

Member Forum

7th September 2021

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.
- All supplementary questions must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. There is a maximum of 2 supplementaries, one per question asked.
- Questions have been submitted in priority order, via the group leaders / whips. Questions are rotated around the political groups, in order.



LABOUR QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Hulme, Horfield Ward

Subject: Afghan Refugees

- 1) I would like to thank the mayor for preparing to offer sanctuary to ten households fleeing the heart-breaking situation in Afghanistan. It is devastating to see that twenty years' progress threatens being undone in a week - girls may no longer be able to go to school, women will be denied basic freedoms, journalists may face arrest, and anyone who assisted the allied forces will face grave repercussions. This unfolding catastrophe is no doubt in part down to negligence from the British and American Governments. We have a commitment to the Afghan people.

With this in mind, I would like to ask the mayor whether there are any updates regarding the arrival of Afghan refugees, and how the city is planning to support their housing, education, and health needs - and what support is needed from the Government?

REPLY:

We have resettled six families, with a commitment to resettling an additional ten families.

The Resettlement Team is liaising with landlords who have come forward following our appeals on social media, and we are confident we will be able to provide housing for an additional ten families.

The families have been assessed by the Haven, the primary care service for refugees and asylum seekers in the city and have been registered with local GPs.

The children are all registered with the Education Welfare team and school places are being found. The families arrived in the summer holidays so confirming school places could only be done after the schools returned in September.

In terms of housing, the families are housed within the private rented sector and properties were furnished using preloved goods by WeCare international.

Support has been provided by Bridges for Communities who have organised befrienders and welcome parties.

We anticipate there will be more unaccompanied asylum seeking children from Afghanistan and we would urge the Government to reinstate its UASC grant funding in recognition that numbers are likely to increase imminently.

- 2) I thank the Mayor for the Council's efforts to go above and beyond for Afghan refugees. A group of people that has also hugely suffered from intervention in Afghanistan are our British troops. There are over 16,000 veterans in Bristol, some of whom will have served in Afghanistan. Incidences of PTSD among veterans are significantly higher among veterans than the general population, so while there is a need for Government



to invest in mental health more generally, this is especially true for our veterans. I would like to ask what this administration has been doing to support Bristol's veterans?

REPLY:

The dedication and sacrifice of the armed forces community and their families to safeguard the security of the United Kingdom is fully deserving of our utmost respect and gratitude. Indeed, we have seen this not only in Afghanistan, but also across the UK as the Armed Forces have helped with the COVID effort. We owe it to the armed forces community to provide them with the best possible support across all spheres of life, including healthcare.

That is why recently we have been promoting Operation COURAGE -The Veterans Mental Health and Wellbeing Service to local armed forces communities locally. Operation Courage provides specialist care and support for Service leavers, reservists, veterans and their families.

In addition to this there is a lot of activity, which is being led by Councillor Helen Holland to promote the Armed Forces Covenant locally, including looking directly at the services available to support veterans and their families in Bristol. Cllr Holland is the Council's Armed Forces Elected Member Champion and she is leading work with armed forces communities to promote the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure organisations in Bristol understand their role and responsibilities to veterans as well as serving members of the armed forces. This includes looking at housing and health services provision as well as support veterans leaving the armed forces into work.

This work is ongoing and involves representatives from the armed forces, armed forces communities, the DWP, NHS, housing services, further education providers, which Cllr Holland meets with on a regular basis.



GREEN QUESTION 1

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ed Plowden, Windmill Hill ward

Subject: Clean Air Zone

In response to a question about the mitigation measures needed for local areas on the edge of the Clean Air Zone, which will be affected by increased traffic, the Mayor stated that it is “not possible to mitigate a problem that has not happened yet”. Since that time he has announced mitigation measures for the CAZ amounting to spending tens of millions of pound on new vehicles.

Questions

1. Does this mean that a plan will now be put forward to mitigate the effect of the CAZ on neighbourhoods that are modelled to be adversely affected?
2. How will the large sums of money to be spent on cars support the need to reduce all forms of car traffic by up to 60%,* to have a hope of meeting our carbon reduction targets by 2030?

* As calculated by Transport for Quality of Life Consultancy in their report ‘More than electric cars’

REPLY:

Q1 Our modelling does not show any significant negative impacts in the areas around the edge of the zone due to the beneficial impact of the scheme, but we recognise resident’s concerns and the potential for unexpected impacts, hence our commitment to mitigating those impacts with this approach.

We committed as part of our full business case submission to ring fence any income from the CAZ for measures that would improve air quality.

One of the options for this potential income is to take forward our Liveable Neighbourhoods approach in those areas around the edge of the zone to deal with any issues that arise from diverting traffic and improve air quality in those areas. Can I suggest that you develop proposals for liveable neighbourhood in your ward (if you have the support of your residents)?

Q2 We are working on transport interventions across the board including progressing our Mass Transit plans, the Bus Deal and active travel.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1

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

Subject: CANCELLED GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS and SIMILAR SERVICE ISSUES

Q1. The Mayor will no doubt share my disappointment with the cancellation of the green bin collection service by Bristol Waste for 10 weeks in the height of Summer, one of the busiest times for gardeners. Is he confident the service will resume on 15th September as indicated by Bristol Waste?

REPLY:

We share your disappointment and acknowledge the difficulties this has caused residents. We have asked Bristol Waste to do everything they can to ensure services will resume on 15th September. We will have more information on this prior to the end of the ten-week suspension.

In addition to Covid, we are also facing a national shortage of drivers, partly caused by the impact of Brexit.

Q2. The Mayor will be aware that as well as the cancellation of green bin collections, Bristol Waste has had many missed and late collections of black bins and recycling. Staff sickness rates have been high. Bristol Waste has placed most of the blame for this on the so called 'pingdemic', when even vaccinated staff had to self-isolate. That has now, of course, ended and staff absences and sickness rates should as a result have sharply reduced. Is this in fact the case?

REPLY:

You are right - the covid isolation restrictions being eased has improved the situation.

As we suspended garden waste, we would have expected the collection of black bins and recycling to improve in August and we are waiting for the data to confirm this. I will share the data with you when I have it.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Andrew Varney – Brislington West

Subject: Voi Scooter Parking

At Full Council in July, you disagreed with my question about the need for physical docking infrastructure and the reallocation of car parking spaces for eScooters in order to avoid pavement clutter. I see from the media you have changed your mind and now agree with me. Could you tell me when Bristol is likely to see its first eScooter docking stations, how many we will be getting and where they will be located?

REPLY:

We will continue to work with VOI to find the best solutions for different areas and embed them as soon as possible.



LABOUR QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hornchen, Brislington East Ward

Subject: Mental Health Support for Young People

- 1) The past 18 months have taken a huge toll on the mental health of young people in Bristol. There is an epidemic of loneliness in modern cities of which Bristol is no exception made worse by the Lockdowns needed to control the Epidemic. It is a known fact that loneliness can lead to Mental Health problems. In 2020, one in six children aged 5 to 16 years were identified as having a probable mental disorder, and in young adults, the figure was as high as 27.2% for young women and 13.3% of young men.

I would like to ask what the Council has been doing to support young people with mental health problems, and what further support it needs from Government to fully address the growing crisis?’

REPLY:

Bristol City Council works with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to commission mental health support for children and young people, including the following:

- CAMHS service provided by AWP NHS Trust
- Off the Record provides 1:1, group work and support for transition to adult services
- Kooth provides online counselling and support
- Primary Mental Health Specialists embedded in schools and social care area teams
- Be Safe for children presenting with harmful sexual behaviours
- Specialist CAMHS provided through the Youth Offending Team
- Thinking Allowed service for children in care / children not living with their birth parents

In response to the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people’s mental health, further system transformation has taken place since March 2020, including:

- Expansion of the CAMHS Intensive Outreach Team to become a 24/7 service
- Launch of a free 24/7 mental health crisis line

Additional government funding would be helpful to increase the capacity of services to respond to need.

- 2) What is council doing to try and help young people, in their local communities before they get a crisis point?

REPLY:

Bristol City Council manages the Healthy Schools programme, which includes the Essential and Specialist Mental Health awards, providing support for schools to develop a whole school approach to mental wellbeing.

The council worked with the CCG on a bid to fund mental health support teams (MHSTs) in schools, supporting children with mild to moderate mental health problems, reducing the risk



of crisis. Bristol has two MHSTs, working in schools in the South and East Central localities. Bids for additional MHST funding are being prepared.

We commission the Targeted Youth Service, including a wellbeing service supporting those with mild to moderate mental health problems.

The council also commissioned a specialist mental health service to work with young people in the Somali community. A similar specialist service is being commissioned to support children from wider Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. We also commission training for professionals working with young people to promote mental wellbeing.



GREEN QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Emma Edwards, Bishopston & Ashley Down ward

Subject: Residents Parking Zones

Residents Parking Zones have been a hot topic in parts of Bristol for a while now, but especially for those areas of Bristol within walking distance of the centre, such as Bedminster, Windmill Hill, Ashley, Redland and my own ward Bishopston and Ashley Down. This is a topic that comes up frequently from residents and with the advent of the CAZ, and the opening of the new Ashley Down Train Station, the topic has become one of urgency. In October 2020 another public consultation was done in these areas, with the results showing favourably to the introduction of RPZ or extension of RPZs. In Bishopston and St Andrews (covering Ashley and Redland ward also) 60% of people were in favour of RPZ and 70% in favour of junction protection.

Ashley Down Station is set to open in 2022 and residents close to the station site are very concerned of what this will mean for them. They have petitioned us to implement an RPZ as a matter of urgency. We have long heard of trials of RPZs coming to the area but with none coming to fruition yet. Other areas have similar concerns with the advent of the CAZ and new housing developments.

Question:

1. Can the mayor indicate when we will get these parking zones extended please? Or at least trialled in the most urgent instances.

REPLY:

An unintended consequence of Residents Parking Zones is an entrenchment of private car ownership and use, so it is not an unqualified good. I was elected on a promise in 2016 not to extend RPZs. Our direction of travel is to promote public transport and active travel, as you can see from the proposed new Ashley Down rail station.

We are bringing forward liveable neighbourhoods that provide a range of benefits to local communities, we will consider parking issues as part of these schemes as they come forward.

The new station will be situated in the heart of the local community and will be well connected to surrounding communities via the Concorde Way walking and cycling route. Secure cycle parking will be provided.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2

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

Subject: NEED FOR UNIVERSAL 4G AND 5G MAST MAP FOR THE CITY

Q1. Most people want to benefit from the latest generation of mobile technology, and they also accept that network providers need the necessary infrastructure to delivery these services. However, it is also important that elected representatives have a clear idea about the current (and proposed) distribution of masts and base units. Given the controversial nature of some of these installations, does the Mayor accept that all Councillors should have access to an authoritative and definitive map of every site location in Bristol?

REPLY:

I agree that such information would be useful for Councillors having to weigh up the pros and cons of enhanced digital coverage across our city.

Q2. No doubt, much of this information will already be held confidentially by the large network operators. Will the Mayor agree to task officers with producing or compiling such a comprehensive guide – available for inspection with restricted access if deemed appropriate – so that Executive Members and Ward Councillors are in a better position to evaluate the appropriateness or impact of any increase in provision in specific parts of the city?

REPLY:

Unfortunately there isn't currently a definitive single set of information about these networks. The Council receives this information on piecemeal basis, from early consultation on proposed installations to formal applications for permission under the Planning Act. Bringing this information together into a single map-based resource (and, importantly, keeping it updated) would draw officer resource away from Council priority areas and therefore I cannot commit to the work required to fulfil this request.

Alternatively, I would encourage Members to fully engage when proposals for digital developments are made through the planning system. Such applications can be tracked by signing up to "consultee access" on Planning Online, which we have encouraged all Members to do and our planning team can advise further on this if required.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark – Brislington West

Subject: Community Bus Scheme

Mayor Rees, Cllr Varney and I have been approached by local residents who feel that their bus service does not serve their needs and feel this particularly keenly since the No. 36 bus route was altered. They have approached me to ask if the council would consider providing a community transport service to serve the areas of Hungerford Road, Talbot Road, Broadwalk and Tesco's Callington Road?

REPLY:

I understand and share residents' concerns about being able to access bus services. One of the reasons we entered into the Combined Authority was to access greater funding and resources for a number of areas, including buses. Subsidised bus services in the region are therefore now the responsibility of the West of England Combined Authority.



LABOUR QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Massey, Southmead Ward

Subject: Food Sustainability

- 1) In Southmead we have recently had new SUDS pods installed to help with drainage and hopefully prevent the flooding we experience from time to time. These have been planted with flowers, and look very attractive, as well as providing a useful facility. However, even with the ongoing regeneration work around the Arneside area, when this is completed we will still have a lot of green space along Greystoke Avenue.

Given the emphasis on protecting and encouraging wildlife and the ecosystem, would the Mayor support encouraging further planting in that area, including potentially a community vegetable patch, plus fruit bearing trees that could be freely used by local people?

- 2) I'm pleased to hear the Mayor encourage sustainable food growing across the city. Bristol is leagues ahead of other cities in this, as was recognised when we were awarded Gold Standard for Food Sustainability. I hope that, despite being one of the best – if not the best – city in the country for food sustainability, we're still aiming to go further. Can the Mayor inform me of any work that he will be doing to further improve sustainable food production in Bristol?

REPLY:

Q1 We are committed to ensuring green spaces help deliver our environmental and health agendas including doubling the city's tree canopy and delivering our Ecological Emergency Action Plan. We know there is scope in most parts of the city to do more and welcome proposals in Southmead for tree planting and food growing.

Organisations such as Incredible Edible <https://www.incredibleedible.org.uk> can provide support for food growing in public spaces and we have lots of tree planting locations in Southmead and elsewhere identified for sponsorship <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/museums-parks-sports-culture/treebristol-planting-trees-in-bristol> .

Q2 You rightly highlighted Bristol's success in achieving Gold Sustainable Food City Status, thanks to the hard work of Cllr Craig, council officers and many, many partners.

We are now working with the One City Environment and Health and Wellbeing Boards, and a range of partners to develop the One City Good Food 2030 Action Plan, which will include food growing in the city.

This forms part of our wider Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme.



GREEN QUESTION 3

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Carla Denyer, Clifton Down ward

Subject: CEE Bill and Fossil Fuel Non Proliferation Treaty

1. CEE Bill

Preamble

As noted in Bristol's Climate Emergency motion in November 2018, Government must provide more powers and funding to make the city's 2030 carbon neutral target possible. That starts with Government taking it as seriously as we do here in Bristol.

There is a Bill before Parliament—the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the “Climate and Ecology Bill”), which, if it became law, would require the government to develop a strategy to address the emergency that would ensure:

- the ecological emergency is tackled shoulder to shoulder with the climate crisis in a joined-up approach;
- the Paris Agreement is enshrined into law to ensure that UK does its real fair share to limit global temperature rise to the most stringent end of the Paris agreement -1.5°C;
- the Leaders Pledge for Nature is enshrined into law to ensure that the UK's ecosystems are protected and restored with a focus on biodiversity, soils and natural carbon sinks;
- the UK takes full responsibility for our entire greenhouse gas footprint (ie consumption emissions plus shipping, flights and land-based transport) by accounting for all of the emissions that take place overseas to manufacture, transport and dispose of the goods and services we import and consume;
- the UK takes full responsibility for our ecological footprint so that we protect health and resilience of ecosystems along both domestic and our global supply chains;
- an independent, temporary Climate and Nature Assembly is set-up, representative of the UK's population, to engage with the UK Parliament and UK Government to help develop the emergency strategy.

104 local authorities, alongside many MPs and Peers from all parties, have already backed this bill, as they recognise its importance in securing concrete and urgent action from Government.

Question:

Please will you, on behalf of this Council, announce your support for the CEE bill and write an open letter to Bristol's four MPs urging them to sign up to support the Bill if they haven't already?

REPLY:

I welcome the aims of the Climate and Ecological Emergency bill but given that the bill does not have government support it stands little chance of passing. As this is a Parliamentary Bill I have no direct power to support its progression.



2. Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

Preamble:

If the latest IPCC report makes one thing clear, it is that we cannot continue to burn fossil fuels, and that instead we should be immediately transitioning away from the dirty energy of oil, coal and gas. And yet many countries that signed up to the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change continue to spend billions of pounds each year to subsidise the fossil fuel industry. The UK alone spends some £11 billion per year in fossil fuel subsidies.

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is an initiative based on global efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and ban asbestos, ozone-depleting chemicals, landmines and other threats to humanity. It has been signed by a growing number of cities, including Barcelona and Los Angeles, who recognise that every penny spent on fossil fuel subsidies is not only money lost to tackling climate change but, worse still, is money spent making the goal of tackling climate change that much harder to achieve. For more information about this see my Members Forum statement.

Question:

Given the clear and present danger of climate change made clear in the latest IPCC report, and being felt today around the world, will the Mayor support a council vote to sign the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and then use his position as the directly elected leader of our city to petition and lobby the UK government to switch its funding support for fossil fuels towards supporting cities like Bristol to achieve their zero carbon goals?

REPLY:

The latest IPCC report is a reminder of why we must continue to keep climate, ecology and the SDGs as central to everything we do.

It is not my role to determine what council decides to debate – you are welcome to table a motion.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sharon Scott (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: Weed Control & Maintenance Strategies

Along with most people in our city, we welcome the Authority's ambition to reduce the use of pesticides by 50% by 2030. This strategy is important in terms of protecting pollinators and the environment as well as helping to reduce any public health concerns. Clearly, there will also be a place for chemicals as it is the only effective treatment for some invasive plant species. However, I am receiving numerous complaints from residents over the current state of roadside gutters which are being overgrown in many places, damaging infrastructure, creating costly repair problems, and making areas unsightly.

Q1. Does the Mayor accept that the current approach or strategy to weed control needs to be improved as doing nothing or simply reducing intervention ultimately represents a false economy?

REPLY:

We recognise the challenge. We are committed to reduce the use of pesticides in the city by 50% by 2030, and it is going to be a challenge to get there. As yet, there are no effective solutions about how you manage weed growth in the complete absence of pesticides.

Through city partners we will be assisting with a glyphosate amnesty to collect unused chemicals and dispose of them safely later this month. We are keen to aid and promote community-based solutions to weed management where we can.

In the meantime, this year has seen prolific weed growth due to wet weather and warm conditions. The treatment of weeds prior to removal using our current methods requires dry conditions and our contractors found timing the first spray difficult. Because of this the second weed spray has been brought forward to now rather than later in the year.

Q2. In addition to this, the practice of cleaning the drains along carriageways needs to be better managed in that often, once cleared, debris is left uncollected which rather defeats the whole object of this exercise.

Will the Mayor commit or redirect more resources towards dealing with all of the issues identified above?

REPLY:

As ever, we need to make best use of the resources we have. Where would you redirect resources from? However, please ensure let our Highways team know of any specific sites where debris has been left and we will challenge our contractor.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Alex Hartley – Hotwells & Harbourside

Subject: Bike Hangar Procurement

The 15 current bike hangars across Bristol were procured and installed by CycleLoop, at an estimated cost of £8850 per hangar. Of this an estimated £1000 is spent on bollards surrounding the hangar, £500 is spent on building a concrete base, and £500 is spent on the 'Bristol Blue' paint scheme. No other local authority uses concrete bases, and bollards generally aren't used due to the low number of collisions. Can the Mayor please explain why BCC is paying an additional £2000 per hangar than other local authorities?

REPLY:

Thank you for pointing this out. We have taken this challenge back to the transport team, and we will be working with them to review our specification as we develop our plans for further bike hangar installations.



LABOUR. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Rippington, Brislington East Ward

Subject: Mass Transit / Housing retrofitting

- 1) Bristol is a city which has lagged behind in public transport matters for many years. Whilst Bristol has had to suffer with a poor quality bus service, struggling to make its way through congested roads, other cities such as Sheffield, Manchester, Nottingham and Edinburgh have made massive strides towards providing a proper, European style mass transit system for their residents. I therefore very much applaud the strides that we are now making, with a Labour Mayor and a Labour WECA Mayor, towards achieving something similar for Bristol.

As a resident of Brislington I am also pleased to learn that the A4 corridor between Bristol and Bath is one of three routes chosen for the initial phase, and I urge everyone living in the area to take part in the current consultation, which ends on 12th September. We need to hear from as many local voices as possible.

The plan for Mass Transit is based upon providing fully segregated carriageways in both directions, and initially improving bus services before moving to mass transit when the case is proven that faster, more efficient services will draw more passengers. However, this is not a case that needs to be proven, it has been shown many times that a comfortable, regular mass transit system can achieve modal change in the range of 35%. I am also concerned that the cost and disruption of providing two lanes of fully segregated traffic along the A4 may mean that this project takes many years to come to fruition. We are told that we need these two lanes of segregated roadway to successfully get mass transit up the Bath Road. I don't believe this to be true, however.

We keep thinking about this in terms of buses, and how to clear a route for buses, but we need to think of this more like a light railway, even if the eventual vehicles used still have tyres and run on the road.

Along the Bath Road there are several sections where two-way running is already possible, but also sections where only one carriageway can realistically be freed up. This is fine, because mass transit can run in both directions on the same carriageway. With an average of five minutes between each vehicle in a given direction, we merely need to provide passing places at 2.5 minute intervals.

The entire journey from Three Lamps to the Bath Road Park and Ride would take approximately 7 minutes nonstop in an unimpeded vehicle. Add in 20 seconds per stop (mass transit is much quicker than a single door bus), and you still have a total of less than 10 minutes journey time. Therefore, you would only need four passing places on this journey. These can easily be provided at Arnos Court, the Lodekka, Brislington Hill and the Park and Ride.

Has the Council considered this model as part of its Business Case and, if so, what conclusions have been reached?



REPLY:

You are right to point out that Bristol has lagged behind in not having a mass transit system and this is one of our key priorities.

There is currently public engagement taking place on the A4 corridor between Bristol and Bath and I echo your request that everyone complete the survey. Through this engagement we are seeking to further understand current issues people encounter when travelling along this corridor. With the results we will refine our objectives and undertake option assessment work. We will be presenting that option assessment work to the public in a further round of engagement.

I understand you have previously suggested the idea of mass transit running in both directions on the same carriageway to the project team. The idea was added to the long list for consideration following your suggestion. Once the current public engagement exercise is complete, the results analysed and the objectives finalised, the options assessment work will be completed. We will then set out the option assessment process including rationale for why some options were discounted.

- 2) To meet our climate change targets we urgently need to retro-fit all our council housing with carbon free heating systems.

If the cost of this has to be borne by our own Housing Revenue Account this will severely impact our ability to build new, desperately required social housing.

Is the Mayor aware of any commitments or funding from central government to pay for this retrofitting, given this is a national, indeed global issue?

REPLY:

The Government has announced the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, which would total £3.8 bn over the next 10 years. We estimate the cost of decarbonising council homes in the city at between one quarter and one half a billion pounds. So it is clear that the level of national funding being provided is wholly inadequate.

The first wave of £170m is open to applications, with wave 2 in the spring estimated to make £560m available. Officers are currently assessing our strategy for bidding from this fund.

We are also procuring the City Leap Partnership to help open up other opportunities to decarbonise our city's energy systems.



GREEN QUESTION 4

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor David Wilcox, Lockleaze ward

Subject: School streets and bus service changes

1. School Streets

Bristol City Council is piloting a School Streets Programme for four schools in Bristol. A School Street is a road outside a school with a temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times. The restriction applies to school traffic and through traffic. The result is a safer, healthier and pleasant environment for everyone. Other cities like Leeds and Birmingham are rolling this out to 14 and 12 school streets, respectively, although in Bristol we currently have just four pilots.

Question:

Can members have an update on these pilot schemes, as it seems to be missing from the Mayors forward plan?

REPLY:

As specific schemes are taken forward, officers will liaise with local members as appropriate. If you have a specific query about a scheme in your ward, please contact the Transport Engagement team.

2. Bus Service changes

Both FirstBus and Bristol Community Transport will be decreasing their already reduced services due to the expiration of the UK Governments Covid-19 Bus Service Grant (CBSSG).

Question:

Why were members independently informed of these changes instead of by either WECA or Bristol City Council?

REPLY:

The council no longer provides or manages subsidised bus services in the region – this is the responsibility of the West of England Combined Authority. I agree it is important that WECA keep local council members well-informed, and Cllr Don Alexander and I will raise this with WECA at the earliest opportunity.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: Area Committee 6 - Section 106 and local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds

We have now reached the end of stage 1 for the Area Committee Process. We would like to introduce a zebra crossing on Stockwood Lane as there are no safe crossing points anywhere on this road. During the costing stage for the scheme, it has become apparent that Highways would like a 50% premium applied to this crossing as it is to be installed onto a concrete road.

I feel that this is really unfair as the Council spends next to nothing on these roads over the decades; the road surface should not be a consideration in protecting the lives of pedestrians; and the extra cost has never been brought up before when I have asked previously suggested this project.

Our Committee continues to try to make up for the historic shortfall of CIL expenditure in Stockwood Ward. (My research indicates that between April 2012 – April 2018, my Ward received £15,000 of CIL funding when the Authority spent in the region of £15m during this time period).

Q1. Can the Mayor look to use Strategic CIL to make up this premium as it is not something that we have the funds to cover?

REPLY:

Strategic CIL is unfortunately not available to cover the full costs of local projects where the cost of those projects exceeds the funding available to Area Committees. Strategic CIL allocations are made by Cabinet for the delivery of strategically important infrastructure that is necessary to enable or support the growth of the city.

I will ask transport officers to look into the feasibility of adding a crossing into next year's transport capital budget.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark – Brislington West

Subject: Stockwood Open Space Skate Park

Mayor Rees, Cllr Varney and i have been working with local residents who have come to love the open spaces on their doorstep and are working to help young people continue with a healthy lifestyle. We have identified an area which would be ideal for a skate board park in Stockwood open space and ask that the council work with us to find funding to enable this to happen.

Can I ask if the mayor will identify an officer who will work with us to progress this project and liaise with external bodies such as health and police to draw in external funding streams.

REPLY:

Stockwood Open Space is managed by the Council's Parks and Green Spaces Service. Although the service is not able to fundraise directly, we have contacts with local skate leaders and designers and can put residents in touch with park groups and others that have a strong history of fundraising. Please get in touch with my office and we can put you in touch with the relevant officer.



LABOUR QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bennett, Eastville Ward

Subject: Alcohol ban in Bristol's green spaces / Safe consumption rooms

- 1) Over the summer, thousands of primarily young people took advantage of the warmer weather and headed to our lovely green spaces in Bristol's city centre, like Castle Park and College Green. Many enjoyed an alcoholic drink and the vast majority of those who did were considerate of others and took their rubbish with them.

Despite this, they were still at risk of receiving a fine, just for drinking alcohol. Covid has made many people appreciate their local green spaces even more. Having a sensible drink at a park in the sun is a social activity, not an anti-social one. It's apparent the PSPOs preventing drinking alcohol in central parks are not observed or even being enforced, so will the Council reconsider the suitability of these PSPOs preventing the drinking of alcohol in some of our green spaces?

REPLY:

This is about ensuring that everyone who wants to use our parks and green spaces can do so without being worried about the behaviour of others.

The PSPO was put in place following a substantial amount of antisocial behaviour in Castle Park and College Green connected to extensive drinking.

No-one who is simply drinking alcohol in a PSPO area runs the risk of a fine. This is because people drinking in an area covered by a non-drinking PSPO only commit an offence if they refuse to surrender their alcohol when requested to do so by a designated officer (e.g. Police or BCC Officer with the delegated authority). The request to surrender alcohol can only be made if the officer believes that the consumption of alcohol is causing or likely to cause antisocial behaviour.

- 2) Our manifesto included a commitment to lobby the Government to allow us to pilot safe drug consumption rooms – a measure proven to reduce overdoses and blood-borne virus infection rates. What representations have been made to the Government regarding this, and how favourably is it looking on allowing Bristol to pilot this scheme?

REPLY:

Reducing harm from drug and alcohol use is a key priority for the city.

We have launched a new drug and alcohol strategy which sets out 6 key priorities: Support communities and change culture, prevention, and early intervention, minimise harm and protect health, treatment and recover, tackle crime and disorder and adapt to emerging challenges.

We have made a commitment to explore a variety of harm reduction initiatives including drug consumption rooms



Cllr Asher Craig has expressed to government that Bristol would be interested in piloting an approach.



GREEN QUESTION 5

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Tess Fitzjohn, Bedminster ward

Subject: City of Culture

The UK City of Culture competition has just closed. The long list of applicants, 20 in all includes Torbay and Exeter, Southampton and Cornwall.

This competition replaced the European Capital of Culture. Delivered by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), short listed Applicants will receive grants of 40K to support second stage applications, and the winning City can expect to benefit from financial support to ensure the programme's success and lasting legacy. Coventry City of Culture 2021 has received over £15.5 million from the Government to directly support its year as UK City of Culture.

The impact of competitions like this on cities like Bristol, even if they're not selected is considerable. For example, it raises the level of ambition, organisations develop new partnerships and reach out for increased funding public and private. It raises everyone's game, increases opportunities and puts the City back onto the international map.

Coventry is already providing a blueprint for how culture can be at the heart of social and economic recovery. The programme expects to receive a significant boost in visitor numbers and economic investment over £110 million in additional investment secured over the 2018-22 period. The programme aims to attract around 5,000 volunteers and create more than 900 jobs.

Question:

Why didn't Bristol City Council lead a bid for City of Culture 2025?

REPLY:

We assessed the City of Culture competition as an opportunity. The bid development processes normally cost in the region of £500k to £1 million and our view was that we were not in a strong position to win. We took the view that these funds would be better used for current investment in the cultural sector.

We are currently investing heavily in the reconstruction of the Bristol Beacon, underwrote the investment in St George's and the modernisation of the Bristol Old Vic. We have introduced a cultural strategy aimed at promoting our cultural assets and growing inclusion in our cultural sector.

We will consider a One City bid for the 2029 designation.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander (Frome Vale)

Subject: REGULATION OF ELECTRIC SCOOTERS

I understand why the Mayor is so enthusiastic about the e-scooter scheme currently being trialled in the city. I also accept that some of the problems being experienced by other road users and pedestrians can be mitigated by the additional safety features and registration which accompany the officially sanctioned VOI machines. However, the same cannot be said for private vehicles.

Q1. Does the Mayor recognise this distinction and, if so, is he still supportive of an unregulated free-for-all of these devices on our streets?

REPLY:

We fully support the Voi E-Scooter trial. These are a legitimate form of sustainable transport helping tackle congestion and deliver the environmental goals of the city.

Private E-Scooters are a matter for Avon and Somerset police who are informed of the issue. The Police have upped their patrols to try and increase enforcement action, in recognition this is a growing issue. We will continue to encourage the use of Voi E-Scooters throughout the duration of the WECA trial.

Q2. If your mind is unchanged on the present illegal use of private e-scooters, what steps will the Mayor be taking to ensure underage riders are deterred or prevented from using these gadgets and driving them recklessly to become a threat to life and limb of both themselves and others?

REPLY:

There is value in supporting the legalisation of private scooter use so that they can be properly regulated and subject to proper speed limitations. There is a set of comprehensive rules to address the potential dangers Voi E-Scooters can present.

It is illegal to use Voi E-Scooter if you are under the age of 18, you must prove this by providing a provisional drivers licence with a date of birth in order to access them. We would support this being retained in any legislation governing private use.

We continue to work closely with Voi to ensure the safe use of E-Scooters is enforced across the City.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Alex Hartley – Hotwells & Harbourside

Subject: Cladding Motion Update

In Dec 2020, Council unanimously approved a motion trying to lessen the effects of the cladding and EWS1 scandal on residents. As part of this motion, Council called on Cabinet to pursue 9 individual actions designed to help the EndOurCladdingScandal campaign and local residents. Can the Mayor please update the Council on how each of these 9 elements has progressed in the last 9 months?

REPLY:

We acknowledge what a difficult time it has been – and continues to be – for a number of Bristol residents who are affected by the national cladding scandal through no fault of their own.

We continue to support affected Bristol residents, including through a dedicated information website, which is in the process of being updated; two public advice meetings for residents; and writing to owners of building with potential cladding issues.

We continue to lobby national Government and support resident-led campaigns, having completed or considered all suggestions from the motion. Councillor Tom Renhard is leading this work, having picked up from Councillor Nicola Beech – supported by Thangam Debbonaire MP.

All councillors have been invited to training events about cladding to enable them to better support residents. All Members should attend one of these sessions in the coming weeks.



GREEN QUESTION 6

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Mohamed Makawi, Cotham ward

Subject: Local bus services

Question:

Are there plans to restore the number 9 bus service which previously operated through Cotham and Redland?

REPLY:

Buses were deregulated in 1985 and are ran by private operators including First Bus who ran the number 9 service.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Windows (Henbury & Brentry)

Subject: BEARING THE COST OF POLITICAL ADVERTISING

I appreciate there can sometimes be a fine line between blatant self-promotion and effective communication with the electorate. However, the reported spending by the Mayor on publicity material prior to the last local elections is really quite alarming and spectacular.

£31,267.20 political advertising and wraparounds
£4,907 and £5,250 in assorted messaging

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm that the above quoted figures are accurate?

REPLY:

I don't recognise those figures and you haven't explained where they are from.

Q2. Is the Mayor able to provide any assurance that these extraordinary sums were met by the local Labour Party and not paid for by local taxpayers?

REPLY:

Political advertising is paid for by parties. There is no use of public funds.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 6

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

Subject: New Oasis Secondary School in South Bristol

For many years pupils in Knowle and nearby areas have suffered as they progress from good primary schools to widely scattered secondary schools. We have been highlighting this issue for many years and welcomed this administration's decision to support the scheme involving the Park at Daventry Rd.

The promised delivery time for the new school by central government of 2023 was a little late, and left a significant shortfall of hundreds of Year 7 places and this has been made significantly worse by the failure in delivery of the Temple Meads School project.

Until very recently, Cllr Davies and I have been meeting with LEA officers to progress the possibility of a 2022 opening in temporary accommodation. At our last meeting this was shattered by the admission that central government would deliver the permanent building a year late in 2024.

As ward Cllrs we have passed possible temporary sites to central government and LEA officers consideration.

- 1) Can the Mayor please give his full commitment to trying to deliver these places in the Oasis Knowle school from 2022.

REPLY:

The Oasis South project is a Free School, being delivered by the Department for Education.

We were informed by the DfE of the delay to the permanent building project and conveyed that information as soon as possible, as well as expressing our concerns to the DfE.

We are working with the DfE and LocatED to identify suitable sites for the school to open, in temporary accommodation, from September 2023 (the original planned opening date).

The challenges to the DfE of identifying a suitable site and providing the necessary accommodation mean that 2022 is not realistic. In addition, Oasis, who have wide experience of opening new schools do not feel 2022 is achievable and continue to be committed to opening the school on a temporary site in 2023.

Officers are working with schools in the area to ensure all pupils who require a secondary school place can be offered one in September 2022.

- 2) Although not ideal geographically, the New Fosseway school site might well be the easiest to deliver for a 2-year scheme. The site is currently destined for the development of housing but can the Mayor give an assurance that the potential temporary use would not be resisted.

REPLY:

As mentioned above, Council officers are working with the DfE who, are the responsible party for identifying and securing a suitable location. All viable sites are being considered and the Council will support the DfE in identifying and securing the most appropriate site.



GREEN QUESTION 7

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor, Redland ward

Subject: Road Surface Dressing

Loose chippings are laid over adhesive tarmac and passing traffic embeds them to effect a cost effective way of extending road surfaces. This has to be swept twice with a few weeks' delay to embed the stones. Downsides are missing road safety markings and hazards for cycling.

This spring many streets in Redland were treated in early May. A few signs were left saying road markings were missing. Among the problems were minimal provision to manage parking chaos, as all double yellow lines were gone, no corner protection, including Keep Clear markings, no disabled bays, and therefore the designated Southmead Quietway, the only cycle route to the hospital from Cheltenham Rd, was impassable due to rogue parking in a one way street.

In late August some corner protection markings were still missing and at least one disabled parking bay.

Question:

What can be done to prevent such extensive problems in future?

REPLY:

Surface Dressing is endorsed by the DfT and offers an economic way of prolonging the life of a road and produces far less carbon than traditional surfacing. The sites are designed in line with national guidance. The process is partly dependent upon embedment by passing vehicles and subject to two initial sweeps and then a third comprehensive sweep requiring the site to be cleared of parked vehicles.

We typically carry out carriageway preventative maintenance (surface dressing and micro asphalt) on more than 120 sites annually, all within the summer window as minimum road temperatures are required. This year was a larger programme than usual, as we had sites that were not completed last year due to covid related delays and a higher number of remedial sites due to work being carried out late in the season once again due to covid related delays

We prioritise the reinstatement of road markings, with pedestrian crossings and school markings being top, followed by key junction markings, main roads, then RPS areas or other areas of controlled parking, with remaining sites to follow. Central areas can be problematic, as we need to clear roads of parked cars to reinstate some of the markings.

We have suffered this year from internal staff shortage due to covid, but that has also affected the available resource from contractors.

We hope that covid will not cause such problems with future programmes. We will create clear prioritised programmes for the reinstatement of lines, to ensure that they are reinstated as



quickly as possible. We will be working under new contracts from next season, with some new contractors, which we will manage to ensure good contractor performance. We will also be reviewing the information, which is shared with residents to ensure that they are better informed of the work which is happening in their street.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 7

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

Subject: Policy & Practice of Sign-posting Closed Council Assets

1. I fully endorse the Council policy of discouraging unnecessary travelling, providing up-to-date information, reducing vehicular congestion and leading to a reduction in air-borne pollution.

In Bishopsworth Ward and, indeed, throughout Bristol, there is a huge amount of road-signage directing people to closed Council assets. For example, there is a road-sign near the 'King's Head' roundabout on the A38 Bridgwater Road directing people to the public toilets almost a mile north, which were closed by Cabinet over three years ago. There is also a road-sign on Bedminster Down Road (north of the 'Cross Hands' pub) directing people to Bishopsworth Swimming Pool (well over a mile to the south), which was closed over nine years ago by a previous Council Administration.

Do we have a policy or protocol on removing redundant, wasteful, and misleading signposting to closed Council assets?

2. If the Council does not currently have such a policy, does the Mayor agree with me that the Place Directorate should develop such a policy and implement it in a pragmatic manner?

REPLY:

Q1 When any Council asset is closed down or changes name, the project team are responsible for removing or updating any pedestrian, cycling or road direction signing to that location.

If there are any current signs that need to be removed, then these should be reported via the Improve My Street website to let the team know so that these can be removed.

Q2 The City Council has a direction signing strategy that aims to ensure that people select and utilise the most appropriate sections of the road network, for safety, economy and environmental reasons.

This includes signing of local and tourist facilities as well as major destinations and areas of the City.



GREEN QUESTION 8

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Barry Parsons, Easton ward

Subject: Gateway reviews

Her Majesty's Treasury recently issued updated guidance on the use of Gateway Reviews for Major projects, which includes regularly reviewing the fundamental Business Case (gate 0) for all major projects, as well as a 5 stage process for tracking a project from Business Justification (1) to Benefits Realisation (5).

Given that the international Monetary Fund recently warned that Commercial Real Estate is at a crossroads with such a high degree of uncertainty that it could affect broader global financial stability, there is a need to constantly review the business case for the decision to guarantee the office rents at Temple Island for 40 years.

Questions:

1. Is the council using gateway reviews for all major projects, and if not why not?

REPLY:

All major projects are reviewed according to well-established processes. We have recently reviewed our processes for capital and are now regularly using Gateway Reviews. Further information will be outlined in a report for Audit Committee in September relating to the governance of capital projects.

2. Can the key conclusions of any recent Gateway reviews of the Temple Island Programme be made available, or at very least at what Gateway the project has last been reviewed?

REPLY:

This is a land disposal not directly relevant to the Gateway Review process. The only area directly covered is the enabling works which is subject to a Gateway Review process.

Although the main commercial principles have been agreed, we continue to work through the final legal documentation. Once completed, we will carry out final project financial review and sign-off. This information is commercially sensitive, and the principles have been shared under suitable exemptions with members of scrutiny.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)

Subject: GRASS CUTTING POLICY

We have had real problems in Stockwood this year with grass cutting. Unfortunately, this is something experienced annually in the ward over recent years.

Anything remotely difficult or time consuming is being left and causing issues with residents (trip hazards and slopes not being cut making areas less attractive and safe). Areas which have always been cut are now being left due to Health and Safety.

In addition, vegetation which is left to grow for environmental reasons needs to have a wider space clear either side of footpaths to enable families to walk safely without being in fear of ticks and other bugs.

Q1. Can the Mayor introduce a consistent set of rules regarding how grass is cut across the city so that there is greater clarity and certainty in this matter? Such change would enable people to better understand Council policy or strategy and assist Councillors in how to support our communities. The current standard is just not good enough with some green spaces seemingly missed out for no good reason.

REPLY:

It is true that we needed to introduce changes to our grass cutting approach as part of delivering austerity savings in recent years, but also as part of our commitment to address the Ecological Emergency.

In large part we have been able to do this without having a significant impact on residents' ability to use a park or green space. Where we may not be achieving this then we will look to make changes if reported.

We will be reviewing our grounds maintenance specifications as one action to help us manage green spaces in a more beneficial way for wildlife. We will be introducing changes across the next 1-3 years ensuring that we listen to residents and communities beforehand and as we progress.

A product of this will be a new 'map' of grass cutting and other grounds maintenance tasks that we want residents to be able to access online.



GREEN QUESTION 9

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christine Townsend, Southville Ward

Subject: Colston statue

1. The FOI responded to by Ben Mosley, Head of the Executive Office states that the Colston statue was gifted to the people of Bristol in 1895 and has been held in trust by Bristol City Council ('the Council') for the people of Bristol since that time – can the Mayor tell the people of Bristol: who are the trustees?
2. pulling down of the statue, were the Trustees / the Mayor's Office and/or the Council informed by the police about the likelihood or possibility of a prosecution for criminal damage without a statement of evidence being provided from the council?

REPLY:

Q1 Bristol City Council is the trustee.

Q2 The Council were asked for and provided a factual statement.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)

Subject: RSPCA – Pets as Prizes; the case for a ban on council-owned land

The Mayor may not have been made aware of this national campaign, but I am sure he will agree with me that this ‘commercial’ practice is totally unacceptable in our more enlightened age. The use of live animals (predominantly fish) as trophies disrespects, and exploits species as well as being extremely harmful for their welfare.

Q1. Will the Mayor support this initiative and help introduce a voluntary ban on such activity on any land over which the local authority has control, influence, or ownership?

REPLY:

I fully support your aims.

All events that take place on Bristol City Council land are subject to a policy that inhibits any form of entertainment involving live animals.

I will ask the events team to ensure the contract is updated to clearly exclude live animals as prizes.

Q2. In line with the RSPCA’s suggested course of action, will the Mayor also agree to write to Her Majesty’s Government to urge a change in the law of England to prohibit the award of live animals as prizes to anyone (regardless of age) except within the context of private family interactions?

REPLY:

Yes, but I would suggest that you and your local party would have more weight in calling on the Conservative government to change the law.



GREEN QUESTION 10

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Lisa Stone, Windmill Hill Ward

Subject: Colston statue

1. After Colston's statue was pulled down, who at the Council made the decision to provide a statement of evidence to the police as victim of criminal damage?
2. What consultation process was carried out prior to providing that statement to ensure support from the trustees and people of Bristol for the decision to provide the statement?

REPLY:

The Council were asked for and provided a factual statement. No consultation was carried out.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 10

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

Subject: SENIOR OFFICERS PAY IN BRISTOL ENERGY

The remuneration enjoyed by two directors of this company have been published in draft accounts and circulated in at least one national publication.

This shows that a finance consultant was paid £242,101 and £113,333 for services rendered over 18 months. Meanwhile, the interim managing director secured £111,209 in respect of 8 months spent in that role.

Q1. Can the Mayor confirm whether there was a performance related element in any part of these salaries?

REPLY:

The figures quoted are whole costs relating to each appointment, not salaries received by the relevant individuals. There were no performance related elements.

Q2. What is the salary ratio or multiplier applied here between these above two subsidiary employees in comparison to the lowest paid Council employee?

REPLY:

The salary of the lowest paid employee in 2020/21 was £17,942 per annum within Bristol City Council which is the Living Wage Foundation approved rate. The sums referred to in the draft 2020/21 annual accounts that you quote are referred to as:-

“..... amounts disclosed in the table in respect of these posts are the costs incurred by the Company to secure the individuals services on this basis and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower).”

It is self-evident that the sums referred to are not salaries and therefore the multiplier does not apply.

