

Question: CS9.1

Cabinet – 2nd June 2020

Re: Agenda item 9 – Moving Forward Together

Statement submitted by: Councillor Graham Morris

I am very pleased to see this report today.

I fully endorse the aims and objectives outlined as in my 5 years of service to the residents of Stockwood Ward, it is very clear that Bristol City Council Housing Teams and the tenant have become far removed.

I do take issue with the sole blame being laid at the reduction in public sector financing and the real reduction in rental income over this period as this disguises other decisions which have led us to this situation.

My primary concerns have been the significant reduction in access to Landlord Services which started in 2006, when Bristol City Council shut the Local Housing Offices. We have then seen further reductions in the Council's estate with the Citizen Service Points having been closed.

When we look at the 6 resident priorities:

- Being more visible and having a strong local presence
- Listening to what residents say
- Keeping our promises
- Making it easier for residents to contact us
- Tackling anti-social behaviour & crime
- Improving the safety and appearance of our homes/estates

I contend that all of these primary concerns would not be as prevalent if we had retained Local Housing Offices or some other form of local connection with Landlord Services.

I fully understand the rationale for a reduction in such facilities but this was undertaken by Bristol City Council PRIOR to austerity.

To declare otherwise paints or risks an inaccurate picture of why and where we are now. If we do need to look at how we have arrived at this position, I suggest that the actions of the then Lib Dem Administration, and the decisions of the Labour Party need to be reviewed more closely.

I very much welcome this project which is clearly needed and I hope for a successful implementation.