

Overview & Scrutiny Management Board 14th February 2023 Public Forum



Public Forum Questions

Ref	Name	Topic
Q1	David Taylor (Attending)	Item 7: Company Business Plans 2022-23: Goram Homes
Q2-3	Suzanne Audrey (Attending)	Item 10: Q2 22-23 Performance Report

Public Forum Statements

Ref	Name	Topic
S1	Jen Smith (Attending)	Appropriate use of language / SEND
S2	David Redgewell (Attending)	Item 12: WECA Minutes
S3	Cllr Geoff Gollop (Attending)	Item 7: Company Business Plans, and Item 13: Work Programme

PUBLIC FORUM - QUESTIONS**David Taylor (Item 7: Company Business Plans – Goram Homes). Q1****Question 1.**

Isn't there a clear conflict of interest between Goram Homes' strong representation on this cabinet, their pursuit of lucrative developments in the harbour, and their increasingly hostile attitude to current harbour users who may present an obstacle to said developments? Would the Monitoring Officer please re-examine the potential for conflict of interest in light of these recent issues?

Asking for a community who were excluded from the consultation process regarding conditions of license and fee increases for harbour residents and users.

Officer response provided by BCC Monitoring Officer

Goram Homes is the councils' wholly owned company responsible for delivering housing developments on land identified by the council. Their strategic objectives are to deliver housing in the city, and their business plan seeks to do this.

We do not see there is any conflict of interest.

Suzanne Audrey (Item 10: Q2 2022-23 Performance Report). Q2-3**Background**

I note from the quarterly performance report:

- Action P-ENV1.2: Due to the financial pressures on the City Council the additional projects approved by Cabinet in June '22 for our ecological emergency response have not been able to start.
- Action P-ENV2.2: To create a Bristol Blue/Green Infrastructure Strategy, which refers to the use of blue elements, like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands etc., and green elements, such as trees, forests, fields and parks, in urban and land-use planning. No further work has been undertaken in Q2 due to funding (reserve drawdown) being frozen.
- Action P-ENV2.3: Monitor and report on the delivery of the One City Ecological Emergency Strategy with partners. Unfortunately the role of Ecological Emergency Co-ordinator is being held vacant as part of the council's management of its financial pressures, so progress here is behind schedule as a result.

Question 1

Which projects approved by Cabinet in June '22 relating to the ecological emergency have not been able to start?

Officer Response provided by Sustainable City and Climate Change Services Manager

There were 6 projects which Cabinet approved to start or expand in June 22.

Work has continued on three of these but not been expanded with additional resources as envisaged:

- 1.5 BCC Land Habitat Improvement Project
- 1.6 BCC Herbicide Reduction Project
- 2.6 Ecological Network and Wildlife Index
- 3.5 Supporting Partner action on the One City Ecological Strategy including public engagement.

Work has started at a lower level than envisaged on one project:

2.5 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Framework and action plan

Work has not begun on a final project:

2.7 Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

Question 2

Developers seem to use the term 'biodiversity net gain' a lot. What checks are made to ensure the validity of 'biodiversity net gain' when it is included in planning applications

Officer Response provided by Development Management Team Manager

The Environment Act 2021 introduces new biodiversity net gain requirements for planning permissions, this is anticipated to come into force in November 2023. Biodiversity gains will be measured using a standardised biodiversity metric. Information relating to biodiversity will need to be submitted in support of planning applications and this information will be considered by specialist officers as part of the planning application assessment process.

PUBLIC FORUM - STATEMENTS

Statement 1: Jen Smith

It's really disappointing to see that mainstream secondary schools do not want to open up resource bases for Send pupils because 'this will have an impact on their results'.

The council says this has been a 'barrier'.

I think the council needs to be mindful of this 'barrier' when it comes to Send pupils who are out of education.

Send pupils are forced to endure mainstream secondary environments where it is clear they are not welcome.

Parents – usually the mother – are then vilified for their 'parenting failure' or worse, experience phony accusations of Fabricated or Induced Illness.

Just this month, a report went to Cabinet saying that there were 129 autistic children and young people who were unable to attend school due to extreme anxiety.

Victim blaming language used by the council in the report included:

'socially self-isolating'

'negative cycle of anxiety management'

Barriers are also used by schools as a way of pushing pupils out of education.

Remember that secondary schools have results they want to preserve over and above inclusion. So this short statement, which can be quickly overlooked, indicates that Bristol has an off rolling problem as well as an inclusion problem.

Having had a child at a mainstream secondary in Bristol who has experienced 'barriers' and disability discrimination, I have not seen one action from this Local Authority which would prevent it happening to other pupils.

If you don't like this statement and want to highlight it in yellow, feel free to have legal check the veracity of the claim which is clearly in the Sen team and Sen legal documents under my name.

At the time, the council colluded with the school to make it a family problem when it was school putting up barriers.

This kind of unforgivable action is what results in the 129 pupils not being able to go to school.

I know that other families still have similar experiences even now.

This might be a tiny sentence in a long paper, but it is a significant one because the ramifications of 'barriers' on families is significant, detrimental and life-long.

Statement 2: David Redgewell (Item 12: WECA Scrutiny Minutes)

We are concerned that with the West of England mayoral combined Authority and North Somerset council scrutiny commission minutes that the impression is that when Bristol city council allow the west of England

mayoral combined transport Authority Metro mayor Dan Norris to withdraw bus services to the poorest communities in the city and county of Bristol, that Demand responsive bus will take. Apart from Brislington, Keynsham and Totterdown, no other areas are covered by Demand responsive bus services.

The reason for bus service being withdrawn because Bristol City Council, BANES and South Gloucestershire council have failed to fund the Transport levy at a rate to keep bus service operating and the staff paid buses maintenance at the Depot of the city bus contracts.

Most of these routes are not (as stated at the budget overview and scrutiny commission) operated by bus and railway company First group plc. First group plc profits on bus railway contracts are very limited by the Department for transport bus service recovery grant. And railway contracts; First group plc is not profiteering out of the city and county of Bristol council or west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council. First group is owned by pension funds and it staff and trade unions. It is regulated on the Delivery of metro west railway train services and new station at Portway parkway station with Network rail western route west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Bristol city council and the Department for transport.

The services being withdrawn are operated by Big Lemon Buses, a co-operative company from Brighton.

506 Bristol city centre to St Phillips Easton, Eastville, Horfield Southmead hospital bus station; these areas have no replacement service. The places served are more than 15 minutes' walk from other bus route. The Dings has no bus service.

Part of Easton; Service 516 Whitchurch park, Hengrove, South Bristol hospital, Knowle.
- Big Lemon co operative bus company of Brighton.

178 Brislington park and ride Keynsham, Marksbury, Timbury, Paulton, Midsomer Norton.
- Abus Citistar.

96 St Anne's park, Brislington, Knowle, Hartcliffe and Hengrove hospital.
- Operated by local bus company Abus of Brislington.

511 Totterdown to Bristol, 512 Hengrove to Bedminster.
- Euro coaches of yate Gloucestershire

636 Keynsham to whitchurch
- CTC coaches of Radstock.

626 Wotton under edge, Iron Acton, Hambroke, Frenchay, Stapleton, Eastville park Bristol.
- Euro coaches.

Service 513,514 Brislington, Knowle Town service.
- Stagecoach west owned by DWS Deutsche bank. Operator inframobility uk Didco Ltd. Pan-European infrastructure III,SCSp.

Service 17 Bristol city centre, Southmead bus and coach station to Horfield Eastville park, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Hillfield, Cotham, Kingswood, Hanham, Longwell Green, Keynsham. Evening and Sunday service.
- First group plc

Some commercial journeys supported Keynsham to Kingswood.
47 Yate bus and coach station, Westerleight, Puckchurch, Emerson Green, Downend, Oldbury Court, Fishponds, Eastville Park, St Werburgs, Bristol.
- Funding Bus service recovery grant.

523 Seven Beach to Bristol.

- Euro gate Gloucestershire.

52 Bishopsworth to Bristol city centre.

- Transpora.

672 Bristol, Bedminster, Bishopsworth, Chew Valley.

- Extension to June 2023

Bus service improvement plans proposed service let in Bristol are Brislington Park and Ride, Keynsham, Paulton, Odd Down park and ride.

522 First group plc.

Following bus service improvement plans:

521 Brislington to Hengrove hospital.

523 Brislington town service.

524 Long Ashton park and ride to Hengrove South Bristol hospital.

527 Anchor Road to Chew Valley.

Whilst the North of city bus services that are supported are all being rewarded to Stagecoach group Deutsche bank along with 505 and Bristol park and ride services.

Service 10 Avonmouth Dock to Southmead hospital bus station, UWE bus station and Bristol parkway via Westbury on Trym.

Service 11 Shirehampton, Dursey Road, Shirehampton, Lawrence Weston.

Westbury on Trym, Southmead Hospital bus station UWE bus station and Bristol parkway station.

13 Shirehampton, Sea Mills to Bristol city centre.

506 long Ashton park and ride to Clifton Downs, Horfield Southmead hospital bus station.

Portway Parkway, Park and ride Shirehampton, Sea Mills, Hotwells Bristol city centre and Bristol Temple Meads.

Brislington park and ride non-stop to Bristol Temple Meads station and Bristol city centre. Not serving the community of Brislington.

The Demand responsive bus services are to run by E-zec medical service merger ESRS medical Ambulance service. Hedge fund Cairgorn Capital. Craig Smith is Chief Executive.

Driver rate £12.50 per hour, 6am to 10pm, Monday to Saturday (Sunday option). Based at a new yate bus Depot, with licence from Kevin Rooney still to be granted.

The other operators are DRT, We Transport solution ltd (a coach broker).

We are very concerned that the poorest communities in South Bristol and East Bristol are left without bus services, many without cars, who cannot walk 15 to 45 minutes to a bus stop to cross part of South Bristol. Or have to travel to Bristol city centre from Hartcliffe / Hengrove / Knowle to get another bus to try to access school in Brislington. Or From Brislington and St Anne's have to travel to Bristol to get a bus to South Bristol hospital.

Why has Bristol city council not worked with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority Mayor Dan Norris to protect bus service in East and south Bristol.

Why were all the North Bristol bus contracts re-let? The issue of contracted bus and rail services and to Transport companies is not an issue in other councils and Transport Authorities in England as profit margins are very low. All bus services in London and Greater Manchester are being franchised to private transport companies.

Passenger groups and the poorest communities in Bristol just want Bristol city council to work with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris to keep the bus service operating.

The city Financial Director has made press statements that bus service will be taken over by Demand responsive bus Networks. Not fact in Bristol except Brislington and St Anne's park. Totterdown. At present no bus services improvement bus service have been let in South Bristol by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.

On bus service infrastructure in the city and county of Bristol needs transferring to the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and Transport staff .

Many bus shelters are covered in graffiti in Bristol city centre and Broadmead area.

Statement 3: Councillor Geoff Gollop (Item 13: Work Programme, and Item 7: Company Business Plans)

I wish to raise concerns about Bristol Waste and its Business Plan.

Last month OSM members were told the business plan had been delayed. This seemed unusual given the timetable for business plans had been clearly established and agrees, but we were told the plan would now be brought to an additional OSM meeting on 27th February.

On 10th February Companies House posted a notice that the interim Managing Director has ceased to be a director on 12th January,

I wish to put on record my concern.

This is the 3rd managing director to depart. If the departure is the reason for the delay in the business plan, it seems remarkable that no one thought to inform members of this change. It should have been obvious that the termination would have been published by companies house, so there is no sensible explanation for members not having been told of these changes.

Had we been briefed in confidence we would have been aware of the situation. As it is members can only be suspicious of why all information appears to be concealed.

In previous years, we have at least known that the MD of each company has led the business plan process, This year we have no idea who if anybody is leading Bristol Waste. Members should not have to ask for such information and the failure to face up to this is concerning and shows serious failings in governance and accountability on the part of the City Council.

It would be helpful to be reassured that the Plan will still be available by 20th February and to be advised who will be acting as managing director.

I understand 2 members of OSM are fully aware of all the details and are unable to comment as a result of their involvement, but I urge them both to encourage an honest and open response to my concerns from the Council