

Question: PQ21.01 & PQ21.02

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: George Colwey

Background:

I'm writing as a concerned harbour user and lifelong Bristol resident. I find it deeply worrying that the proposed increase in fees seems to have been made with total disregard for the sizeable population known to be living in the harbour. This is an open secret, the harbour master himself has stated on public record that there is a population living in the harbour and that there is nothing they can do about it. It is therefore, concerning that there hasn't been consultation with the harbour's underground residential community over these extreme fee increases.

Question 1: Would the council approve increases of up to 57% for a social housing property in one year and if not, why is it approving the same increase for vulnerable residents in the harbour?

Question 2: Does the council acknowledge the existence of the unofficial residential community living in the harbour and will it therefore trigger a needs assessment, as is required under The Care Act 2014, before implementing these new fees?

Question: PQ21.03 & PQ21.04

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Alexi King

Question 1: Why hasn't the council taken into consideration the people living in the harbour?

Question 2: In a city already struggling with affordable housing, are the council aware that increasing the fees so dramatically could push people into homelessness?

Question: PQ21.05 & PQ21.06

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Nick Marshall

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: What is the council going to do if hundreds are displaced by this rise in fees?

Question: PQ21.07 & PQ21.08

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jodi Venton Harvey

Background:

I'd like some questions answered in relation to the decision to announce new fees to be rolled out across the harbour which, in some cases represents a 60% rise in fees beginning in April. This has the potential to displace a lot of vulnerably housed people and has been decided on without consulting the community of around 200 people currently living under the radar on boats in the harbour.

Question 1: How can this decision be justified when the community of boat dwellers was not acknowledged or involved in this process?

Question 2: Many of these people may be displaced/homeless as a direct result of this decision - what support will be available to them if they are unable to pay these fees?

Question: PQ21.09 & PQ21.10

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jonny Taphouse

Background:

I'm writing with regards to the proposed City Dock Fee Changes Review; and believe that the negative impact that these changes will have on the quality of life, mental health and standard of living for boat dwellers have been overlooked or indeed disregarded.

I have been unable to find evidence that the council have undertaken an Accommodation Needs Assessment for the harbour, and therefore, the equality team and the Harbour Authority saying that there is "no equality impact" is not evidenced based.

The Harbour Authorities are aware that the use of moorings on the harbour as dwellings happens, and it could easily be assumed that the people & families whom cannot afford conventional housing and are already struggling with elevated food and heating costs. A proposed increase of 32.8%** to 57.8%* for moorings in the 1st year, followed by an additional rise of RPI +5% for the 2nd year is a HUGE cost of living increase for these homes, and this proposed change is accepted by the council could well force homelessness upon them.

**Current Annual Fees: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/875-navigation-and-berthing-charges/file>

- Pontoon Berth per metre £188.20 + **32.8% proposed increase****
- Club Pontoon per metre (including club discount) £156.20 + **60% proposed increase**
- Pontoon Temple Back per metre £158.35 = **57.8% proposed increase***

Question 1: Please can you confirm that the mandatory Accommodation Needs Assessments for the harbour area has been completed & provide the location of the published results?

Question 2: Why have the equalities team not done an appropriately detailed report on the impact of these fee changes on such a vulnerable demographic?

Question: PQ21.11 & PQ21.12

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jessie Makins

Question 1: What is the council going to do if hundreds are displaced by these fees?

Question 2: Will the council trigger an Accommodation Needs Assessment as required by law?

Question: PQ21.13 & PQ21.14

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Liam Frank Bergin

Question 1: Why have the council not acknowledged and protected the existence of a community of people living on their boats?

Question 2: What immediate and practical support will you offer to those who will become homeless due to the huge increase in fees?

Question: PQ21.15 & PQ21.16

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Daf Bergin

Question 1: When you make these people, who are already at the bottom of the food chain, economically homeless, will the council trigger an 'Accommodation Needs Assessment' as required by law?

Question 2: Why hasn't there been a proper consultation between the council and the boaters about this planned Harbour Review?

Question: PQ21.17 & PQ21.18

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Griffin Pimlett

Question 1: why was the community not consulted on this decision?

Question 2: What will the council do if hundreds of people are displaced by these increases will they trigger an 'accommodation needs assessment' as required by law?

Question: PQ21.19 & PQ21.20

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Josh Walker

Background:

This change seems extortionate considering the widely known situation of precariously housed people living on their boats in the harbour and the general situation of housing in Bristol and the cost of living nationwide. The community must be consulted to come to a more reasonable arrangement.

Question 1: What is the council going to do if hundreds are displaced by this rise in fees?

Question 2: Will the council trigger an 'Accommodation Needs Assessment' as required by law?

Question: PQ21.21 & PQ21.22

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Hanni Coles

Background:

The new fees to be rolled out across the harbour (which, in some cases represents a 60% rise in fees beginning in April) have the potential to displace many vulnerably housed people. This decision has been made without consulting the community of around 200 people currently living on boats in the harbour.

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: Will the council trigger an 'Accommodation Needs Assessment' as required by law?

Question: PQ21.23 & PQ21.24

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Millie Colwey

Background:

We are writing to express our concern and opposition to the proposed city dock fee changes, which we believe will negatively impact on the community of people who live in houseboats on the harbour, including children.

The proposed fee increases will see a steep rise of between 32.8% and 57.8%, impacting an already marginalised community of people living on houseboats, who are disproportionately impacted by inflation and soaring house, food and energy prices. It is our belief that the proposals have not taken into consideration the quality of life, standard of living and mental health of boat dwellers.

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: Will you be carrying out an Accommodation Needs Assessment for Bristol Harbour, to protect the needs of this community moving forward?

Question: PQ21.25 & PQ21.26

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Morgan Etches

Background:

I'm writing with regards to the proposed City Dock Fee Changes Review (item 21); and believe that the negative impact that these changes will have on the quality of life, mental health and standard of living for boat dwellers have been overlooked or indeed disregarded.

Both the Harbour Authorities, and the Bristol Boaters Association are aware that many of the leisure moorings on the harbour are used as dwellings, and most often for people/families whom cannot afford conventional housing and are already struggling with elevated food and heating costs. A proposed increase of 32.8% to 57.8% for pontoon leisure mooring in the 1st year, followed by RPI +5% for the 2nd year is a HUGE cost of living increase for these "homes".

Current Annual Fees: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/files/documents/875-navigation-and-berthing-charges/file>

- Pontoon Berth per metre £188.20 + 32.8% proposed increase
- Club Pontoon per metre (including club discount) £156.20 +60% proposed increase
- Pontoon Temple Back per metre £158.35 = 57.8% proposed increase

The proposed fee increases will see a steep rise of between 32.8% and 57.8%, impacting an already marginalised community of people living on houseboats, who are disproportionately impacted by inflation and soaring house, food and energy prices. It is our belief that the proposals have not taken into consideration the quality of life, standard of living and mental health of boat dwellers.

Question 1: Why have the equalities team not done a detailed report on the impact of these fee changes on such a vulnerable Demographic?

Question 2: You planning on carrying out an appropriate Accommodation Needs Assessments for Bristol Harbour, so these demographics do not get overlooked again?

Question: PQ21.27

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Amanda Sharman

Background:

With no outcome visible of the; Harbour Operation Review, nor a clear outline of benchmarking fees, nor an accommodation needs assessment of boat dwellers, nor inclusion of an umbrella strategy for bridging the harbour budget deficit, nor with any consultation of the harbour users.

The escalation of these Proposed fee increases- I will predict this may lead to a mass exodus of the docks and a significant number of households being made homeless. It will put the long-standing community- put extreme pressure on lives and businesses. Fair enough we want a financially sustainable harbour- and to see improvements in facilities- but the level of price hikes seems extreme, all too sudden and a shock to the community. Where is the engagement that the Government Guidance-Port of Good Governance insists upon, where stakeholders input before decisions are made. Point 10. On the Decision Pathway Report states; the stakeholders will be engaged with to notify them of changes. This seems the wrong way round to me. Engage first; then make decisions; then engage again.

Question 1: I ask; How can this be going to Cabinet for approval next week for implementation THIS year, without any of the required background data, or a representation/inclusion of opinion from the largest stakeholder in the harbour?

Question: PQ21.28 & PQ21.29

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Tess Price

Question 1: In deciding on a new fee structure involving, in some cases, a 60% rise in fees, why did the Council not consult with the community of people living on boats on the harbour?

Question 2: If hundreds of people are displaced from their homes as a result of the rise, will the Council accept its duties to those made homeless and carry out an 'Accommodation needs assessment' as required by law?

Question: PQ21.30 & PQ21.31

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Cathy Hopkinson

Question 1: Why has the community not been consulted on the plan to increase fees by 60%?

Question 2: Why has the council not acknowledged the existence of a community of people living on their boats?

Question: PQ21.32 & PQ21.33

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Judith Ritchie

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted about this as this rise in fees risks rendering many homeless

Question 2: Will the council trigger an Accommodation Needs Assessment with regard to this proposal, as required by law.

Question: PQ21.34 & PQ21.35

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Luke Dunstan and Giles Thomson - Bristol Packet Boat Trips

Question 1: Implementing these increases in 2023/24, especially new bridge fees where there has been no charge in place for 40 years of running will have a huge impact on commercial operators. We are still recovering from Covid-19 and we have new MCA safety regulations to adhere to. Bringing in these changes now will have a severe impact on our business. How do you expect small companies to absorb these costs? Do you want boat trips to continue to be a feature of Bristol's thriving Harbourside?

Question 2: Please can you provide clarification on the proposed 'Passenger Carrying Charge'? What is the rationale and evidence to justify this charge?

Question: PQ21.36 & PQ21.37

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Bristol Boaters Community Association

Background:

Bristol Harbour has a varied mix of vessels and uses, adding to its charm and appeal to visitors. The average Bristol City Harbour mooring fee payer is not the high-class big yacht luxury owner; rather a more humble hands-on-deck, self-maintained, hard working owner. This increase of fees could drive many users out of the harbour. We would like the Cabinet to have in mind their vision for the future of the harbour when making their decision on this item.

Boat dwellers are not mentioned in Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review nor the Bristol Local Plan. It is evident that there is no understanding of or consideration for the boating community in council planning and decision making. This is further evident due to the lack of an Accommodation Needs assessment of boaters which is a duty for the Council to undertake under Section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. Due to this, the amount of need for Residential Licences remains unknown to the council.

There is a potential increase of mooring fee by 177% this year depending on the location and licence offered. These increases are potentially unachievable for many users and the dramatic change would “have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living” meaning the Equality Impact Assessment on Appendix E also provides a false analysis and misleading information.

When BBCA tried to do a benchmarking review one of the key things is that the Dept of Transport put harbours into 3 buckets. Private run, Trust run and Local Authority. There are very few Local Authority run Harbours remaining to compare against and almost none which have narrow boats , yachts and cruisers together. The key differentiator is the poor facilities that Bristol Harbour LA offers - the quality of facilities offered just does not enable Bristol to be fairly benchmarked against the private and Trust run harbours. Bristol should therefore be priced lower until facilities improved.

Question 1: With a complete disregard to the existing boat dwelling community or without including an Accommodation Needs Assessment we consider the equality impact assessment to be invalid.

How can the Cabinet make an informed decision whilst disregarding the potential impact these proposals would have on people's homes, the harbour communities and the harbour as a whole?

Question 2: Without access to the evidence of Benchmarking Fees Report, the Harbour Operations Review Report or without any recommendations of how revenue will be increased from other beneficiaries of the harbour or the Docks Estate, the price hike for boaters seems heavy handed and unevenly weighted or disproportionate.

How can we be assured that this proposed Schedule of Fees and Charges put upon vessel owners is relative and proportionate to ensure the harbour becomes financially sustainable?

Question: PQ21.38 & PQ21.39

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jonathan Coles

Question 1: Have the equalities team done an impact assessment of these fee changes?

Question 2: Are you as a council really considering a 50% rise during the current cost of living crisis?

Question: PQ21.40 & PQ21.41

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: David Etches

Question 1: Why hasn't the affected community been consulted?

Question 2: Will the Council trigger an accommodation needs assessment as required by law?

Question: PQ21.42 & PQ21.43

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jan Fox

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted about the fees increase?

Question 2: Why has the council not acknowledged the existence of a community of people living on their boats, many of whom on very low income and vulnerable?

Question: PQ21.44 & PQ21.45

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Tom Quarrelle

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: Why has the council not acknowledged the existence of a community of people living on their boats?

Question: PQ21.46 & PQ21.47

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Jan Ratcliffe

Question 1: Why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: Why has the council not acknowledged the existence of a community of people living on their boats?

Question: PQ21.48 & PQ21.49

Cabinet – 24th January 2023

Re: Agenda item 21 - Bristol City Docks-Fees and Charges Review

Question submitted by: Liam Dowling

Question 1: Wondering why was the community not consulted?

Question 2: What is the council going to do if hundreds are displaced by this rise in fees?