

Member Forum

11th January 2022

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

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Marley Bennett, Eastville Ward

Subject: Government financial support / Community Toilet Scheme

- 1) Has the Government's financial support packages been sufficient to keep Bristol's hospitality sector afloat?
- 2) Please can the Mayor update me on the expansion of the community toilet scheme?

REPLY:

Q1.

The end of 2021 was a challenge for many hospitality businesses who saw mass cancellations of Christmas parties and get togethers following government comments recommending that people prioritise their social engagement.

The rise in cases and rapid spread of Omicron warranted a clear message to people to be more vigilant. However, without the business support to go with this change in messaging, it was our hospitality sector who took the hit.

Government did eventually offer some support but up to £6k per business is a drop in the ocean – many venues will have lost this in a single night or with one big cancellation, which is why so many simply chose to close over the festive period.

That's why our Night Time Economy Advisor, Carly Heath, joined calls before Christmas for Government to roll out a more comprehensive package of support in recognition of the challenges facing the sector. This was alongside the Business Improvement Districts and businesses in the city.

Throughout the pandemic, the grants on offer have been wholly inadequate to meet the needs of businesses.

I am of course mindful of the knock on impact closures have on jobs and the local economy and, with Carly's deep knowledge of the sector, we will continue to monitor the situation and keep the pressure on.

Q2.

The UK has witnessed a depletion in the number of council-operated toilet facilities. Despite national cuts to Bristol's budget, we have safeguarded and upgraded public toilet provision in our parks and launched the [Community Toilet Scheme](#) – an initiative to improve public access to free toilets.

Three years on and 185 community toilets have signed up across 26 wards, with 85% of these accessible. Many toilets in this scheme are open for longer than the previous public facilities and are better cared for, providing better safety and improved cleanliness for those using



them. As part of signing up, businesses agree to allowing members of the public to use facilities without exception and without obligation to buy something.

I'm pleased to say that we are adding to the scheme with the new Vaulted Chambers café in Castle Park, which now provides a community toilet.

We are always looking for more businesses to sign up to the scheme and would welcome your support in promoting the scheme in your local area.



GREEN QUESTION 1

Question to the Mayor from Councillor Lorraine Francis, Eastville Subject: Charging for Parks

1. How can charging to use parks help residents with no gardens or access to space to keep fit/ meet neighbours/ etc if any organised activity will now be faced with red tape and uncalculated costs?

REPLY:

The parks business licensing scheme won't prevent residents accessing parks and green spaces to keep fit or meet neighbours or have picnics etc. The scheme is being introduced to regulate business activities and add much needed revenue to parks and to ensure services offered are safe for both those attending sessions and park users.

Over 20 local authorities have introduced licensing for activities in parks. This is a necessary and important revenue stream to support the costs involved in maintaining our parks for daily use by residents.

The annual fee for a licence will be fair and means-based on the number of activities and number of clients a provider has. We will support providers through the application process, and we will review the scheme after 12 months to ensure it's working for everyone. This is absolutely the same principle as we charge sports clubs to use our parks.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 1

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

Subject: STATION ROAD BUS LANE

At December's Full Council I presented a petition asking for the Station Road bus lane to be opened to allow for two-way traffic. The official response that I have received did not answer the specific request at all. It would also appear that the idea of making the bus lane active only during an extended peak hours period has also been killed off at the political direction of your Administration.

The reality is that the only people that would use this opened access road would be those in Henbury or Lawrence Weston - but even this would bleed some of the traffic off the A4018 dual carriageway.

I therefore pose the following questions:

1. A straight-up question (demanding a clear and honest answer). Will you open Station Road as requested by petitioners to allow residents to get home - either fully or outside of peak time hours?
2. If not, then when the Henbury ford floods and the road closes, how does the Mayor propose that residents get home from Cribbs Causeway? I would be very interested to learn of your proposed route.

REPLY:

Q1.

The bus lane on Station Road commences in South Gloucestershire and continues into Bristol and is a vital public transport route. Neither us nor them want to remove it. Removing an important bus lane would affect regularity and priority for buses and negatively impact on the administration's manifesto commitment to improve bus services and prioritise services to grow demand.

Q2.

People can still access Henbury southbound via Crow Lane or Passage Road via the Crow Lane roundabout.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Kent – Hengrove & Whitchurch Park

Subject: Exclusions and Part Time Timetables within Bristol's Schools

1. I have had brought to my attention that some schools in Bristol are using part time timetables for children with SEND despite clear statutory guidance that this is unlawful unless in exceptional circumstances. Can the mayor inform me whether the council insists that all schools register part time timetables with the council, what monitoring we do of this and the total amount of children in Bristol that are currently placed on a part time timetable?
2. Is the mayor aware of a recent study by the University of Birmingham 'Investigation of the causes and implications of exclusion for autistic children and young people' and their recommendations for local authorities and could the mayor tell us whether any of these recommendations will be taken up (listed below)?
 - Collect data on part-time timetables and informal exclusions in order to develop a system for challenging exclusions.
 - Track data on how many autistic children and young people are being excluded within each Local Authority. Those LAs who are particularly struggling with exclusion and autism could be signposted to the AET for training.
 - Improved LA data collection on their autistic pupils. Information around specific need is important in order to target local authority support and generate a response to it. If LAs do not know the needs of the cohort that are being excluded, they are unlikely to put the right provision in place.
 - Introduce greater independent monitoring of schools' exclusion processes and interventions when illegal exclusions occur.
 - Facilitate the fast delivery of EHCPs for those children who need it given their risk of exclusion.
 - Set up local SEND youth panels to provide advice to schools. For example, Birmingham City Council (BCC) have set up a SEND Youth Forum that meets 4-6 times a year. It consists of secondary age young people who have a disability or SEND and the aim is that they should have a say in influencing policies across the city. Seventeen have been appointed (among many applicants). It is a neuro-diverse group with a high proportion of autistic young people.

REPLY:

Q1

I share your concern and so we are in the final stages of establishing an online process to collect and analyse information from schools and settings in relation to Temporary Education Arrangements (TEAs).



Although it is not a statutory duty to complete a TEAs return, we are encouraging schools to utilise this process to ensure they can evidence appropriate action has been undertaken to meet the needs of any pupils.

Through a process of active monitoring by the Local Authority, any cases that cause concern will be reviewed with the relevant setting and appropriate advice and support provided.

The use of reduced timetables cannot be routinely identified through register coding, hence the establishment of an online form.

Q2

Thank you for raising this. I would invite you to meet with the cabinet lead to discuss in further detail the report and its recommendations.

More broadly, work is already underway in these areas:

Bristol Autism Team support our autistic children and young people (CYP) across Bristol, champion their needs and raise issues such access to full time education with our settings through cohort meetings and advice clinics.

Where education settings have put a part time education in place, pupils are tracked to ensure a plan is developed.

As an Autism Education Training Hub, avoiding exclusion is part of our training offer. In 2022 Bristol Autism Education Team are launching the City-Wide training which includes the new exclusion module (schools with any pupils on part time plans will be requested to attend).

The team inform SEND caseworkers if any autistic pupil undergoing a needs assessment is excluded or is at risk of exclusion. In addition, the team inform all settings what unlawful exclusion is and expect to see a plan of provision and support in place to address any areas of concern.

Working with our autistic CYP is already an area that we are developing as part of our work. Training in 2022 is being co-produced with Autistic CYP. Our Autism Education Training Hub has a Young People's Autism Panel as part of this work.



KNOWLE COMMUNITY PARTY QUESTION 1

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

Subject: CONSULTATION IN KNOWLE re No.2 Bus Route

When WECA and BCC announced their plans on the Consultation on improvements to the No2 Bus Route along the A37/A4018, it was discovered by a local resident to include plans to introduce numerous one way roads and a cycle track in the Knowle area.

Knowle Councillors had not been advised or consulted.

A Consultation was then announced at the local shopping centre. BCC officers present handed out booklets, taking no notes and not being fully aware of the area or being able to answer residents questions.

The proposed cycle track is through a park, passing the gate to a heavily used children's play area and through a very busy car park making it dangerous to children and cyclists. In addition it is planned to go past what will be part of the new shopping centre development and does not take into consideration the impact of traffic during the building works and the heavy goods delivery road and residents access for the 800 proposed flats. A planned Cycle route has already been agreed along Broadwalk many years ago which has Astrid S106 agreement, so why on earth is this unnecessary plan being put forward. This proposed cycle route must be rejected on safety grounds and its very inappropriate route through the busiest points in and around the park.

REPLY:

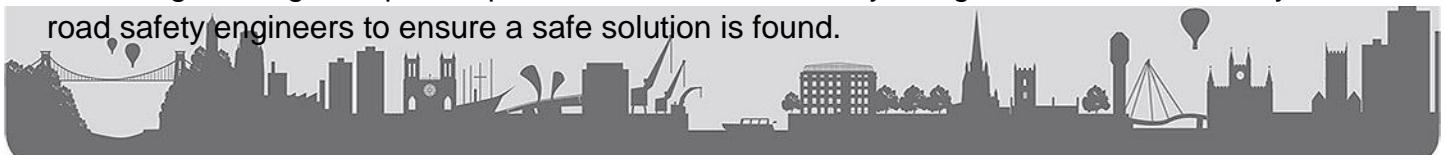
The scheme is in consultation stage. Please submit your comments to the consultation, where they will be considered.

An important element of the project is to provide suitable and safe facilities for people cycling and walking along the route. The challenge to providing suitable cycling facilities on the Wells Rd itself is a lack of available road space, and an alternative route running as parallel to the Wells Rd is proposed.

This route has been created to access low traffic volume roads to provide a link from Three Lamps Junction to the installed cycle route on Airport Rd/Wooten Park, which will link into the Whitchurch way cycle route which in turn runs up to Stockwood.

In order to provide as direct as route as possible it is felt that a properly segregated cycle path through Redcatch Park is the best way to achieve this. Other options have been considered but would result in placing cyclists on much busier roads and create a more convoluted route that would not be attractive.

The design through the park is part of the consultation. Any design will be scrutinised by our road safety engineers to ensure a safe solution is found.



LABOUR QUESTION 2

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Rippington, Brislington East Ward

Subject: Liveable Neighbourhoods and School Streets

- 1) Newbridge Road in my Ward of Brislington East has constantly scored as the highest in the city for speeding and has had a number of traffic accidents in recent years. When I was elected in January 2020, I discovered that a report into traffic calming measures had been commissioned and paid for in 2016 but never produced. I'm pleased to say that, after a considerable amount of encouragement on my part, that this report is now finally available and sets out both the measures that could be taken to improve the road, and the costs involved.

Our next hurdle is of course to secure funding for the measures involved. Could the Mayor please update us on the long-awaited Liveable Neighbourhoods strategy and in particular the funding bids to both WECA and government for the pilot Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme in St George? I am particularly interested in this as the expanded version of this scheme would cover the area of St Anne's, including Newbridge Road, and could lead to these measures being incorporated into the plan and hopefully delivered by 2024?

- 2) It was pleasing to see the announcement of the expansion of the School Streets programme just before Christmas to bring three more schools into the scheme. I believe this is an excellent way to make our school run safer where circumstances are appropriate. Obviously, not all schools are in the same situation but I believe my local Primary School in Lichfield Road, Brislington, is an excellent contender for a future round. Unfortunately, after applying for the initial pilot scheme, they missed the deadline for the next round of applications and so were not considered. Schools face many competing pressures at the moment, so I would like to give them a heads up on when the deadline for the next round will be to ensure they apply – can the Mayor advise please?"

REPLY:

Q1

In our winning manifesto we pledged to deliver two Liveable Neighbourhoods trials in the next two years and learn from those experiences. The first of these will be the delivery of the East Bristol pilot area. This will provide an opportunity to incorporate learnings from that project when planning a subsequent scheme. Those learnings will inform a strategy for a city wide review, in the future.

I understand OSMB are looking at setting out ideas for a second trial and I will consider that in due course.

We have made a bid to the Department for Transport to support those trials and we are awaiting an announcement.



Q2

It is great to have support for the School Street programme. We are currently working on delivering the next four School Streets which will bring the total to eight in Bristol. There is an aspiration to continue with this project and further funding is being sought. If confirmed funding can be found for the next financial year, the team will contact the schools and engage with local ward members.



GREEN QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Hathway, Clifton Down Subject: A37/A4018 Improvements Consultation

The ambition to improve this vital transport corridor for public transport users and active transport is very welcome. The proposals focus on several sections identified as key for improvement along the route, and the public are invited to give feed back on changes proposed. This seems a historic chance to change how people travel along this corridor, so I was surprised to find so little proposed for one of the key sections – the Whiteladies Road/Downs junction that includes the top of Blackboy Hill. The route up Blackboy hill is dangerous for cyclists, slow for buses caught in traffic, and inconvenient for pedestrians needing to cross Whiteladies Road, yet all that is proposed on this stretch is adding 0.1 mile of bus lane to the existing northbound bus lane.

- 1) Were there any additional measures to support buses and active travel considered for inclusion in the this part of the consultation?
- 2) If different or additional measures were an option, why were they not included for the public to have their say on?

REPLY:

Q1.

Because the Whiteladies Road section of the route was improved as part of the Greater Bristol Bus network scheme, no further additional measures were effective for this scheme.

As you will know, Whiteladies Road and Blackboy Hill have had crossings introduced and there are several possible routes for pedestrians seeking to cross in this area.

Please, however, feel free to make additional suggestions as part of the consultation.

Q2.

A number of different interventions to the Blackboy Hill junction were considered. Due to the complex road layout and the large number of conflicting movements it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to provide any significant bus priority through this junction without banning a significant number of vehicle movements and/or closing or bus gating major roads in this area. The knock-on effect to the local and wider network road network would be significant and therefore a decision was taken not to take these options forward.

We will aim to further review the gyratory in the future and we expect improvements will result from the proposed closure of Roman Road.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 2

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

Subject: HENGROVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

1. At the Members' Forum dated 7th December 2021, in reply to my second question concerning the Council's relationship with Caridon regarding Imperial Apartments, the Mayor accepted that "lessons" had been learned relating to our experience with this criticised company. What are these lessons?
2. A news-release was issued by BCC Corporate Communications dated 21st December 2021 which stated that the Mayor's Administration would be pursuing "a new approach" to Hengrove Park, where 1435 dwellings have previously received planning consent. Can the Mayor kindly outline the scale of these revised proposals and confirm whether or not it will require any revision of the planning consent formerly granted?

REPLY:

Q1.

We have never been completely happy with this arrangement, but it is one of the only options the government have allowed us.

Imperial Apartments has provided tenancies for 310 people at Local Housing Allowance rates. This includes 274 households who have experienced, or been at risk of, homelessness.

The Housing Options team have been able to implement a number of different processes to improve outcomes and learn lessons. These include:

- Weekly meetings with staff on site and monthly meetings with senior managers have provided a forum to discuss and resolve issues swiftly.
- Gaining experience in mobilising our teams with external partners to quickly utilise a large number of Local Housing Allowance-capped private rented properties.
- We have benefitted from the insights of professionals working with residents. In hindsight, earlier formal involvement with some stakeholders would have ensured better joined up working (for example, with local GPs to manage greater demand).
- While Caridon is a private landlord, it has been useful to more closely monitor and input into areas including complaints and arrears which has been improving.

Q2.

The decision to look again at the best way to deliver this flagship housing scheme, and pursue a different delivery approach, will boost housing delivery across Bristol by exploring innovative approaches to deliver high-quality, low carbon and affordable homes more sustainably and quickly. The new delivery approach is more ambitious, and will include delivering a higher number of Affordable Homes, incorporating innovative methods of housing delivery including, where possible, using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), as well as providing the community facilities and infrastructure that will support an inclusive community. The changed



approach will enable Hengrove Park to become an exemplar new, high-quality, and sustainable neighbourhood.

We do not anticipate any significant changes to the Outline Planning Consent (19/02632/PB) that the Council has secured for the overall Hengrove Park masterplan site. However, as with any development of this scale, it is possible that some changes may be proposed over the life of what will be a large development delivered in multiple phases over several years (for example, in response to our ambition to deliver a greater proportion of Affordable Housing, or to incorporate innovative housing construction methods).

If any such changes are proposed these would be subject to the necessary planning approvals.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 2

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

Subject: Brislington Greenway

Q1. Despite asking for an update on the cancelled meeting to discuss the proposals for the changes to the A4 which will affect Brislington West, I have still not had an update about any forthcoming meeting. It was a shame that the executive member was not able to update either myself or Cllr Varney when we happened to see him and two officers doing a site meeting on the A4 on Friday 17th December. Can the mayor give Cllr Varney and myself a date for the councillor briefing as residents are keen to know what is going to happen in their area, especially since Cllr Cheney told us that the Brislington Greenway will not become a road?

REPLY:

Let me reiterate Cllr Cheney's comment and the comments I made during the election, that there will be no road on the disused railway line. We will continue to look at all options for the delivery of a mass transit route for the area. Consultation on the mass transit is due to be published by WECA shortly.

We continue to discuss the future of the A4 with WECA and BANES. As soon as decisions are made about the approach that could mean we can consult on them, I am sure a date for a briefing will be confirmed.



KNOWLE COMMUNITY PARTY QUESTION 2

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christopher Davies, Knowle Ward
Subject: Phone Mast and base Station in Redcatch Park, Broadwalk**

A Planning Application for a Phone Mast & Base Station on an open green space on land bordering Redcatch Park, Broadwalk was refused permission.

Park Officers are proposing to give permission for this Mast & Base Stn to be allowed to have a Temp position on open ground in Redcatch Park, knowing it does not require Planning Permission. The route of the power cables would be via the main park car park and a Circlular marked play area, which will require the digging of trenches through the car park & Play Area.

This Temp Mast site is totally unacceptable for all users of the park and a better alternative position has been offered by the developers of the new shopping centre on top of their premises as a permanent site. Can Park Officers please investigate this offer ASAP.

REPLY:

There are emergency provisions in planning legislation that allow telecoms operators to install their equipment (including masts) for a temporary 18-month period in order to “prevent loss of service or network disruption following the impending loss of an existing site”. The telecoms operator has been asked to justify their use of the emergency powers.

The statutory telecoms providers have already considered the adjoining shopping centre as a possible location, but the temporary mast and base station is required within the next three months, which does not fit with the timeframe for the development of the shopping centre in terms of demolition and redevelopment.



LABOUR QUESTION 3

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Pearce, St George Central Ward

Subject: Support for the technological sector

- 1) Bristol has a growing reputation as a hotbed of technological start-ups within the strategic Western Gateway. I would like to draw attention to, and congratulate, Vertical Aerospace, which is now a publicly listed company. **How is Bristol supporting similar technology companies?****
- 2) Bristol City Council recently announced it is ending the procurement process for the development of Hengrove Park. Please can the Mayor elaborate on why this decision was made, and what the benefits of this will be?**

REPLY:

Q1.

I welcome your support for this important sector. We have a proud heritage of technological innovation and start-ups.

The Council's current programmes for business start ups are focused on support of potential and early stage entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities and social/demographic groups under-represented in enterprise. Some of these entrepreneurs are involved in technology-led start ups, and will benefit from grants, and signposting to the West of England Growth Hub to access more specialist advice and funding from industry sector-specific schemes led by WECA, the Universities and Business West.

The main public-funded support for technology start ups in Bristol is now via programmes commissioned by:

- The West of England Combined Authority
- The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- UK Research and Innovation (for which Business West is the regional delivery partner).

The Council has recently opened a new Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) at the Central Library, funded by the British Library, which offers free access to specialist on-line intelligence on global markets, companies, technologies, patents etc. There are plans for three 'satellite' BIPCs at Southmead, Easton and Knowle libraries to widen access for entrepreneurs and businesses across the city.

Q2.



The Council has secured Outline Planning Consent for the masterplan redevelopment of Hengrove Park, delivering up to 1435 new homes, a c. 22 hectare new public park, and significant investment in high quality public realm and new community and employment facilities.

The decision to look again at the best way to deliver this flagship housing scheme, and pursue a different delivery approach, will boost housing delivery across Bristol by exploring innovative approaches to deliver high-quality, low carbon and affordable homes more sustainably and quickly.

The new delivery approach will include delivering a higher number of Affordable Homes, incorporating innovative methods of housing delivery including, where possible, using Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), as well as providing the community facilities and infrastructure that will support an inclusive community. The changed approach will enable Hengrove Park to become an exemplar new, high-quality, and sustainable neighbourhood.



GREEN QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Emma Edwards, Bishopston & Ashley Down Subject: Illegal Parking

Dangerous and illegal parking has long been a big problem in Bristol and especially in certain areas such as Stokes Croft, Redland, Bishopston, Bedminster and parts of the centre. People park on double yellows, block cycle paths and pavements, often causing dangerous obstructions to pavement users, cyclists, other drivers who have poor vision at junctions, school children and those who use mobility devices. As councillors we are often asked about enforcement for those who park illegally. So my questions are:

1. What statistics are there for revenue generated by individual parking enforcement officers on average across the whole parking enforcement team?
2. How many penalty tickets for parking on double yellow lines have been issued for areas outside any RPS zone in the last 12 months?

REPLY:

Q1.

Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) are responsible for the enforcement of parking restrictions as part of their day to day patrolling duties.

Each CEO issued on average 1456 Penalty Charge Notices in the last 12 months, with each PCN generating an average of £26 per issued PCN.

Q2.

Parking Services issued 21,547 PCNs to vehicles observed parked on double yellow lines in the last 12 months. Of this figure, approximate 10,500 PCNs were issued outside of the RPS areas. If you have concerns about any specific area or street, this can be provided on request.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 3

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

Subject: DISABLED AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS

Many disabled and elderly residents are unable to use public transport but are able to drive making use of 'blue badges' to assist with parking. These people are dismayed by proposals to close some retail areas to cars and are worried that accessing the city centre by car is becoming increasingly difficult.

1. What assurance can the Mayor provide to them that they will not become marginalised by transport proposals, which will see roads such as Park Street closed to cars?
2. One City, no one left behind. Does the Mayor agree that all forms of discrimination, including discrimination on the grounds of disability or age have no place in our society?

REPLY:

Q1.

The Park Street proposals do not remove access to the street for parking. There will be parking provision made for those who are unable to use public transport and are reliant on their car to get around.

All transport schemes include engagement with a range of Equalities groups to ensure they are designed in an inclusive way, and they will have an Equalities Impact Assessment.

We are fully committed to an inclusive city. This includes disabled people, and older residents through our work as an age friendly city.

Q2.

I fully agree. I also think we should not only be mindful of the legal duty, but recognise we can always go further in our thinking and policy to ensure Bristol is an inclusive city and our high streets are accessible.

Assuming this question is relating to your first, I'd ask that you please encourage as many people as possible, but in particular those with protected characteristics, to contribute to our consultation on the Number 2 bus route so we can capture their thoughts.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 3

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

Subject: Deceased Animal Collection

I recently had to inform an 83-year-old, elderly resident, who lives alone, that she needed to drag a large, dead fox into her front garden as BCC wouldn't collect it from her back garden even though she has side access to the rear of her property. Why won't BCC pick up dead animals from back gardens, only front ones?

REPLY:

Bristol Waste Company has a responsibility to cleanse the highway and this includes removing and disposing of dead animals on the highway. The Council and Bristol Waste do not have a responsibility to clear private land of waste, including dead animals.

However, we would expect a considered response depending on the circumstances. On this occasion Bristol Waste offered the resident a service over the standard business offering but I will remind them of the need to look at specific circumstances to support residents.



KNOWLE COMMUNITY PARTY QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Jubilee Pool

Q1. Successful partnership working between Parkwood and the community has led to record membership levels and trading profit. Jubilee operates without council subsidy.

A short while ago the mayor in response to question confirmed that an extension would be offered to Parkwood from 3/22 to ensure the pool stayed upon until the asset transfer could be completed. Parkwood are keen to continue without subsidy but officers are refusing to sign the extension until “a viable asset transfer is in place”. Given that even with the accelerated transfer timescale proposed by officers a business plan is not expected until July 22 (and that will not be the end of the process) how can the mayor explain the mismatch between his assurance and actions on the ground.

Q2 Although actual and projected trading profits are good for jubilee there is a high chance that these will be needed to fund energy efficiency measures. The administrations previous pronouncements said that profitability was impossible and this has been proved wrong. The mayor is now demanding a share of future profits which appears to all concerned to be an attempt to scupper the successful transfer. Will the mayor now drop this ridiculous demand and work instead towards a successful transfer.

REPLY:

Q1.

Officers are meeting with Parkwood and an offer of an extension has been made at no cost to Bristol City Council. The current contract includes a clause that allows BCC to decline repair costs at our discretion and Parkwood have been notified that this clause will be effective for the duration of the extension.

Expressions of Interest for Community Asset Transfer offers closed on 7th January and any extension would cover a 6 month period to allow for offers to be considered.

Q2.

We have a duty to protect the value of council assets. When considering community transfers, we ask for business plans that demonstrate there will be a sustainable and successful future for the asset. Of course, given that we are transferring assets to communities, often at peppercorn rents, we expect to share in profit to benefit the whole city.

This is a standard clause in any community asset transfer, to protect the city's assets and has been clearly stated in the CAT prospectus from the outset.

We will consider any CAT business plans in due course.



LABOUR QUESTION 4

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Fabian Breckels, St George Trooper's Hill Ward

Subject: Councillor decision making

- 1) Please can the Mayor tell me how many Councillors are currently involved in direct decision making?
- 2) Which decisions are solely made by Councillors?

REPLY:

Q1.

All councillors play a role in decision-making by virtue of sitting on Full Council, which is responsible for directly exercising, or choosing to delegate where possible/appropriate, non-executive functions.

Councillors also sit on the various committees that exercise the non-executive functions that are delegated to them by Full Council. These include:

- Area Committees
- Development Control Committees
- Licensing Committee
- Public Safety and Protection Committee
- Audit Committee
- HR Committee
- The Downs Committee

Councillors can also contribute to the scrutiny and oversight of the council's work through membership of OSMB and the respective scrutiny commissions.

In terms of executive functions, there are currently seven councillors, in addition to the Mayor who make up the Cabinet and are responsible for taking key decisions that fall within the areas covered by their portfolio.

Q2.

Non-executive powers, unless otherwise delegated to officers by Full Council, are exercised by Full Council and/or committees and therefore are made solely be councillors.

The councillors who form the Cabinet have responsibility for taking key decisions within their portfolio, in relation to executive powers. The division of responsibilities is set out in detail in [Part 3 of the council's constitution.](#)



GREEN QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Barry Parsons, Easton Subject: Ethical Debt Collection

One morning last month, at 7am, I got a text message from one of my residents. Bailiffs chasing an alleged debt to Bristol City Council were trying to evict her and her two young children at the crack of dawn. The resident is a vulnerable disabled woman and this would have left her and her family homeless, days before Christmas. I and another ACORN member were there within five minutes, our numbers quickly grew and together we successfully resisted the eviction.

Now, those bailiffs should never have been there in the first place. Bristol's ethical debt enforcement policy is meant to avoid the use of bailiffs in favour of a citizen-centred approach that supports vulnerable people and adopts a holistic view of debt. I wholeheartedly support this approach and have been pleased to hear Cllrs Renhard and Cheney restate their commitment to it in recent days. But clearly, this didn't happen in this case.

I understand the bailiffs were appointed by a county court, not directly by Bristol City Council. If the council pursues its debts in county court, a holistic approach is impossible since there will always be the risk that the court will appoint bailiffs. A truly ethical policy means not washing our hands of the difficult cases.

1. How many cases of council tax debt or rent arrears are currently with the courts?
2. Will the mayor commit to end the practice of passing council tax debts to the courts?

REPLY:

Q1.

We had been unaware of the eviction until the day the bailiffs attended. The reasons for this is that the bailiffs are acting on behalf of the receiver and not the council. We have requested a review of the case.

Neither council tax nor rent arrears were the reason for the eviction attempt cited.

Council tax insolvency cases are currently on hold at the court; no council tax cases have been passed to court for a liability order since the pandemic began.

Enforcement agent action for council tax debt has been reduced year-on-year, (and has been on hold completely since start of pandemic); in accordance with the long-established processes, enforcement agents will immediately return any case that appears to be vulnerable to the council.

There is one rent arrears case currently with the court, and we can provide further anonymised information about this case on a confidential basis.



Q2.

We must be prepared to take legal action to recover debts, eg where an individual has committed fraud, purposefully frustrated our numerous attempts to engage with them and has the means to pay what they owe. Otherwise, their debt would be unfairly borne by other council tax payers.

However, our approach is always to constructively engage with any individual that has a debt with the council to ensure we take a supportive approach to the collection of debt.

We continue to review processes to consistently improve our ethical debt management.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 4

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

Subject: THE A37/A4018 TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

Stockwood Ward councillors have shared information on the proposed changes to the A37 / A4018 transport corridor (i.e., the No.2 bus route) on social media. The information was presented in an impartial way and at the time of writing has reached 14,895 people. The post has generated a huge amount of engagement. There have been a great many responses to the plans, and they are overwhelmingly negative. I hope that this flawed scheme will either be substantially amended if not scrapped altogether. A key component of any project appraisal is the cost, which is a matter of public interest.

1. Please therefore can the Mayor advise the total estimated cost of this scheme should it proceed unaltered?
2. I understand that the Council are proposing new bus lanes on Wells Road which are not advertised in the plans for the A37 / A4018 transport corridor. Is it therefore the intention of the Council to introduce these by stealth?

REPLY:

Q1.

If you have 14 985 responses, please ensure these are forwarded to the consultation as that would be invaluable evidence.

Financial appraisal of the scheme is ongoing as we are developing an Outline Business Case submission. This will confirm the estimated costs of the agreed scheme and an assessment of the benefits.

Q2.

The proposals in the Consultation include new 24-hour bus lanes in both directions south of the West Town Lane/A37 junction, up to around the New Fosseway junction with the A37.

These proposals are advertised on the main consultation page via the Travel West website, as well as on the various leaflets and banners supplied at the consultation events.

The proposals support our commitment to the city to prioritising public transport.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 4

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

Subject: Poole's Wharf Marina Cleaning

Over recent weeks, large amounts of rubbish has collected in the Poole's Wharf Marine area of water (see photo), which has been reported to both the Council and to the Harbour Master by local residents to no avail. This waste is harmful to local wildlife, unsightly to look at, and will if not collected eventually entering the wider ecosystem.



Could the Mayor please confirm why the council does not clean the Poole's Wharf Marina area of water, when they do clean other areas such as Brunel Quay?

REPLY:

Suggested response:

Unlike Brunel Quay, Poole's Wharf Marina is a privately owned marina and therefore falls outside the control of the harbour authority.

The harbour authority has no legal rights to enforce the owner of the marina to carry out maintenance or cleansing of this area.

We have, however, made contact with the owner of the marina and notified them that there have been complaints regarding the rubbish and asked them to clear the rubbish. A referral has now been made to Neighbourhood Enforcement Team who will be reviewing the appropriate powers the council has to ensure the litter is cleared.

I would suggest that you also contact the marina owner and support our attempts to improve the area.



LABOUR QUESTION 5

Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Brenda Massey, Southmead Ward

Subject: E-Scooters

Following the increased use of e-Scooters, there have been a number of cases of e-Scooters catching fire, and Avon Fire & Rescue Service has experienced considerable difficulty in putting out the fires due to the nature of the scooters. The electric battery is sealed, and it appears that the only way to put out a fire of this nature is to completely submerge the scooter in water. The result is that the scooter is then contaminated, and it is difficult to remove it safely. A recent e-Scooter fire in the central area proved very challenging to resolve due to the contamination, and eventually AFRS had to contact the company the scooter belonged to so that it could be taken away for safe disposal.

On New Years Day there was another fire at the Voi warehouse in Brislington, and this required AFRS attendance with a number of appliances. Although they put out the fire, they had real difficulty with getting a representative of the company to attend on site, as they were extremely reluctant to attend the incident.

This follows an earlier fire at a house where a private scooter was being stored and resulted in the house being virtually gutted by the severity of the fire.

I understand that the Police & Crime Commissioner is also concerned about the safety of these scooters. Given that there have also been at least 90 accidents involving the scooters in a four- week period, the use and storage of them is very worrying.

- 1.** With the increased availability of e-Scooters, both on the trial and privately owned, what arrangements are in place to deal with the disposal of these contaminated items?
- 2.** Given that there is now increasing evidence, both in Bristol and other areas of the country that they are a fire risk, appropriate arrangements for safety and disposal are essential. As it appears that they will be an ongoing feature in the City, sanctioned by the Council, can we be reassured that adequate safety measures are in place to deal with these hazards?

REPLY:

Q1.

I cannot comment on ongoing investigations by Avon Fire Rescue, but the fire at the warehouse is very saddening to see. We are grateful for the swift response of our fire services and pleased that nobody was injured.

It is important to highlight this is a trial and all safety concerns are continually evaluated by West of England Combined Authority and Voi to improve safety.

I want to reiterate to residents that it is only legal to use Voi e-scooters on public highways.



Batteries for large electrical items should be disposed safely either at a household waste and recycling centre, or through booking a bulky waste collection.

Q2.

In terms of the Voi trial, incidences of fire hazards have been isolated and are not considered indicative of the entire roll-out, but this will continue to be monitored.



GREEN QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor David Wilcox

Subject: Liveable Neighbourhoods

1. Please detail the phases, timelines and areas for the proposed Liveable Neighbourhood Pilot in East Bristol.
2. A second Pilot area has been mooted - where is it, and what are the phases and timelines for that?

REPLY:

Q1.

Funding is secured from WECA to develop an outline business case for a pilot Liveable Neighbourhood in the area south of Church Road, St George. We will be working with the communities to look at the parameters and geography of the trial.

Q2.

The location, phases and timescales for a second pilot area have not yet been determined

It is likely that we will learn many lessons, working towards the first trial area, to support work for a second trial area. I understand OSMB are looking at setting out ideas for a second trial and I will consider that in due course.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Henry Michallat (Stoke Bishop)

Subject: BRISTOL BEACON (formerly known as The Colston Hall)

1. Can the Mayor update Members on the current status of this rebuilding project?
2. What is the new estimated cost of this remedial work?

REPLY:

Q1.

The project is meeting the re-baselined programme milestones and the building is scheduled to be fully operational by October 2023.

Q2.

The estimated total cost remains £106.9m. The volatile construction market and pressures caused by Brexit and Covid have continued to be a challenge, and the team are working to manage these pressures.

This structural refurbishment work to a landmark venue is, of course, a substantial commitment to Bristol's cultural sector.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Andrew Brown – Hengrove & Whitchurch Park

Subject: Hengrove Park

Following a Press Release entitled “A new approach for Hengrove Park” made on the 21st December, which was duly reported in the media over the following days, a number of local residents have asked about this. Unfortunately, local Councillors had no advance warning of this release, nor do we know anything beyond what is contained in the press release.

- 1). Can the Mayor explain what, if any, protocols are in place with regards to providing local Councillors advance notice of significant press-releases (and related activity) in order to allow us to better inform our residents, and answer any queries they have?
- 2). At time of writing, my colleagues and I are seeking a meeting with Officers to explore the new proposals more fully. However, can the Mayor outline the benefits and risks of the decision, including any financial implications?

REPLY:

Q1.

There is no formal protocol or requirement to pre-brief local councillors solely on the basis that a press releases is being issued.

However all press releases are sent directly to all councillors to ensure timely access to the information.

There are occasions when publicity addresses emerging policy positions. In these instances local members will normally be kept informed by the relevant service teams as detail develops. This in line with the Member-Officer Protocol commitment to ensure councillors have regular up-to-date information that is appropriate and relevant to their needs, having regard to any individual responsibilities that they have.

Should any members have queries about any specific issue, they can submit a Member Enquiry through the normal email address for this.

Q2.

The decision to look again at the best way to deliver this flagship housing scheme and pursue a different delivery approach will boost housing delivery across Bristol by exploring innovative approaches to deliver high-quality, low carbon and affordable homes more sustainably and quickly. The new delivery approach will include delivering a higher number of Affordable Homes, incorporating innovative methods of housing delivery including, where possible, Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), as well as providing the community facilities and infrastructure that will support an inclusive community in the future. The changed approach will enable Hengrove Park to become an exemplar new, high-quality, and sustainable neighbourhood.



There are no significant financial implications for the overall project budget as a result of the decision to pursue an improved delivery approach. The programme of enabling works required to prepare the site for development are still scheduled to proceed as programmed.



GREEN QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tony Dyer, Southville Subject: Brownfield Land

Local Authorities are obliged by central government to produce an annual register of Previously Developed (“brownfield”) land.

The criteria for which land should be included in the register is largely set out in The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 but it usually consists of previously developed land which either has planning permission for, or is allocated in the Local Plan for, residential development.

Bristol City Council’s Brownfield Land Register was last updated in December 2020, and included land which had planning permission as of March 2020.

1. Can you confirm if the register has been updated, and, if it has not yet been published, when will it be available?

The Brownfield Land Register does not, of course, list all previously developed land in Bristol that may be suitable for residential development. Given the concerns that many residents have about loss of valuable green spaces, whilst also being aware of the 15 to 16,000 families on the Housing Register, it is of course important that we, as a city, make the best use of land that can be repaired, reused and/or recycled from a previous use.

However, the December 2020 Brownfield Land Register clearly shows that only 24 of the 128 brownfield sites listed are owned, even in part, by the council. Given the general inability (or unwillingness) of private developers to deliver anywhere near the levels of affordable housing needed by the city, this present a clear obstacle to delivering the 1,000 affordable homes per year by 2023/24 target.

However, Bristol City Council itself is a major land and property owner, with almost 4,000 assets excluding the over 26,000 council homes that still exist in the city. Together, these 4,000 assets comprise over 3,500 hectares of land, and over a million square metres in internal floor space of building.

Clearly many of those assets will be required long in to the future, for example our 44 public parks, 30 commons and village greens, 136 primary and 19 secondary schools. But other assets may offer opportunities for repair, reuse and or recycling whilst retaining council ownership and thus the value of the asset.

In this context, I would like to highlight that the council owns land that is currently used for some 99 car and/or lorry parks covering some 30-35 hectares. Car Parks are, in general, an inefficient use of land that fail to make the best use of the air space above the car park itself. Although not all council owned car parks will be suitable, some will surely offer the option to build over the car park itself (retaining the parking beneath if required) and build into the air space above to provide affordable housing on brownfield land.

In a similar vein, the council owns the freehold on some 14 petrol stations/commercial garages. As we move away from petrol and diesel as a source of fuel for motor vehicles, and towards electricity as the main source of fuel, clearly petrol stations will need to adapt. As



leaseholds expire there may be an opportunity for the council to repurpose petrol stations for other uses, including perhaps the provision of EV charging points.

Finally, I would also like to highlight that the council owns some 186 plots of land simply described as "verges". By their very nature, many of these plots of land are very small, and thus in danger of being overlooked. However, together they add up to almost 15 hectares.

2. My question: What formal process can be created to allow ward councillors, working with communities, to identify not only what land within their wards should be safeguarded for future generations, but also what brownfield sites could potentially be reused for affordable zero carbon housing? And also what land, such as "verges" which although too small for development, may be made for community use such as increasing biodiversity?

REPLY:

Q1

Work on updating the Brownfield Register will be started shortly and an updated register is expected to be available in the spring. Your point on fuel stations is well made and I would be happy to discuss and assess these opportunities further.

We are already reviewing the potential for affordable housing on car parks across the city, in a similar way to the multi-award winning scheme Hope Rise. This scheme is an exemplar scheme providing much needed social housing to young people, whilst also retaining access to parking spaces.

Councillors are invited to make proposals for land in their area and this will be welcome.

Q2.

The on-going review of the Local Plan provides a formal process where councillors and communities can seek to identify land to be protected and locations for new development. To date, the draft Local Plan has identified 10 areas of growth and regeneration* and 70 proposed development site allocations. These locations have the potential for the development of thousands of new and affordable homes, primarily on previously developed land. The draft Local Plan has also proposed for protection hundreds of open spaces as Local Green Space or Reserved Open Space and sets out approaches to the sustainable management of development.

We are also in the process of working towards a small space strategy, to utilise areas of our land which we would otherwise not get to for many years, to accelerate the opportunity for affordable home building with several different partners.

* Brislington, Bristol Temple Quarter, Central Bedminster, Central Fishponds, Central Southmead, Frome Gateway, Lawrence Hill, Lockleaze, St Philip's Marsh, and Western Harbour.





CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 6

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

Subject: LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. What will be the basis for selection of these sites?
2. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not any public consultation on this will include the possibility of rejection?

REPLY:

Q1.

Following the delivery of the East Bristol pilot area, we will use the lessons learned to shape the second trial. The lessons from both trials will shape a city-wide review.

The second trial will be determined by a number of factors, that could consider the impacts of developments, density, the potential impacts of CAZ, parking and transport issues. Funding availability will also be considered. Any decision will be brought to cabinet, having followed consultation.

At the heart of the Liveable Neighbourhood approach is the co-design process which will ensure that communities will be involved from the outset in shaping improvements in their local area.

Q2.

We will of course listen to public consultation and incorporate feedback into designs. There is no question we have to bring people with us as liveable neighbourhood schemes in other areas have failed due to local support. It is crucial we look at liveable neighbourhoods as a process that relies on community support.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Sarah Classick – Henrgove & Whitchurch Park

Subject: Utility Bills at Imperial Apartments

A number of residents at Imperial Apartments in Whitchurch have informed us of issues relating to utility bills within the apartments.

One resident informed us he is being charged circa £240 for 35 days for a 1 bed flat

Another is being charged around £290 per month for a 2 bed flat including being chased for an outstanding debt from the previous tenant in their flat.

Because of the nature of the site they do not have a choice over supplier and are only able to use British Gas so cannot switch to a cheaper provider

This is well above the average costs for utilities in Bristol and we are seriously concerned about the impact of this on residents of the apartments – some of whom are incredibly vulnerable.

What safeguarding does the council have in place to ensure vulnerable residents placed in such accommodation are not extorted by their utility suppliers and what support can they access from the council to ensure they are not slipping into unmanageable debt?

REPLY:

This is incorrect. Tenants do have the choice to switch supplier.

Caridon give information on using the storage heaters in flats and support tenants to contact energy providers where bills are incorrect.

We commission resettlement support for vulnerable residents. Visiting support workers provide assistance across a number of areas, including around utilities, money management and debt advice. Additionally, BCC's in-house Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service provides expert advice around benefits, budgeting and debt.

Council officers meet weekly with staff from Caridon and commissioned support services, providing a forum for issues relating to tenants to be discussed and resolved. Officers also meet monthly with senior managers from Caridon to discuss and address emerging issues.



GREEN QUESTION 7

**Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor, Redland
Subject: Access for Services & Charging users for activities in Parks.**

Access for services.

There are increasingly frequent reports of failed recycling and waste services in parts of my ward and elsewhere in the city due to obstructive parking. Incidents of this problem and emergency services unable to access some roads is a major concern and could threaten lives, not just routine council services. I assume the council is in regular liaison with other services where such problems get discussed.

The blockages need to be tackled as it's evidence of a dysfunctional road management system affecting essential vehicles. Promises were made last year that corner protection would be looked at but we know of no action to date. Some times these obstructions get reported as local highway safety issues.

There is no longer a local highways budget and this is in any case a strategic issue for areas of the city not a ward matter.

Q 1. Can the Mayor say how and when these problems will be tackled as a priority?

Charging users for activities in Parks.

Q 2. What is the anticipated scale of charges and what exemptions will be offered to avoid discouraging users of our valued open spaces?

REPLY:

Q1.

The work to consider corner protection in Bishopston and Redland referred to has not yet commenced due to competing priorities and the availability of appropriate funding. However, officers will be reviewing this in developing the capital programme for 2022/23.

If parking is causing an immediate safety issue or threat to public safety, these should be reported to Avon and Somerset Police for action as this is not something BCC can address. Neither the Emergency Services nor other Council Services regularly identify difficulties they have experienced travelling along a road due to parking. When they do identify concerns, officers work with them to find a resolution.

General access issues are local issues, rather than strategic, and the best opportunity to get any changes funded would be through the Area Committees.

Q2.

Details of the pricing structure will be finalised in January 2022. The annual licence fee will be means-based on the number of activities and number of clients a provider has, which will ensure the fee is fair. We have been carrying out benchmarking of our pricing structure with other Local Authorities, to ensure that we have a fair and consistent pricing structure.



We have a number of businesses using our parks under another licensing scheme which permits mobile traders etc to use our parks to operate their business. Non-commercial activities such as Park runs, are exempt from the scheme.

We aim to share the finalised pricing scheme as soon as possible, to give providers plenty of time to prepare before the scheme goes live.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 7

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

Subject: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The Mayor will be aware that the following message appears on the website of Bristol's Make a Planning Application webpage: -

'We're experiencing waits before applications will be allocated to a case officer. This is because of a nationwide increase in planning applications over the last 18 months. Thank you for your patience with our staff during this time.'

1. How many planning applications has the department received in 2021?
2. What are the comparable figures for 2020 and 2019?

REPLY:

Q1.

By the end of 2021 the Council had received 2440 planning applications during the calendar year.

Q2.

This is a 22% increase compared to 2020 (1993 applications) and a 21% increase compared to 2019 (2006 applications)



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 7

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

Subject: Child Friendly Games at Arnos Court Park

The friends of Arnos Court Park is a group that came into being because of the pandemic and local residents seeing the value in their local amenities. Both Cllr Varney and I have been working with the local community to help shape the park for the future. Part of the work of the group is to make the most of the existing assets and with this in mind we have spoken to officers about the possibility of getting child friendly games painted on the redundant tarmac next to the play area. This would be cheap and simple to do and make the area look even more appealing for young children. Can I ask the mayor if he could see if there is the money to fund this project in this financial year?

REPLY:

This is an excellent initiative and I am grateful to you for raising the matter. Officers are seeking cost estimates for carrying out this work, looking at low-cost options but also higher cost options that may last longer.

It is unlikely that Parks Service budgets can support this until next financial year. A longer lasting and quicker solution may be best delivered through funding devolved to the Area Committee. Councillors are in a better position than me to accelerate this but I will ensure, if the funding is available, we will carry out the area committee request.



GREEN QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lily Fitzgibbon, Bishopston and Ashley Down

Subject: School streets

1. How many schools in Bristol have expressed an interest in a School Street.
2. Bristol City Council successfully installed four school streets for the following schools: Wansdyke Primary School in Whitchurch, St Peter's CofE Primary School in Bishopsworth, Redfield Educate Together Academy and Victoria Park Primary School in Bedminster. What was the cost of each scheme?

REPLY:

Q1.

In total 69 schools expressed an interest in the latest funding round to become a School Street.

Q2.

The cost of each scheme varies due to the size of the project, but on average a school street costs £40k.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 8

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

Subject: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

1. Can the Mayor state whether there have been any changes in staffing levels?
2. How many are employed in Development Control now in comparison to the number for 2020 and 2019?

REPLY:

Q1.

As an income reliant service the Development Management (DM) service (planning applications) has to balance its resourcing with the fee income received through planning applications.

Planning application fees are set at a national level by Central Government on an infrequent basis and so we have to finance our DM service through fees that were set a number of years ago.

Whilst economic activity, in the form of planning applications, has increased during 21/22 (compared to 20/21), this has largely been through smaller applications which are not accompanied by the scale of fees that would enable us to deliver a balanced budget. Therefore, during 21/22 we have had to manage a small number of vacancies which has caused some capacity issues.

Q2.

Compared to 2019, one post (Graduate Planning Officer) has been deleted as this was a vacant post and the budget for this was needed to contribute to the investment in the Regeneration service.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 8

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

Subject: Planning Delays

The Mayor claims to be supportive of active travel yet an application for an active travel scheme in my ward of Brislington West has been languishing in the planning department since last February! Could the Mayor account for this unacceptable delay?

REPLY:

I am supportive of active travel and use active travel myself.

The planning application you refer to seeks a 3 year temporary planning permission for a pedestrian and cycle patch and associated works on the former railway land located between Tramway Road and Talbot Road in Brislington. Planning officers have been working with the applicants to ensure that the information submitted meets the legal requirements for planning applications. As a result, a revised “red line” site location plan was not submitted until October 2021.

The application is nearing the end of the assessment process and it is anticipated that the application will be reported to a DC Committee during February or March.



GREEN QUESITON 9

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend, Central

Subject: Buses

1. What assistance has Bristol Council and WECA offered to bus service operators to replace services that have been affected by the removal of the Governments Covid Recovery Bus Grant?
2. How is Bristol Council working with WECA to implement the concepts and utilise the funding available under the Bus Back Better strategy from the DfT?

REPLY:

Q1.

The Covid Bus Recovery Grant is available until 4th April 2022 (this replaced the Covid Bus Service Support Grant). WECA has provided funding for the continuation of affected services, for example the financial support for evening and Sunday journeys on service 5 in Bristol, which will apply from the 30th January 2022.

A joint letter from WECA and North Somerset Council has been sent to the Department for Transport highlighting the continued need for Government support as services recover from the impact of Covid. The government have responded, recognising that challenges still exist and that they will be working with the bus sector to understand if further action is required.

Q2.

The City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement submitted by WECA includes significant investment in bus priority infrastructure in Bristol aimed at providing high quality fast and reliable services that are the objective of the National Bus Strategy.

We have submitted a bid for revenue funding through WECA as part of the Bus Services Improvement Plan. This is being assessed by DfT and we are currently awaiting the outcome.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 9

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

Subject: Grass Cutting

The standard of grass cutting appears to be getting worse the further out from the centre of Bristol you go.

1. What reassurances can you offer the residents of Stockwood Ward and similarly impacted areas that the grass will be cut in a timely and regular manner and to an acceptable standard?

REPLY:

Grass cutting in the city is carried out on a frequency basis – a given number of cuts per year up to a maximum of 12, with 8 being the frequency for most locations. We have areas that are cut three times and some only once. Different frequencies apply based on a number of factors but these are not geography to the city centre. They include recreational function, potential to support wildlife, local amenity or equipment access for example.

We have been reducing frequency in some locations in recent years to benefit wildlife, and to help move resources into other work – for example increasing waste and cleansing work in response to higher visitor numbers at certain sites.

I have asked officers to arrange a site visit of the Stockwood ward with local councillors and discuss the grass cutting regimes applied and to understand the standards expected and that may be delivered.



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT QUESTION 9

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

Subject: Progress on LGBTQ+ Mental Health Provision Motion

On 6th July 2021 Full Council, my motion on LGBTQ+ Mental Health provision was passed with unanimous support. Given that it has now been six months since this motion was passed, I would like to ask the Mayor for an update on how each of the elements that the motion called for have progressed?

The motion called for;

1. Ask the Head of Equality & Inclusion to ensure that within the Council itself, a robust set of processes are created through our staff led groups and trade unions to protect the mental health of LGBT+ council staff.
2. Carry out a survey of Bristol LGBT+ residents to assess the current issues around health within the LGBT+ Community, similar to the 2016 Bristol LGBT+ Health & Wellbeing Needs Survey
3. Work with our partners across the city, other Equalities Charter signatories, and the large range of LGBT+ charities working within mental health across Bristol to create a strategic plan for improving the mental health of the LGBT+ community.
4. Work with local charities and our city partners promote services available to LGBT+ persons for assistance with their mental health.
5. Ask the Cabinet Member for Education to write to all the governing bodies, proprietors (of academy chains), headteachers and principals of every school across the city to offer the Council's support in delivering greater levels of LGBT+ mental health support in our schools.

REPLY:

An Employee Assistance Programme is available to all Bristol City Council (BCC) staff, including support around mental health and wellbeing. Training is available to staff on supporting others around their mental health. HR staff have provided initial support to individuals around LGBTQ+ issues as well as supporting people who are transitioning.

BCC's Equality and Inclusion Policy and staff training programme address equality issues and eliminating discrimination. It is important that we develop an approach that works for all groups, working with our staff led groups and trade unions, and ensure that we have an inclusive, trauma-informed approach that recognises additional vulnerabilities whatever they may be, and that values difference and supports our mental health.



The Quality of Life survey and Pupil Voice survey include questions on sexual orientation, and we will be delivering on our manifesto commitment to undertake a Mayoral Equalities Report into the experiences and opportunities of LGBTQ+ people in Bristol.

Partners across BCC, the NHS, and the VCSE sector are currently working together to transform community mental health services. This has included coproduction with the Independent Mental Health Network LGBTQ+ group. Integrated Care Partnerships are now developing models of support targeting those experiencing greatest inequalities and reflecting the diverse communities that they serve. Several local organisations promote mental health and other support for LGBTQ+ people including Bristol Mind and the Independent Mental Health Network.

BCC part-commissions Off the Record (OTR)'s Freedom project, providing specific support, advice and social opportunities for young people in the LGBTQ+ (or questioning) community. 1-1 counselling can also be accessed from OTR specific to LGBTQ+ young people. New Mental Health Support Teams are currently also being established in Bristol.

The Education and Skills department are working in partnership with Public Health to develop a Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and health resource hub for schools and this will support them in delivering LGBT inclusion. We are working with partners to develop our school support offer with a focus on supporting vulnerable LGBT children and young people as well as to improve their health and wellbeing and provide a strategic briefing for Governors focused on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Information on these resources will be communicated through the Director for Education and Skill's regular bulletin to school leaders.



GREEN QUESTION 10

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Wye, Ashley Ward

Subject: Electric vehicle charging

Several residents in my ward are interested in switching to EVs. In many cases, due to the cost they are also looking to share cars between households. They ask how the council will be supporting the roll out of charging points as most houses do not have access to off street parking and require charging points. They further ask why we cannot use the existing street lamp infrastructure as has been used elsewhere (such as Oxford pilot or the 1000 plus stations across London). I am aware that there are some technical issues either to do with the voltage in lampposts and that needed to run EV charging or in not impeding the pavement. However these are being overcome in these pilots either through electrical adaption or through installing gullies (like Oxford)

Time is of the essence with no new petrol/diesel cars being sold in the UK in a mere 8 years time.

Whilst simply switching from one type of car to the other is not going to solve our transport and congestion problems it will contribute significantly to air quality. Could the mayor please outline answers to the following:

- 1 with regard to technical solutions what are the main technical issue (electrical or physical positioning) and what planning has gone in to addressing these?
- 2 Could the mayor outline the strategy for the development of a significant increase in EV charging points, including overcoming any technical issues?

REPLY:

Q1.

Highways and the Energy Service have been looking into technical solutions for residential charging, to complement the existing public charging network that BCC has been rolling out since 2019, including an extensive analysis of current available electrical infrastructure and capacity.

The main barrier for the physical positioning of on-street EV chargers is the electrical infrastructure under the ground, provided by Western Power Distribution (Western Power Distribution). This is a problem across the South West.

In many areas, especially those with older housing, the electrical infrastructure is more than 50 years old and cannot support the additional load for EV chargers, even with the changes to LED street-lighting. Charge points require a lot more power than street lighting. Additionally, a number of electrical sub stations and transformers are at capacity. This means putting in applications to Western Power Distribution for new connections which are either not possible or very costly. We have also been focusing new potential connections for charge points in areas where there is some capacity available, whilst looking to work with Western Power Distribution on longer term solutions to overcome the lack of capacity.



The only real way to address this is for Western Power Distribution to make substantial capital investments in their network to allow for additional connections suitable to allow EV chargers. To work towards this, Highways and Energy Service has been working at a strategic and local level with Western Power Distribution on our short and long term plans for EV charging infrastructure since 2017 and have been looking at ways to influence this and work around it.

We have sought to influence investments in electrical infrastructure including participating in Western Power Distribution-led consultations and stakeholder sessions looking at where future demand is, and participating regularly regular participation in Western Power Distribution-led stakeholder sessions. This will continue, and your support in encouraging Western Power Distribution to invest in this infrastructure is welcome.

Q2.

Through the Go Ultra Low West (GULW) project, we and our partners have been rolling out over 120 public EV charging bays as part of the publicly owned and operated Revive vehicle charging network. We have also made use of further central government funding opportunities for taxi charging bays, with some further rapid public charging bays to come in 2022-23.

This is a good start but we know more infrastructure is needed, some of which we as a local authority will look to deliver and enable. The Energy Service, Highways and Transport teams are working together and with WECA on future plans including:

- A strategy to clearly outline the numbers of charge points needed to achieve One City Plan targets for improved air quality and decarbonisation.
- Engaging as a key partner with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for forthcoming funding opportunities expected later in 2022.

In the meantime residential public charging solutions for on and off-street locations have been investigated in detail in 2021. Detailed analysis is being undertaken on which streets in the city are high priority areas in need of residential charge points, which considers:

- availability of off-street parking,
- existing street-scene limitations,
- site suggestions received from the public (available via Travelwest website),
- locations where we could trial innovative solutions.

This is overlayed with the physical potential to install further infrastructure, navigating the limitations outlined in question 1 reply.

We submitted a bid to OZEV in Dec 2021 for funding for residential charging bays. This is the only central government funding source currently available and would provide up to 130 charging bays for up to 50 streets (roll-out would begin from Autumn 2022 at the earliest). We are also working with WECA on current funding opportunities to expand public EV charging infrastructure.



CONSERVATIVE QUESTION 10

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

Subject: Area Committee Decisions

It is clear there are long delays for the implementation of projects brought forward from the Area Committee processes.

1. What plans do the Council have to clear the backlog and to ensure the new projects do not suffer from long delays?

REPLY:

I am aware that there have been delays to area committee requests.

To that end, I am introducing a new management group, to triage those request that do have the support of the administration and then set out timelines for those to be delivered. This group will include transport and parks, where a large number of area committee requests are directed.

Part of this work will also be to ensure area committees are advised when their requests will not be taken forward more transparently.



GREEN QUESTION 11

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Heather Mack, Lockleaze

Subject: Progress on the transport vision

According to our Bristol's transport vision adopted in 2019 we have a number of short term priorities, with outcomes expected by 2023, just one year away.

1. How is the council progressing with outcome #8 'More people making sustainable and healthy transport choices by improving engagement with communities, schools and businesses', in terms of our actions, and measurable outcomes?

2. Outcome #15 (also due by 2023) is to deliver 'Safer places to live by working with citizens to design and deliver measures to improve movement and liveability in our neighbourhoods' – With the help of temporary COVID measures there's been greater opportunity to deliver these measures – how many households have had changes to improve the liveability of their neighbourhood?

REPLY:

Q1.

In schools we use our Modeshift Stars and School Streets programmes to increase the people travelling to school via walking, scooting and cycling. We are doubling the number of School Streets from 4 to 8 in the city to help provide safer and quieter streets around the school entrance to assist with this outcome.

We work with around 4500 businesses in the city to encourage sustainable modes of travel and offer several bespoke services for Bristol businesses such as 50% match funded grants, pool bikes, workplace audits, travel plan support etc.

We also have similar community offers to encourage active travel such as free cycle training, free loan bikes and accessories including electric bikes, travel planning support, discounts for car clubs, e-scooters, taster bus tickets etc. More information is available below:

[For Businesses – Travelwest](#)

[For Residents & Communities – Travelwest](#)

Q2.

Funding for Active Travel measures has delivered a number of improvements to walking and cycling across the City as well as measures to improve air quality, particularly in the Old City.

The Bus Services Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan focus on walking and cycling and public transport improvements to reduce dependency on car use



and congestion. The anticipated funding from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement will allow us to deliver further against these plans.

The impact of Covid on travel in the City means it would be difficult to take a reliable measure of progress at this time. We will complete a 5 year summary monitoring report against the Transport Strategy's short term objectives. This will include information from Quality of Life survey results, the Department for Transport and other data sets to report on the measurable objectives within the Strategy.

