

Member Forum

13 September 2016

Questions and replies



Procedural note:

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- Councillors are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions each.
- Councillors are also entitled to ask a maximum of 2 supplementary questions at the forum.
- If a councillor has submitted 2 questions on 2 separate topics, they may ask both of their supplementary questions on just one of the topics if they so wish, or may ask one question on each of the 2 separate topics. All supplementary questions must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- Via the group leaders / whips, questions have been submitted in priority order.
- At the forum, the asking of questions will be rotated between the political groups that have submitted questions, taken in priority order.



QUESTIONS

The following member questions have been submitted:

A. Questions from the **LABOUR Group** (listed in order of priority):

LAB. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Nicola Bowden-Jones

Subject: Child refugees

Can the Mayor update the Council on what progress we are making as a City to support and accommodate child refugees, particularly unaccompanied children, who have fled war-torn countries such as Syria and who want to seek asylum here in the United Kingdom?

REPLY:

- The city council's Asylum Team support unaccompanied asylum seeking children. The children have similar rights as looked after children and are allocated appropriate placements and support. At present the council is supporting 45 unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have access to education and to CAMHS in the same ways as other LAC. The asylum team also supports families who have been refused leave to remain and are awaiting Home Office decisions about their future, the team ensures these vulnerable families receive subsistence payments and accommodation as required by the Government.
- The council funds young provision including a specific group for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people and also a larger group for care leavers, which involves the active involvement of UASC. For example the asylum seeking young people are producing a film about their experiences which will be shown on 20 September at an arts venue in Broadmead.
- The Education Welfare Team employ a specific officer to work with refugee and asylum seeker families to support the families to register with schools, to register for free school meals and to arrange a basic induction. The Community Learning Team offer Family Learning courses for refugee and asylum seeking parents to understand the education system and understand how to support their child's learning.
- The Syrian Vulnerable person's resettlement programme is working with eight families, of which 19 are children. The families are supported to access schools and early years services, we provide crèche to enable access to ESOL for new arrivals where children are under 4. One young person has been assessed for entry to university and four of the young people have recently attended a national conference on Syrian Refugee issues, one of whom led a Karaoke event in Arabic for all conference attendees. The Syrian Community and their supporters have held two Eid events where children were given presents funded by Muslim, Christian and Jewish faith based organisations



Looking ahead:

- The council has allocated some project resources to mapping current provision for refugees and asylum seekers in the city, the information will be used to develop a City of Sanctuary strategy in partnership with refugee and asylum seeking voluntary and community sector organisations.
- As part of this work a business case regarding the council's statutory responsibilities will be developed to plan for supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people who claim asylum in Bristol and any new cases through the new Transfer scheme. The Transfer scheme is part of the new Immigration Act which requires local authorities to take responsibility for unaccompanied asylum seeker children who sought asylum in Kent or Surrey. The business case will include considering how to support the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme longer term and the Government is likely to announce two new voluntary schemes for Vulnerable children from the Middle East and North African area and a scheme to accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children who sought asylum in Europe. The business case will include costed options to explore the viability of the council being able to participate in these two new voluntary schemes. The business case should be available in early October 2016.

LAB. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Don Alexander

Subject: Proposed IBAA Facility at Avonmouth

1. In May 2014 the Council's Planning Department granted permission for a Bottom Ash Processing Plant at Avonmouth Docks. The proposed plant, which has now been built, is situated 50 metres from my constituent's garden. It has come to light that it appears the Council did not follow the correct Planning procedures when granting permission for this facility. As a result my constituents have been deprived of their statutory right of consultation and have been denied the opportunity to oppose the construction of this incinerator. Will the Mayor order a review into this planning case and ensure my constituents have the opportunity to be properly consulted on this and future developments in Avonmouth?
2. Will the Mayor write to the Environment Agency to ask them not to grant Day Group Ltd a license to operate while a full review of the planning process surround this site is conducted?

REPLY:

1. In March 2014 the Council received an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for proposals for a facility for the processing of inert waste and specifically IBA (Incineration Bottom Ash) imported into Avonmouth Docks and for onwards transit to a variety of end users. Such applications are assessed on a factual interpretation of legislation, namely whether the proposed use falls under the definition of permitted development (ie. not requiring planning permission) in this case as development on operational land by statutory undertakers or their lessees in respect of dock activities. Such applications are not subject to normal consultation processes as they are an



assessment of the facts. Officers issued the certificate under delegated powers in May 2014. The approach to such developments at the Port was reviewed by officers in 2015 and the Port were advised in 2015 that a stricter interpretation of the legislation would be made in future. I agree with this approach and can assure you that local residents will be consulted on any resulting planning applications. However, I am advised that the IBA plant is a lawful development, but for clarity this is not for an incinerator.

2. I understand that BCC officers are working with the Environment Agency regarding the Environmental Permit process and I encourage them to continue to do so in order to protect the interests of local residents, as this is the process now available to control the operation of the site rather than the planning process.

LAB. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mhairi Threfall

Subject: Metrobus

1. We can all see that there is so much infrastructure work underway for delivering Metrobus, but what will be the key benefits for passengers and how will services integrate with the rest of the bus network?
2. Can the Cabinet Member for Transport also update members on progress in securing operators for the Metrobus services?

REPLY:

1. MetroBus will deliver a range of benefits including:
 - MetroBus will provide more direct routes to key destinations – enabling 1000s more people to access key employment, education and leisure destinations
 - More bus priority, including dedicated bus lanes that will improve punctuality and reliability of all bus service to and through Bristol city centre
 - Reduction in journey times compared to existing bus services
 - MetroBus services will be make use of a range of off-bus ticketing options to speed up passenger boarding time.
 - Improved bus interchange facilities in Bristol city centre for those still needing to change buses
 - Improved local links for cyclists and pedestrians
2. The three councils (Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset) are actively negotiating with bus operators regarding running the MetroBus services, therefore it is not possible, as these negotiations are confidential and commercial, to say more.

We have always been clear, the aim is that the MetroBus services are run entirely on a commercial basis via a Quality Partnership Scheme that sets minimum standards for frequencies, quality of vehicles and maximum fares, supported by a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with one or more operator.



Of course should negotiations not be successful we have a range of back up plans which could include formal contracts to run all or some services on a contracted basis which might require the use of public money following a competitive procurement process, but this would depend on the situation when negotiations conclude.

LAB. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Ruth Pickersgill

Subject: Classroom teachers from BME backgrounds

Local media reported this week that only five per cent of the 3,433 registered classroom teachers in Bristol are from minority ethnic backgrounds and yet 28% of pupils (and an even higher percentage in the early years) are from BAME backgrounds. This is far lower than the 7.6% national figure for BAME teachers. It is not clear if this is just maintained schools.

The report 'Leadership Aspirations and Careers of Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers' by Manchester University and Education Data Surveys also found that over half (54 per cent) of BME teachers questioned said they have faced discrimination in their careers, and did not believe the teaching system was inclusive.

If we are to raise the aspirations of Black and minority ethnic young people in our City, we need to ensure there are a range of BAME positive role models teaching, managing, and working in support roles in our schools, but also coming in as visiting experts and speakers. One of the historical issues in this City has been the significant under-representation of minority ethnic groups gaining places on teaching courses in Bristol University, and BAME young people who may want to go into teaching from our schools choosing to leave the City to study (often in London or Birmingham).

1. Whilst it is difficult to get data from academies, please could you let us have a detailed breakdown of the ethnicity profile of applicants to posts, and of the current workforce in all the schools in the City, and in our own education service, (including an analysis of their salary level, as representation in senior positions is particularly poor)?
2. What will the City Council and its key partners do to address the issue of under-representation, and also what positive action can you take to support BAME teachers to move into leadership positions?

REPLY:

1. In relation to Point 1: the Council does not have the capacity to collect the information requested as the information isn't held by us and would require significant administrative capacity as well as and the permission of all schools/academies who do not use our payroll system. However we can ask all schools to send us their staff breakdown.

However the under-representation of BAME teachers in the City's education workforce is a concern. This mirrors similar under-representation in the public sector in Bristol which we are working to challenge.



2. In relation to Point 2: Within the Learning City developments, a Recruitment & Retention Task group has been set up to focus on recruiting and retaining excellent teachers and leaders to Bristol schools and to increase the representation of BAME teachers and leaders. The group has representatives from schools, FE and HE as well as Council officers.

The group is developing an action plan and reports regularly to the Learning in Education Challenge group.

Members could support this work by promoting teaching as a career to BAME citizens as well as encouraging more BAME citizens to consider becoming a governor or volunteering in schools.

LAB. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Brook

Subject: Bristol Housing Company

Can the Mayor give an update on progress towards establishing a Council Housing Company, and what form this will take, given the ever-increasing pressures on Housing in the city despite the budget cuts the Council will have to make?

REPLY:

- A brief, outlining the scope of the proposed company, has been prepared and agreed with the Cabinet Member for Homes & Communities.
- Lead consultant, Lambert Smith Hampton, has been appointed to work with the Council to produce a strategic business case, the normal first step in establishing a new entity and required by Council guidance on the setting up of any new council company.
- There are a number of different legal forms it could take and the options on this will part of the business case work.
- The work has commenced, with the business case expecting to be completed by late autumn and, subject to its conclusions, to go forward to Cabinet in early 2017.
- Assuming this happens as set out above how long it then takes to formally establish a company (eg register it; recruit members of its board etc) will depend upon what form it takes.
- While the company is being created business continues to bring sites forward for affordable and council housing development.
- We wish to avoid any real or perceived hiatus resulting from people thinking that we are waiting for the company to be operational before kick starting development of our land.



LAB. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Improving the safety and well-being of the LGBT community in Bristol

As someone who has had to make three formal complaints to the police concerning homophobic harassment (including, on one occasion graphic descriptions of how I deserved to die), that led to nothing due to the absence of witnesses, what efforts is the Mayor making to improve the safety and well-being of the LGBT community in Bristol?

REPLY:

The Council takes the responsibility of its citizens' safety very seriously and works in partnership with many organisations across the city to ensure Bristol is a safe city. As part of the city's hate crime support service, the Council works with LGBT Bristol to support victims of hate crime and deliver an array of preventative activity including campaigns and training. Bristol Hate Crime Services can be contacted by <http://www.bristolhatecrimeservices.org> or Tel: 0800 171 2272.

Victim / service user involvement is a key element of the services offered. If you would like to share your experiences and help shape future service delivery and agency responses, please do not hesitate to contact Bristol Hate Crime Services.

LAB. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Brook

Subject: Interims

A significant number of senior officers are currently "Interims", including those with the difficult task of achieving financial savings (e.g. Chief Executive, Director of Business Change, Interim Finance Director). Whilst these are clearly capable individuals, it is not a sustainable state of affairs to have short term post holders. Furthermore, there may be the worry that the long term impact of the cuts is not fully considered by those in short term posts. Can the Mayor detail when we can expect to see key "Interim" posts filled on a permanent basis?

REPLY:

- We are moving to a more permanent staffing and committed to review senior level staff along with departmental reviews.
- It is recognised that using interims for crucial senior posts in the organisation is not a sustainable solution in the longer term; however, it is also vital that while we seek to fill these posts on a permanent basis, we have the flexibility to bring experienced professionals into the organisation in the short-term to lead on delivering our priorities.
- A new permanent Director of Finance (section 151) has been appointed, and will start on 30th November 2016. The advert for a new permanent Chief Executive will be launched later this month.
- We are reviewing the senior roles during the period of organisational restructure, consolidating the number of permanent Service Directors and make permanent appointments that will reduce the number of interims at this level.



LAB. QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Olly Mead

Subject: Manor Farm Community Hub

Will the Mayor send a message of support to the community activists leading efforts to create the Manor Farm Community Hub, at the former St Peter's EPH, and ensure that this development (agreed under the previous administration) is completed as soon as possible?

REPLY:

- The need for improved community space provision for Manor Farm is recognised, as is the potential for the site of the former St Peter's EPH site to accommodate that space.
- No capital or revenue budget for such a community space has been identified as yet. This is being given further consideration.
- Council officers have kept the local Manor Farm Community Hub group informed as to the situation and offered to attend their next meeting after 4th October to provide an update.
- We welcome the development of local Community Hubs which are in the heart of communities and are an ideal place for people to meet and share a variety of services and activities and which are open to everyone in the community from the youngest to the oldest.
- New hubs are springing up across the City and most recently the closure of the former Eastville Library provided an opportunity for local people to create a 100% run, vibrant community hub, with a community cafe, library space, workshops & activities, an edible garden, play space and hire room.
- Bristol City Council will be consulting with communities over the coming months about the potential for further development of community hubs in local Neighbourhoods, as part of the forthcoming review of Neighbourhood Partnerships and Libraries

B. Questions from the CONSERVATIVE Group (listed in order of priority):

CON. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris

Subject: Metrobus

1. Is the Mayor able to advise on progress being made to find bus operator(s) to run on these expensive routes?
2. Can he give an assurance that a public subsidy will not be paid to entice firms on to this taxpayer funded infrastructure?

REPLY:

1. The three councils (Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset) are actively negotiating with bus operators regarding running the MetroBus services, therefore it is not possible, as these negotiations are confidential and commercial, to say more.



2. We have always been clear that, the aim is that the MetroBus services are run entirely on a commercial basis via a Quality Partnership Scheme that sets minimum standards for frequencies, quality of vehicles and maximum fares, supported by a Voluntary Partnership Agreement with one or more operator.

Of course should negotiations not be successful we have a range of back up plans which could include formal contacts to run all or some services on a contracted basis which might require the use of public money following a competitive procurement process, but this would depend on the situation when negotiations conclude.

CON. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris

Subject: Prince Street bridge

1. Can the Mayor provide me with an update on the repair and refurbishment work currently being undertaken on this important harbour crossing?
2. Will the Mayor give an unequivocal assurance and commitment that, on completion, the bridge will be restored to its full operational capacity - which includes access for motorists?

REPLY:

1. As you are no doubt are aware, this Grade 2 listed bridge is undergoing extensive structural repairs, which has involved repairing and/or replacing up to about 30% of the main cross beams as well as many major structural repairs to the three main girder beams. The bridge decking will be totally replaced as well as the City Docks undertaking some mechanical repairs to the operational components of the bridge. To date the manufacture and installation of all new structural members are estimated to be 50% completed and the girder repairs are about 20% completed. The decking will be installed in November. The works are expected to be complete by late December 2016.
2. Once the refurbishment work is completed, our intention is to review the overall traffic flow and congestion issues across the city. Therefore we are looking to manage transport strategically, not by a piecemeal approach or by being drawn into responding to campaigns on single issues.

CON. QUESTION 3

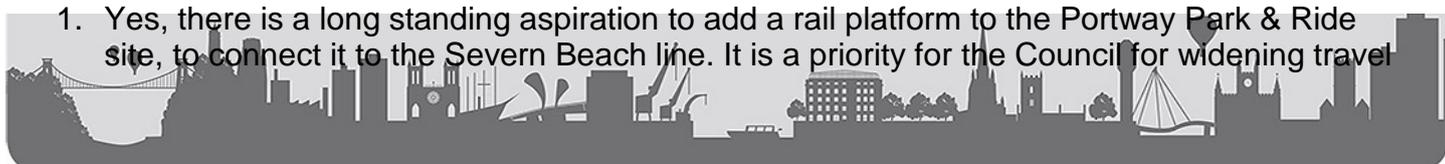
Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Matt Melias

Subject: Portway Park & Ride rail station

1. Is the Mayor familiar with plans passed in 2012 to create a rail platform near to the Portway Park & Ride site?
2. When can we expect to see this 'station' to be built and opened for business?

REPLY:

1. Yes, there is a long standing aspiration to add a rail platform to the Portway Park & Ride site, to connect it to the Severn Beach line. It is a priority for the Council for widening travel



choices and improving access to areas such as the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and key destinations along the Severn Beach line.

2. The City Council is currently working with Network Rail on developing the project and I am pleased to say that work undertaken so far has identified a feasible option to deliver the scheme. Funding has been allocated to further develop this option and a bid has been submitted to the West of England's Local Enterprise Partnership for funding to build the platform, with the aim of bringing it into operation in 2019.

CON. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Mark Weston

Subject: Community infrastructure levy

1. As the Mayor will be aware, planning applications which aim to provide social housing do not attract developer financial contributions to mitigate the impact on local communities of such schemes. Does the Mayor recognise that this is unfair and should be addressed?
2. Will the Mayor examine the option of applying a new distributive financial formula from the general CIL payments to compensate those wards which provide the land upon which such a building programme depends over the years ahead?

REPLY:

1. The operation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is governed by highly prescriptive government regulations, which require that affordable housing (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework) is granted 100% relief from CIL. This is because the provision of affordable housing is not a viable form of development, and CIL is predicated on development viability. Ultimately if affordable housing development was required to pay CIL then there would be less money available for the provision of affordable housing. However it is recognised that affordable housing requires infrastructure in the same way that open market housing does.
2. As far as the distribution of the local element of CIL is concerned, government regulations are very clear that the local element of CIL is devolved to the community in the area that the development that paid the CIL is located in. There is no flexibility to allow the redistribution of the local element of CIL as requested by Cllr Weston.

CON. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Liz Radford

Subject: Bristol Energy Company

1. Can the Mayor confirm whether or not this municipal-owned company is on target for attracting customer numbers?
2. Is this take-up figure sufficient to cover the costs of this venture or within the projected levels predicted at this stage in its original business case?



REPLY:

1. Bristol Energy launched to domestic customers in February and its business to business service in July.

Domestic customer take up of the service has not been as high as expected, partly due to unfavourable market conditions and a two month delay in launch.

There is clearly more that needs to be done to get the message out to the City, some of the benefits for people switching to Bristol Energy could be saving money on your fuel bills, high quality customer service, supporting the fight against fuel poverty, investing in locally generated renewables and returning a dividend to the City Council as opposed to private pockets.

2. The Council approved the Bristol Energy business plan in December 2015, the Shareholder Group has received performance updates against this.

The delays in the launch of the domestic and business tariffs means that there is a risk that customer numbers may not keep up with the business plan predictions over the full 5 years.

Bristol Energy is responding to this with a mitigation plan and mid-year review of strategy and the Council will be working closely with the company in planning for the next steps.

CON. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Jones

Subject: Traveller trespass

1. Does the Mayor agree with me that the recent flurry of illegal traveller encampments around Bristol were totally unacceptable and unjustified given that there were pitches available at our dedicated transit site in Kingsweston Lane?
2. Will the Mayor liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioner to see if she can influence or change policing policy to make more use of the very effective provisions contained in the Public Order & Criminal Justice Act 1994 to deal with this menace?

REPLY:

1. It is disappointing that over the recent few months there has been a significant increase in the number of unlawful traveller encampments in the City. The City Council has the Transit site for travellers to use who are in transit which has running water, WC facilities available instead of them using an unauthorised encampment without any facilities.



All new traveller encampments in the City are offered access to the Transit Site in Kingsweston Lane and it is regularly used. Travellers can remain on the transit site for a maximum of 13 weeks.

There were currently six pitches in use at the moment (12th of September 2016) out of the twenty pitches available on the Transit site.

Prior to offering access to the Transit Site, a welfare assessment is always undertaken to determine whether the City has any responsibility for the travellers in terms of their health, children's education etc.

Access to the Transit Site is not always allowed where the travellers have a previous history of violence or not abiding by the Transit Site conditions i.e. leaving after 13 weeks, causing problems on the site etc.

2. The City is currently in discussions with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) lead for Avon and Somerset constabulary about developing a protocol when each agency will take action in relation to unlawful encampments. The draft protocol is current being discussed and will hopefully be in place by the end of the autumn 2016.

Action by the police using their powers under the Public Order & Criminal Justice Act 1994, can only be used where the travellers have caused significant anti-social behaviour and/or where the encampment is causing significant problems to the local community and the encampment is on local authority owned land. This does not include the public highways.

As a result of the restrictions in the use of the powers under Public Order & Criminal Justice Act 1994, the police are unable to use this power to deal with all unauthorised encampments.

Where the police are unable to use their powers, the City Council will apply for a possession order to remove the unlawful encampment for our land.

CON. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander

Subject: Hockey's Lane

1. This continues to cause great concern for the residents of Greater Fishponds Neighbourhood Partnership. Cars still turn left at this junction despite the prohibition against doing so. As previously warned, this situation represents a risk to life and limb. Please will you order another review of this dangerous junction?

2. Hockey's Lane was widened at the time the Safeway Supermarket (now Morrisons) was built to accommodate the traffic and large lorries for it and other commercial outlets on New Station Way. The banned left turn means that the only access for all these premises are two



very narrow roads - both unsuitable for delivery vehicles. Will the Mayor ensure that any new traffic scheme respects the reasonable needs and requirements of these businesses?

REPLY:

1. Officers continue to monitor and assess this junction on a regular basis. Accident data indicates that the level of incidents at this junction since the scheme was carried out is at a similar level to the levels prior to its introduction. There were 8 incidents in the 5 years prior to the scheme compared to 7 incidents in the 4 ½ years since. There have been no pedestrian accidents at the crossing across Hockey's Lane. Officers will continue to review the operation of the junction but at present there are no plans for significant changes.
2. Morrisons car park can still be accessed via Fishponds Road, turning right in, and via Station Avenue South and also Filwood Road. Traffic approaching from the Downend/Staple Hill direction can use either Station Rd or the gyratory of Channons Hill and Station Avenue South. There are no current proposals to review access routes to the Morrisons Car Park and other nearby premises but if a scheme is developed all access routes will be given due consideration.

C. Questions from the GREEN Group (listed in order of priority)

GRN. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eleanor Combley

Subject: Change programme savings

The gap between the savings expected from the change programme and those actually delivered is glaring. As was made clear at Cabinet last week, there is an important distinction to be made between one-off and annual expenses. While I know this will be covered in detail in the independent review, there is an urgent question I feel we need answers to now in order to learn lessons and work out a way forward.

So I would like to ask how the undelivered savings divide between:

- time slippage (savings which we are still expecting to be able to make, but not within this year, and therefore a one-off loss)
- unachievable savings (potential savings which had been identified but which turned out not to be feasible or were implemented but failed to deliver the savings expected and are therefore an annual cost)
- savings which were hoped for but never actually identified (and therefore mainly an issue of wishful target-setting)?

REPLY:

- As the question references, an independent review of the programme of change will take place to establish the detailed picture and identify key lessons to be learnt.
- Work has been ongoing to establish the benefits contribution of change projects in 2016/17 and the likely future position with regard to both delivery and benefits realisation of all change projects. This work will feed into the independent review and will provide a clear picture for each element of the overall change programme. Once



completed, the review will include a comprehensive breakdown enabling responses to each element of the question.

GRN. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Paula O'Rourke

Subject: Job losses

As I expressed at Cabinet, I am extremely concerned about the announcement of job-losses, particularly given the speed with which this is happening. Having up to 450 members of staff fewer on 3rd October will also have serious ramifications for the running of the Council.

I have been told that part of the reason for this process being undertaken in such a short time-frame is that new national legislation is coming in at the end of September which will cap the amount staff can be paid on redundancy and pension payments. This means that after this date the conditions faced by people taking voluntary severance will worsen.

The council must have known that new legislation was coming in at the end of September that would affect voluntary severance so:

1. Why was the process of discussing voluntary severance not started sooner to give more time for a carefully thought through process to be developed, nor taken to HR committee for consideration ahead of the announcement being made?
2. How many people in the organisation would be affected by this new £95k cap?

REPLY:

1. The exact details of the budgetary position were not known much sooner than conversations about VS started. As I explained to you at cabinet last week, we had to turn over the rocks in order to understand things fully.

The scale of the savings needed to remain within the budget agreed by Council means job losses are unavoidable. To not deal with the problem now would create an even larger problem next year that would seriously undermine Council's ability to set and keep to a proper budget.

Work has been on-going between HR, Unions and Service Directors to identify vacant posts and remove them wherever possible. At the same time cross-directorate officer panels have been in place to control spending and recruitment to vacant jobs. Voluntary Severance is on the agenda for discussion at the HR Committee's meeting this month.

It is unknown when the Government will lay before Parliament the necessary Regulations to enact the Exit Payment Cap provisions in the Enterprise Act 2016. Parliamentary time is limited and it is not known what priority the new Government attaches to this measure.



2. The £95k cap will only affect certain employees aged 55 or over who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The draft Regulations include the facility for the Full Council to waive the Exit Payment Cap, subject to guidance from HM Treasury. Like the Regulations, this guidance has yet to be published.

The HR Committee and Unions will be kept fully informed of legislative changes.

GRN. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: Opposing national austerity

At Cabinet, the Mayor outlined that he would “love there to be less austerity...but in local government we don’t have the same scope of powers and options at our disposal as national government does”.

I am sure this implies the Mayor is just as appalled as I am at the scale of the cuts that Bristol is going to have to make in this and coming years. These cuts come on top of multiple millions of pounds of savings over the last six years. As Greens we are seriously concerned that it will become impossible to implement these additional cuts without very serious damage to the services that people in Bristol rely on.

While we recognise the limitations of each local council working alone, we feel there is an opportunity for Bristol to play a leading role in working with other cities facing similar decimation of their funding. We are keen to work with the Mayor and other cities to represent the most marginalised in our society who will suffer most from these cuts, by taking a strong message to Westminster that the cuts to local authorities must now be stopped.

In view of this, the Green Party submitted a motion to this council which calls on the Mayor to:

- *“Take a leading role in working with other core cities and authorities to show a united front in opposing the appalling cult of austerity.*
- *Work with local politicians, business, unions, community groups and other sectors to lobby government for a change to our funding.*
- *Report back to Council on the progress made on the above before Christmas.”*

Can I ask the Mayor if he will agree to do this?

REPLY:

- You are right in your thinking from my comments at cabinet last week: I am opposed to the ideologically based austerity agenda imposed by central government.
- As highlighted at the recent Job Cuts protest at the end of August, I am committed to engaging with Government Ministers, both as an individual City and with our partner Core Cities and through the Local Government Association to make clear the significant pressures on local services and the potential impact of further cuts, particularly ahead of the next Government Autumn Statement (*in November*).



- These discussions though also need to be constructive: setting out what we can offer, where funding does most good and how local government can benefit both the local and national economy.
- A key part of this is through greater devolution, and longer term planning, enabling us to take more control at a local level, to work with our partners across the city and region, so we can have greater freedom to focus on our local needs, invest in our future and align resources behind this.
- Our priority remains making Bristol a more equal and inclusive city where no-one is left behind. This means keeping my promises to the Bristol public, maintaining our life-and-limb services and doing all I can to improve people's lives with the resources we've got.
- I appreciate and all the parties assistance on this for the benefit of Bristol, and will report back on efforts to lobby government as you suggest.

GRN. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Eleanor Combley

Subject: Ring-fencing ILF funding

Back in September 2014, the Green Party successfully proposed a motion calling upon the then Mayor, George Ferguson, to ring fence funding for the Independent Living Fund (ILF) to ensure it was provided to those it was intended for. The motion was amended and supported by the Labour group, and accepted by the Mayor.

In February this year, central government announced that it had agreed to provide additional funding to support former users of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) in England over the next four years. This followed months of campaigning pressure from disabled activists.

However, this additional funding was not included in the proposed budget to full council voted on by members.

As a result, the Green Party Mayoral candidate wrote to then Mayor Ferguson asking him to commit to ring-fencing the additional funding being made available (£1,781,970 in 2016/17, part of a total of just under £6.8m for the four years to 2019/20). The response said that the then Mayor did not think ring-fencing this grant to former ILF recipients was necessary.

Last week, Inclusion London published a report evaluating the impact of the closure of the Independent Living in London. The Report concludes that "the closure of the Independent Living Fund represents a clear step backwards in independent living support for Disabled people" and amongst its recommendations calls for "the Former ILF Recipient grant to be ring-fenced to ensure it is spent on meeting the support needs of former ILF recipients."

My question is very simple: Will the Mayor commit to ring fencing the ILF Recipient grant as recommended by the report?



REPLY:

- Bristol City Council have given a consistent commitment that funding that has transferred from the Independent Living Fund (ILF) will be ring fenced for Adult Social Care.
- This has allowed us to support the needs of former ILF recipients, but also support other disabled people when support is no longer needed, this would have not been possible if we ring fenced the money to individuals.
- In March 2016 Bristol City Council worked with Bristol Disability Equality Forum in Co producing a response to the DWP consultation on future funding transfers of ILF. A clear statement within this was “We agree that this funding should continue to support Older and Disabled people to live independent lives and should at the very least be used by Adult Social Care to support those with the highest support needs”
- We have worked in partnership on the ILF transfer using an ILF Task Group and webpage to work together in achieving a smooth and informed transition.

GRN. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jude English

Subject: Revenue-raising

A significant part of the medium term financial plan included more effective revenue-raising, particularly from the council’s extensive property portfolio:

1. Do we still expect to raise the predicted amount from the council’s property portfolio?
2. How much has yet to be achieved and how far will this go to offset the £29m shortfall?

REPLY:

- We expect to achieve £2.3m of savings from the Council’s property portfolio in 2016-17. This leaves a forecast £7.7m shortfall in the delivery of the MTFS savings target.
- The overall £29m shortfall reflects this forecast.

The strategic outline for the overall £10m pa savings target was made up:

		MTFS Budget Amount	Current 2016-17 Forecast
1	Asset optimisation – reducing the total scale of the Council’s operational estate	£5m	£700k
2	Facilities Management efficiency – cost effective FM delivery	£2m	£1.1m
3	Improved returns from Investment properties	£3m	£400k



Timing of returns achieved from this savings programme have been delayed by other priorities using resource capacity, the lead times for achieving property portfolio changes, and the pace of organisation change.

Programme review indicates that there will be increased savings over the next three years and the results of work already carried out and planned come through. Individual projects will be brought forward for Cabinet decisions.

GRN. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Charlie Bolton

Subject: Residents parking

I have been trying to clarify the process with officers for the RPS reviews. This includes asking questions on how residents in streets outside the zone could be included, how to address parking on match days, issues with traders and a couple of others. The response has led me to doubt that councillors actually are central to the review.

Could the Mayor/Cabinet member specify which decisions in the RPS review will be taken by ward councillors, which decisions will be taken by officers and which decisions will be taken by the administration?

REPLY:

- Ward members play a crucial role in relaying their constituents' feedback to the Council. They will determine the proposals for whether the RPS works should be cancelled/changed/ extended and then the final principle decisions will be taken by the administration.
- Certainly, the best possible scheme will be influenced by the suggestions and comments of ward members and the community.
- The feedback from the reviews will be used to aid officers in designing a scheme that will work as well as it can do for the community. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the Highways Authority to make technical decisions on how to proceed with a scheme.

GRN. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Carla Denyer

Subject: Design brief for City Hall 'disposables culture'

Last week was International "Zero Waste Week". To mark it, many people including one of my fellow Green councillors challenged themselves to not throw away *anything*, especially plastics. They have proved that it is difficult at first, but possible if you put the right systems in place.

It chimes with Bristol City Council's new waste and resource management strategy, entitled "**Towards a Zero Waste Bristol**" which talks about the importance of prioritising re-use above recycling, and working towards a circular economy.

And yet, enormous amounts of recyclable and compostable materials are being needlessly thrown away in City Hall.



I appreciate this question about City Hall facilities might seem petty to the Mayor and Cabinet in contrast to the work involved in running the whole city. However, *it is the very fact that the Council is not even managing to get its own small responsibilities right that concerns me.*

I have been in discussion with officers for two months about various issues around the use of single-use disposable items in the kitchens, café and meeting rooms, and the lack of any recycling facilities in the offices. I have got some answers – for instance I have been reassured that recycling bins will finally be arriving sometime in September. But I have two questions that I have not received any answers on, so I am reluctantly elevating them to this forum:

1. I have been told that the reason we have disposable tea-stirrers rather than washable teaspoons in all the office kitchens, and disposable cutlery and even disposable soup bowls in the Cash Hall café, is that this was part of the design brief for the building, and therefore it's not possible to change it. *Why* did Bristol City Council issue a design brief that prohibits reusable cutlery, crockery, etc, in direct contradiction to its own waste and resources policy?

2. Apparently the recycling bins for City Hall were only ordered after staff had moved in. It is surely not rocket science that an office of several thousand people might produce some waste and recycling. Why did the design brief not anticipate this need?

REPLY:

- Thank you for your question, we agree that there are some things that need to be learnt from here and that could have been done better.
- The design brief for City Hall, which was developed with advice from specialist design consultants, did remove the requirement for certain utensils and equipment across the staff areas at City Hall.
- The intention was to reduce the cost of maintaining the collection, cleaning and storage of items in a building where the maximum number of people would be up to 2,000. An occupancy of this level requires significant operational effort. This requirement was balanced with the provision of recyclable materials.
- The refurbishment and restoration of City Hall was a complex programme of works that was linked to the disposal of costly other office accommodation, the most significant of which being Brunel House. City Hall was made available to staff on a phased basis to protect the release of financial benefits from other closures and there was an element of completing the works whilst moves were happening.
- Recycling facilities were ordered at an appropriate time but we were not comfortable with the new facilities when they arrived and new facilities were ordered. They will be in place by the end of September. In the interim temporary recycling facilities are provided across all areas of the building.
- The building remains in a transition phase whilst we continue closing other office accommodation and moving more staff in. We will continue to learn and review the accommodation and equipment provided.



GRN. QUESTION 8

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Stephen Clarke

Subject: Ashton Gate

Ashton Gate has recently hosted crowds with attendances higher than for at time in the last two decades. As such, parking continues to be a significant issue for the Ashton, Southville and Bedminster area. With further expansion of the ground due, and the possibility of further success for the club and big local derbies for the rugby club, this issue is only going to get worse. Local people have asked for a match day parking scheme, or an extension to residents parking as potential solutions.

1. Will the Mayor give me his assurance that he will work with residents, fans, the club, and other local stakeholders to ensure a satisfactory solution is delivered which works for both all concerned?
2. There is car parking at the Create Centre, not far from the ground. Will the mayor investigate opening this up to fans on match days?

REPLY:

1. attracting large gates to their games at Ashton Gate and it is important that any disruption to local residents is kept to a minimum.

There are legal issues but we are keen to resolve them and open up Long Ashton park and ride on matchdays.

The council is working with Bristol Sports to provide a comprehensive approach to travel to and from the stadium and will continue to work with residents, fans, and other local stakeholders to ensure a satisfactory solution is delivered.

I welcome Bristol Sports initiative to set up a number of new match day bus services for the 2016/7 season. Two match day Park & Ride operations - from Portway and Bath Road - have been established and a new bus service for football fans from south Bristol has also commenced.

We are currently working to deliver MetroBus services which will provide both an excellent public transport link and safe walking/cycling routes into the Ashton Gate area in the future.

As part of the planning approval for the stadium expansion, the Bristol City Council negotiated and agreed that a sum of money would be made available to devise and deliver a matchday parking scheme when attendance reaches a certain level. The council is in discussion with the club about potentially making this money available earlier, as despite recent higher attendances the trigger has not been reached. The views of local residents will be fully considered as part of a comprehensive consultation exercise before any alterations to waiting restrictions are introduced.

2. Thank you for your suggestion regarding car parking at the Create Centre, this proposal will be investigated.



D. Questions from the LIBERAL DEMOCRAT Group (listed in order of priority):

LD. QUESTION 1

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Public transport

1. Given the problems over service reductions, unreliability, park and ride contract letting, lack of clarity on metro bus operation and concern about cuts in supported services will the Mayor now give a clear undertaking that, even if new transport powers do not arrive through a combined authority, he will commit himself to a fully integrated franchise system for public transport in Bristol and demanding the powers to follow this through?

2. The practice of Operators being given public subsidy for running a few later evening busses on what are otherwise very profitable routes is of concern in itself, when money is short, but will the Mayor now ensure that the practice of cancelling day buses or running non DDA compliant buses on these routes and then claiming subsidies is stopped by conditions in the new contracts?

REPLY:

1. The Bus Services Bill is expected to provide options on how local authorities can seek to develop bus services in their area. These range from the strengthening of Quality Partnerships, new Enhanced Partnership proposals to part or wholesale Franchising. The merits of each option need to be fully considered in the context of the prevailing bus market and whether they can best deliver the sustainable bus network to which we aspire.

Aspects of the bill may only be available to areas that do indeed go for a combined authority approach, and given the experience of the North East of being prevented from exploiting Quality Contracts it is unlikely that Bristol would be able to pursue a franchising model without the new powers.

There is a review of the Council's supported bus services currently underway, to identify needs across the city and assess value for money. The Council has successfully worked with operators to reduce supported bus service expenditure over the past 5 years, particularly focusing on those journeys that supplement an otherwise commercial route. We strongly encourage people to respond to the consultation.

2. On all bus services compliance with legal requirements is enforced the Traffic Commissioner.

Where there are supported bus service contracts in place, BCC specifies that vehicles must be compliant with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (this includes wheelchair accessibility amongst other things). If it is known that an operator fails to meet the requirements (such as compliance with PSVAR) on a BCC contracted journey, or fails to operate it at all, then the appropriate financial deductions would be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract.



LD. QUESTION 2

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Clough

Subject: Armed Forces Champion

Bristol City Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2014 following a Liberal Democrat Motion. The recommendation made at the time that the Armed Forces Covenant was created was that the council name Armed Forces Champion(s) in various parts of the council. As a former soldier, when I was elected in May, I asked the Group Whip to put me forward for consideration as a Champion and I understand this has been done. There has been no response to this from the administration.

Would the Mayor reaffirm the Council's support for the covenant and would I be safe to assume that he would be happy for me to fulfil this role?

REPLY:

- I am of course pleased to express my support for the covenant, which set out that the council would:
 - encourage local communities to support their local Armed Forces community
 - promote public awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces community
 - recognise the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces community
 - encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces community into local life
- I am happy for you to fulfil this role, thank you very much for volunteering and for bringing this to my attention. I would ask that you liaise with Alison Comley in her role as the Council's Armed Forces covenant lead.
- If any other councillors would like to work with you on this I'd be pleased to know.
- I look forward to hearing about the work that you do supporting the Armed Forces community.

LD. QUESTION 3

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Harriet Clough

Subject: Bristol Physical Access Chain

There are many potentially unseen consequences to the Voluntary Severances and Vacancy Freezes; one such has the potential to affect the ability of the Bristol Physical Access Chain, a group of disabled volunteers – of which I am one – to continue with Access Audits.

What measures have been taken to insure that this latest round of cuts do not unduly affect vulnerable minorities?

REPLY:

1. The Voluntary Severance Scheme is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which is being monitored on a fortnightly basis in conjunction with trade union representatives and Staff-Led Groups.



2. There are no plans to discontinue the Bristol Physical Access Chain, which is co-ordinated by the Equalities and Community Cohesion Team.

LD. QUESTION 4

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christopher Davies

Subject: ICT equipment - fit for purpose

It has been reported to me that certain front line teams within Children's Services are woefully equipped to professionally carry out front line services due to the lack of up-to-date IT equipment. Social Workers are unable to join colleagues in conference calls or refer to online documents because they are not provided with laptops or iPads. The mobile telephones provided are old generation technology without cameras (which they require to record injuries or situations) and without modern texting facilities.

May I ask that the Mayor requests a full survey of IT needs and provision to ensure he is totally confident that every frontline team has adequate IT equipment to carry out their roles to a professional high standard that is required?

REPLY:

- We are seeking to ensure that Council ICT budget is put to the best use for the Officers to best service the citizens of Bristol. We are reviewing the provision of ICT equipment in all areas, including Children's Services, and will report back the results.
- This review will, as you would expect, include a detailed analysis of the layers of ICT needed, or as you say, 'frontline team has adequate IT equipment to carry out their roles'. Some staff will state the need for camera phones, as they are useful tools, others will state the need for laptops, because colleagues have them, but as well as expressions of need, decisions about 'actual provision' and the 'core need(s) of the job role', our deployment capability and actual staff behaviours should be included, for example:
 - Staff might request individual laptops, but with no wifi in a building/no 3G signal, is the core need for an 'always on' connection to a case management platform. Will a networked, shared PC, provide a better service?
 - Staff might request a fleet of fully featured smartphones, but is the core need for staff communication so are more, simpler phones, that make secure calls between them, providing a better service?
 - (These, above, are hypothetical scenarios, but show how we need to analyse our position from actual staff working patterns, the reality of IT provision, layers of need and our budgets.)
- In the current financial circumstances, we have to make difficult decisions between provisioning new IT (with a total cost of lifetime ownership view) and retaining staff to deliver services. Total ICT expenditure will therefore, necessarily, be curtailed to only the most necessary cases.
- We will be renegotiating the whole Council's mobile phone contract next year. One of the options for the ICT expenditure we are actively exploring is for appropriate services



to have a smartphone that covers all three functions: calls, online documents, cameras, texting. In recognition of the financial issues, we would also offer a lower grade of phone that allows calls only.

LD. QUESTION 5

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Christopher Davies

Subject: Street cleansing

Since Bristol Waste has recently taken over the cleaning of our roads, I have seen a failure to ensure many of the roads of Knowle are kept clean. Many residents complain to me of continuing litter on the pavements and roads around the main shopping centre at Broad Walk. I have reported this on six separate occasions now and there have been only minor improvements in the service. I have repeatedly asked for a copy of the cleaning schedules but to date nothing has been provided. I have requested for all road cleaning in Knowle to be scheduled to follow after the bin collection, but again this has not been undertaken. Can I request that the Mayor ensures that the above failures are addressed as soon as possible?

REPLY:

- The Council is aware that certain areas of Knowle, are heavily used and consequently litter can build up on a daily basis.
- The Council understands that Bristol Waste Company (BWC) has responded to reports in relation to this by changing the frequency of cleansing activities to take place daily on certain streets. BWC has also employed the use of mechanical pavement sweepers to help tackle the problem.
- BWC do try to sequence street cleansing to take place after bin collections, however this is not always possible due to the services starting at different times and taking place at different frequencies. This is something the Council will ask the Bristol Waste Company to continue to look at.
- BWC will respond to ad hoc reports and are happy for any further concerns about particular streets and areas of concern to be reported to them for further investigation.
- BWC is able to provide a list of the local streets which have moved to the daily frequency.
- In the future, BWC aims to be able to produce maps which are able to show the frequency of collections in certain areas, this is dependent on a refresh of its ICT systems which it hopes to be able to deliver as part of its 10 year business plan.

LD. QUESTION 6

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark

Subject: Mayor's public engagements

As a newly elected Councillor, I have heard from the Mayor that Bristol was adopting a new and more transparent way of working.



With this in mind I wonder if the Mayor can tell me what the protocol is when he attends public meetings in the Ward and how he lets Councillors know these meetings are happening?

REPLY:

- I am often asked to attend events and meetings arranged by ward councillors or as part of a Neighbourhood Partnership (NP), and I do generally not arrange public meetings in wards myself.
- I would like councillors to invite me to their wards based on particular issues to listen to concerns and help wherever possible. If I am able to attend then I do.
- Most visits to NP areas are arranged by Neighbourhood Partnership officers, not the Executive Office, and therefore my office does not hold responsibility for notifying ward councillors. That said, I would of course expect ward councillors to be invited.
- When events in wards are arranged by external groups, I would expect the organisers to invite the relevant area stakeholders including Councillors and do on occasion suggest this to the organisers.
- The Neighbourhood Management Service Manager and the Exec Assistants team agreed in August that NP visits organised by the NP coordinators in conjunction with the Executive Office are to invite ward councillors to these visits.

LD. QUESTION 7

Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jos Clark

Subject: Hungerford Road meeting

Can the Mayor tell me how much Officer time was allocated to attending the meeting about Hungerford Road, and can the Mayor tell me if he has promised the residents of the Hungerford Road area any improvements; confirm which budget he will take the money from and which services will not be delivered so that he can deliver on his promises?

REPLY:

- The Exec Assistant team spent 1hr gathering information for the Mayor's briefing in relation to this meeting as it was organised and convened by the local Labour Councillor Harriet Bradley.
- The Transport officer spent 1 hr writing the briefing for Mayor in regards to issues raised about Hungerford rd and subsequently spent 2hrs travelling and attending the meeting with the Mayor.
- NP Coordinator and Officer spent 2 hrs each travelling and attending the meeting.
Total officer time: 8hrs
- When Cllr Jos Clark visited the Mayor early July to discuss ward issues, the Exec Assistant team spent 5 hrs gathering the information for the Mayor's briefing in relation to this meeting. Officers contributing to the briefing spent collectively 6hrs to provide briefings on issues raised.



Total officer time: 11hrs

- You should can always enquire about minutes and actions by contacting your councillor counterpart or by contacting your NP Coordinator for the area – Ariaf Hussain.
- No actions were agreed in terms of road improvements but if there were in the future, it would come from the NP Transport budget in agreement with NP members.

