

Member Forum  
13 November 2018  
Statements from councillors



**Procedural note:**

**STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).



**The following statements have been submitted – full details are attached:**

CS 01 - Cllr Stephen Clarke & Cllr Charlie Bolton – subject: School places

CS 02 - Cllr Weston – subject: A4018

CS 03 - Cllr Fabian Breckels – subject: Wood burning stoves

CS 04 – Cllr Anthony Negus – subject: Telegraph poles and overhead cables all over Bristol

CS 05 - Cllr. Paul Goggin – subject: UN poverty report



**Statement: CS01**

**Full Council – 13 November 2018**

**Statement submitted by – Cllr Stephen Clarke and Cllr Charlie Bolton**

As Southville ward councillors, we write to express our concern that there may be insufficient school places available in secondary schools as a result of the bulge in school places currently going through primary schools.

We have been contacted by parents raising concerns and seeking reassurance that plans would be properly put in place for their children when they reach secondary school age.

Having spoken to officers, we find that there are plans for free schools in South and East Bristol – with the possibility – not the certainty – of completion by 2021. The alternatives seem to be a possible temporary expansion at an existing school, or requiring Southville children to attend schools in Brislington.

None of these solutions treat the children of residents of Southville with the respect they deserve, and at worst may damage their ability to receive the best education at a critical time for them.

We therefore submit this statement with a view to asking the mayor and relevant deputy mayor to ensure that there will be sufficient school places available in local secondary schools for children living in our area.



**Statement: CS02**

**Full Council – 13 November 2018**

**Statement submitted by – Cllr Mark Weston**

My Lord Mayor yet again we have had another accident on the A4018 that has closed one of the primary routes out of the City. There have been 5 in recent weeks and more over recent months.

In the vast majority of these cases the cause of the this problem is drivers accelerating hard away from the Crow Lane roundabout towards Cribbs Causeway. They then fail to account for the slight turn in the road clip the kerb and then lose control. Often this is linked to, but not dependent on, damp road conditions. These collisions have destroyed walls, lamp posts, central reservations and trees - all of which have led to at least partial road closures and often to the entire dual carriageway being closed. As yet almost nothing appears to have happened.

Local residents are very frustrated and angry that this keeps happening.

Action is urgently needed to improve the road safety on this stretch of Bristol key road infrastructure. We need to both improve the road surface and more importantly speed enforcement.

How many more time must the road network in Henbury & Brentry be brought to a grinding halt? We need action now - not in six years, not in six months but now.



**Statement: CS03**

**Full Council – 13 November 2018**

**Statement submitted by – Cllr Fabian Breckels**

**The Impact of Wood Burning Stoves on Air Pollution**

I think all of us know the real problems Bristol has with air pollution. I'm involved with St George Breathing Better which seeks to improve air quality where we live.

Most people associate air pollution with motor vehicles, particularly diesels. However, with winter drawing in, many will be starting to use their wood burning stoves, oblivious to the impact burning solid fuel has as opposed to using gas central heating.

Recent evidence has highlighted that domestic solid fuel burning is contributing a lot more to air pollution in the UK than previously thought. Defra have calculated that around 38% of all primary PM2.5 emissions in the UK come from domestic wood and coal burning. At the same time, it is estimated that only around 7.5% of the population have access to a wood burning stove or open fire.

Primary emissions are those emitted directly to the air, such as those from wood burning. Secondary particles form when chemical reactions take place in the air, for example when emissions of ammonia form secondary particulate pollution through chemical reactions in the atmosphere.

One eco-certified wood burning stove, rated at 3.1gms/hour of particulate matter is the equivalent of:

- 18 Newer diesel passenger cars, rated at just 0,17 gms/hour of particulate matter or
- 6 Modern heavy goods vehicles rated at 0.6 gms/hour of particulate matter

Makes you think doesn't it? Someone could be walking and cycling everywhere thinking they are really being environmentally friendly, oblivious to how much pollution their wood burner is causing – especially when it is on for many hours in the day.

Bristol's poor air quality causes nearly 300 deaths a year so we need to be looking at all the causes of air pollution, not just the obvious ones like traffic.

PM2.5 particulates are much smaller than a human blood cell. They are more common in wood smoke than diesel emissions and are more likely to penetrate deep into the body. They are linked to cancer, heart attacks, strokes, cancer and dementia. Scientists are already warning that the popularity of wood fires could erase any progress we could in improving air quality by reducing pollution from traffic.

In Bristol we are likely to be following the national trend that has seen an increase in solid fuel burning and the installation of wood burners. In most cases this will be as a form of secondary heating rather than as the main source of domestic heating. The whole of Bristol is a smoke control area (SCA) which aims to ensure emissions from solid fuel are controlled to some extent. This means that people can either burn an exempt smokeless fuel in any appliance or are permitted to burn a wider range of fuels.



if using an exempt Defra approved appliance. A Defra approved appliance is a burner that is designed to burn fuel efficiently to reduce emissions.

I know that as a Council we are undertaking more monitoring, including mobile monitors, to understand the level of particulate pollution in different parts of the city. We are also asking Government for better enforcement powers so we can tackle domestic fires. Currently the mechanism of enforcement is very difficult to local authorities to implement, having to be driven by difficult to prove nuisance complaints mechanisms. Enforcement of SCA regulations as they are currently would require considerable resources. Given the emerging evidence on the scale of solid fuel emissions and therefore health impacts, Defra have recognised that the current mechanisms for SCA enforcement are not fit for purpose. In the Draft 2018 Clean Air Strategy Defra promise to give more flexible, proportionate enforcement powers for local government.

In the meantime, we need to educate people. I'm aware that RADE Bristol is focussing on static pollution and we should be supporting them and all the groups campaigning for cleaner air in our city like St George Breathing Better. They can all help us with the task of educating and informing people to make cleaner choices.

It might not be so trendy but the fact remains that using gas or electric heating is far better for the planet than burning wood.

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



**Statement: CS04**

**Full Council – 13 November 2018**

**Statement submitted by – Cllr. Anthony Negus**

**Telegraph poles and overhead cables all over Bristol**

Openreach have started to install telegraph poles around Bristol, which many would have thought were out of date 50 years ago.

I have encountered this problem after residents contacted me about a pole due to be placed by the contractors in a narrow footpath in a Conservation Area. This appears to be because Openreach have been appointed to deliver faster broadband service to all properties in Bristol. It transpires that they are using poles as a cheaper alternative to the twin tasks of running cable underground in footpaths (or making a connection to an existing ducted service) and passing the service from the footpath into each property.

This begs the following questions:

- what exactly is their remit and who is responsible for setting their brief?
- what is the position regarding ownership of existing broadband services in footpaths? Previously BT were responsible for providing all of these and, in the same way as electricity, gas and even water, service companies compete to market this resource.
- It appears, from an officer's response, that even a Unitary Authority has little control over however service companies choose to operate around our city. As with our impressive new city centre these private companies can dig up expensive materials just laid and replace them without due care so thwarting public ambitions and expense.

I am aware that highlighting an incident in my own Cotham ward, all of which is in a Conservation Area, is easily slighted as parochial. But I want to highlight this risk to the character and clutter of the whole of our city, the visual reminders that this progressive city is modernising by using antediluvian technology and our inability to control it, or set our own standard.

If this city and city-region is to be the maker of its own destiny as promised by both major parties in Westminster when the devolution deal was promoted in Parliament we have so far only been made to take on the mayoral imposition without the devolved authority. The LGA and core cities both support greater autonomy and at the same time there needs to be a national agreement with utility-service providers to establish a more satisfactory code and modern solutions to this institutionalised abuse.

Cllr. Anthony Negus

(Cotham, Lib Dem)



**Statement: CS05**

**Full Council – 13 November 2018**

**Statement submitted by – Cllr. Paul Goggin**

Professor Philip Alston, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, visited Bristol last week.

Karin Smyth MP (Labour – Bristol South) wrote to him after the visit to set out the reality of poverty lived by Bristolians, which has been significantly worsened by national Government policy. I hope that everyone considers the attached, particularly as it affects many people in the ward which I represent.

Professor Philip Alston  
United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme  
Poverty and Human Rights  
By email  
Our Ref: ZA37220 7 November 2018

Dear Professor Alston

I am writing regarding your inquiry into poverty in the United Kingdom and in particular the challenges facing so-called peripheral estates in large cities. This week you have been in Bristol, one of the wealthiest cities in the United Kingdom and the only one of the ten Core Cities which is a net contributor to the UK Treasury. However, Bristol is also an unequal city and I am convinced that the actions of central government since 2010 have made this worse.

The constituency which I am proud to represent, Bristol South, has the highest number of social security claimants in the city, the poorest health outcomes and the lowest educational attainment. The southern part of my constituency also suffers from extremely poor transport links to the rest of the city and higher crime than most areas.

Thousands of people depend on national or local government for financial and other support, support which has been dramatically reduced since 2010. They have been hit disproportionately by the austerity imposed by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government 2010-15 and the Conservative government since 2015.

The electoral ward of Hartcliffe and Withywood is the most south-eastern part of the city where it meets the countryside of North Somerset. It contains five of the ten most deprived communities in Bristol as defined by the Bristol City Council Local Super Output Area (LSOAs) Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015. Nearby Filwood ward has a further three of these ten most deprived LSOAs. Two of the LSOAs in Hartcliffe & Withywood ward are in the most deprived 100 in all of England. More than half (50.1%) of children in the Whitchurch Lane area in Hartcliffe live in low income families compared to less than 0.5% in parts of Henleaze and Stoke Bishop. Hartcliffe & Withywood has the lowest life expectancy in Bristol for men and the third lowest for women. In other parts of Bristol both men and women can expect to live for 10 years longer than in Hartcliffe & Withywood.

Nearly six thousand working age adults in my constituency are unable to work due to ill health or disability and depend on financial support from the state through Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Since 2010 there have been significant real terms reductions to ESA payments including the £30 a week cut to the work-related activity component and the ongoing benefit freeze announced in 2016. Many of those in the ESASupport Group will lose considerably when migrated to Universal



Credit in the coming months as their entitlement to severe disability premiums is removed. In real terms they will be nearly £80 a week worse off.

Over 2,250 of the ESA claimant in my constituency live in the two wards of Hartcliffe & Withywood and Filwood, with over 1000 in the most deprived parts of Hartcliffe & Withywood. According to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) produced by the NHS Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group these are the only two wards in Bristol identified as having a much worse proportion of the working age population experiencing limited day-to-day activities due to ill health or disability.

More than 2000 households in Hartcliffe & Withywood receive state support to help pay rent in the form of Housing Benefit which is calculated using Local Housing Allowance which was also frozen in 2016. Although there was a marginal change last year to recognise spiralling rental costs this means that many private sector tenants do not receive enough Housing Benefit to meet their rent, often falling into arrears.

The JSNA shows Hartcliffe & Withywood and Filwood wards have lower child birth weights than the rest of the city (2010-2014), which is strongly associated with special needs when a child reaches school age. Hartcliffe & Withywood has one of the highest hospital admission rates for childhood asthma and also the highest rate of excess weight in 4/5 year olds at 33% and in 10/11 year olds at 43%. Hartcliffe & Withywood ward has two of the ten most deprived food deserts in England as identified in the recently published Kellogg commissioned Social Market Foundation Report into the availability of affordable nutritious food. Children in Hartcliffe & Withywood are the most likely to be identified as “in need” by Bristol City Council social services, a rate of 36 per 1000 population compared with zero in Clifton Down.

Over £70 million in central government grant funding will have been cut from Bristol City Council's budget by 2020. This means that services for disabled children, public health and adult social services have all been reduced significantly. The Council has closed their Customer Service Point in Hartcliffe & Withywood and reduced levels of provision at Children's Centres in the area. Youth services have been reduced by 30% and the Supporting People budget by 1.8 million. All of these are as a direct result of central government funding decisions.

Bristol City Council's Education Indicators show that one in four children in Hartcliffe & Withywood have Special Educational Needs (SEN) which is the highest in Bristol, almost 40% receive free school meals and more than half are identified as deprived. Only Filwood ward has a poorer Attainment 8 average achievement score in Bristol. In 2017 only 39% of children in Hartcliffe & Withywood ward achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics compared with 88% in Bishopston and Ashley Down ward.

Fewer 18 year olds from my constituency go to University than any other constituency in England. According to the Office for Students in one part of Hartcliffe & Withywood there is a higher education participation rate of 5.6% compared to a 100% rate in Clifton. The educational challenges facing schools are therefore significant, however under the new schools funding formula introduced by central government all Primary Schools in Hartcliffe & Withywood lose out with cuts of up to 1.4% in their budgets. The police force which serves Bristol and the wider area has also had their funding dramatically reduced by central government since 2010 resulting in 650 (19%) fewer police officers. Hartcliffe & Withywood suffers from the highest rate of domestic violence and hate crime in Bristol. Outside the city centre it is the ward with the fourth highest over crime rate. As a result more than 60% of local residents feel there is a problem with antisocial behaviour and nearly half think that crime has got worse in the past three years.

In this letter I have limited my comments to just some of the impacts of cuts to benefits, local government and schools funding on one ward of my constituency. Others I am sure will provide much more detail on the impact of austerity, in particular on women and disabled people in the United Kingdom. I could also have mentioned the impact of the bedroom tax, the benefit cap, the two child limit on tax credits and the introduction of Personal Independence Payment.



I could also have focused on the full roll out of Universal Credit which started in my constituency in June 2018. Already I am seeing genuine distress and hardship caused by delays in payment, inaccurate information to claimants or confusion over entitlement. Despite all the challenges they face my constituents in Hartcliffe & Withywood remain incredibly resilient. The community consistently helps to support vulnerable neighbours, family and friends individually and through the outstanding local voluntary sector organisations. There is so much potential which could be realised with appropriate funding from government.

I hope that this letter is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Karin Smyth

Labour MP for Bristol South

