

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

	Name	Subject
CS01	Cllr Varney	Barriers on Cycle Paths
CS02	Cllr Clark	Brislington Greenway
CS03	Cllr Hartley	Park Street Bus Gate Plans
CS04	Cllr Hopkins	Jubilee Pool - Don't drop the baton (or throw it away)
CS05	Cllr Brown	Budget Funding Gap

CS01

**Members Forum statement from Cllr Andrew Varney – Lib Dem Cllr for Brislington West
Subject: Barriers on Cycle Paths**

I'm sure the vast majority of members are in agreement that encouraging active travel such as walking and cycling is crucial, not only in terms of easing congestion on our roads, but also in terms of physical and mental health and well-being, and in terms of reducing pollution and helping to achieve our carbon neutrality targets.

I'm sure we also agree that having an integrated and segregated network of routes, safe and suitable for all ages and abilities, is highly desirable and the best way to encourage more people to make the switch and leave their cars at home.

Unfortunately, as a regular cyclist I can tell you that Bristol is a long way from achieving this. The routes we have are often poorly designed, disjointed and inconvenient, and poorly maintained and often strewn with broken glass and other detritus. It's no surprise many cyclists refuse to use them.

Of particular concern is the number of barriers across these cycling routes, restricting access to wheelchair users, parents with push chairs and anyone with a non standard bicycle. The argument of course is that these barriers prevent illegitimate use of the routes by motorcyclists. However, the fact that these barriers prevent many legitimate users is unacceptable.

There is also a great deal of inconsistency. For example, there is a difficult barrier that prevents access for disabled users and riders of non standard bikes at the entrance to the St. Phillip's Greenway riverside path at Avonmeads Retail Park. However, between that point and Temple Meads, there are four barrier-free access points where motorcyclists could join or leave the path if they chose to do so. Guess what? I have never encountered a motorcyclist on this path.

The barriers are clearly pointless and only serve to frustrate, irritate, and hinder legitimate users. They need to be removed as soon as possible and I'm pleased to say relevant council officers agree with me. However, when I spoke to officers about this issue, I was met with the usual response: 'We do not have any dedicated funding at our disposal to facilitate it.'

This is unacceptable and I would humbly request that as a matter of urgency, dedicated funding is made available and a timetable is established in order to remove these barriers. If we are serious about promoting active travel to as many people as possible, if we are serious about meeting our climate emergency obligations, if we are serious about fulfilling the requirements of the Equality Act,

2010, where measures must be put in place to avoid physical features that disadvantage people with disabilities, then anything less would be unacceptable.

CS02

Members Forum statement from Cllr Jos Clark – Lib Dem Cllr for Brislington West

Subject: Brislington Greenway

Bristol is a great place to live but it cannot always be said that it is a great place to get around in, particularly if you want to do the right thing and start using your bike to travel. The cycling rates in South Bristol are not good compared with other areas of the city, this is in part because of the major roads that cut through the area. In Brislington West we have a potential off-road route crying out to be used for active travel. The Brislington Greenway would act as the missing link on the Whitchurch Way and would be a great way to get into the centre of the city without having to encounter too many cars. Cllr Varney and I call upon the council to enable this project to progress rather than building more polluting roads.

CS03

Members Forum statement from Cllr Alex Hartley – Lib Dem Cllr for Hotwells & Harbourside

Subject: Park Street Bus Gate Plans

Upon learning of the WECA Mayor's plans for a consultation on installing a bus gate on Park Street, I wrote to all the residents on the neighbouring streets to ask their opinion. Since I put out the survey 10 days ago, I have had over 200 responses. The headline numbers are 58.3% of respondents are either wholly or partially against, 2.4% are neutral, and 39% are somewhat or wholly supportive of the plan. Many residents acknowledged that we need to do as much as we can to tackle both the climate emergency and air pollution in the city centre but felt that the closure of Park Street to private cars would push traffic down Jacob Wells Road and Park Row, which would add to existing pollution and congestion issues in those areas, including outside the BRI. Many local residents expressed how difficult this would be for them, and local businesses to operate. One resident's comment was particularly accurate, this is the wrong solution to the wrong problem. Outside of rush hour, Park Street is not that busy, and improving bus services would do more to reduce traffic and improve the area.

What was clear from the vast majority of respondents was the need to make sure that those most affected; those living on or on the roads just off Park St, need more support if this is to happen, perhaps an exemption for local residents, or improving the local RPZ conditions.

60% of respondents thought that bus provision in Bristol is either very poor or poor, and 67.8% of respondents thought that the Mayor and his administration's plans for transport in Central Bristol are poor or very poor. I would implore the Mayor and the Cabinet Member for transport to take local residents views into account when creating their plans. We must offer car drivers more of a carrot by creating better public transport networks before trying to force them out of their cars

through an ever-growing number of bus gates which force people to take journeys many times longer and more polluting.

I will continue to work with local residents as part of the consultation, and I hope that all councillors will voice theirs and their residents' views when the consultation opens. I also sincerely hope that the views of the public will be properly considered during the consultation process, something that has not happened after recent consultations.

CS04

Members Forum statement from Cllr Gary Hopkins - Lib Dem Cllr Knowle

Subject: Jubilee Pool - Don't drop the baton (or throw it away)

The stated position of the administration, in response to a huge campaign, changed from forcing closure of Jubilee Pool to working towards community ownership and management.

The community are working very hard in preparation and the friends group has been boosted with expert volunteers.

But are the administration really trying to pass on the baton.?

I have attached the first response to the cat offer which illustrates the reality.

Meanwhile the community have been given a very tight timetable to work within. They are being told that the entire process must be complete by July 2022, that no repairs will be done and no help given.

Incorrect and incomplete information seems to have been supplied. Should all this be successfully overcome then unbelievably the administration are demanding a share of the future profits.

I recently received an assurance from the mayor that the contract with the present operators, Parkwood, which contains no council subsidy, would be extended beyond March. Parkwood, who with the help of the friends group have got to a record membership and full sessions, are keen to continue but no extension has been offered.

Council performance and attitude need to improve dramatically.

CS05

Members Forum statement from Cllr Andrew Brown – Lib Dem Cllr – Hengrove & Whitchurch Park

Subject: Budget Funding Gap

One of the things I've enjoyed most over the past few months has been working constructively with Councillors from all parties on the Budget/Finance Task and Finish Group. My experience has been that Officers have been open and forthright with regard to the information shared, and the challenges facing the Council's finances. They have guided members' through the various budgets, cost pressures, and forecasting assumptions with the utmost professionalism.

It was somewhat disappointing, therefore, to have little advance notice of the administration's consultation on closing the remaining funding gap for 2022/23. Further, it is disappointing the extent to which the consultation is focused on cuts and reliance on third parties to backfill on services currently provided by the Council. This approach contrasts with the Housing Revenue Account 30 year plan consultation process, in which members of the Working Group have been able to inform the process, provide feedback on the tools used, and interact with the Cabinet member responsible.

None of this is to belittle the challenges faced by the Council in meeting the budget; the pressures of Covid on both revenue and services has not gone away, even as funding for the purpose comes to an end. Adult Social Care in particular remains a real concern, despite the much-trumpeted changes announced earlier this year, and SEND provision remains a major, and to an extent, unquantified element of the Education budget.

External pressures are substantial and closing a funding gap of £23m is now going to severely compromise the Council's services and staffing numbers. However, members of the public, who have seen tens of millions lost in the Bristol Energy debacle, will be entitled to ask how much of the pressures are of the administrations making. Clearly it is too simplistic to say that the money spent on Bristol Energy could have been available to cover the current budget gap, but that doesn't mean that the challenges wouldn't have been much less had £43m+ not been channelled into that failed venture.

The cuts envisaged will compromise the city not just in 2022/23 but for years to come.