

Member Forum

17 December 2019

Statements from Councillors



Procedural note:

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

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



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

	Name	Title
CS01	Councillor Claire Hiscott	Vehicle Encampment, Rosling Road, Horfield
CS02	Councillor Mhairi Threlfall	Royate Hill and Road Safety Issues
CS03	Councillor Jerome Thomas	Residents and Visitors Parking Permits

CS01**Members' Forum statement from Councillor Claire Hiscott****Subject – Vehicle Encampment, Rosling Road, Horfield**

The Mayor will be aware that my councillor colleagues have tabled a series of questions to you on the efficacy of the Council's "Policy for vehicle dwelling encampments on the highway". This is also the subject of questions from the public as part of today's Full Council Meeting.

Essentially, local residents have been concerned that at the first test of the new approach to these encampments, the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NET) have been found wanting. The site in question has hosted vehicle dwellers for well over four months, presumably because it was categorised as being of 'low impact', in spite of various reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. You may recall that in a joint statement to Cabinet on this issue (3rd September 2019), I raised many misgivings over the obvious shortcomings of the case-by-case assessment process. It seems that far from introducing certainty and clarity into these kinds of proceedings, the Authority has simply substituted one set of ambiguous rules with other equally mysterious and malleable criteria for determining intervention.

Rather prophetically, we previously pointed out that:-

"The categorisation of 'low' or 'high' impact incidents remains highly subjective and relies upon factors which are defined so vaguely that it is still unclear when enforcement action will be deemed appropriate or warranted. For example, concepts such as the 'level' of damage or nuisance, and 'proximity' to residential properties are so broad as to reintroduce uncertainty into the strategy." Not only has the above encampment been permitted to stay in situ for too long, the NET should have done much more to keep nearby householders informed. Instead, people have been left in the dark over what – if anything – was happening to move these vehicles along.

In the case in my ward the NET changed their minds, first promising removal, then deciding to leave it, without informing residents of their decision change. Finally a further change of plan to remove last week was not implemented and residents left in limbo by a latest email to residents stating 'it's on the NETs radar' .

Residents' constant reporting of problems of ASB, human waste and litter was not believed because, on the one occasion the NET visited the site, it wasn't evident. Local business has been affected, even staff from the Royal Mail are forced to empty Post Boxes near human waste. Children are subjected to intimidation and even wood smoke in their bedrooms from the caravan every evening. The current lack of action is an insult to council tax paying residents who feel abandoned and ignored. Even the local police are frustrated having to constantly visit a source of vandalism and ASB.

Again, I would draw the Mayor's attention back to the ludicrous timescales appended to the policy document itself. For instances classed 'low impact', we are given in Scenario 3, the possibility of no



attempt at removal for up to three months and beyond. Given the health hazards associated with this kind of living arrangement both in terms of physical and/or psychological well-being, this does not strike me as a sensible grace period for anyone in need of assistance to find more suitable or sustainable housing options. In Rosling Road the caravans have been there for over four months now, showing even this part of the policy is ignored.

The new policy has failed local people very starkly - poor communication, poor monitoring and tardy action. It has also failed those caravan dwellers in need of assistance. I urge the Mayor to review the system urgently.

CS02

Members' Forum statement from Councillor Mhairi Threlfall

Subject - Royate Hill & road safety issues

I would like to show my support for the petition to sort out Royate Hill.

This issue is long term and is not related to solely to the number of accidents but related to:

- congestion
- pollution levels
- traffic queuing in bike lane
- narrow & inaccessible pavement
- route to school

I support the residents petition and would like to see one of the viable options implemented.

At peak times the queuing of traffic is severe, impacting on the local air quality. I disagree with officers that there are other local priorities - this has been an issue for a while.

At the very least, a signals project (which would cost £75k) would at least alleviate the congestion at peak times as well as offering a crossing point for school children.

Currently, children do not walk to school because of this busy road that does not have an adequate crossing point and many are driven, adding to the congestion. There is also accessibility issues for those in wheelchairs or with buggies.

I would urge officers to reconsider their recommendations and work with residents to improve our local area.

I would also welcome the repainting of the no left hand turn sign which has still not been repainted 18 months after the original request and a very serious review of the new McDonalds junction which is causing already safety issues



CS03

Members' Forum statement from Councillor Jerome Thomas
Subject – Residents and visitors parking permits

I am concerned that electronic residents and visitors parking permits have been introduced by this administration without consultation and at the same time as getting rid of the paper parking permits. I find it extraordinary that this shift which could impact so disproportionately on older people without IT skills, and on people who may not be able to afford internet access has been undertaken without an equalities impact assessment and without consultation.

Elsewhere in the country e parking permits have been introduced to run alongside paper parking permits. I would like an explanation as to why that option has been rejected. I would also call on the administration to look at the opportunity created by the introduction of e parking permits to bring in not just daily visitor parking permits, but hourly or half daily visitor parking permits, within the existing allowance of visitor permits. Older people living on their own often have a number of family and friends visiting them during the day who currently use one paper visitors permit to cover those visits. This proposed change to include hourly or half daily visitor parking permits would disadvantage them less than the current proposed system.

