

Member Forum

10th November 2020

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 Don Alexander

Subject: Coronavirus

At Member Forum two months ago, I asked about the impact of national Government's failing Test & Trace system and the implications for Bristol.

1. Would the Mayor provide an updated assessment on the impact of coronavirus on Bristol?
2. Would the Mayor provide an updated assessment on what more national Government needs to do to support Bristol?

REPLY:

The test and trace system has been a government failure at huge cost to the taxpayer and huge implications for how we have managed the virus. The impacts on the city, and indeed the country, are the direct impact of the virus itself and the impact of the measures required to prevent the spread of the virus on education, mental health and livelihoods. During the first wave of the pandemic, 250 Bristol residents died from Covid-related illness.

Government have advised that the second wave, which we are currently in, is likely to claim more lives. Please see Director of Public Health bi-weekly report for detail on the most current position.

There are three ways to consider the impact of the virus:

Bristol City Council

Our loss of revenues as well as an increase in costs seen against an insufficient government settlement. We are estimating the business need for the council, including an additional income loss of £3.5m to be in the region of £8m a month. So far we believe government funding will be a little under £4m a month, but we are still waiting to see how this plays out.

The impact on the City

There will also be significant economic consequences from the pandemic - our Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy was published on October 16 2020. Forecasts suggest that Bristol will experience a severe recession in 2020-21, with the loss of some 8,000 jobs. By August 2020, approx. 70,000 eligible employees in Bristol had been furloughed. This was highest amongst 16-25 year olds where 44% of eligible employees in that age group were furloughed. The work experience, apprenticeship and job market for young adults is very worrying.

Claimant count data at ward level shows an increase across all wards in July 2020 compared to July 2019. From March to August, the city's unemployment rate more than doubled to 4.5% and as of September, the unemployment claimant count was at 20,790. Furlough levels in the South West were also highest among the accommodation and food sector, arts, entertainment and recreation and construction businesses. This pattern is reflected in Bristol.



Children and young people have experienced significant disruption in their education and training and are dealing with uncertain futures and managing considerable anxiety. Whilst during the first lockdown we didn't see much impact on children, we expected 'hidden harm' and children's services retained an as 'normal as possible' delivery model with face to face visiting for children continuing, with strong risk assessments taking place.

The increase in domestic abuse obviously harms children as well as adult victims. Subsequent to ending the first lockdown, there has been an increase in impact on emotional and wellbeing harm with an upsurge in referrals. Children report that their morale is low. There has been a significant increase in criminal exploitation of children and young people, with county lines and serious violence increased.

Brexit uncertainty

The combination of the impact of the pandemic and the unclear decision making factors government is using to move areas between tiers, along with the ongoing negotiations of a Brexit deal has a multiplying effect on our businesses which need to plan. Cities need dependable relationships with government and certainty – as you'll see from Cllr Mark Weston's question, we are continuously asked to plan and work for the people of Bristol without the foundations and relationships to do so.

2 It is vitally important to ensure businesses, self-employed people, the community and voluntary sector and vulnerable people are fully supported during this lockdown. Central Government could best support local authorities to do this by ensuring that the economic impacts are fully mitigated.

We estimate £14m will be required to support those organisations previously excluded from Government criteria for business support packages. In addition, £3.9m is needed for council business and community support and £500,000 for VCSE support during this lockdown. There is also an estimated £3.7m loss to council revenue expected during this four week period to December 2 2020.

The Council's funding gap needs to be resolved through a minimum two-year settlement from Government to provide us with financial certainty. There is also an opportunity for Government to work more closely with Bristol and other cities to provide clear, transparent criteria for entering and exiting lockdowns. This approach should include supporting a locally controlled Test and Trace system that is sensitive to local knowledge and needs of communities.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston (Henbury & Brentry)

Subject: EXPANDING THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Q1. The Mayor will be conscious that this is a very live issue with the window of opportunity for North Somerset to join the Combined Authority in time for the next election cycle quite tight. Does the Mayor welcome this development and the extra funding that this could secure for our region?

Q2. Will the Mayor be supporting the incorporation of this neighbouring authority should any formal application for membership be made?

REPLY:

Currently, there is no assurance from government that there is additional money. We have written to both WECA and the government saying we support an extended combined authority – that doesn't need to stop at North Somerset – but we must have a financial settlement before we proceed.

They have not offered a new financial settlement, so as things stand, we risk undermining local control and damaging Bristol's economy by extending the combined authority.

We believe that North Somerset joining the combined authority makes sense because we are a natural economic areas, but there are two clear asks from Bristol to move forward with an extension of the administrative boundary:

Firstly, there must be a new financial settlement or we are sharing the same level of investment with a bigger population.

Secondly, there must be a clear change to the combined authority's governance to invest in projects the uplift the region's economic output. The combined authority has to prove its ability to win investment, deliver and stand up for Bristol.

Currently, neither of these parameters has been met.

Bristol has by far the biggest economy in the city region. We have a responsibility to Bristolians to ensure that we protect and prioritise that economy. When Bristol's economy grows, so does that of the region. The regional authority has failed to recognise that need – and too often equally shares investment across the UA's, regardless of economic uplift.

If the Conservative leader in the city can push his government to agree a new financial investment for the expanded combined authority, that would be appreciated.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Anthony Negus (Cotham Ward)

Subject: The Position of The Mayor

1. Will mayor Rees confirm that he has made representations to join the suggested advisory panel to government of leaders of major local authorities to bring some different approaches and new thinking to bear on complex issues, particularly now regarding the response to the pandemic?
2. What has he done that mayor Rees believes has justified the award of an honorary Fellowship of the Royal Institute of British Architects that raises him to the level of his predecessor as mayor?

REPLY:

1. You'll have to be more specific about which network you mean.

2 RIBA made the decision to award me for my place making leadership. It isn't for me to assess that but I'm delighted that RIBA have awarded me an Honorary Fellowship on the basis of our delivery on homes and communities in Bristol.

There is of course, no question that we have delivered on place making. My administration has delivered on home building and recognised the additional challenges to tackling a housing crisis during an environmental and ecological crisis.

Building with height and density and bringing homes to the city centre is a key part of that with our ambitions for Temple Quarter and the Western harbour along with St Phillips and the developments in the city centre, Hengrove, Bedminster, Southmead and Lockleaze as clear testament to delivering a growing city with sustainability and community at its heart.



LABOUR QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lucy Whittle

Subject: The environment

1. To support our plans for ensuring clean air for Bristolians, would the Mayor consider restrictions on advertising high-polluting vehicles in the city; and, if so, when is the next opportunity for the Council to review its policies and contracts?
2. Bristol has led the way in declaring climate and ecological emergencies. We have rightly worked with the whole city on strategies which will see Bristol, not just the council, take action. Could the Mayor provide an update on this work, as well as on progress through C40 on decarbonisation?

REPLY:

1 As you will be aware from your recent Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting, we are currently creating a corporate policy about advertising on council-owned space.

The One City Climate Strategy recognised that advertising standards and restrictions to support responsible consumption are needed and we are acting on that.

2. At Cabinet on 3rd November we approved the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme, investing £4m in a range of projects which will enable the council to make a real contribution to the achievement of these strategies. We will:

- lead by example in climate and ecological matters,
- support and help co-ordinate the work of partners on the strategies,
- enable action by citizens and communities.

There are too many practical actions to list here but to illustrate the breadth we have:

- Continued with our Procurement of the City Leap Energy Partnership to help invest over £1bn in low carbon energy
- Accelerated improvements in sustainable travel, whilst helping to address the impacts of Covid
- Helped six communities secure funding for action on climate change from the Big Lottery,
- Created a new Bristol Climate Hub website for launch to help citizens on Friday,
- Launched training on climate change for council staff.
- We are continuing to work with C40 and to learn from the good practice of those cities.

This includes engagement on innovative finance mechanisms for cities to deliver on Sustainable Development Goals and Covid-recovery. Recently Bristol stood alongside 11 global cities, including New York and London, in signing the C40 'Divesting from Fossil Fuels, Investing in a Sustainable Future Declaration'. This is a pledge to actively invest in climate solutions, encourage the private sector and pension funds to invest in decarbonising our wider footprint thereby helping to support a sustainable, values led economic recovery.



Global Future Council for cities and on the finance group which is there to unlock global finance to assist cities in the transition to decarbonised, pro nature development.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris (Stoke Bishop)

Subject: COLLECTION FUND DEFICIT

Members will be alarmed – if not surprised - by the extent of the predicted loss in regulatory income recently reported to Cabinet. This figure is currently put at £25m arising from a combination of increases in claims under the Council Tax reduction scheme, reduced collection rates and delays in the delivery of new housing.

Q1. Government emergency COVID response support has been substantial with regard to the Council's General Fund. Can the Mayor confirm what representations have been made to Ministers to assist in bridging this lost income stream which is also a direct result of the health crisis on employment and the wider economy?

Q2. Whilst I understand the Authority is to be allowed to spread such tax deficits over three years, can the Mayor indicate what plans or other mitigations are currently being considered to address this particular funding gap?

REPLY:

1. The government Covid funding for 20/21 income losses is only expected to partially cover the reductions being experienced in specific sales, fees and charges. Government expect the Council meet the shortfall and cover all commercial (e.g. rents) and investment losses. This is anticipated to be in the region of £13.8m for this financial year alone.

We continue to work with South West Network, LGA and Core Cities to share information and make representation to government. We submit a monthly return to MHCLG where we stress the need for adequate and certain funding.

We'd be happy to share that work with you and we'd appreciate your support in encouraging the government to fully fund Bristol and local authorities of all political persuasions across the country shortfalls.

2. We are continuing to press government to engage with us and local authorities in a meaningful way. In the meantime 21/22 (and beyond) losses will be mitigated.

Government have advised of their intent to enable local authorities to spread council tax and business rates losses attributed to 20/21 (but impacting financially in 21/22) over 3 years. A proportionate share, yet to be advised, will be absorbed by government.

The Medium Term Financial Plan on today's agenda sets out our strategy for approaching this task. We are currently developing next year's budget proposals and we are still exploring options for meeting the funding gap, which includes consideration of post Covid efficiencies and new ways of working, reviewing timing and use of earmarked reserves and other funding sources.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sultan Khan (Eastville Ward)

Subject: Taxi Trade

The taxi trade have raised with me, for many years, the issues that affect their livelihood. As Chair of PSP, I had tried to work with the trade and Council to find resolution for some of the issues that affect the taxi drivers, who are our fellow citizens of Bristol.

The Mayor and the City Council know that there are outstanding transport and licensing related issues linked to the taxi trade.

1. Could the Mayor clearly lay out what real initiatives the Council and the Mayor have undertaken over the past 4 years to aid the taxi trade?

Way before COVID-19 the taxi trade have been a victim of many barriers thrown in their way, since COVID-19 the trades future is at stake.

The Taxi trade has been using the front of the Hippodrome as a pick up point for decades, and it is obvious that this a good point for them and aids disabled and vulnerable taxi users.

2. Will the Mayor commit to looking into the issue of a taxi rank being restored in front of the Hippodrome and working with the Taxi Association and other interested parties in ensuring this is done safely but without delay?

REPLY:

1. The Council have worked with the trade to bring about many positive changes over the last four years including:-

- 24 November 2016 - First ever Taxi Trade Conference – now annual
- Feb 2017 – Public Safety and Protection Committee agree series of policy changes requested by the trade including: introduction of a cap on Hackney carriage numbers, extension of grandfather rights to April 2018, relaxation of need for brand new replacement HC's, relaxation of HC licence plate transfer restrictions, allowing all over advertising on HC's, embedding Licensing Officer in Customer Service Point at Temple Street
- May 2017 Dedicated 'Taxi Cop' appointed
- Forum Arrangements refreshed: Bimonthly meeting of BCC Taxi Policy Forum on alternate months with bimonthly meeting of Bristol Public Transport Equalities and Community Safety Group
- April 2018 – Second Taxi Trade Conference
- 2018 Securing grants to help with costs for ultra-low emission vehicles.
- New signage on main city centre super rank
- 2018 Hackney Carriage fare increase approved.
- 2018 – met with Uber to work towards a better understanding of pay and conditions for Uber taxi drivers. We continue to press Uber on data sharing.



- 2019 – Third Taxi Trade Conference
 - 2019-20 New ranks installed on Avon Street, Baldwin Street and outside the BRI and times extended on the St Augustine’s Parade rank to provide greater rank provision on the centre area.
 - 2019 New shelter and signage installed on St Augustines Parade rank.
 - 2020 Taxi trade meeting with Mott MacDonald to shape Temple Quarter
 - 2020 Face coverings provided to the taxi trade.
 - 2020 Policy concessions agreed re vehicle testing and licences as a result of COVID.
2. The rank in front of the Hippodrome was removed in 2015 following a history of pedestrian and road accidents at the Hippodrome location and with consultation that included objections from the Police. There is no doubt that the historic queuing of taxis in the road and around Park Street corner is a clear safety risk. It was also part of the remodelling of the city centre.

The consultation also included strong opposition from bus companies as the queuing cars delayed buses and added to congestion and bus reliability.

The remodelling was designed to increase bus stop provision outside of the Hippodrome and free up short term coach parking for older and disabled groups attending the Hippodrome.

We have gone to great lengths to invest in additional Taxi rank provision with a new shelter provided at the evening/late night rank just up from the previous rank outside the former Co-op store. We have also installed additional and better signage.

Additionally, we invested in and installed a new larger rank with shelter and signage opposite the Cenotaph.

There is no question that the city centre layout is vastly improved, the access for all road users and pedestrians is improved and taxi availability and signage is also markedly improved.



LABOUR QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gill Kirk

Subject: Mental health

Joint health scrutiny has requested an urgent briefing following the closure of Banksy and Brunel wards at Priory Hospital Bristol which, with NHS Riverside undergoing refurbishment until March 2021, leaves Bristol without any residential beds for children with serious mental health problems. This is a major issue for children, young people, and their families who have to travel great distances to receive the care which they need.

1. Would the Mayor agree that, while acknowledging that community services have been increased, inpatient care for children and young people is critical and that the Clinical Commissioning Group should work to ensure that our children and young people are not without these critical local facilities for another five months?
2. More widely, would the Mayor agree that Thrive Bristol has underlined the importance of local support for people's mental health, which has been further highlighted during the pandemic due to social isolation during lockdown and the economic crisis?

REPLY:

1 I agree inpatient care for children and young people is critical. Residential beds for children with serious mental health problems are commissioned by NHS England. This unit was closed until spring 2021 by the provider, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust (AWP). It will undergo a planned refurbishment and safety improvements, following concerns about staff retention and recruitment.

AWP has introduced an extended crisis intervention, outreach and day Programme to support young people, avoiding an in-patient admission during this time.

Also, young people from Bristol have access to a range of CAMHS inpatient beds across the South West. Decisions about admissions to these beds are made according to clinical priority.

Hospital admission rates for mental health conditions among children and young people in Bristol are close to those for England. The average rate over the last 5 years is 83.8 per 100,000 compared to 85.6 per 100,000 for England.

2. We remain committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our population through Thrive Bristol. In response to Covid-19, a BNSSG wide Mental Health & Wellbeing Cell was established, involving partners from communities, NHS, local authorities, voluntary sector, academia and people with lived experience.

They developed proposals to mitigate the risks to mental health from COVID-19, involving early intervention and prevention and protecting services to ensure capacity to respond to increased demand. Interventions are being implemented, including:

- **Communities** – mental health and trauma informed support training for volunteers & faith groups; capacity building grants



- **Children & Young People’s mental health** – increased access to Primary Mental Health Specialists (schools), CAMHS and targeted support for BAME CYP
- **Suicide and self-harm reduction** – provision of welfare workers, expansion of HOPE service and new targeted self-harm support
- **Increased access to IAPT care**
- **Strengthened support through primary and secondary mental health care** - support for refugees and asylum seekers; people with Dementia and personality disorders; increased support for people with learning disabilities, autism and people with complex needs.
- **Support for groups greatly affected by COVID-19** – Black led mental health support (adults); counselling for people affected by abuse and trauma; bereavement counselling support
- **Increased support for people affected by alcohol**
- **24/7 mental health helpline established**
- **Workplace mental health** – Thrive at Work West of England launched, providing mental health resources targeted at SMEs and BAME led businesses.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy (Bishopsworth)

Subject: BRISTOL HISTORY COMMISSION

1. Can the Mayor please confirm the exact purpose, membership and likely timescale before it proposes recommendations of the Bristol History Commission (announced by him in June 2020)?
2. Following the 75th anniversary of 'VJ-Day' on 15th August 2020, it appears to me (as it seemed to the Full Council meeting on 13th September 2005) that this is an ideal opportunity to recognise the neglected legacy in his home-city of Field Marshal Bill Slim, commander of the multi-racial 'Forgotten Army', which fought the Japanese and triumphed in Burma in the Second World War. Can the Mayor confirm that the Bristol History Commission will consider righting this notorious wrong?

REPLY:

1. I invited the commission to help Bristol better understand its history and how we have become the city we are today. The commission was initiated after the events of this summer and the strains on the city that showed how differently people experience the city.

The commission will allow the city to better appreciate our own history and will offer a better understanding of the how the city has grown and changed. The city has developed been impacted and grown from the result of wars, emancipation, protests, slavery, strikes, migration, education, slum clearances, industry, technology and other major events. Alongside professional historians, the history commission also includes a wide-range of academics from sectors including philosophy, trade unions, arts and culture, and law.

It is chaired by Professor Tim Cole from the University of Bristol.

- Dr Madge Dresser – Honorary Professor of History, University of Bristol
- Professor David Olusoga – Professor of Public History, University of Manchester
- Dr Shawn Sobers – Associate Professor of Cultural Interdisciplinary Practice, University of West of England
- Professor Alan Bogg – Professor in Law, University of Bristol
- Dr Joanna Burch-Brown – Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Bristol
- Estella Tincknell – Associate Professor in Film and Culture, University of West of England
- Councillor Helen Godwin – Cabinet Member for Women, Children and Young People, Bristol City Council
- Nigel Costley – Regional Secretary, Trades Union Congress

The group is working out a recruitment process for additional people to join. Commissioners agreed at the first meeting that their initial focus would be to find ways to invite all citizens to explore the question 'What have we remembered and who gets to tell our history.' They anticipate being able to report back on this phase of work in 6 months after engaging the city in a conversation.



2. It's really important that the full national and international effort and contribution of Britain and the Commonwealth in both World Wars is recognised. We very recently commemorated those lost in wars and I'm pleased that we recently unveiled a memorial in Castle Park to Sikhs who fought for Britain. You are welcome to make suggestions to the Commission of topics for consideration, including the one you raise here.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent (Hengrove and Whitchurch Park Ward)

Subject: School Capacity

1. Can you confirm the projected capacity vs projected demand for Bristol's schools for Reception year (for Primary) and Year 7 (for Secondary) for the 2021 September intake and can you provide these figures broken down into areas (South, East/Central, North) and by ward level?
2. Can you confirm how many Special School Places will be available in September 2021 as well as the demand for these places, taking into account EHCPs with a special school named and adjusted for annual increase in demand?

REPLY:

Pupil projections and school capacities below.

Wards	Total PAN Reception	Pupil Projection for September 2021
Ashley, Lawrence Hill	536	465
Eastville, Frome Vale, Hillfields	480	452
Easton, St George Central, St George Troopers Hill, St George West	450	469
Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston	300	294
Bishopston & Ashley Down, Cotham, Redland	390	380
Central, Clifton, Clifton Down, Hotwells & Harbourside	300	252
Henbury & Brentry, Southmead	285	285
Stoke Bishop, Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze	480	447
Horfield, Lockleaze	330	258
Brislington East, Brislington West	270	239
Bishopsworth, Hartcliffe & Withywood	435	387
Filwood, Knowle, Windmill Hill	590	533
Bedminster, Southville	330	325
Hengrove & Whitchurch Park, Stockwood	480	437
Secondary Area	Total PAN Year 7*	Pupil Projection for September 2021
East Central	747	917
North	2198	2230
South	1376	1363
*Does not include additional places to be offered above PAN		

The projections for mainstream schools are produced based on School Place Planning Areas, rather than by individual schools, as required by the Department for Education.



For Secondary schools these areas are East Central, North and South. For Primary the areas are made up of groups of wards.

The places available are the total of the Published Admission Numbers (PAN) for each school in the Planning Area.

For Year 7, negotiations are currently underway to secure additional places above PAN. This is an annual process that takes into account the numbers of applications received.

- 2 The number and location of Special School places available for Sept 21 is currently being clarified with all specialist provision at the time of writing.

Parent/carers of those children and young people with education, health and care plans coming up to a phase transfer (key stage transfer) must advise the SEND team of their parental preference for a school for Sept 21 by 31st October 2020. However, at the time of writing only 51% of families have advised us where they would like their child/ young person to attend and so the LA is currently contacting these families to support them in sending in their schools of choice advice as soon as possible. Once this information is available then we will be able to ascertain the level of demand for special school places.

We didn't request this information at the start of term 1, appreciating the high level of activity undertaken by our special schools due to the coronavirus pandemic and understanding that their priority was to concentrate on the children and young people with special educational needs and settling them back into their education environment.



LABOUR QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jo Sergeant

Subject: Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston

1. Can we please have a work plan for the repair of the Kings Weston Iron Bridge? It is five years since it was struck by an unidentified vehicle, closed to pedestrians and protected by scaffolding that must be costing the Council a significant sum. I understand that it is a complicated process, with heritage and safety issues that cannot be ignored. However I feel that five years is far too long without a resolution, that even Covid cannot justify.
2. Flies have been an ongoing problem in and around Avonmouth. There appears to have been a hiatus and one major waste management business has ceased operations in the area of refuse derived fuel. Can we have an update on the planned research project between Bristol City Council, the Environment Agency and Darren Jones MP?

REPLY:

1 The footbridge was impacted in late 2015 and early 2016, whereupon it was closed to the public and the footbridge was propped and supported by a protection scaffolding cage. A temporary at grade pedestrian crossing has been provided on Kings Weston Lane to replace the bridge crossing.

Detailed site investigations were undertaken in 2016 along with discussions with Heritage England (HE), BCC Conservation and Planning Officers along with a Structural Condition Report commissioned in 2017.

A Report was issued in late 2018, with options. The preferred option was to raise the footbridge by **1.075m** to prevent it being further impacted by HGV collision. The cost of this work was estimated to be in the region of just in excess of **£1.5 million pounds**. It is worth noting that the bridge has been struck again since being closed.

Formal Planning and Listed Consent application for approval was issued to BCC Planning and Heritage England in early 2019. This application was rejected by the Planning committee in June 2019 due to the Heritage concerns in relation to the incorporation of the proposed new access ramps to raised bridge, and how this would fit in the local environment.

As a result, further detailed discussions and Consultation in 2020 has been ongoing with various Local Community & Interest Groups, Joint Local Access Forum, Heritage England, BCC Planning and Conservation Officers.



We are currently preparing a revised Formal Planning and Listed Consent application for approval to raise the bridge with the incorporation of new revised access.

Should approval be granted to raise the footbridge structure on this occasion, we would need to allocate capital funding for the project.

2 An independent Entomologist has now been commissioned jointly by us and the Environment Agency to undertake the research project. The scope of the study was previously approved by an oversight board chaired by Darren Jones MP and comprised of local community groups.

We are likely to have initial feedback from the study in late November. As well as looking back at incidents over recent years and possible causes, the study will advise if more can reasonably be done to help reduce the potential impact in the wider area when we reach a period of warmer weather.

The panel will continue to feed in to the study as necessary to ensure it suitably reflects the needs of the community.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: HOUSING TYPES and TENURE

I am sure that we all agree that we need more social housing in Bristol but this need has to be tempered with the needs of the community.

In Stockwood Ward we have a huge shortage of 2-bed properties. The last three large developments in the ward were not for the general public (2 care homes and a social housing estate); and Stockwood has amongst the lowest percentage of 2-bed properties in the city (when compared against the city average).

It would be great if we could provide some starter homes for the younger adults in my ward.

Q1. Will the Mayor please confirm the tenure of the proposed new build on the old Greville site and what percentage of these will be shared ownership properties for the local young adults?

REPLY:

This is a proposed development by Housing Delivery as part of the Council House New Build programme

The scheme is currently in planning 'pre-app' stage with the final design yet to be produced; further public consultation will take place as we move through the planning process. This will take place before the submission of the full planning application.

We are currently looking at around 25 new homes with a mix of 1bed flats, 2,3 and 4 bed houses and bungalows. However, the final design has yet to be determined and this can only be carried out following the outcome of the pre-app response.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tony Carey (Brislington East Ward)

Subject: Council Vehicles

1. How many Bristol City Council vehicles are taken 'home' by their drivers each day for a distance more than 15 miles?
2. What is the greatest distance a Bristol City Council vehicle is used for this form of commuting?

REPLY:

1. There are 28 Bristol City Council vehicles that are taken home each day for a distance of more than 15 miles.
2. The greatest distance a Bristol City Council vehicle is used for in this form of commuting is 44 miles.



LABOUR QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Brook

Subject: Flood strategy

Bristol has thrived due to its position on the River Avon, but with the river comes the risk of flooding. Without decisive action, 4,500 properties could be at risk of severe flooding by the end of the century. As such, I welcome the River Avon Flood Strategy, which is currently out for consultation.

1. The strategy seeks defences that protect homes and businesses on the rare occasions that flooding occurs, but that also work for the city for the rest of the time. Could the Mayor/Cabinet Member illustrate how such interventions may work in practice to create a future-proofed, greener and more active city?
2. Whilst defences are needed against flooding in any case, they can also help to unlock areas for growth and regeneration. Could the Mayor/Cabinet Member explain how the council will ensure that new developments in key areas such as Temple Quarter and St Phillip's will interact with, and complement, flood defences?

REPLY:

1. There are several examples in other cities of how interventions might work in practice to provide a greener, more active city: These include:

- Flood defences being integrated with a linear green space that provides wildlife and amenity benefits
- Walking and cycling routes being incorporated into defences to facilitate active travel
- Delivering broader interventions, including tree planting and other green infrastructure improvements such as areas of wildflower and pollinator plants.

2. Suitable planning instruments will be developed to set out the interface between the delivery of defences and the development of sites in areas currently subject to flood risk. This could take the form of spatial frameworks and / or supplementary planning documents



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: COUNCIL'S USE OF PREMIUM RATE CONTACT NUMBERS

I have noticed that the phone number given for the CAZ consultation is a mobile one. This seems odd as the people most likely to use it (because they want to request a paper copy) will be paying far more for the call to a mobile than a land line.

Q1. Can the Mayor explain why a costly mobile number was chosen for this engagement exercise when it will penalise those who don't use modern technology and may be least able to afford phoning it?

Q2. Please can the Mayor provide me with a list of all premium rate, mobile and non-local contact numbers currently issued by the Authority for residents to use?

REPLY:

Q1. The phone number provided is a direct line to the Transport Engagement answer phone which was set up to be monitored at all times due to homeworking because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number was only ever intended to be used as an answer phone so the public can leave their details and receive a free call back from the appropriate team member.

However thank you for flagging this as we have now utilised a standard council landline which they divert to a mobile number. This has now been done and the number to call is 0117 9036449. This number will be promoted on any further emails, letters and social media posts.

Since the consultation began, three (3) people have called the phone number requesting paper copies.

Q2. ICT has looked into this request and can provide a list of all premium rate, mobile/non-local numbers BCC own from an IT visibility but does not have records of usage.

I'd be happy to ask the team to meet with you to discuss the best way forward.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins (Knowle Ward)

Subject: Jubilee Pool

1. Now that it is fully clear that the real reason for the planned closure of Jubilee Pool is to prevent choice and get Jubilee users to go to Hengrove to prop up its finances, will the Mayor now apologise to the thousands of campaigners that he attempted to mislead with his “consultation” and communications?

Having disentangled the long grass that the Mayor wrapped around this issue, the Cross Party Working Group put in the clearest possible unanimous recommendation for the pool to reopen rapidly whilst longer term options are considered.

2. Will the Mayor now use the lockdown weeks to get fully prepared to reopen this vital facility for mental and physical health as soon as national regulations allow; if we are pitched into Tier 3 after lockdown will he prioritise the reopening of this and other facilities that have positive health benefits?

REPLY:

1 The consultation is precipitated by the fact that the operator informed us of notice to terminate the agreement following the Covid restrictions. The actual situation regarding COVID restrictions and reduced usage has not changed.

We continue to support a community led solution for the pool, despite the impact on finances at Hengrove. Please let us know when you have worked with the community to bring forward a sustainable business plan.

2 During the second lock down we estimate the economic hit to the city to be in the area of £54m pounds a month, of which only around £10m is so far covered by government commitments. To date we have taken a phased approach to re-opening leisure facilities and in partnership with our operators have sought to do this in the most cost effective and safe way. Together with our operators we will continue to monitor the situation and take decisions accordingly.

Our priority therefore has to be effective management of the funds we do have at a time when all our pools need support. That is why we will support Hengrove Leisure centre to re-open as the primary provision for the south of Bristol. Hengrove has 5x as many users and much more use, with more residents and more schools using it, even in the Jubilee catchment area. It remains essential that we protect and prioritise the most popular pool that provides a bigger service first. When all of our pools and leisure centres are in need of financial support, it is a very short sighted approach that prioritises the lowest usage pool over all others.

Bristol South Pool is also scheduled to reopen in January 2021, increasing our south offer even further. For the longer term, the fact the newer pool provides the biggest and newest service and is sustainable without additional lifetime costs is the reason the Councillor supported the business plan for Hengrove in 2010, acknowledging that Jubilee Pool would close. What has changed from your decision then that was predicated on the fact that Bristol South needed a modernised, sustainable pool offer?



LABOUR QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Children

1. With the government yet again refusing to help ensure that the poorest children in our country are in receipt of one meal a day during the Christmas school holidays, would the Mayor support continuing past practice during summer holidays by working with Feeding Bristol, FareShare, and others to provide meals as best we can as a city during these challenging times?
2. The swings at the Maskelyne Avenue children's play area in Horfield have had to be removed due to the things they hang on being rotten. The swing seats are fine, and can be re-hung when the things they hang on have been replaced, which could happen quite quickly if the bit of the parks department that deals with play equipment is able to find the money in their budget. Would the Mayor very kindly ensure that they can find the money in their budget, as it is a popular play area for children who attend the local primary school?

REPLY:

1. Feeding Bristol will continue to work with the Council towards alleviating Holiday Hunger during all out of term holiday periods. With the current lockdown, and the difficult challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, we are acutely aware of the difficulties that many families are facing this Christmas period. We are already working with organisations - community based, council and strategic partners- to identify the best way that we can impact and serve the areas of the city most in need.

Based on the infrastructure that was successful over the summer months, and coupled with the valuable lessons learnt, we will look to develop ways of ensuring food and support is available. This will be boosted by the FoodStock 2020 campaign that FareShare has curated, ensuring a stockpile of emergency provision food will be available for the winter months. FoodStock 2020 will also include a food hamper model that will be made available to schools and community organisations.

We will continue to work closely with the council to identify the areas of most need and work with delivery partners, from Food Clubs and Food Banks, to business and food retailers to ensure that the appropriate emergency provision is in place to the best of our abilities.

We will, of course, keep the council updated as firming up of all activities begins to take shape for the Christmas Holiday.

2 The Parks Service has committed its repair and maintenance budgets for this financial year that relate to play areas. However we are aware of this item and the play area's general condition. If other planned spend is not able to be taken forward we will reallocate budget to



install a new set of swings at Maskelyne Avenue. If the swings cannot be replaced this year they will be replaced in May 2021.

The Parks Service will shortly be reinstating the missing springy play item at Maskeleyne Avenue play area.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: OPERATION OF THE DIRECT OFFERS POLICY

Q1. Can the Mayor please advise, as lead for Housing, his thoughts on the council's Direct Offer process in light of the Member Forum statement I have submitted?

REPLY:

While it is not possible to comment on the individual case you have raised, we always aim to ensure that offers of accommodation do meet the needs of our clients based on property size, identified support or medical or SEND educational need. School age, school location and educational need are given consideration when making Direct Offers.

The teams work closely together to help children who are housed under this scheme to continue to attend school, but the specific impact on Home-School Transport team's spend is not considered when making direct offers decisions.

It is important to note that in a context of a limited housing stock, we do advise families that the property type and the area we would look to find a new property in may vary from their expectations.

All statutory housing clients have a right to request a review of the offer and its suitability.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies (Knowle Ward)

Subject: The Park Daventry Road

We have welcomed the administrations backing for the site of the old Merrywood School but we are concerned that unless there is an early opening of the Oasis School in temporary accommodation (the site is suitable) then a lot more children will be forced into long and difficult travelling to find a secondary school place.

1. I therefore ask the Mayor to intervene in this matter to either make the case to government or do the job ourselves to open in 2021?

One of the many successes of the Park Daventry Road Local Opportunity Centre has been its Football Club, a registered charity, that started off with disabled teams and has now grown to 17 teams including youth, women and girls teams.

They took derelict facilities and with huge voluntary effort made a clubhouse, changing facilities and a great sporting centre.

With the repurposing of part of the grounds, they will still be at the park but need a second local base which should be in Redcatch Park.

They can provide the right sort of users for our pitches (some outside teams have demonstrated very undesirable behaviour), fix up the Pavilion (which has been neglected) and will form a great partnership with the Redcatch Community Garden Project, with a view to a permanent rebuild to complete our park.

We have tried to introduce them into the Asset Transfer Project but it has been bound up in red tape and unwelcoming for this wonderful group.

2. Will the Mayor now intervene to ensure that this golden opportunity is not lost?

REPLY:

1 Secondary schools serving south Bristol currently have 1,376 places in Year 7 each year.

Pupil projections for the area are shown below:

Academic Year	Year 7 Places	Projected Pupil Demand
2019/20 (actual)	1,376	1,306
2020/21	1,376	1,324
2021/22	1,376	1,363
2022/23	1,376	1,421
2023/24	1,376*	1,436

*The new school is currently scheduled to open in 2023, providing up to 180 additional places.

Although precise numbers are not known until applications are received, it is possible that there will be a deficit of places across south Bristol for September 2022.



Based on the current projections it is clear that discussions with the DfE are needed to identify if opening the school in Sept 2022 is viable, and we'll continue those conversations to get the right provision for south Bristol's communities.

2 On the 6th Oct 2020 Cabinet approved the delivery of a sustainable financial future for sport in the city's parks and green spaces by transferring their management and operation to capable third parties through a transparent application process.

It is anticipated that the application process will open in November 2020 and community groups, sports clubs and others will be invited to put in an expression of interest. The process will close in January 2021.

The council is aware of and welcomes the interest from the football club in the facility at Redcatch and will ensure they are contacted when the application window opens.



LABOUR QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Rippington

Subject: Transport

The new planned development on the Brislington Meadows site in Brislington will bring with it 350 new homes, of which one third are to be Council houses. Whilst the provision of these new affordable homes is very welcome, many residents in the area are worried that this will lead to extreme congestion on Broomhill Road, which will be the only public access into the site. The road is already heavily used as a rat-run for drivers wishing to avoid traffic queues the A4.

1. Can the Mayor update us on whether there are any plans to review traffic patterns and public transport provision for this area in order to help prevent such an outcome?

Newbridge Road in Brislington suffers from chronic speeding. Despite being a minor road, it has the 6th highest volume of speeding penalty notices issued. Local residents run their own Speedwatch with help from Avon and Somerset Police Speed Enforcement Unit but a permanent solution is urgently needed.

A report on what speeding measures could be taken was funded by the old Neighbourhood Partnership and has been in preparation for several years now. The report was last promised in March, just before lockdown. Since then it has been delayed again and still has not seen the light of day.

With the council now proposing road closure measures for Langton Road as part of its Covid efforts, residents are concerned that traffic on Newbridge Road will increase even further.

2. Can the Mayor therefore confirm when the traffic calming report will now be published, and that the approach to the changes in this area will be a fully joined up one and that residents on Newbridge Road will be fully consulted as part of this process?

REPLY:

1 The current masterplan assumes a single point of access from Broomhill Road. There are no other safe or suitable locations along School Road or Bonville Road.

Any vehicular access from School Road is constrained by challenging and substandard gradients alongside significant tree loss to achieve the necessary visibility.

The associated Transport Assessment will need to include careful and detailed consideration of traffic behaviour, speeds and safety along Broomhill Road and other locations subject to material impacts.

Where material impacts are demonstrated, we will seek improvements and mitigation to reduce the reliance and impact of additional car traffic; to ensure high quality walking, cycling and public transport alternatives are funded and delivered in line with local and central government planning policies.



We do not of course run the local public transport bus systems. The Joint Local Transport Plan 4 identified the need for metrobus and mass transit along the A4 corridor. We are working up plans for the metrobus corridor. We continue to work towards our mass transit system that will provide two lines from the east of the city. The Strategic Outline Business case for this is due next spring.

As part of this scheme we will engage with local residents either side of the A4 to identify what other transport needs there are in the local area. This will include looking at walking and cycling options in the area, assessing access issues and reviewing local bus services. We are open to all suggestions and will engage with local people to understand their needs. We are very aware of current issues in the area and that is why we are bringing these proposals forward.

2. We apologise for the delay in publishing the report, all services have been under increased pressure since the lockdown and work has had to be prioritised. We are finalising the report at present. We are committed to engaging with local communities as part of the process of developing the schemes set out in our proposals for the second phase of the emergency active travel fund. We will incorporate residents' views into the scheme proposals and clearly vehicle speeds will be one of the issues that will need further consideration as part of that process.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Claire Hiscott (Horfield)

Subject: AUDIT OF FUTILE INVESTMENT INTO BRISTOL ENERGY

Q1. Does the Mayor now recognise that, sadly, there were similar errors of judgement made in deciding to keep this company afloat as occurred in relation to Robin Hood Energy Limited, in that your determination for this project to be a success led to a degree of institutional blindness to the very significant risks this posed to taxpayers' money?

Q2. Will the Mayor finally commit to publishing a full account and timeline of decisions taken in relation to Bristol Energy, together with a statement on the impact this will have on the Authority's reserves?

REPLY:

1. I am pleased you agreed it was an error of judgement to enter the energy market in the first place. The business plan for the company was analysed and recommended by your party's deputy leader.

I've said several times that it was the wrong market to get into but a previous administration, with the support of your party backed the decision. It is expensive to enter, operate in and leave. We've done the best with what we inherited, tried to rescue the failing company to secure the best exit possible. We eventually secured an agreement that secured the best deal possible.

2. All decisions were taken at cabinet meetings, in public when possible, and at full council budget meetings. Some of these are below:

February 2015 – Approval of Initial Business Plan [Video Link](#) (BE agenda item begins at 1:04:53)

July 2015 – Approval of Governance Arrangements and Final Business Plan [Video Link](#) (questions begin at 30.54, but the agenda item begins at 47:15)

September 2018 - Bristol Energy Operational Plan 2018/19

April 2019 - Business Planning Update: Bristol Energy Ltd 2019/20 –2023/24

June 2020 - Bristol Energy Limited Update June 2020

There has been no direct impact on the council's reserves, as spending has not exceeded the agreed budget envelope of £37.7m a further statement will be made once all the associated transactions are completed.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Wright (Hotwells and Harbourside Ward)

Subject: Proposed plans for "Waterfront Place"

The planning proposals for a hotel and offices on the "Waterfront Place" between Lloyds and Bordaux Quay have been widely criticised, and I know of no one who has publicly backed the current proposed design. This is one of the most prestigious sites in the city, and yet the process that led to Railpen and Bell Hammer winning the tender, with architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris, has been shrouded in secrecy and hidden from the public.

1. I have heard that there were 22 applications for this site. In order to end the secrecy and bring transparency, will the Mayor now release to the public all the plans that were submitted, so that Bristol residents can see for themselves if any were better than the dismal chosen plans?
2. Who devised the marking criteria that was presumably used to rank the 22 applications, and will the Mayor now release the marking criteria and the scores of all the applications?

REPLY:

- 1 It was hardly secret. There was a public competition held for the design of the building.

There were 22 proposals made to Savills (BCC's marketing agents) Of the 22, two were discounted. The remaining 20 schemes were assessed through a stage 1 evaluation that considered the description of the proposals, land use and massing, experience, professional team supporting the proposal, the financial proposal and its viability.

This stage 1 evaluation shortlisted the 20 down to 6 proposals. These were then evaluated at stage 2 in more detail looking at the scheme designs, land use, programme and financial proposal.

Based on the stages of evaluation a preferred bidder was then chosen.

- 2 The evaluation was carried out by BCC officers from Property, City Design and the Bristol Events team, external support was provided by Savills Property Consultants and Design West.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kevin Quartley (Bishopsworth)

Subject: UPDATE ON BRISTOL ARENA

Q1. The Mayor has accused his predecessor of making unfounded claims in relation to doubts raised about the delivery of this indoor arena. Please can you give me a more detailed update on how the YTL project is progressing?

Q2. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not any new analysis conducted on the potential long-term effect of COVID-19 on suppressing capacity or demand (and therefore viability) of this venue?

REPLY:

1 Now that we've received planning approval from both the Council and the Secretary of State, I am pleased to say that YTL remain on track to open the UK's third largest event space in the repurposed Brabazon Hangars in 2023.

2 I've been criticised heavily for pointing out the risk to Bristol City Council's finances that the original proposal to build the arena on Temple Island posed – with our finances shouldering all of the risk if a commercial operator could not make the arena viable.

Had we pressed ahead with those plans, we would have borrowed around £160 million for an arena that could now be standing empty because of Covid, as are many at risk arena around the world.

We now have a world-class arena being developed by a private company shouldering all the financial risk, which repurposes an existing building thereby saving hundreds of tonnes of carbon emissions through its construction.

We are currently working with YTL, to through the travel issues to meet the planning conditions and to allow YTL to start work on the development itself, scheduled to start summer 2021. This is fully in line with their public timetable, aimed at a late 2023 opening.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Jones (Stockwood)

Subject: HRA New Build Acquisitions

Q1. Last month, Cabinet approved spending £20m from the HRA Capital Programme to purchase 100 affordable homes from private developers/house builders. Can the Mayor confirm the type of dwelling(s) this money will secure?

Q2. I am interested to know the precise mathematical basis for determining that this is the most cost-effective way of delivering housing. Can the Mayor publish the formulae used to calculate or conclude that it is cheaper to buy finished properties rather than paying the cost-price of building them?

REPLY:

1. The £20m is reprofiled, that we have to spend because we haven't got other projects to spend it on because of delays caused by Covid-19. Using it now to purchase affordable homes that are coming on to the market is a quicker and more innovative way to acquire the homes that we need.

We agree that this isn't the cheapest and most efficient way to deliver affordable housing – the best way would be for government to give us the money and powers we need to continue to build new homes ourselves.

Each deal is different and it depends what is on offer from the Developer/ Housebuilder, but it's likely to be a minimum of what is required by Planning Policy (77% Social Rent / 23% Shared Ownership).

Across our whole programme we aim to predominantly provide new council homes for Social Rent. As our schemes get bigger we need to introduce an additional tenure in order to help facilitate balanced communities (i.e. shared ownership).

Shared ownership homes tend to improve viability and help facilitate the delivery of additional homes for Social Rent.

2 Our general approach to delivering council homes is through a varied programme that makes us more resilient in the market. It also widens our market to delivering the much needed housing our City needs.

How we arrive at our offer on schemes is commercially sensitive and not in our interest to publish. That said, all proposed developments ('direct' and 'in-direct') need to meet agreed financial hurdles and performance criteria in order to proceed through various gateways.

Both delivery routes have their own merits and offer similar viability outcomes.

