

Member Forum

13 November 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(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce

Subject: Investment

1. The soft market testing for the LEAP prospectus was clearly a big success for Bristol, as with the Global Parliament of Mayors' summit and housing innovation festival. Given the huge interest already garnered, and recent boost to our city profile from these international events, can the Mayor/Councillor Dudd set out the timeline for moving forward with LEAP – including the potential for going out again for even more bids?
2. What other major infrastructure projects has the LEAP prospectus, GPM, and events like the housing festival attracted investment interest in?

REPLY:

1. The soft market testing phase of City Leap has enabled the council to gauge the scale of type of interest in a potential partnership with the council. The results have been fantastic as you say and have shown that there is a genuine appetite across all sectors as well as aiding our understanding of how the council can stimulate additional investment, infrastructure and activity within the energy sector.

The responses received from organisations during the soft market testing phase are considered to be proposals and ideas, not bids.

2. All these things are building a profile and brand of the city. People, government and organisations are seeing us differently.

The LEAP project will result in investment in the following:

- Heat networks
- Smart energy systems
- Domestic energy efficiency
- Commercial energy efficiency
- Renewable energy
- Monitoring, dissemination and evaluation

The Global Parliament of Mayors established University links, with interest from cities in securing places and building connections. There was also considerable interest in the City region's Tech sector, as showcased at the reception. The Mayor of Kingston is now exploring a sister city agreement with us.

The Housing festival has already shown the potential for two factories to come here and will continue to look at innovation in the housing sector and has attracted a substantial number of partners.

We continue to discuss major infrastructure projects with investors including mass transit, Western Harbour and Temple Quarter/Temple Island.

CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

“LOVE OUR HIGH STREET” PROJECT

Like me, I am sure the Mayor welcomes the announcement in the autumn budget (£1.5bn) to help our high streets and, in addition, the WECA (£10m) funding to revive town centres.

Q1. Can the Mayor advise whether or not officers have begun compiling a list of potential candidates for a share in this regional funding?

Q2. Is the Mayor able to tell me at this stage what criteria will be used to finally select the Bristol nomination?

REPLY:

Q1 Yes we are tuned in to the challenge facing our highstreets due to the retail crisis.

We had already identified this as a priority given the retail crisis the country is facing. We has launched work looking at Bristol’s High Streets and retail sector and created the City Centre Revitalisation Group.

This group brings together BCC senior team, the company which operates Cabot Circus and Broadmead, along with developers, the University of Bristol and other stakeholders.

Q2 We have selected Bedminster as our trial, focusing in and around East Street. The criteria used for selecting the High Street was based on a number of factors including; vacancy rate, strategic importance, availability of opportunity for intervention/change and potential for positive impact on Bristol’s most deprived communities.

We expect there to be a number of other High Streets supported after Bedminster and we will further develop criteria. We would welcome views on how to develop this.

The proposals will be agreed at the West of England Combined Authority committee meeting on 30th November.



GREEN QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Clive Stevens

Subject: Bristol's carbon neutrality target

Dear Marvin – I have asked this question before, at Cabinet (6/11/18), but as of yet I haven't received the reply so I'd be grateful for one now please:

The City Leap seems to be a very positive initiative increasing the chances of the whole city becoming carbon neutral by 2050 (apart from embedded carbon on goods we buy in).

But the latest IPCC study shows that to keep temperatures within the 1.5C target and thus limit the probability of runaway climate breakdown, carbon neutrality across the globe is needed between 2040 to 2055, with obviously 2040 being a more prudent target.

Bristol is the only UK city that has been European Green Capital and has also been leading the way hosting the global Parliament of Mayors, which I'm delighted to see the Mayor championing. And as a city in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, committed to environmentalism and global action, we have a duty to lead the way in reaching carbon neutrality as soon as possible.

Questions:

On the back of the latest IPCC evidence would the Mayor consider bringing forward the City Leap prospectus goals to achieve Bristol's carbon neutrality earlier?

And if so when would be a date that he would target given the increasing urgency?

REPLY:

The recent IPCC evidence has highlighted the urgency and immediate action required to achieve carbon neutrality. Via the City Leap, the Council has benefitted from engaging with the industry to scope opportunities that will expedite the city's progress towards carbon neutrality. In parallel with the City Leap I am already looking at that longer term strategy for how we achieve carbon neutrality and I will bring forward proposals as soon as possible for cabinet to consider.

It's right that Bristol is once again leading by example in the field of energy and our intention is that the success of City Leap, and the low-carbon innovations that stem from it, will be replicated across other UK cities.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have been working very closely with us and have a keen interest in seeing our model of inclusive, sustainable growth develop, so that the benefits and our approach can be shared nationally.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: Isolation from Reduction of Local Bus Service

The mayor may be aware in his new role that the no.9 bus which serves parts of Cotham Redland and Kingsdown in my ward has been withdrawn totally on Sundays and after 18.30 in the evening for the rest of the week. The service was first rerouted, then separated from the no.8 route since and then reduced in frequency to improve reliability which it has not achieved. Part of the route is covered by no.72, an hourly service in the evenings leaving many elderly residents to face a long inclined walk to and from another service. People can't get home on a bus from work or from an evening out.

1. Does the Mayor believe that this represents an acceptable level of travel service for my residents? If this city is to achieve an attractive and viable alternative to private cars we must deliver a comprehensive service for all our citizens. Will the Mayor fight for a decent mass transit system across this city now, instead of hoping for 30 years, even if this means taking up the challenge of a different form of bus service delivery?

REPLY:

As you should be aware, buses are run by private enterprise and since the Transport Act of 1985, bus services outside of London were deregulated. Therefore operators run buses on the basis of demand and this is outside of council control.

As you should also be aware I have brought forward plans for a mass transit system and we are working toward delivery. Transport in the city remains poor because of lack of action or planning in the last 30 years. This of course includes total failure of any action by the Liberal Democrat administration before 2012. If you had put plans in place during your administration we would be completing them now.



LABOUR QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: Health & Wellbeing Board

Myself and other members of health scrutiny have been concerned that the Health and Wellbeing Board meetings schedule the Public Forum for the end of each meeting when time is running short. This limits the time available for members of the public or councillors speak to their statements. We feel that is important for the public to have opportunities for meaningful engagement with the HWB.

1. Would the Mayor support the HWB scheduling its Public Forum for the beginning of the meetings?
2. Could the Mayor please inform us of what channels are available for the public and city partners to raise issues of concern regarding changes to the city's health services, including as part of the work around the One City Plan?

REPLY:

1. Yes I would support this, I don't see a problem. I'll talk to the other members and check they are ok to do this at their next meeting on 12th December 18.

2. Two ways to make your voice heard:

The one city plan is forward looking and not the place to deal with service issues.

The members will have their own route in and you can approach them directly with issues of concern.

The work on the One City Plan is bringing together different sectors in the city to work together towards a common 2050 vision. This work will help us to work more collectively and help us see the impact of changes across the city rather than in silos.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop

CLOSURE OF CANFORD CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

The Office at Canford Cemetery was closed permanently on Friday 19th October. A notice was posted directing all inquiries to south Bristol Crematorium. No consultation appears to have taken place and local councillors were not notified of the decision. There is a danger in making generalisations but visitors to a cemetery are likely to be in an unsettled state, whether visiting for a funeral or to visit a grave, and are often elderly. My concern is that the removal of a point of contact will probably only add to their stress and grief.

Q1. As staff need to be present at the Cemetery throughout the working day, what is the operating and financial justification for closing the Cemetery Office?

Q2. Please confirm that an Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out in connection with this move and that a copy of it will be made available to me on request?

REPLY:

1. The office in Canford was mainly focussed on back office processing work. Funeral directors were the main customer for bookings. There was no "reception" function and the office staff had little interaction with members of the public visiting the site.

There will still be a significant presence on site for visitors and those accessing services, as the Cremation and Cemetery team will still be operating from Canford Office based staff will continue to visit Canford to liaise with staff on site and members of the public, and there is a direct phone line and an email address that the public can use to contact the team.

This is the way we operate most of our cemeteries.

2. An EQIA relevance check has been carried out and has assessed that this change does not require a full EqIA.

Councillors were not made aware of the changes at the time. The changes were being made as the impact on users of the cemetery and crematoria has been assessed as low.



GREEN QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eleanor Combley

Subject: Channel 4 Creative Hub

I'm sure we all welcome the decision of Channel 4 to develop one of their creative hubs in Bristol – a vote of confidence in the city's creative sector.

Can the Mayor confirm his intention to make sure that the 'benefits are felt by all' and 'the whole city'?

REPLY:

Yes I can – its at the heart of our approach to the city, and it was at the heart of our offer to, and ask of, Channel 4. As part of the pitch, we brought together the creative sector – by bringing together the political and creative leadership in the city we've shown what can be done.

We led our pitch by identifying programmes about outreach and specific initiatives involving schools and communities which are exactly about outreach so that the benefits are spread to the whole of the city.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Bristol Bus Network

Bristol bus usage despite improvements due to GBBN and recently Metrobus is much lower than other core cities and clearly we need improvements to reduce congestion.

1. Can the mayor therefore please explain why he has welcomed the recent fare rises from First group where they have massively increased short distance fares and even increased longer journeys that are habitually paid for by day rider.
2. Does the mayor not realise that failure to embrace franchising is in effect handing over the benefits of public investment in infrastructure to a private monopoly.

REPLY:

1. What we have welcomed is equality in the fare system. While you are demonstrating a lack of understanding about inequality in the city, FirstBus have worked with us to ensure that lower income communities are paying reduced fares.

The changes being introduced by First Group have introduced a flat fare in the city for the first time. This is a welcome simplification of the fare structure that has been confusing for passengers. The First Day Rider fare remains unchanged when purchased off bus and represents good value.

2. We do not have the power to franchise bus services, which have been deregulated since the Transport Act of 1985. We will be working with the Combined Authority to look at options.

Dealing with congestion is of course a major challenge, and we are working toward the development of a mass transit system. Bristol's congestion today is a result of decades of inaction by several administrations, including yours before 2012, that took no action whatsoever.

Nobody is doing franchising because of the costs and risks involved to the local authority.



LABOUR QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Don Alexander

Subject: Iron Bridge

1. Residents of my ward have been waiting for some considerable time now for a solution to the problem of the damaged Iron Bridge at Kingsweston. Could the Mayor please update us on progress?

REPLY:

1. Due to the listed nature of the bridge we need to agree the repairs with Historic England (HE). After discussion, we now expect to be able to table a proposal to HE that they will be able to support.

We will then need to commit to finding the money for repairs from the transport capital programme, which may have knock on effects elsewhere.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy

DAYS ROAD RECYCLING CENTRE

Q1. I am advised by my constituents that the Days Road Recycling Centre has ceased processing shredded paper and this now goes to Landfill. Can the Mayor kindly confirm that this is the case, presumably it applies to our other Recycling Centre and provide the justification for this retrograde move?

Q2. I equally understand that the Days Road Recycling Centre has ceased to publish and display its weekly recycling rates. Again, what is the reason for this shameful move?

REPLY:

1. The current processor says that the reduced quality of the shredded paper and the danger of it contaminating higher quality shredded paper, means it is not financially viable for them.

This isn't sustainable position and we are looking for another company to take this on.

2. The recycling performance rate stopped being displayed over two years ago. BWC have reported the amount of recycling done for the city on the Bristol Waste Company website which is updated monthly.



GREEN QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Recycling targets

In his manifesto the Mayor pledged to hit a target of 55% recycling for all waste by 2020 – less than 2 years' time.

In the light of widespread issues with recycling and black bin services, and the controversy over a proposed extra mixed recyclables blue box, can the Mayor quantify how his recycling target will be achieved and what the different contributions will be to get there by May 2020 (including reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives)?

REPLY:

The re-procurement of the existing recycling collection fleet will greatly assist in the delivery of our strategic and statutory recycling targets with greater on board capacity and improved reliability coupled with providing residents with greater capacity at the kerbside.

As detailed with BWCs revised business plan (December cabinet decision), this new fleet will complement the reuse, recycling and waste minimisation initiatives currently underway or being planned, including:

- A new HWRC in the South of the City;
- expanded recycling services at existing HWRCs;
- expansion of the award winning 'feed my face, slim my bin' campaign;
- improved and expanded recycling services to HMO and multi- occupancy properties in the city;
- more Re-use days;
- improved services for on-street recycling
- ongoing communication campaigns to support all of the above.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent

Subject: Pre-school provision in BS14 area

1. Can the Mayor provide figures for the current provision of places for pre-school (nursery places) in my ward and the projection of maximum possible demand, given Government extending free pre-school provision?
2. What approved and financed plans does the Mayor have for expanding nursery provision in my ward?

REPLY:

Early Years Services are currently carrying out an in depth early years and childcare sufficiency audit across the city which will conclude in December.

When the analysis is completed they will be able to provide an accurate and current response to your questions.

In the meantime I have instructed the team to contact you direct with the information they do have available at this stage.



LABOUR QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant

Subject: Iron Bridge

1. The Iron Bridge was struck by an unidentified heavy goods vehicle three years ago and local residents are increasingly frustrated at the seeming lack of action by the Council regarding its repair. Aside from the historic status of the Bridge there is real concern about the poor interim arrangements for pedestrians crossing a busy and dangerous road, particularly as it is on the way to the local secondary school. As we approach the third anniversary of the closure of this grade II-listed pedestrian bridge, and now that he has assumed direct responsibility for Transport and Highways, will the Mayor commit to a programme of repairs to be completed before the next anniversary?



REPLY:

1. Due to the listed nature of the bridge we need to agree the repairs with Historic England. After discussion, we now expect to be able to table a proposal to HE that they will be able to support.

We will then need to commit to finding the money for repairs from the transport capital programme, which may have knock on effects elsewhere.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

BUSINESS CASE FOR TRANSPORT MITIGATION AT FILTON

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm what steps he has taken to secure the reallocation of LEP funding (£53m) to ameliorate the impact of a redeveloped Brabazon Hangar?

Q2. When will Members serving wards located in this part of the city have the opportunity to help shape any revised traffic modelling or scheme should the YTL plans for the Arena go ahead?

REPLY:

1. The council has to make a business case for the reallocation of any LEP funding. We are yet to see any development plans for Brabazon Hanger but it must be remembered that the developer has lead responsibility for transport plans as part of any development.

2. As part of any proposals, during the planning process and transport impact would have to be resolved in the normal way.

There are no development plans currently tabled, but I suggest that those ward members affected commence discussion direct with YTL so that they can start to get a picture of their proposals.



GREEN QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eleanor Combley

Subject: People's Vote

On 20th October around 700,000 people marched in London, in the largest UK demonstration this century after the 2003 Stop the War march. They were marching for a second referendum on the terms of any Brexit deal – a People's Vote. Prominent figures from across the political spectrum, including the Labour Mayor of London, have stepped forward to support their cause. Public polling by Yougov has demonstrated clear public support for a second referendum on the terms of a Brexit deal and on 3rd November over 70 business leaders put their names to a letter supporting the campaign, stating that the country now faces a 'blindfold or a destructive hard Brexit'.

My question to the Mayor is quite simple - does he support the campaign for a People's Vote on the outcome of a Brexit deal?

REPLY:

I am really sympathetic to the campaign, and it is clear that the government is making poor progress in the negotiations.

I've always said, the Brexit referendum was the wrong answer to the right questions. People felt left behind and disenfranchised from politics – but Brexit is not the solution to those issues.

Where I'm not clear on the people's vote, and the discourse around it is, what the question in another referendum would be. Asking the wrong question that it gives you a binary position on something much more nuanced. You've done the same with this question. I don't think this is a simple binary question – you haven't explained what you think should be on the ballot of another vote.

You would have to be clear about the questions, and the consequence.

At the last OSMB I asked Cllr Fodor to collate councillor views and experience – could you update?



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Clough

Subject: Local Plan: Student Mitigation

My LibDem group and I welcome the prospect of strengthening the city-wide policy that seeks to address the huge increase in student living in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document. Will the mayor confirm the advantages of this approach and explain why it has only recently been considered as the best way forward despite being requested by the LibDems and others for many years?

REPLY:

The Council consulted on new proposals for the management of student accommodation including HMOs in February as part of the Local Plan Review. The emerging policies will provide much greater control over these forms of development, including a clearer locational steer for student accommodation and robust mechanisms to prevent harmful impacts. Future applications for student accommodation and HMOs will be determined against these policies with some additional guidance provided through a SPD. A further consultation on the emerging policies is planned for March 2019.

Policies set out in the existing Local Plan will continue to ensure that this form of development does not harm the residential amenity/character of the locality, contributes to the mix of uses in an area and does not result in harmful concentrations.

What action did the Lib-Dems take during their administration up to 2012?



LABOUR QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels

Subject: Car sales

1. Recent joint enforcement operations between the Police, Council, and DVLA, targeted car sales yards on Nags Head Hill and Bryants Hill in my ward. I was happy to attend having been the one to get the three organisations dealing with parking infringements to talk more and work together more closely on these issues.

Penalty Charge Notices were issued, including one fine of £260 which was paid on the spot there and then, while checks also continue to look at tax and insurance issues.

Does the Mayor agree that it's important that these car dealers who flout the rules know that we mean business and will he considering joining our officers at similar joint operations now planned both in my ward and across Bristol?

REPLY:

Local councillors have a key role to play as city leaders, and this shows once again that local Labour councillors are leading the way in their communities on issues which matter to their residents. Other parts of Bristol suffering because of a few inconsiderate and unscrupulous operators will also benefit from the enforcement work which you have piloted as part of this administration.

Thank you for sharing your efforts on coordinating work between council officers, the police, and the DVLA. Clearly the car dealers in St George who are flouting the rules will now think twice with heavy on-the-spot fines being issued.

I would consider joining a future operation if I can, please contact my office with details.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

NEW POLICY FOR GRANTING COMMERCIAL CONCESSIONS IN OUR PARKS

As the Mayor will be aware, my Group is broadly supportive of the drive to increase income streams from commercial activities and advertising. However, the application of this principle has to be tempered by common sense and reason.

Q1. Is the Mayor confident that the move to grant more commercial opportunities in our parks actually strikes the right balance between generating revenue and respecting existing community ventures or enterprises like the Ardagh Community Trust on Horfield Common?

REPLY:

We are reviewing the use of mobile food outlets in our parks and green spaces as many agreements have either expired or do not have a formal contract in place.

We considered adding an ice cream van on Horfield common to also operate in a similar model to other parks. Consultation on the application for trading consent was carried out during October.

There has been a large number of representations received against this application. The Licencing Committee will consider the representations along with the report from the council and make a decision to award trading consent at the end of November.



GREEN QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Bristol Airport Expansion

In a recent blog article the Mayor restated his support for the expansion of Bristol Airport, also stating that “as a city we take climate change incredibly seriously”. Currently aviation emissions are one of the fastest growing parts of global carbon emissions, which are a significant cause of the growing climate emergency. As councillor Denyer has previously raised, the Airport’s own carbon neutrality targets do not include emissions from air travel.

Can the Mayor clarify how this support for increased air travel is compatible with ‘taking climate change incredibly seriously’ and with his stated goal of Bristol becoming carbon neutral by 2050?

REPLY:

An expanded Bristol Airport can reduce traffic forced to travel to larger airports for other flights. Currently every year almost 8m passengers from the south west bypass Bristol Airport and travel to fly from London Airports. By increasing how many passengers the airport can handle to 12m passengers and in time 20m will mean far fewer long car journeys from the south west to London airports, substantially decreasing carbon output.

In addition Bristol Airport aims to be carbon neutral by 2030, and as part of its emerging Sustainable Growth Strategy it has received Stage 1 Carbon Accreditation from the independent Airports Council International

The airport employs nearly 4,000 people on site, a substantial proportion are from Bristol and in particular south Bristol. The growth of the airport will mean it becomes a key employment hub that offers jobs in sectors that are currently shrinking in the city.

Added to the key employment status, a growing airport is increasingly a crucial economic driver for the city region. The airport generates £675 million of Gross Value Added (GVA), and this will increase to around £3 billion.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus

Subject: Household Waste and Recycling Collection.

The street offences covered by the current, Kingdom, operations have been almost totally fining smokers discarding cigarette ends. Sadly there have been very few fines for other important areas such as fly tipping. The problems that come from inconsiderate management of household waste and recycling have not featured at all although this is turning parts of my ward into a slum and holding down the city's poor record on vital recycling.

1. Now the Household Waste (duty of care) Act is in operation, or about to be, will the Mayor advise how he intends to take advantage of this opportunity to impress on everyone the desirability of being more considerate in delivering cleaner neighbourhoods?

REPLY:

Household duty of care relates to when a household transfers waste to another individual, business or the local authority and not to how waste is to be presented for collection. Over the summer DEFRA ran a consultation on introducing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for the householder but no decision has been made on introducing the new policy.

An example of when this FPN would apply would be for a householder transferring waste to a "man with a van" who did not possess a Waste Carriers Licence.

We were hoping that this updated legislation would have been available in October 2018 but we are still waiting for its release. When it is released and we have an opportunity to examine the legislation in detail.



LABOUR QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant

Subject: Clean Streets

1. As part of his Clean Streets Campaign, does the Mayor have plans to develop a robust and effective strategy to deal with the increasing amounts of fly tipping, which is affecting the health and wellbeing of many residents in Avonmouth & Lawrence ward and I'm sure in many other parts of Bristol?



REPLY:

We want the city to be measurably cleaner which means less fly tipping.

In 2017/18 Bristol Waste Company (BWC) received 12,823 requests to remove fly tipping and in 2016/17 fly tipping cost Bristol City Council £455,771.

In the last 6 months Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET) issued 50 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for fly tipping with 2 prosecutions pending.

Starting 5 November 2018 NET reconfigured the service to be more responsive to fly tipping. NET is now automatically informed of fly tipping reports containing evidence and a response officer is available daily to gather evidence. NET will conduct targeted operations on fly tipping hot spots supported by Kingdom. They also have access to covert CCTV cameras supplied by BWC.

In August a Kingdom enforcement officer spent 14 days embedded with BWC to investigate fly tipping as part of the council taking a tougher stance on environmental crime. Kingdom issued 24 x £200 fines with 12 paid so far.

We will do more to encourage residents to use the bulky waste collection service and to share evidence of fly tipping in the new year. Commencing November Neighbourhood Services will provide councillors with a monthly report detailing enforcement actions taken across the city and progress with Clean Streets.

CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

TRANSFER OF SCHOOLS PFI FUNDING

Q1. Is the Mayor aware of the excellent news that the DfE has agreed to fund (from next year) the annual £4.1m cost to the city of servicing the Schools PFI debt?

Q2. Can the Mayor advise whether there are any other PFI contracts signed by previous Administrations that could similarly benefit from such a transfer of payment?

REPLY:

Q1. I am aware. The Department for Education has been able to confirm in their arrangements for the National Funding Formula for schools in 2019/20 that the Dedicated Schools Grant will meet £4.1m of costs for PFI.

This cost would otherwise have grown by the rate of inflation each year for the next 17 and our General Fund budget would have continued to bear that cost.

Q2. The two school PFI contracts are the largest. The other PFI contract the Council operates is for Hengrove Leisure Centre, which earlier this year was subject to a refinancing exercise which produced a £2.3m one-off windfall for the council.

We are continually looking for opportunities to secure funding or efficiencies on PFI to keep the costs down.



GREEN QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jerome Thomas

Subject: Planning decision on Cribbs Causeway and Bristol arena

The Government has rejected the application for the expansion of Cribbs Causeway primarily on the basis of the sequential planning test which means that city centre locations must be preferred locations for development over out of town locations.

Does the Mayor believe that this ruling is likely to significantly reduce the possibility of an arena at Filton, as the same test would be applied to any arena application?

REPLY:

The Secretary of State's decision to reject the expansion of the Cribbs Causeway shopping centre is very welcome. He applied national planning policy, supporting Bristol's view that the expansion would have harmed Broadmead by drawing trade away from its shops. He also agreed with us that there was a feasible alternative for new retail development in Bristol Shopping Quarter at Callowhill Court. The decision gives backing to our plans to improve and diversify Broadmead's retail offer and ensure it is in a strong place to meet the shopping needs of the community in a changing and challenging retail environment. This supports our plans to revitalise our City Centre.

The decision on Cribbs Causeway does not change Government policy or the way it is applied. All 'main town centre uses', which can include entertainment venues such as arenas, have to meet the sequential test set out in national planning policy. That means town centres are the first place to look for suitable sites. If development in or adjoining a town centre is not possible, out of centre options can be considered to meet development needs. An arena proposal at Filton would have to make this case to the Council in its role as Local Planning Authority and this would be considered on its individual merits. The Cribbs Causeway decision does not set a precedent for this future planning decision.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark

Subject: Re: Paintworks developments

The residents who live in the surrounding roads of Edward, Chatsworth Roads and a stretch of the A4 immediately adjacent to these roads, there is very limited parking with few local alternatives.

1. At part of the paintwork developments next to these roads it has been agreed that a residents parking scheme shall be implemented in order that local residents can park close to home. After meeting with officers recently i understand that the scheme will take a number of months to implement. Bearing in mind the length of time they have had to wait is there any way that the scheme could be implemented as matter of urgency?

REPLY:

It is expected that the first steps towards a parking scheme on Chatsworth Road & Edward Road will commence with an informal consultation with residents' within the next two weeks.

The complexity of Traffic Regulation Order Procedure and the statutory nature of consultations, including consideration that must be given to objections, often means that parking schemes do take between 12-18 months to be implemented.

The delivery programme for this scheme is targeted well within this timeframe reflecting the priority it's been given.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 7

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott

CONTINUING PROBLEMS WITH REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

Over the summer, many thousands of homes across Bristol were reported to have experienced regular problems of missed rubbish or recycling collections (2,500 incidents for the month of July alone). This situation was attributed to the unprecedented hot weather but, sadly, matters do not appear to have improved. Many residents in Horfield have written to complain to me about the poor quality or haphazard service they are receiving from the Waste Company.

Q1. Can the Mayor give me a comprehensive account (including timescales) on what action is being done to rectify this completely unacceptable state of affairs?

REPLY:

Over the summer months, we and neighbouring Councils experienced challenging circumstances. Since then the efficiency and effectiveness of waste and recycling collections has returned to more normal levels.

BWC accept that the reliability of the recycling collection fleet remains an issue and this is being resolved with its current replacement programme.

Improved reporting was introduced after the summer and with the exception of blocked roads and access issues, all waste collections are now carried out within contractual and legal timeframes. All reports of non-collections are reported to the council client and call centre each morning with a rectification plan to collect all uncollected waste by 12.00 on that day.



GREEN QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jerome Thomas

Subject: Clean Air

We note that Birmingham City Council and Bath and North East Somerset are proposing that they will need to charge older diesel cars as in a Clean Air Zone if they are to ensure that their air quality meets legal standards.

Can the Mayor tell Full Council whether he believes it will be necessary to charge older diesel cars in Bristol as part of a Clean Air Zone in order for Bristol to meet its legal obligations?

REPLY:

In line with the decision of Cabinet in March of this year we are carrying out detailed modelling of a range of options to reduce Nitrogen Dioxide pollutants.

I want to ensure that whatever solution is implemented works for the people of Bristol and in particular does not disadvantage those who can least afford it.

We are also investigating what mitigation measures could be implemented, alongside any future Clean Air Zone, in order to reduce any adverse impacts on small businesses and vulnerable households.

The problems of air quality and the impact of charging on those who can least afford it are problems faced by all major cities, the majority of which have not introduced charging. Core Cities, Combined Authorities and London have been discussing these challenges and are opening a dialogue with government to find solutions.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark

Subject: Wick House

Wick house has been subject to recent media attention bringing it to the attention a broad audience but residents in Brislington have been aware of the challenges associated with the hostel for years.

The owners were forced to put in a number of retrospective planning applications earlier this year and they were all turned down, this means that the hostel can not continue to work in its current way resulting in an aspiration to relocate.

1. Can the executive member/mayor give me an update on the time line when the hostel will vacate the building and relocate?

REPLY:

The council has always had an approach, in accordance with national policy and the Council's local enforcement plan, to work with the owners to find a positive solution. This has been preferable to serving notices which can be appealed against and prolong the unauthorised activities.

Planning officers remain in dialogue with the site owners and are currently looking at a pre-application submission to use the site for a nursing home. Whilst progress is being made on this, the enforcement team will review the situation early in the New Year to assess whether formal enforcement action should be taken.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Smith

SELECTIVE REOPENING OF COUNCIL-OWNED PUBLIC TOILET BLOCKS

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm the financial impact on running costs arising from the Chancellor's recent announcement to exempt public loos from business rates?

Q2. Given this concession and continuing concerns expressed by Members of all Parties over the remaining network, will the Mayor revisit these closures and reopen some facilities, particularly those sites near to parks and secondary shopping centres?

REPLY:

The total annual saving from the closure of the street public toilets was £400k. That would therefore be the annual cost of reopening and there would of course be additional costs to reinstate any decommissioned toilets.

Currently 74 venues are signed up to the Community Toilets Scheme (CTS) (including 40 businesses and non BCC organisations).80% of which are accessible. 20 venues - sign up pending.

The saving on business rate liability would be £25,670, so is not a primary consideration in the decision, nor would it materially impact on the original decision.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 9

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tony Carey

WICK HOUSE

Q1. Is the Mayor aware of the serious concerns which have been raised about the standard of care provided by the Bristol Charity responsible for running Wick House sheltered accommodation? For example, seven residents have died there in the past five years and it is reported to be dangerously overcrowded.

Q2. Following the failure to obtain retrospective planning permission to double in capacity, can the Mayor explain why the Council gave permission for a HMO on this site covering 90 people – a somewhat contradictory move given the aforementioned refusal to endorse its illegal expansion and the fact that I understand that the Charity Commission has been investigating this organisation?

REPLY:

Q1. We have been aware of the situation at Wick House, which is a cause of continuing concern. Wick House is not a Council commissioned service and BCC does not refer people to Wick House. The Council is pursuing planning enforcement action against the owners of the building. Furthermore, we are calling on the government to introduce regulation for organisations like Wick House that aren't commissioned by local authorities.

Q2. HMO licensing is not dependant on having the correct planning permission. Given the number of tenants and the facilities provided Wick House is not considered overcrowded, and we therefore have no grounds for refusing a license.

We have forwarded information to the Charity Commission about the ownership of the property and our involvement in this case to assist them in their ongoing investigations.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 10

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Liz Radford

IMPACT OF SO-CALLED PHOENIXING ON LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCES

The LGA and recent media coverage has highlighted the fact that this entirely legal practice (estimated applicable to 4% of all insolvencies) is costing suppliers and unsecured creditors, including local councils, HMRC hundreds of millions every year.

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm the financial loss due to business insolvency experienced by Bristol City Council in the last financial year?

Q2. Does the Mayor agree with me that the ability of directors to declare insolvency to escape debt one day and then overnight start again under a different name is fundamentally unfair and wide open to abuse?

REPLY:

1. The majority of financial loss incurred by the Council as the result of business insolvency would be in lost business rates. During 2017/18 the amount written off was around £1m with a further £1m awarded as exemptions.

2. I do agree – I propose that we jointly call on the government to close this loop hole, with a formal request from the Conservative group.

