.

In the meantime our Mobile Wardens and Housing Officers act on all complaints received, and take appropriate action, often in close liaison with the Council's ASB Team and the Police. We encourage residents to always report any incidents.



## **CONSERVATIVE. QUESTION 7**

**Question to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Smith**

**Subject: Fencing Around Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

Access to green space is vital for good mental and physical health. The approximate 25 acres of Stoke Lodge Playing Fields are overlooked by houses, which give this large green space a unique sense of safety and security. Hence this is a much used community asset with visitors coming from all around North Bristol - Sea Mills, Lawrence Weston, Coombe Dingle, Stoke Bishop and Westbury.

The recently built new fence has restricted access to this important open space.

Q1. Would the Mayor please support our local communities in North Bristol by writing to Cotham School, asking them to keep the gates open, when they are not using the playing fields or better still removing the gates altogether?

### **REPLY:**

I want both sides to come together in mature dialogue to find a resolution to this issue. The school has responsibilities to its pupils as well as the communities of North Bristol so I hope a resolution can be found.



## **LABOUR. QUESTION 8**

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

**Subject: A4108**

1. Given the recent consultation on potential changes to traffic layout on the A4018, can I ask why there was no official information session convened for residents of Southmead Ward? I am aware that there have been sessions held for residents in both Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze Ward, and Henbury. However, although the proposed changes will almost certainly mean more traffic using both Greystoke Avenue, and possibly rat-running through the estate, nothing was planned for Southmead. In fact, as Councillors for Southmead we have had to organise a session ourselves, including booking a room, and printing our own posters to advertise the session.

Darren Jones M.P. has had huge interest when he set up some public meetings about the proposals, and I am aware that there is cross-party support for asking the traffic officers to review their current proposals due to the adverse impact some aspects of the plan may have on local people.

Can the Mayor assure us that given the current level of concern about the proposals, that the plans will be reviewed again, and that any future proposals include consultation with ALL impacted wards?

### **REPLY:**

You are right, Southmead should have been involved. We checked it and I am told officers met the BS10 Parks and Planning group in Southmead on 11 February 2019.

The week before the public consultation commenced, all local ward members were given a copy of the consultation materials and asked to suggest representative groups within their wards with whom the Project Team could discuss the proposals.

Following correspondence with Cllr Godwin, the project is also confirming an officer to attend her surgery on 16 March at Southmead Library to answer questions her constituents may have.

It is important to reiterate that this is a genuine consultation exercise and we are listening to residents and all interested parties. The primary reason for the proposals is to improve bus prioritisation and bus infrastructure.

A consultation report will be put together when the consultation period ends and this report will be provided to the cabinet member for transport for consideration. The cabinet member will determine with the Mayor's office what changes to make to the proposals and which elements to take forward.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8**

**Question to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris**

**Subject: Bristol Local Plan**

Q1. Can the Mayor please confirm if the proposed South East Bristol and Whitchurch Orbital road will be featured in the Bristol Local Plan?

### **REPLY:**

No, because the Local Plan can only include planning policies and proposals for the Bristol City Council authority area, and is not a transport plan.

Transport proposals are addressed in the Joint Local Transport Plan and the Bristol Transport Strategy and are subject of separate consultation processes.



## **LABOUR. QUESTION 9**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Don Alexander**

**Subject: Brexit**

1. The UK is due to leave the EU on 29 March. How has Bristol been engaging through the core cities and other city networks on this issue?

### **REPLY:**

Your guess is as good as mine as to whether we are going to leave on the 29<sup>th</sup> March.

Brexit has been a top priority for Core Cities. We facilitated a meeting with the Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox in December where we pitched Core Cities as serious players in global trade, city-to-city post Brexit. We have also secured a face to face meeting with the Brexit Minister Kwasi Kwarteng on 26 March.

Core Cities are ready to respond with an offer to Government on post Brexit challenges. We have commissioned a report, 'Hitting Reset', which will make the case for using Brexit as an opportunity to 'finish the job' on devolution, giving cities the tools they need to drive growth, jobs and investment.

In terms of preparedness our asks are being fed up to government on a weekly basis via South West Council. This gives us strong collective voice which we have used to call for:

- Additional contingency funding to support Brexit preparedness
- Extra support for the social care sector and a stronger focus on SME preparedness
- Clarity about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Green Paper has still not been delivered despite Ministers promising it would be issued before Christmas.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 9**

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott**

**Subject: Council's Pay Policy Statement & Interims**

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm that the remuneration of senior officers paid through a Personal Service Company have been included in the Authority's latest pay policy statement?

Q2. Will the Mayor please advise me of the number of senior staff who enjoy weekly remuneration of £3,200 or more and those paid a daily rate of £640 or more?

### **REPLY:**

1. No. The Pay Policy Statement only includes those post holders where the Local Authority is the employer (apart from the staff of Local Authority Maintained Schools).

2. The Council is currently engaging two interim workers occupying senior positions with day rates of £640 or more. No employees have weekly earnings of £3,200 or more.



## **CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 10**

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

**Subject: A4018 Improvements Consultation**

The consultation on the A4018 proposals has only just closed, but already it's clear that the public and local councillors are very unhappy with the proposals and, in particular, there are profound concerns regarding the massive impact on local communities especially in Brentry, Henbury, Southmead, Westbury, Stoke Bishop and Henleaze.

Q1. Will the Mayor give his explicit commitment that, if the public consultation robustly rejects these proposals, transport officers will go back to the drawing board and produce a completely fresh set of proposals, which help rather than hinder traffic movement in this part of the city?

Q2. Can the Mayor advise when such a revised scheme would be available for consideration by Members, the travelling public and residents of north Bristol?

### **REPLY:**

1. If it is clear that there is an overwhelming majority against some of the proposals then that will be taken into account. That is the point of a consultation.

The priority for this consultation is the improvement of bus infrastructure and bus prioritisation.

2. A consultation report will be put together when the consultation period ends and this report will be provided to the cabinet member for transport for consideration.

The cabinet member will determine with the Mayor's office what changes to make to the proposals and which elements to take forward in June.



# Member Forum

## 19 March 2019

### 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 have been submitted – full details are attached:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
CS01	Conservative Group Councillors	Silencing of the 'We Love Stoke Lodge' petition
CS02	Councillor Clive Stevens	Local Plan enriches landowners, we need to do something in the future
CS03	Councillor Jo Sergeant	Discretionary licensing for Avonmouth village

**CS01****Members' Forum statement from Conservative Group Councillors****Subject – Stoke Lodge Playing Fields**

**MEMBERS' PUBLIC FORUM STATEMENT** from Cllrs Mark Weston, John Goulandris, Peter Abraham, Geoff Gollop, Liz Radford, Steve Smith, Chris Windows, Matt Melias, Claire Hiscott

**SILENCING OF THE "WE LOVE STOKE LODGE" PETITION**

We are seriously concerned that a petition, which has crossed the threshold for debate in this chamber, has been blocked by the Council on the pretext that debate might somehow damage the Council's future legal position. That could be said of many petitions and we hope censoring petitions will not now become the norm in Bristol.

Thousands of our constituents have signed this petition in the expectation that they would be able to engage in the democratic process. For some of our younger citizens this would have been their first taste of democracy - sadly now leaving a bitter taste in their mouths. Their faith in the Council will have been shaken and they will be genuinely puzzled as to what the Council fears from debate of this issue. By stifling discussion in this way, councillors and the public who have not been directly involved in this issue, will remain very much in the dark as to the arguments for and against a fence at Stoke Lodge. A missed opportunity!

The key issues, which we don't believe can have any effect on the Council's legal position and in our view are simply statements of fact, are:-

1. Bristol City Council is the owner of the freehold of Stoke Lodge.
2. Stoke Lodge has seen multiple shared use since its purchase in the 1940s.
3. Many schools have played sport at Stoke Lodge without the need for a fence.
4. Ofsted have confirmed in writing that no fence is required for pupil safeguarding.
5. The fence is galvanised steel, concreted into the ground, 2 metres in height and approximately 1.5 kilometres in length. It encloses the greater part of Stoke Lodge.
6. The fence hinders community access to important open space.
7. Local politicians of various political colours do not agree with the need for a fence and certainly not a permanent fence of this size and type.

We trust that we will not see any further attempts to close down democratic debate.



**CS02**

**Members' Forum statement from Councillor Stevens**

**Subject – Local Plan enriches landowners, we need to do something in the future**

Dear Mayor

Every five years or so Bristol Council's Planning Authority awards millions of pounds to some lucky landowners.

The giveaway date was yesterday. Yesterday was when the new Local Plan was issued showing new sites allocated for housing. Often the land allocated is derelict or ex car parks, unwanted industrial sites and this time includes a number of car dealerships. The lucky landowners will receive a value uplift of maybe a million pounds per acre possibly more.

This new money isn't coming from the Council itself but is at the expense of those needing affordable or simply reasonably priced housing and hinders the City's progress towards carbon neutrality because developers who buy the newly allocated, higher priced land will say "I can't afford to build cheap housing or be carbon neutral because the land price is too high". And national laws permit this excuse because the provision of affordable housing and carbon neutrality are subject to a viability test, which means if the land price goes up then you don't have to follow all the planning policies.

In fact one landowner was so overwhelmed with the Planning Authority's generosity that they celebrated by felling all the trees on their newly allocated land; the old Wyevale Garden Centre in Brislington West. I expect they got an early tip off. I think that Councillors Harriet Bradley and/or Jos Clarke will provide you with more detail and I do hope that replacement trees can be enforced.

A national Land Value Tax has been proposed by many as a solution to this five yearly bonanza but while we have a Conservative Government that's unlikely to happen. Why? Because the system I describe benefits the very individuals and businesses that vote for and fund that Party.

The next land value giveaway will be around the year 2024, so we have time to consider a local approach whereby the Council itself and people of Bristol will benefit instead of those who already have more than their fair share of Bristol's wealth.

Councillor Clive Stevens (Clifton Down ward)



**CS03**

**Members' Forum statement from Councillor Jo Sergeant  
Subject - Discretionary licensing for Avonmouth village**

The private rented housing sector has grown in Bristol (like the rest of the UK), due to the prohibitive costs of buying a home and the increase in commoditisation of lower cost accommodation. As the Bristol City Council proposal for discretionary licensing schemes states:

'there can also be drawbacks if large concentrations of private rented properties become established in an area which impact on the areas social and community cohesion. Poorly maintained and or badly managed properties together with transient or disruptive tenants have an influence on the local community. Private absentee landlords may also not have a connection with the local community and as a result may not be aware of the impact their tenants may be having on the local community and residents

This very much applies to village of Avonmouth, which, due to its proximity to employment opportunities on the Avonmouth & Severnside industrial areas, has seen an increase in its transient population. The village has seen an increase in fly tipping and poorly managed household rubbish. Unwanted furniture and white goods, along with general household detritus, can often be found dumped outside properties between tenancies, official or otherwise, with no arrangement for their collection. Bristol Waste bins/boxes are incorrectly used, leading to their non-collection and are often left out on pavements all week and their contents end up strewn along local streets. This is because, whilst happy to profit from multiple rents, some landlords are not taking responsibility for their properties or their tenants. They don't always provide suitable storage. Nor do they always brief their tenants (whose first language is not always English) on their responsibilities and the methods for waste disposal.

Standard legislation is not working so I am requesting that discretionary licensing is introduced to Avonmouth village so that residents can benefit from the additional powers that Bristol City Council can exercise with regard to landlord regulation and responsibility. It may not solve all the problems with waste management in that area but it will be a start.

