

Member Forum

11 September 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 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 to the Mayor from Cllr Brenda Massey

Subject: Recycling and waste

1. Given the recent problems with delayed collections of recycling in Bristol, and the increased likelihood of this happening in coming years, what contingency plans are in place by Bristol Waste to avoid a repetition of having to wait two weeks for a collection in the hottest time of the year? The plans should also include appropriate health and safety awareness for the workforce.

2. At least one collection during the hot weather was made by a co-mingling lorry. Given the time taken by residents to carefully sort their waste into different categories, was this collection then taken to landfill instead, as that negates the point of categorising waste? I understand that this was due to a shortage of appropriate vehicles, partly due to an ageing fleet, so can we be reassured that steps have been taken to increase the fleet as a matter of urgency?

REPLY:

1. As you mention, the recent extreme weather had a detrimental impact on our aging vehicle fleet causing multiple breakdowns on a daily basis.

- A new vehicle fleet is being re-procured. This will provide longevity and resilience. The new fleet will be delivered in Spring/Summer 2019.
- We are updating health and safety training for using the current fleet, including working in extreme weather, which will be continued for the new fleet.

2. BWC has a contract in place to separate and treat any co-mingled recyclable waste, therefore none of this waste was sent to landfill.

A materials recycling facility (MRF) is used to mechanically separate comingled recyclables into its component product streams to ensure that the recyclable waste presented by our residents is always recycled.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Matt Melias

Subject: Council policy on the use of industrial sites to host van dwellers

1. At the end of May, Bristol City Council took a unilateral decision to relocate a number of mobile homes from Greenbank to a former depot site in Avonmouth. Can the Mayor confirm what consultation took place with local people over this move?
2. I understand that this is meant to be a temporary arrangement, presumably lasting until the land has been sold for redevelopment. Please can you confirm that this stop-over will not become a more permanent settlement?

REPLY:

1. Cabinet members made the decision, local councillors were advised and I would expect everyone to have worked together.

As part of the formal action to remove the large encampment of Vehicle Dwellers from Greenbank View, Easton, an offer was made to the occupiers whether they wanted to move to the empty site Bristol City owned land at Chittington Road, Avonmouth, on a temporary basis. Occupation would only be on a temporary basis until the land was sold.

2. The land at Chittington Road, Avonmouth is currently being marketed for sale.

Before entering the Chittington Road site, occupiers must sign a site license condition form confirming that they will only be able to use the site for temporary residence.



GREEN QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Charlie Bolton

Subject: Distinctiveness of cycle lanes in the city centre

As both a cyclist and pedestrian, I go through the centre of Bristol on a regular basis. My experience of the city centre, by the fountains, is that pedestrians simply do not know where the cycle lanes are. This leads to them walking down them, and therefore to cyclists using the parts reserved for pedestrians. This is therefore to the detriment of both sets of users, but particularly pedestrians with visual impairments or other vulnerabilities, and can lead to conflict.

Similar comments could be made about other parts of cycling infrastructure in the city e.g. Gaol Ferry Bridge, Queens Square.

Does the Mayor or Cllr Threlfall agree that the current layout does not work well, and – if so – how do they propose to address this? For example, do they support having distinctively coloured cycle lanes?

REPLY:

I use it myself; I must admit when I first used it I did have to look down and work out what's going on. But now it's OK. I can understand how there are other people working it out too. It could be better, of course it could be better.

As for distinctive coloured lanes for Bikes, I think there are Pros and Cons – there is something good about shared space and people riding bikes taking care.

You can't legislate or build for every eventuality – especially in busy spaces. At some point for Bristol to do well we all have to give a bit on the name of the 'common good'.

The cycle routes through the Centre are still being completed with more signage and other measures planned



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Gary Hopkins

Subject: Ashton Court miniature railway

1. Can the Mayor please explain what alternative use has been identified for the land currently used by the miniature railway at Ashton Court?
2. Can the Mayor please explain what he and his officers would consider to be an acceptable income for the use of this land?

REPLY:

1. The lease is coming to an end and we are exploring options with them to make it self-sustaining.
2. My administration is looking to ensure sensible financial decisions are made, while balancing the undoubted positive impact that many community organisations, charities and community groups have.



LABOUR QUESTION 2

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Don Alexander

Subject: City Leap prospectus and next steps

Now that the City Leap prospectus has closed, would the Mayor be able to give us an impression of whether this has proved popular and an idea of the what the next stage is please? In Lawrence Weston we would like to hear of any steps towards linking us into the developing heat network.

REPLY:

1. The City Leap has exceeded all expectations and we've been overwhelmed with the number of responses that we've received since May.

- We've received 180 of expressions of interest.
- For example from
- Heat Networks was among the most popular areas for potential partnership and investment.

The council's Energy Service are now working through the offers and meeting with the interested organisations to get a sense of the opportunities that these present for Bristol.

We will be briefing the relevant Cabinet Members on the full response and next steps in the coming weeks, as well as publishing a press release to update the public on this initiative.

2. Any opportunities to engage communities like Lawrence Weston in the resulting projects will be fully explored to ensure that we share the benefits of this exciting initiative.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Richard Eddy

Subject: Reinstatement of resurfaced road markings

1. As all Elected Representatives are aware, in recent years Bristol City Council has engaged increasingly in a citywide programme of surface-dressing to (a) maintain our roads in a serviceable state while (b) seeking to ensure the Traffic Maintenance Budget goes further. In some instances, after surface-dressing works, the subsequent renewal of road-markings has taken some time to be achieved, at considerable inconvenience to some Bristol residents (particularly the disabled). Does the Mayor recognise this reality, which affects constituents of every councillor serving on Bristol City Council?

2. Would it be possible for him to direct officers to prioritise the replacement of, for example, Disabled Parking Bays and kerbside-markings? For example, temporary primary-coloured (though not red) parking-cones could be displayed until Disabled Bays were reinstated.

REPLY:

1. I can recognise that this would be an inconvenience if it were happening. Can you be more specific about the instances (which roads) and the time that's being taken (how long is it)?

We typically carry out preventative maintenance including Surface Dressing and Micro Asphalt on around 100 to 150 roads annually.

Our records show that Surface Dressing was carried out in June / July this year and all road markings have been reinstated across the city.

2. The reinstatement of road markings following that is carried out in a priority order;
1. Pedestrian Crossings and School Keep Clears
 2. Strategic Roads
 3. Resident Parking Areas
 4. Other outlying areas

It is important that the contractor completes entire sites where practical, as jumping from site to site to reinstate single elements is inefficient, would increase cost and would delay overall completion.

Prior to the reinstatement of disabled bays, a check is made with Parking Services to ensure that they are still required. Although the reinstatement of disabled bays is currently not prioritised, as explained above, they can potentially be brought forward on request if there is a particular difficulty.



GREEN QUESTION 2
Question withdrawn



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Jos Clark

Subject: Fly tipping and waste on land process

In the past few months I have noticed an increased number of incidents of fly tipping in Brislington West, this is being further exacerbated by the delays in removing the dumped rubbish. Several years ago the Council put together a 'Waste on Land' process, so that there was one contractor to clear waste rather than the 16 contracts, to save the Council money. We have been advised that this process has slowly fallen apart.

1. Can the Mayor ensure that the Waste on Land process is implemented and reassure residents that rubbish will be removed as quickly as possible, so that the area is clear of dumped rubbish?

Brislington West has experienced problems recently with dumping of builders rubbish on Council land, although our Enforcement Teams have been involved; the rubbish remains 'whilst investigations are ongoing'.

2. Can the Mayor assure me that the Council will remove the rubbish so that our green spaces look at their best and also to discourage further fly tipping?

REPLY:

1. I can confirm that the 'waste on land' process and protocol remains in place. I can also confirm that the processes are currently being reviewed by officers.

The rapid and ongoing increase in the instances of fly-tipping has dramatically increased pressure on the contractor responsible for the clearance of this waste in terms of time and resources so a review was necessary.

The process remains in place while this review is undertaken and the outcome along with any recommendations for improvements will be brought back to the executive member to consider.

2. Yes, please can you report to the officers as needed. If you think there are particular hotspots please speak to the clean streets campaign so that we can look at the action we can take.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr John Goulandris

Subject: Cost of traveller trespass enforcement

1. What was the total cost to BCC for the 12 months to April 2018 in dealing with and cleaning up sites after illegal traveller incursions? Here, please can the Mayor provide the legal costs (including an apportionment of officer costs) of evicting travellers in this period?
2. Has any attempt been made to recover any of these costs from the offenders?

REPLY:

1. The total known costs to BCC for dealing with unauthorised encampments was: £38,837.

The costs can be broken down into:

- approximately £16K for Traveller sites officer enforcement work
- £22,837 legal cost for dealing with unlawful encampments in 2017-18
- The costs for collecting and disposing of waste on unauthorised encampment sites are not recorded.

2. It's really difficult to do, and could cost us more in chasing the money than the sum itself.

If we can recover the costs we always will, however unless an officer from the City Council or a Police Officer witness a person dropping or leaving waste taking successful legal action against that individual or group action will be unsuccessful as you need the name of the individual to take a successful prosecution.

The Council is unable to obtain costs against persons unknown. Rarely are the names of the people given during court proceedings. Even if the name may be given, without a fixed address enforcement is likely to be unsuccessful.



GREEN QUESTION 3

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Martin Fodor

Subject: Council motion on single use cups

At the Full Council in December 2017, members from all parties voted on a motion to agree to deal with plastic waste and unrecyclable coffee cups. We agreed to surcharge users of disposable cups at our own café, and those on council sites, to encourage reusable cups to be chosen, and to change from non-recyclable black plastic lids for takeaways. The surcharge is to be used in a fund for environmental improvements.

Among the points agreed were:

Calling on the Mayor to ensure all outlets on Council land offer reusable coffee cups for sale, to request all council contractors to switch to fully recyclable drinks cups (i.e. no plastic lining), and to ensure all recyclable cups only include non-black plastic lids (as black plastic is not recyclable).

Q: Can the Mayor therefore confirm that he has authorised all the changes included in the motion that was voted for with cross party support, and give a progress report on how and when they are being actioned?

Reply in writing please.

REPLY:

1. The Mayor and the Executive Member for Energy, Waste and Regulatory Services Kye Dudd can confirm that they have authorised the implementation of the measures agreed in the motion.

the Executive Director of Communities has agreed to progress points (a) to (c) from the motion passed at Full Council on 12 December 2017. They are detailed as:

- a) *To request the government to legislate for a small charge to be levied on such cups noting the success of the plastic bag charge in increasing the use of 'bags for life' and reducing plastic.*

This has been completed with a letter sent by the mayor in April 2018;

- b) *Impose a small charge on the sale of hot drinks commonly known as 'latte levy' at City Hall, to monitor effectively and then include other venues controlled by Bristol City Council;*

The cash hall café have agreed to this, and should be implemented by the end of October.

- c) *To ensure all outlets (defined as the café at City Hall and council run cafes in park and museums) offer reusable cups for sale.*

The cafés in City Hall and at Ashton Court Estate do this already.



2. We have also identified other opportunities including:

- Establishing a Green Champions staff led group who will identify ways to improve the council's environmental performance.
- Extending the 'latte levy' to other premises.
- Improving recycling options in council buildings – particularly for plastics.
- Exploring how BCC's commissioning and procurement arrangements can encourage better practice.
- Explore use of licensing, planning and other relevant powers to reduce use of single use plastic.
- Explore getting the council signed up as a recognised Refill Bristol tap water station.

This administration is committed to reducing single use plastics and is taking steps to put this motion in place. We encourage staff and elected members to do their part.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Anthony Negus

Subject: A pesticide-free Bristol

France and Belgium have banned glyphosate and Germany is phasing it out over three years. Cities and local authorities in this country have made a similar commitment or are meaningfully trialling alternatives. Although used as a herbicide it widely considered to act as a pesticide affecting our biodiversity. The carcinogenic effect on humans is contested but there seems little doubt that this is pernicious for children at least.

There has been no indication of progress within this City Council's on this issue since the meeting I convened in May 2017 with Parks officers and pesticide-free campaigners to discuss the trial alternative solutions I set up in Cotham ward – and how this council could move forward from that.

Will the Mayor please provide an update on our progress on his stated vision of Bristol becoming a pesticide-free city like many local authorities in the UK?

REPLY:

1. The French President has committed to phasing out glyphosate when a suitable alternative is found, and at the very latest within 3 years. German ministers have also made a similar commitment. There are other EU countries that are also considering this. The situation in America, which much of the research on glyphosate is based on, is very different as they use aerial spraying on a mass scale.

Our options are based on finding affordable alternatives. One of the main possibilities is Pelargonic Acid, which is more expensive than glyphosate to produce but is seen as a more natural alternative.

- We are keen on trialling alternatives to glyphosate as they become available.
- Bristol City Council volunteered for a trial in 2017 to test Pelargonic acid products but the license was not granted.
- In 2016-2017 the council trialled using acetic acid (vinegar) as an alternative but this was not effective.

There is a hard reality that affordability is an issue.

The cost of other alternatives such as using steam or foam is prohibitive and would require significant investment and ongoing revenue budgets which are not available.

As with all chemicals, the council's policy is to reduce use where it can and we would always use the minimum amount possible, applied in a safe way.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Steve Jones

Subject: Update on revenue costs of the Kings Weston Lane transit camp

1. Can the Mayor provide me with the current running costs of the purpose-built transit camp in Avonmouth?
2. What are the average annual occupancy levels of this facility?

REPLY:

1. The total costs for running the Kingsweston Lane Transit site will be approximately £12,800 in 2018-19. This is likely to be cost neutral based on income from charges made for Gypsies and Travellers occupying the site pitch, as well as the amount of water and electricity used whilst the site is occupied.
2. There are 20 pitches available on the Kingsweston Lane, Transit Site.

The occupancy figures for the transit site for 2018 are:

January:	9 x families
February	12 x families
March	8 x families
April	2 x families
May	4 x families
June	6 x families
July	6 x families
August	6 x families
September	11 x families

Apart from April and May, the site was pretty much at 50% capacity as some families have more than one caravan depending on how many children they have.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Tim Kent

Subject: Provision of school places

The Integrated Education and Capital Strategy (2015-2019) sets out how Bristol City Council will meet its lawful duty to ensure there are enough school places within the city to meet demand.

1. Where within the strategy or the Mayor's budget and medium term financial plan, passed in February of this year, are there plans to meet the need for around 500 additional primary school places in my ward of Hengrove and Whitchurch Park due to new development?

The South Area is projected to be running at a shortfall for Year 7 pupils. Development not only within the Hengrove and Whitchurch Park ward but also in surrounding areas will greatly increase the shortfall requiring a new secondary school for south Bristol. In 2015 Bristol City Council passed a motion proposed by the Liberal Democrat's on provision of school places.

2. Government funding for a new secondary school in South Bristol has been secured, what progress has been made on delivering this?

REPLY:

1. We recognise the additional need of up to 500 additional primary age children, which is dependent on mix of housing type and success of future planning applications.

Subject to the delivery of all the anticipated new housing another 240-300 places would be required at a later date. This would require partnership working with academy chains that run local schools to identify the best location for an additional expansion. It is likely this would be paid for by grant funding provided by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This would require cabinet approval to be included in the capital programme.

Housing Delivery Service is considering funding the rebuild and expansion of Perry Court Primary School to accommodate an additional 240 pupils. Feasibility work is about to start. The project would take approximately 2 years to complete from instruction, once agreed by the Cabinet for it to be included into the capital programme.

2. The ESFA is proposing to build the school with no grant money given to the Council. Site negotiations are ongoing but positive. Educators in the city are fully aware of this. A likely opening date is 2020/21.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Steve Smith

Subject: Waste promotion 'No food diet'

1. The Mayor will be aware that Bristol Waste have used yellow plastic tape across every black bin in the city with a promotional message about food waste. Can the Mayor assure me that the plastic tape used is fully recyclable?
2. Is the Mayor able to advise me approximately how much of this plastic tape has ended up in black bins as additional waste?

REPLY:

1. I can confirm the tape used as part of this waste minimisation initiative is fully recyclable.
2. The quantity or fraction of this tape entering the household waste stream is not known as the separate fractions cannot be measured without a full composition analysis. It can however be evidenced that any plastic tape within the residual waste stream is fully recovered and forms part of the refuse derived fuel products created as part of our waste treatment process.

None of this waste is disposed of at Landfill.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5

Question to the Mayor from Cllr Anthony Negus

Subject: Answers to forum questions from members and the public

Will the Mayor assure all Councillors and the public that their questions will be answered respectfully under his direction by appropriate Departmental Officers and not by his Political Assistants?

REPLY:

Many officers help draft responses to full council questions, reflecting the wide range of the subjects asked about and their particular expertise. I review all of the answers and I am satisfied they are answered appropriately.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Graham Morris

Subject: Joint Transport Plan

When does the latest version of this document come out for public consultation and will planning officers hold an event in Stockwood?

REPLY:

The current programme for the Joint Local Transport Plan public consultation is January 2019.

Officers are not planning to hold any local events as in the past this has been a poor use of resources that have not generated high levels of engagement.

Our approach to consultation, which has been signed off by WECA Committee, is to be based online, promoted on social media and via posters in public centres to direct citizens to the website, with paper copies of the plan and questionnaire available on request.

A stakeholder launch event will be held in central Bristol at the beginning of the consultation, the date of which is yet to be confirmed.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 7

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Graham Morris

Subject: Local bus routes

I have received several complaints regarding the demise of the no. 57/67 bus service. Will Bristol City Council review the route to determine whether this service can be made viable with some financial support?

REPLY:

The decision to withdraw services 57/ 67 was a commercial decision made by the operator Abus, as the services were no longer considered to be commercially viable.

The Tory government deregulated the bus services in this country with the Transport Act 1985.

The Council's supported bus service budget is fully allocated for this financial year.

The local bus network will be reviewed as part of the WECA Bus Strategy in the near future and this will include the provision of bus services between the Chew Valley, Stockwood and central Bristol.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8

Questions to the Mayor from Cllr Chris Windows

Subject: Management of vacant allotment sites

1. Can the Mayor confirm the latest position regarding the amount of vacant allotment plots across the city and the number of people currently on the Council's waiting list?
2. Please can you explain why the management system for this service seems incapable of quickly matching vacancies with aspiring allotment holders?

REPLY:

1. The Council has 4,048 plots on 94 allotments with 471 plots currently vacant. This is an occupancy rate of 88.4% with 31 allotments fully let.

There are currently 2694 customers who are on one or more waiting lists for an allotment plot. Of these 451 are asking for plots on sites that have no vacancies.

Customers can refuse an allotment plot and choose to remain on the waiting list for a different opportunity. Plots continue to remain vacant because they are on allotments that are in areas of low demand; commonly because they are in a shaded area, there is no nearby water source or are very overgrown.

We are aware that some of the customers on the waiting list are unlikely to be still looking for an allotment. The Council will shortly be contacting all applicants to determine whether they wish to continue to be on the waiting list.

2. The above explains why there is not always a speedy resolution.

The system also relies on prospective tenants responding to an offer of an allotment in good time.

The Council is making some adjustments to its allotments service this year including moving to online billing.

