

Full Council 7 December 2021

Public Forum Statement Responses

PS12

Thank you for your statement. I note – though disagree with – your views on the Mayoral model.

I would argue that a Mayor that is directly elected by the whole city offers far greater visibility and accountability for decision-making that is undertaken by the council and indeed by the wider city. The One City Approach recognises that life in Bristol is not determined by the council alone. To that end, we have encouraged the council to harness its power not only as a delivery organisation, but as a convening power that can bring together different voluntary and community groups, public services and – yes – businesses, to agree to common goals that we want to see delivered in the city.

On housing I'm proud of our record of delivery. We've brought forward 9,000 new homes, and put a particular focus on the delivery of affordable homes that our city so badly needs. We've been able to do that in part because we have been able to transform the council into a delivery-focussed organisation. We have also been able to take decisions that have the needs of the whole city in mind – not just those able to shout loudest and who have the ear of whichever councillor happens to have the relevant casting vote in an otherwise anonymous committee.

While you note an increase in opposition councillors following the last election, I was nonetheless honoured to have been returned to office. Being re-elected is a deep honour, and it is particularly so knowing that I was re-elected not only on the basis of the vision we put forward at the election, but also on our record of delivery. Even if residents disagreed with decisions I had taken, they knew it was me who was accountable for those decisions, and were able to express their judgment on that record at election time. The committee system will take away a vote from Bristolians to decide the leadership of their city.

You raise your preference for a committee model that you say will not be able to ignore the will of a majority of councillors. I would question whether that model enables the council to be sure it is delivering on the will of the majority of citizens. In that Mayoral Election, candidates who stood on a manifesto pledge to scrap the position of elected Mayor secured less than 30% of the vote – it is therefore arguable that delivery of homes, and improving our transport system were far higher priorities for the city than a debate about the future governance of the city council.

PS31

Thank you for your statement and for sharing your experiences.

Decisions about planning permissions on private land are undertaken by the council under its regulatory functions, over which I as Mayor can have no executive power.

While pursuing discontinuance action is technically an option the council has at its disposal under planning legislation, a number of factors need to be borne in mind. Specifically, both digital displays were considered as part of a public process and the Development Control B Committee decided to grant permission for both displays in separate meetings in 2016.

Both decisions were informed by assessments of the impact of the displays on local amenity and highway safety. There is limited evidence of any road safety impacts since their construction. Any

discontinuance action would be open to challenge from the displays' owners. If they were successful in any appeal to the government's Planning Inspectorate, the Council may be liable for costs.

We will continue to keep the situation under review.

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PS40

Thank you for your statement to council and for the points you raise.

I appreciate businesses' need to have confidence in stable and long-term political leadership in order to continue to deliver for Bristol. I am also grateful to you for highlighting how important it is that Bristol's model of governance is one which is best-placed to build effective relationships and attract investment to the city.

The directly elected mayoral model provides that political stability, and by empowering the whole electorate, gives Bristol a strong voice to put forward our interests with regional and national government and to continue to develop our strong and growing international links.

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We will continue to keep the situation under review. We will also continue to work to improve and maintain lighting facilities across the city in order to keep people safe – especially at night. Residents can report any broken street lighting or road safety concerns via our [website](#).

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