

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board - Mayoral Question Time



24th February 2021

Member Questions

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Q1	Councillor Anthony Negus	8. Bristol Beacon
Q2	Councillor Anthony Negus	10. Clean Air Zone
Q3	Councillor John Goulandris	10. Clean Air Zone
Q4	Councillor John Goulandris	10. Clean Air Zone
Q5	Councillor Claire Hiscott	8. Bristol Beacon
Q6	Councillor Claire Hiscott	8. Bristol Beacon
Q7	Councillor Geoffrey Gollop	8. Bristol Beacon
Q8	Councillor Geoffrey Gollop	8. Bristol Beacon
Q9	Councillor Paula O'Rourke	7. Scrutiny Annual Report
Q10	Councillor Paula O'Rourke	7. Scrutiny Annual Report



Question 1 & 2: Councillor Anthony Negus

Q1: Responsibility for Beacon Project costs.

My professional experience leads me to think that this contractual process has failed, resulting in BCC assuming too much responsibility for some cost increases. Purposefully-commissioned structural reports and detailed examination of the existing seen and concealed fabric from an Enabling Contract was put in place by BCC to provide maximum clarity to tenderers to be covered in their contract sum, with a provisional allowance for anything not revealed, like wells, to minimise any extra costs that would become the responsibility of BCC.

Why has this standard and detailed procedure and the necessary scrupulous checking process of the lowest tender failed to protect BCC from additional costs?

Q2: Recognition of the actions needed to mitigate entirely foreseeable consequences of the Clean Air charging zone(s).

I regret that road restrictions could not reduce critical levels of pollution quickly enough. It is sadly recognised that there will be displacement of zone-avoiding traffic and so more, and heavier, non-compliant vehicles will be using more unsuitable roads and spreading noxious fumes in edge-of-centre areas such as my Cotham ward.

What is being planned now to be urgently implemented in this period before the end-of-year Zone(s) activation to mitigate these negative impacts without major redesign that will permanently damage our neighbourhoods?

Questions 3 & 4: Councillor John Goulandris – Clean Air Zone

Q3: Part of the Portway (A4) is included in the proposed clean air zone. The Portway is a main arterial road and a key route from the M5 to Bristol Airport. Why is the Portway included in the clean air zone and would it not be more equitable to charge only those vehicles entering the city centre?

Q4: If Bristol aspires to cleaner air, should we not be honest with residents? We could get cleaner air immediately, if we stopped burning coal and wood in open fires and burners. What is the Mayor doing to discourage this bigger source of fine particulate pollution than traffic?

Questions 5 & 6: Councillor Claire Hiscott - Bristol Beacon

Q5: As a key member on the Project Board responsible for the delivery of this project, can the Mayor confirm when he was first made aware that the cost of this rebuild was going to exceed agreed budgets?

Q6: In January, the Bristol Post helpfully provided drone images of the current structure. On what date was the removal of the roof of the Bristol beacon authorised, and which officer and politician gave approval to this decision?

Questions 7 & 8: Councillor Geoffrey Gollop - Bristol Beacon

Q7: On what date were officers made aware of the additional structural problems with this building?

Q8: What steps have you taken to mitigate or reduce these extra costs?

Questions 9 & 10: Councillor Paula O'Rourke

Hi Marvin,

You know that I am keen to improve pre-scrutiny and scrutiny of policy in general.

I have been on a steep learning curve since I joined the scrutiny panel and believe that some good work has been done in my commission. Much of the most useful work done recently was as a consequence of good dialogue with officers and some cabinet members.

To illustrate, I would point to the item on delivery options for the development of Temple Quarter which is coming to the March meeting of G&R scrutiny. It also illustrates a willingness by officers and cabinet members to engage with scrutiny of policy.

However, this is not always the case. A recent failure to scrutinise the decision to transfer the FM contract to BWC has led to much disquiet. So much so that the HR committee unanimously called for the paper to be pulled from this month's Cabinet so that it could be properly discussed. In this case, it seems that the officers and the cabinet member decided that this major policy change didn't need any oversight from members and did not offer it to scrutiny.

Q9: The above examples bring me to my first question: is it, as it seems, that scrutiny of policy decisions and pre-decision scrutiny are at the will of the cabinet member overseeing it? If this is the case, is it adequate or does it 'require improvement'?

Q10: A working group has been established to oversee the recommendations of the Grant Thornton (GT) report, however, these recommendations are limited as the GT report only looked at value-for-money (post-scrutiny). Will you ask the group to consider how pre-decision scrutiny could be improved and make additional recommendations as necessary?