

Member Forum  
12 December 2017  
Statements from councillors



**Procedural note:**

**STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints). One statement on one subject per member is permitted
- 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 Harriet Bradley – Adult social care
- CS 02 - Cllr Fabian Breckels – Fund essential road safety improvements on Conham Road.
- CS 03 - Cllr Jo Sergeant – Avonmouth – proposed Incinerator Bottom Ash processing operation
- CS 04 - Cllrs Stephen Clarke and Martin Fodor - We should formally introduce an 'Agent of Change' policy into the Local Plan.
- CS 05 - Cllr Charlie Bolton – Expansion of Bristol International Airport and climate change
- CS 06 - Cllr Jerome Thomas – Let's build Bristol's Arena in Bristol
- CS 07 - Cllr Carla Denyer – Chinese investment in Bristol



## STATEMENT CS 01

Councillors may be aware that a recent Which report stated that Bristol had one of the worst care home records in the country: the report stated that of the 2,527 beds available in the area 45% of them were rated as 'requiring improvement' or 'inadequate'. This followed a Joseph Rowntree report of a rise in pensioner poverty and homelessness. All this indicates the problems which constitute an ever increasing crisis in social care, in the context of austerity policies on local government funding which fail to confront the demography of an ageing population

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many old people with disability issues would prefer to stay in their own homes, so I welcome Councillor Holland's policy to shift resources from residential care to home care, to bring us in line with other comparable cities. However, whatever kind of care is offered, it is quality rather than quantity which is important.

Councillor Kirk and myself have been engaging with the Council's lay assessor team which visits care homes which have been judged inadequate in order to survey the quality of the care provided. Many of the problems relate to high levels of staff turnover, lack of activities to engage the residents and bleak environments. The stress of the lay assessors' project is not on the physical and administrative aspects of provision but on the quality of life experienced by the residents, in terms of relationships and activities. A recent visit to the top-rated Deerhurst Care Home was inspirational. It showed what can be achieved by creative and compassionate management which had succeeded in promoting an atmosphere of homeliness marked by the hum of activity and engagement. In such circumstances staff become committed and tend to be long-serving.

Many of our old people have worked and paid taxes all their lives. They deserve better than what many of them are getting. I would like to urge Councillors and Officers to work to develop guidelines for care homes which will steer them to providing a better environment for residents and care staff alike. Recent policies of privatisation have further devalued the already ill-rewarded work of elder care. There is a desperate need for well trained and properly rewarded employment in this area if we are to rise to the challenges posed by the ageing population.

Councillor Harriet Bradley

## **STATEMENT CS 02**

### **Fund Essential Road Safety Improvements on Conham Road.**

Constituents have been approaching me for years to address the dangerous crossing on Conham Road. Where the cycle and footpath ends you literally cannot see where to cross the road to get to the path on the other side. Oncoming vehicles can't see anyone trying to cross the road there either. It's not called Suicide Corner for nothing. I know from using it myself you take your life in your hands as you get across as fast as possible.

There were plans for a new cycle path beside Conham Road, along the land to the north of the road. This would have included raised crossings at Suicide Corner and just before Lower Conham Vale, providing access to Conham River Park. The cycle path was postponed because of our financial situation as a city, which is fair enough, but Suicide Corner is so dangerous it cannot be left on the back burner.

I met with officers last year to discuss our plans to try to identify an affordable solution to the issue of the crossing of Conham Road from the riverside path to the pavement on the west side. The plan I and my constituents wanted was a crossing on a raised speed table, this would act as traffic calming and provide a safer and more visible place to cross. If and when the cycle path was put in then one of the crossings to it would already be in place. However, yet again I'm finding there are certain officers who are finding obstacles to put in the way. The excuse this time is the lack of lighting at this location and the I quote "associated road safety issues". So there are road safety issues preventing us from carrying out essential works required to provide road safety in my ward. Nice. I'm now told the project is no longer deliverable within the budget that had been identified. I don't recall lighting being raised when the crossing was planned as part of the proposed cycle path. Besides, if that is an issue, why fail to implement traffic calming to slow traffic down and make collisions with pedestrians less likely? Speed tables usually have white arrows on them which will show up in your headlights if you are driving, so you'll still know you have to slow down. Has one of my constituents got to be killed or seriously injured before anything is done?

I am told that the 'Conham Gap' remains a priority. However officers now cannot give me a timescale for when anything will be done. I'm told they are looking at funding options but I'm stuck with a desperately needed road safety matter in my ward effectively kicked into the long grass.

Funding needs to be found and found urgently, before someone is killed. Costs will only increase so the sooner this is done the cheaper it will be. Our Mayor has often challenged us to come up with something else to cut if we want something funded or saved. Fair enough. Here is my suggestion. Senior staff posts have cost the Council £6,000,000 a year. The planned restructure will save £750,000 which is to be welcomed but that's dwarfed by proposed cuts to valued services like parks and libraries. So my suggestion is we cut the senior staff budget by at least a third and use some of the money saved on urgent safety improvements instead.

Cllr Fabian Breckels, Labour/Co-operative Party, St George Troopers Hill

### **STATEMENT CS 03**

Avonmouth – proposed Incinerator Bottom Ash processing operation

I would like to express my concern about the possibility of a permit being granted to the Day Group for processing incinerator bottom ash (IBA) in Avonmouth, a very short distance away from people's homes.

I understand that the Environment Agency (EA) is minded to grant a permit, after negotiations (about which the public was unaware) over additional conditions. The Public Inquiry held last week the week before went ahead, despite this last minute agreement between the two parties.

Although the decision still lies with the Inspector, who presided over the Inquiry, it seems less likely that it will go against Day Group.

Whilst we may have to accept the decision, it is important, that Bristol City Council works closely with the EA to ensure that Day Group adheres to these conditions, and acts swiftly over local concerns about safety. I hope that the Mayor will support this and it will not merely be lip service.

Councillor Jo Sergeant

## STATEMENT CS 04

### Statement by Councillors Stephen Clarke and Martin Fodor:

#### **We should formally introduce an 'Agent of Change' Policy into the Local Plan.**

We sit on DCA and DCB committees and there have been a number of recent occasions where concerns have been raised about new residential developments impacting on existing leisure outlets and businesses. The two that come to mind are the worries about the continuation of the Thekla as a music venue and the existing shipbuilding activity next to the proposed McArthurs Warehouse apartments adjacent to the SS Great Britain. The earlier development next to the Fleece is still current as it just completed construction.

In all these cases, the concern is that new apartments will be purchased or rented by people who then try to stop the existing potentially noisy operations which are happening next door. This is unacceptable in our view. We live in a City where music and existing industrial uses (often of a heritage nature as in the shipbuilding) are integral to the fabric of our vibrant urban space. We do not want to end up with a monolithic fabric of residential and retail.

To deal with this issue the Mayor of London has proposed a planning principle in the London Plan called 'The Agent of Change Rule'. It says:

*'Boroughs should ensure that planning decisions reflect the Agent of Change principle and take account of existing noise-generating uses in a sensitive manner when new development, particularly residential is proposed nearby...Boroughs should refuse development proposals that have not clearly demonstrated how noise impacts will be mitigated and managed.'*

It continues:

*'Development should be designed to ensure that established noise generating venues remain viable and can continue or grow without unreasonable restrictions being placed on them'*

At the moment we have no such principle in our planning policy documents. We therefore propose that we adopt a similar policy to the London one and we would ask that the Mayor promotes it as an important part of our Local Plan.

## **STATEMENT CS 05**

### **Statement by Councillor Charlie Bolton: Expansion of Bristol International Airport and climate change**

I remember submitting two motions regarding airport expansion which were considered by Bristol City Full Council meetings in the years 2006 to 2010.

I note with concern the current proposals by Bristol International Airport – as part of its consultation – to expand its airport from handling a current figure of around 8 million passengers to a possible 20 million.

While I welcome the fact that Bristol International Airport is committed to being carbon-neutral by 2030, I note that this specifically excludes emissions from flights, and therefore totally misses the point.

Air travel remains the most climate-damaging form of travel, and significant expansion of air travel will therefore have a significant climate impact. Not only that, such an increase in the number of flights would lead to an enormous growth in the number of journeys to get to the airport – a fact which in itself would contribute to significant ongoing issues around congestion, pollution and infrastructure.

I struggle to see how this fits in with the commitment – in Bristol – to be carbon-neutral by 2050, and the Climate Change Act which requires an 80% cut in emissions across the UK. Or indeed, the Joint Spatial Plan – which includes North Somerset and the geographical area covered by the airport and contains an explicit commitment to making a 50% cut in emissions by 2036.

I therefore urge the Mayor to take all possible measures to address the issues raised by this potential expansion and to ensure the city and city region meet their environmental commitments.

## **STATEMENT CS 06**

### **Statement by Bristol Green Councillor Jerome Thomas: Let's Build Bristol's Arena in Bristol**

On behalf of Bristol's Greens I'd like to register our concern about the delays getting started on Bristol's proposed arena and now the exploration of a site in South Gloucestershire on Filton airfield as a possible alternative venue.

We appreciate the Mayor's concerns and efforts to get the best possible arena deal for Bristol. However, it seems there is now a fixed price bid of under £120 million from Buckingham Group to build an arena on Arena Island next to Bristol Temple Meads station. As a result the city's exposure to cost overruns will be minimised. Buckingham Group have solid experience of developments on this kind and so we can have a good level of confidence that the city can get the arena it wants at a price that is manageable.

Bristol is the only one of the UK's Core Cities to have no city centre arena. Major arena and sporting venues elsewhere exist in city centres with limited parking. Whether it's the Glasgow Arena, the Manchester Arena or even the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff, these are all centre of city locations with good public transport links and minimal parking provision. Detailed discussions about the level of parking provision for the Bristol arena should not distract us from getting the right location for the arena in the first place.

An arena in the centre of our city with great transport links will provide people in Bristol and the surrounding regions with the opportunity to see national acts that currently pass us by. Siting the arena on Arena Island is a wonderful opportunity to regenerate and open up this part of the city, providing employment opportunities for people living in walking distance of the site in Ashley, Easton, Lawrence Hill, Brislington East, Brislington West, Windmill Hill, Central and other neighbouring city wards. It will also strengthen the economic vitality of our city centre retailers and other service businesses and allow us to grow the essential revenue the city receives from its business rates. These are some of the reasons this site was selected in the first place.

A Bristol arena in South Gloucestershire would require a significant amount of parking to service it, in an area that already suffers from severe congestion and traffic jams on a daily basis. Being located some distance from the centre of Bristol it would provide little additional benefit to arena guests nor added value to businesses in the city.

While we recognise that the construction of an arena is expensive, particularly in times of austerity, we have already spent over £10 million on the development of this site and any alternative site could be significantly more expensive. As well as the guaranteed revenue from the arena operator over a ten year period of over £30 million, we also note that good property investment decisions by the city and potential windfall property gains could result in capital gains to the city in excess of £25 million. These capital gains could further offset the cost to the city of the proposed development.

Approving and starting work on the Bristol Arena on Arena Island in January 2018 would be exactly the kind of decisive action that City hopes for from its elected Mayor. By the time the Global Parliament of Mayors comes to Bristol next year, construction of the arena would be in full flow; a practical demonstration that Bristol's elected mayors can deliver for the city.

## **STATEMENT CS 07**

### **Statement by Bristol Green Councillor Carla Denyer: Chinese investment in Bristol**

I note with concern the brochure issued to promote our Mayor's visit to China seeking investment. The Chinese state has a well-documented disregard for human rights, freedom of speech and religious tolerance. Any co-investment with Chinese banks, which are deeply embedded in the state and Communist Party, must be carefully looked at to ensure it doesn't violate the Council's ethical investment policy.

Moreover it is alarming that the Mayor, whose mission is to tackle the City's growing affordability and homelessness crises, is touting Council-owned land for foreign investment into private sector housing. A brochure which boasts of "significant price inflation", with house price growth just behind that of London's, does little to address concerns that any housing built will help ordinary Bristolians (let alone those most in need) by delivering high levels of social or even affordable housing that the city is in need of. I hope the Mayor can address these concerns and recognise that they come from a place of real unease about the future shape of our city and the wellbeing of its residents