

Full Council – 14 March 2023

Agenda item 6 b

Public questions



Procedural note:

Questions submitted by members of the public:

- Questions can be about any matter the Council is responsible for or which directly affect the city.
- Members of the public who live and/or have a business in Bristol are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions, and to ask up to 2 supplementary questions. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- Replies to questions will be given verbally by the Mayor (or a Cabinet member where relevant). Written replies will be published within 10 working days following the meeting.



*point of explanation - where a person has asked two questions on the same topic they are on the same line. Where topics are different they have different lines.

Ref No	Name	Title
PQ01	Tom Bosanquet	Digital Billboards
PQ02	Tom Bosanquet	St Luke's Road
PQ03	Lesley Powell	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ04	Sian Ellis-Thomas	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ05	Kate Swain	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ06	Claudia Collins	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ07	Alison Lauder	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ08	Carole Hall	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ09	James Jones	Plant Based Catering
PQ10	Keith Farley	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ11	Alex Gill	Redcatch Community Garden
PQ12	Haydn Gill	Park Row Active Travel
PQ13	Josephine Robinson	Plant Based Treaty
PQ14	Alex Hartley	Cumberland Basin Regeneration
PQ15	David Redgewell	Integrated Transport System
PQ16	Andrew Lynch	Bristol Port Company
PQ17	Suzanne Audrey	Bristol Harbour Review
PQ18	Suzanne Audrey	Mass Transit System
PQ19	Amanda Jones	Bristol Harbour Review
PS20	Bristol Boaters Community Association	Bristol Harbour Review
PQ21	Simon James Lewis	HMOs
PQ22	Molly Petts	Bristol Harbour Review
PQ23	Trevor Gray	Bristol Harbour Review
PQ24	Phoebe Arrowsmith Brown	Bristol Harbour Review

QUESTION PQ 01**Subject: Digital Billboards****Question submitted by: Tom Bosanquet**

Digital advert screens have spread like a nasty rash around Bristol in the last few years. There have been an increasing number of large ones on major routes, such as the highly distracting, ultra-bright ones that make me & others wince each time we drive back into Bristol on the M32 (I'm yet to meet *anyone* who likes them - they are widely loathed), along with a multitude of small ones both on bus-stops and plonked in shopping streets. They're intrusive, use (/waste) vast amounts of energy, distract, steal our space (both physical & mental) and push destructive consumerism. Each time new ones come for planning there are plenty of public comments against them, but your administration has continued to allow them to spread unabated. Perhaps they earn some funds for the Council? I can't otherwise think of any reason to continually welcome them to our (theoretically) public space - though wonder if selling all our citizens out to the advertisers is worth it on balance.

Question 1.

What benefits do Bristolians actually get from these intrusive consumerist displays?

Answer:

- The Local Planning Authority determines planning applications. It is not my administration who makes these decisions. If you are serious about change you need to direct your complaints at the right source.
- You must also consider the need for the council to raise revenue. Throughout thirteen years of austerity, local authorities have been forced to find new ways to raise money to pay for vital services for the most vulnerable citizens, as well as the necessary backroom services that nobody campaigns for such as planning officers, lawyers, or accountants.
- Regardless of your opinion on the balance between benefits and costs, there are undeniably benefits from digital billboards. These include:
 - a. Flexibility for public messaging. During Covid-19, they were used for public health messaging.

- b. They are managed remotely and so don't need staff in vans to drive around and manually change them.

QUESTION PQ 02

Subject: St Luke's Road

Question submitted by: Tom Bosanquet

Question 2.

Still no sign of our pedestrian crossing on St.Luke's Road that was lined up by our previous Labour Councillor. When will all residents, who daily have to risk their safety dodging speeding cars there, finally get their crossing?

Answer:

- Local consultation on the proposed zebra crossing took place in July and August 2022. The results of that exercise were positive and so the project is proceeding to the next stage of design and development. This includes publishing a statutory notice to advertise our intention to install a crossing. This will take place shortly.
- We will aim to advertise the St Luke's Rd proposed zebra from mid-April 2023. The legal advertisement stage takes place for a period of 21 days. The number and nature of objections received will then determine the timeframe with regards to when we will be able to present the TRO recommendation report for sign off consideration stage.

QUESTION PQ 03

Subject: Redcatch Community Garden Community Asset Transfer

Question submitted by: Lesley Powell

Question 1

I understand that the 'land' which constitutes the Community Garden was classed as 'agricultural' at inception of the Garden licence, hence £300 pa rent. With a rent proposal now on the table at £16,000pa (5000% increase) when was the land re-categorised / revalued and to what?

Answer:

- Your question is dated and therefore does not reflect the ongoing conversations. There is not going to be an immediate jump from £300 to £16,000 pa.
- We want you to flourish. The £300 agreed rent and the payment of all service charges during this time is evidence of that.
- As part of this process, we already have rejected park officers' initial rental recommendations so that we have the space to talk to you about developing an agreement that enables you to grow, but also enables us to get the necessary revenue from assets.
- We hope to reach a fair conclusion to rent negotiations.

Question 2

How does the Mayor suggest the Community Garden (not for profit organisation) finds the money for this huge rent increase when it makes a maximum of £2,000 pa profit year on year and has inadequate reserves, runs everything as lean as possible yet provides over £1m worth of social value services per annum to the community which are not considered within the rental calculations by the Council?

Answer:

- This conversation is not about you needing to convince how good your work is. I say this to groups all over the city. We know that our voluntary community sector provides vital interventions, reduce demand on vital services and have been critical to the network of Welcoming Spaces that the city has offered up.
- Our challenge is that we still must find that upfront resource to unlock that. It's not for lack of will but a lack of financial flexibility. We will continue to work with you and hope that conversations in tomorrow's meeting (29.03) have a positive outcome. The final decision will be taken at the CAT board and all discussion between officers and the community garden will be reported.

QUESTION PQ 04**Subject: Redcatch Community Garden****Question submitted by: Sian Ellis-Thomas**

1. On his recent visit to the Garden, the Mayor confirmed that he recognises and values the significant contribution it makes to the community in terms of its social value (calculated to be in excess of £1m+). However, despite this contribution, because of shortfalls in Council budgets, we are told there needs to be an extreme hike in the Garden rental of over 5000%.

Does the Mayor think it would be more sensible to accept the offer of affordable rent from the Community Garden, to allow it to sustain its growth and become resilient, in order to continue to support the community, rather than insisting on an unsustainable rent that would result in it closing down?

2. In order to help mitigate some Parks costs, the garden organisation have offered to take over the responsibility of opening and closing park gates and the public toilets, which as well as savings in man hours, would reduce the incidence of the toilets being left open resulting in regular vandalism and the ensuing cost associated with that. Does the mayor not accept that saying this saving is irrelevant, because the cost is met from a different budget, shows the council in a very poor light? Surely a saving is a saving?

Answer:

- Your work is important and impressive and we want to work with you for the city to benefit from the work you've done.
- I've worked in community development myself and one of the best things you can do when trying to work towards a resolution is trying to understand the challenges and motivations on both sides. We are motivated to deliver a fairer, more well city and we believe in the role of the voluntary community sector in delivering that.
- People like yourselves are often well able to work with people and local communities in ways big public sector organisations cannot or will not.

- The challenge here is financial. Bristol City Council need to fund services that serve vulnerable adults, children, those with special educational needs, as well as our climate team and housing team to name a few. Therefore, we must look at our assets, from parks to the harbour, to make sure we are managing our assets to be as efficiently and financially wise as necessary.
- We are committed to trying to resolve this with continuing discussions with your group.

QUESTION PQ 05

Subject: Redcatch Community Garden

Question submitted by: Kate Swain

1. Can the Mayor explain how the proposed rental increase at Redcatch Community Garden truly understands and supports community enterprise and Asset Based Community Development and the social value they bring to their communities?
2. The Mayor has confirmed in writing to Redcatch Community Garden “he wants Redcatch Community Garden to continue operating to its full extent” How does he propose this will be possible given the proposed rental increase?

Answer:

- Your work is important and impressive and we want to work with you for the city to benefit from the work you've done.
- I've worked in community development myself and one of the best things you can do when trying to work towards a resolution is trying to understand the challenges and motivations on both sides. We are motivated to deliver a fairer, more well city and we believe in the role of the voluntary community sector in delivering that. People like yourselves are often well able to work with people and local communities in ways big public sector organisations cannot or will not.
- The challenge here is financial. Bristol City Council need to fund services that serve vulnerable adults, children, those with special educational needs, as well as our climate team and housing team to name a few. Therefore, we must look at our assets, from parks to the harbour, to make sure we are managing our assets to be as efficiently and financially wise as necessary.
- We are committed to trying to resolve this with continuing discussions with your group.

QUESTION PQ 06

Subject: Redcatch Community Garden

Question submitted by: Claudia Collins

1. Over two years ago Redcatch Community Garden and Park Knowle Football Team applied to BCC to request a Sport Community Asset Transfer of the Pavilion building to run youth and disability activities. How does the experience of nil response or action to progress this encourage them or any other community groups to step forward and be involved especially when the building has continued to degrade and is costing £000'S in electricity to heat, even when empty?
2. If the Community Garden is forced to shut because of excessive rent demands what plans and available budget does the parks dept have for the Garden site that will derive either the commercial rent it says is required and / or a £1m of social value?

Answer:

- We set out the programme of sports asset transfers. Transferring community assets to sports teams at no cost to the council is sensible, which is why we created the plan to transfer sports assets to sports clubs and communities.
- This has been delayed by covid and then a lack of resource and we are committed to making sure it gets completed this year. Thank you for our patience while we get this back on track.
- We must go through a process which protects the council's assets and ensures good value for Bristol's taxpayers and is fair to all applicants, we can't just hand out the asset.

QUESTION PQ 07**Subject: Redcatch Community Garden****Question submitted by: Alison Lauder**

1. On his recent visit to the Redcatch CG, the Mayor confirmed that he recognises and values the significant contribution and “hope” it brings to the community in terms of its social value (calculated to be in excess of £1m+). However, despite this contribution, because of shortfalls in Council budgets, they are told there needs to be an extreme hike in the Garden rental. How does the Mayor believe the public will respond to the news that the Council wants address it’s shortfalls by charging Charitable Community organisations such as the highly valued, respected, award winning, unique community resource of the Garden?
2. The founders of the Redcatch CG have worked tirelessly for 5 years, investing their own money, community crowd funding and have had very, very little help from BCC. What sort of message does the Mayor think this sends to other community minded people who are considering doing something good for its community, yet see that once it’s worked hard for 5 years, BCC can come along and pull the rug from under it despite the Social Value it delivers?

Answer:

- I think your work is important and impressive and we want to work with you for the city to benefit from the work you’ve done.
- I’ve worked in community development myself and one of the best things you can do when trying to work towards a resolution is trying to understand the challenges and motivations on both sides. We are motivated to deliver a fairer, more well city and we believe in the role of the voluntary community sector in delivering that. People like yourselves are often well able to work with people and local communities in ways big public sector organisations cannot or will not.
- The challenge here is financial. Bristol City Council need to fund services that serve vulnerable adults, children, those with special educational needs, as well as our climate team and housing team to name a few. Therefore, we must look at our assets, from

parks to the harbour, to make sure we are managing our assets to be as efficiently and financially wise as necessary.

- We are committed to trying to resolve this with continuing discussions with your group.

QUESTION PQ 08**Subject: Redcatch Community Garden****Question submitted by: Carole Hall**

1. Redcatch Community Garden runs community services such as the Community Hub and Holiday Activity Fund/Your Holiday Hub for SEND children. These are funded by BCC. Who is going to run these services should RCG have to close due to the proposed rental increase?
2. The narrative around the rent being demanded of the Community garden - £4,000, £8,000, £16,000 over the first 3 years advises that the Community Garden is being treated the same as similar organisations in Bristol in that their rent is based on a percentage (6.7% in their case) of turnover. As you can imagine, we have a lot of connections in our field and our enquiries have led us to understand that there are no other such agreements with other comparable organisations. Please therefore can you enlighten us as to who else is signed up to this commercial approach to rental charges for charity / community / not for profit based organisations?

Answer:

- These questions are out of date as they don't not reflect the ongoing conversations.
- We have already rejected park officers' initial rental recommendations so that we have the space to talk to you about developing an agreement that enables you to grow but also enables us to get badly needed revenue from assets.
- We want you to flourish. The £300 agreed rent and the payment of all service charges during this time is evidence of that.

QUESTION PQ 09**Subject: Plant Based Catering****Question submitted by: James Jones**

I have attended multiple Bristol City Council meetings over the last three years to talk on this issue - the most recent being July 12th 2022, in which myself and other Bristol residents spoke regarding agenda item 14, the renewal of council catering contracts with Cafe Gusto, Parsnip Mash, and Pegasus until December 2023.

In that meeting, myself and others voiced our concerns regarding the consumption of meat and dairy and its effect on the climate crisis - a problem that has since worsened, and will continue to worsen until it is properly addressed. Councillor Craig Cheney and others present at the meeting listened to our public statements which detailed how meat and dairy consumption causes more CO2 emissions, biodiversity loss and deforestation. In turn, contributing to rising temperatures and the eventual displacement of millions of climate refugees globally. Myself and others are not alone in raising these concerns, Exeter City Council also recognise the problems that meat and dairy consumption cause, and took the initiative to successfully carry a motion on 14th December 2022 to cater fully plant-based meals to actively mitigate the effects of climate breakdown aforementioned.

As a Bristol resident, I take pride in the progressive nature of the city and this council. However, the council appears to be continually sweeping this issue under the carpet. In the July 12th 2022 meeting, Councillor Craig Cheney explained that the councils resistance to amending the terms of the catering contracts was largely due to the logistics of the contract renewals - stating that myself and others should return in 2023 to discuss future amendments, once all three contracts had been brought in line with each other to terminate in December 2023. Today, I am here to ask:

“This year, will the council finally hear the motions which have already been tabled, agreeing to fully plant-based catering, and amend the terms of these three catering contracts, so that plant-based eating is showcased and normalised by Bristol City Council?”

Answer:

- We acknowledge that there is a carbon impact on consumption of meat and dairy products, along with the mass production of soya and rice. It is also important to acknowledge these decisions are not as straightforward as you present. It is less carbon intensive to eat meat reared locally than avocados imported from places like South America.
- All our catering contracts follow Bristol City Council sustainable and environmental policies. Plant based and vegan options are always available in all these three café sites plus catering for City Hall meetings and the Mansion House. As part of the Bristol Eating Better Award, we have actions which encourage increasing plant-based ingredients and reduction of meat within menus. Council caterers are required as part of the Health and Sustainable Procurement policy to achieve the highest standard in the award. Examples of core actions to achieve this are:
 - Reduce the amount of red and processed meat in their menu
 - Increase the amount of fruit and vegetables in their menu
 - Take steps to incorporate more plant-based ingredients in the food they serve
- As a local authority, we have a role to play but we have limited bandwidth and I would also suggest we have limited authority and reach to tackle the challenges you present. We will continue to look at food as part of our overarching Climate and Environmental Emergencies and this work is emerging in the One City Good Food 2030 Framework. This includes looking at our approach to allotments and growing food in every ward.

QUESTION PQ 10**Subject: Redcatch Community Garden****Question submitted by: Keith Farley**

On his recent visit to the Garden, the Mayor confirmed that he recognises and values the significant contribution it makes to the community in terms of its social value (calculated to be in excess of £1m+). However, despite this contribution, because of shortfalls in Council budgets, we are told there needs to be an extreme hike in the Garden rental because it's 'tough' back at City Hall.....

1. How does the Mayor believe the public will respond to the news that the Council wants to put a knife through the 'beating heart of our community' (quote from visitor), bleed a highly valued, highly respected, award winning, unique community resource to death because it has haemorrhaged £millions from its own failed 'businesses' (Bristol Energy, Bristol Waste, wasted fees on Arena, Cumberland Basin, Underground.....) and needs to plug the budget gaps?

We understand that the Council is to outsource the catering commissions it currently runs directly because it cannot make them pay.

2. Why then does the Mayor think that Redcatch Community Garden, which delivers so many Social Value projects from its café and restricted income, can make more 'commercial' profit than its own operations and can therefore afford a 5660% increase in rent?

Answer:

- Your work is important and impressive and we want to work with you for the city to benefit from the work you've done.
- I've worked in community development myself and one of the best things you can do when trying to work towards a resolution is trying to understand the challenges and motivations on both sides. We are motivated to deliver a fairer, more well city and we believe in the role of the voluntary community sector in delivering that. People like

yourselves are often well able to work with people and local communities in ways big public sector organisations cannot or will not.

- The challenge here is financial. Bristol City Council need to fund services that serve vulnerable adults, children, those with special educational needs, as well as our climate team and housing team to name a few. Therefore, we must look at our assets, from parks to the harbour, to make sure we are managing our assets to be as efficiently and financially wise as necessary.
- We are committed to trying to resolve this with continuing discussions with the group.

QUESTION PQ 11**Subject: Redcatch Community Garden****Question submitted by: Alex Gill**

In the current rent negotiations at Redcatch Community Garden, in order to highlight that the Garden is not about commercial profit, but value derived from activities in order to deliver socially rewarding projects for the most needy and vulnerable in our community and make a difference to people's lives, RCG asked BCC for a Social Value calculator. RCG were told "BCC does not have one that is recognised and understood" and so RCG developed their own.

1. In order to value an 'asset' that is providing so much 'value' to a community, BCC should have developed a model for all to use so that it can demonstrate that it understands that some 'businesses' are more valuable than commercial profit. Does this indicate that BCC does not consider Social Value as a contribution?
2. As part of their Community Asset Transfer, Redcatch CG have offered to take over the responsibility of opening and closing the public toilets which would save the council money. Does the Mayor not accept that saying this is irrelevant because the cost is met from a different budget does not demonstrate an overarching strategy of an efficiently managed Council?

Answer:

- Your work is important and impressive and we want to work with you for the city to benefit from the work you've done.
- I've worked in community development myself and one of the best things you can do when trying to work towards a resolution is trying to understand the challenges and motivations on both sides. We are motivated to deliver a fairer, more well city and we believe in the role of the voluntary community sector in delivering that. People like yourselves are often well able to work with people and local communities in ways big public sector organisations cannot or will not.

- The challenge here is financial. Bristol City Council need to fund services that serve vulnerable adults, children, those with special educational needs, as well as our climate team and housing team to name a few. Therefore, we must look at our assets, from parks to the harbour, to make sure we are managing our assets to be as efficiently and financially wise as necessary.
- We are committed to trying to resolve this with continuing discussions with the group.

QUESTION PQ 12

Subject: Park Row Active Travel

Question submitted by: Haydn Gill

I bring the councils attention to Annex D of the CRSTS funding paper presented to Cabinet in February 2023. If you can find it.

This risk register on active travel scheme delivery was published as part of Cabinet papers, before being removed following my submission of questions to the Mayor on this. Clearly there is something to hide.

Regarding the Park Row active travel improvements, it seems to be that the Mayor is not "getting stuff done", but is actively delaying active travel schemes and putting funding at risk.

The risk register highlighted a risk of the Mayor's making. Issue I004. The Mayor opposed one part of the scheme, where due to space constraints, a bus boarder is proposed to be installed instead of a bus stop bypass.

Bus boarders are already in place in Bath, Cardiff (both cities without mass transit) and other cities with strong active travel delivery. With no major issues reported, they are in the national active travel design guidance, issued by the Secretary of State for Transport (Local Transport Note 1/20), for when road space is constrained.

Active Travel England is the government agency providing funding and design guidance for active travel. If schemes fail to adhere to national design guidance, funding may be withdrawn.

Bath & North East Somerset has published a video on bus boarders for those who may not understand exactly how they work:

<https://youtu.be/J9ZqfMZfdd0>

The risk states:

28/07/2022 update - the Mayor's Office does not accept the solution re: bus stop boarders. We are now notifying Active Travel England, (since ATE is not supportive of their removal) and

asking them to confirm whether proceeding with flag and pole arrangements (the only viable alternative) would mean that our funding is to be pulled (i.e. that the scheme cannot proceed). In the unlikely event that ATE does not pull funding, the project would now need to be re-planned and would be significantly delayed as a result (which would in turn have a range of implications). Assuming that funding is pulled, implications include comms, overspend to-date, loss of asset improvement and arrangements re: the temporary scheme.

Question 1

Can the Mayor expand on his specific objections to the Park Row bus stop boarders and the resulting delay and overspend this decision has led to?

Answer:

- Bus stop islands work well elsewhere in the city. An example would be Prince Street, where there is sufficient footway and good visibility.
- The proposal for the Park Row bus stop would be unique in Bristol, just a flag and pole stop with the cycle path continuing. This reduction in space for pedestrians is not acceptable in this location and would too often bring cyclists and pedestrians into conflict. The proposed space for bus passengers is too small and can be dangerous and therefore was rejected.

Question 2:

Why is the Mayor making design decisions on an active travel scheme, against guidance from highly experienced Active Travel England officers, who design active travel schemes, and contrary to the consultation results, when 68% of consultees approved of the bus stop boarder?

Answer:

- The reason we elect our leaders rather than appoint them is to allow for a broader decision-making process considering more than is available from specialist advisors. This includes a balance between lived experience, common sense and accountability.

- As the elected city leader I will take guidance from officers before making each decision.
- Often specialist officers and in particular Active Travel England can be single issue focused and not look at the wider context. On this occasion I consider that Active Travel England's perspective does not effectively consider the needs of pedestrians and bus passengers.

QUESTION PQ 13**Subject: Plant Based Treaty****Question submitted by: Josephine Robinson****Question 1.**

What are the direct and indirect ways that the council can: offer, manage, let, control, regulate or influence what get provided or sold to be eaten in the city - based on the council's operations, licensing, regulation or commercial concessions?

Answer:

The priority role of Bristol City Council in this space is to make sure you are not poisoned by the food you consume in the city. We can use our procurement powers and we have made efforts to get alignment on procurement with our city partners. Some of our influence on food provided in the city include:

- Defining standards within council food contracts from food suppliers to retailers.
- Developing policies influencing food provision and food environment including:
 - Healthy and Sustainable Procurement Policy - making sure suppliers of our work, goods and services operate in a way which promotes equality and uses resources sustainably
 - Advertising and Sponsorship Policy – preventing the advertising of foods high in fat, salt and sugar in council-owned spaces, assets and events
 - Healthy Weight Declaration – promoting a healthy weight and aligning with a health in all policies approach.
 - One City Food Equality Strategy - fair equitable access; choice; skills and resources; a sustainable local food system; and food at the heart of decision-making
- We're working with partners across the food system on Initiatives including Bristol Gold Sustainable Food City status and the developing One City Bristol Good Food 2030 framework.
- We also influence food provision with food standards awards including the Bristol Eating Better Award, Healthy Schools Award and Soil Association Food for Life Served Here.

- We require minimum standards in food provision, for example, traders at Bristol markets are required to achieve a Bristol Eating Better Award at Bronze level and Bristol Parks concessions are required to achieve a Bristol Eating Better Award at Gold standard.

Question 2.

What has the council done in line with official advice to reduce meat and dairy consumption in what's offered across the catering it provides or can influence?

Answer:

Our action to reduce meat and dairy consumption includes:

- Introducing a Healthy and Sustainable Procurement policy which includes a mandatory requirement to offer and encourage the uptake of plant-based options and initiatives which might include meat free Mondays.
- Including core actions within the Public Health administered Bristol Eating Better Award, including:
 - Reducing the amount of red and processed meat as part of the menu
 - Increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables and fibre as part of the menu
 - Increasing the amount of plant-based ingredients in menus
- Supporting the emerging the One City Good Food 2030 framework which sets out a vision for Good Food in Bristol. This includes several themes developed from Bristol's Going for Gold work such as eating better and the local food economy - both of which include climate friendly diets and how we can support a sustainable food system.

QUESTION PQ 14

Subject: Cumberland Basin Regeneration

Question submitted by: Alex Hartley

1. At Cabinet last month, the report stated “The council has submitted a bid for £5.6 million funding from the combined authority for the development of the Western Harbour masterplan and infrastructure delivery plan project.”

Can the Mayor please release the bid so it can be scrutinised by local people to highlight what this large amount of taxpayer money is being spent on? If the Mayor can/will not release the bid, could he please explain why?

2. The timetable for the redevelopment of Cumberland Basin stated that masterplanners were supposed to be appointed in Autumn 2022. As is clear from the funding request from WECA, this has yet to happen. While I understand the future is impossible to predict, can the Mayor please lay out an updated timetable including;
 - When will masterplanners be appointed
 - When will the masterplanning development take place
 - When will the planning applications take place
 - When will building work commence & finish

Answer:

- The bid will be made publicly available when it is considered at WECA committee in due course. Until the funding has been confirmed, the council cannot progress the appointment of master-planners. It is anticipated that the masterplan and infrastructure delivery plan will take approximately two and a half years and will include a headline programme for delivery.

QUESTION PQ 15

Subject: Integrated Transport System

Question submitted by: David Redgewell

1. What progress is Bristol city council and mayor Rees making with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council over the very urgent need for the west of England mayoral Transport Authority to develop new bus services improvement plan for bus services routes across South, East and North Bristol?
2. Will mayor Marvin Rees work with our other city Region council leaders to make sure that a mass transit / light rail system budget is kept at the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council committee meetings on 17th March 2023 to make sure we have an integrated transport system and the west of England city region of Greater Bristol and Bath is not left behind?

Answer:

- Thank you for your input. There has been some progress, but it might not be as fast as we would like – we all know that there are immediate challenges with the consequences of the pandemic on travel to work journeys, and recruitment of drivers. We also need a longer-term vision to help us restore a quality transport network and build one fit for the future.
- I will continue to work with the other leaders of the unitary authorities to progress this.

QUESTION PQ 16

Subject: Bristol Port Company

Question submitted by: Andrew Lynch

With a tightened council budget, every little helps. Yet about a year ago the Bristol Port Company - in which Bristol City Council is a shareholder - donated £10,000 to Liam Fox, the Conservative MP for North Somerset. I believe that Councillor Alexander represents us on that board. Did that donation deprive Bristol of any amount of the company's dividend, however small? If so, did Councillor Alexander raise any objection at the board meeting that approved either the donation or the accounts?

Answer:

- Bristol City Council has no oversight of the port's day to day business and no voting rights and therefore have no say in how the port conducts its business.
- This donation will have had no impact on the level of dividend Bristol City Council receives.

QUESTION PQ 17

Subject: Bristol Harbour Review

Question submitted by: Suzanne Audrey

You have made several references to a Harbour Review report which has shaped your policies in relation to Bristol's Harbour. Please can you provide the actual report, a link to it, or an explanation as to why the report is not being made available to the public?

Answer:

- The harbour report will shape the placemaking future of the harbour. It will be published when it goes to Cabinet.

QUESTION PQ 18

Subject: Mass Transit System

Question submitted by: Suzanne Audrey

You have made reference to a third report, about Bristol's proposal for a mass transit/underground system, which has been rejected by your office because it is based on a "flawed approach" by WECA. Please can you provide the actual report, a link to it, or an explanation as to why the report is not being made available to the public?

Answer:

The report you reference is WECA's report, and you should approach them for a copy.

QUESTION PQ 19

Subject: Bristol Harbour Review

Question submitted by: Amanda Jones

I urge you to address the issue of affordability of mooring fees and curb these rent increases, so the community that significantly contributes to the security and surveillance all along the harbourside can continue to exist

Q1 Does the council wish to look after its long-standing boat-dweller community? If so then please I ask how will you ensure these fee increases for residential license can be affordable?

Q2 Is this drastic and sudden increase in harbour fees not exactly the sort of behaviour the Renters Reform Bill should be protecting us from?

Answer:

- We have a responsibility to all our communities in Bristol. We must balance that responsibility and fulfilling our statutory duties to Adult and Children social care amongst many other services.
- Docks fees have fallen behind other harbours and more importantly have fallen behind the revenue we need to make the harbour self-sustainable.
- We are not introducing residential licences, but we are looking at the possibility of short term live aboard licences which will be at a commercial rate.

QUESTION PQ 20**Subject: Bristol Harbour Review****Question submitted by: Bristol Boaters Community Association****Question 1**

The premature approval of fees increase will have a detrimental impact on the harbour's sense of place. Pushing the diverse mix of vessels out of the harbour and replacing with the more luxury and uniform leisure craft, not only reduces the level of safety surveillance currently supplied by the long-standing community, but also has the potential to lose the harbour's charm. The Placeshaping Vision was intended to run along side the Harbour Review to enable the outcomes to be influenced by both pieces of work and feed into the 20 year plan of the harbour. Due to the delay in the Placeshaping vision, the Harbour Review outcome is premature and lacks consideration of this vision.

Will the Council halt the fees increase and other outcomes of the Harbour review until the Placeshaping vision is complete as previously intended?

Answer:

- There is no basis for your claim. Boats are charged per meter for their mooring, not their type or location. We want safe, well managed and maintained vessels in the docks which financially contribute to a safe, well managed and maintained harbour.
- Many people on leisure licences in the Harbour are breaking the terms of their licence and if people aren't happy with the fees or the facilities, they are free to move.
- We will implement the fees this April.

Question 2

The council are withholding their benchmarking activity so BBKA have produced their own. This has been sent to the Harbour team, Ward Councillors and the Mayor and Cabinet. It is also available on our website <http://bristolboaters.org/documents/>

As demonstrated in the photos contained within this document, the facilities or availability in Bristol are not a uniform standard, they also fall far below that of those in the 4 marinas used in BCC's assessment which has not been recognised or considered.

How can the council justify charging fees inline with the privately run marina in Bristols Floating Harbour without the same level of facilities, safety or service provision?

Answer:

- The benchmarking contains commercially sensitive information and therefore we are limited in our ability to share. We are looking into whether we can share a redacted version and if we can, we will. Based on that review, we have come to this level of fees.
- We recognise that work is done on the harbour and that cannot come out of the General Fund. The harbour must be self-sustaining and that means raising money to improve facilities. Not just for those staying on boats to make the harbour welcoming and accessible to all Bristolians.
- We will be considering introducing live aboard licences and we will consider implementing an additional option of more nights for live aboard licence
- If we do proceed with live aboard licences, we have published the potential rate and that a very competitive rate for a central Bristol location and we believe there will be good levels of interest.
- As with Redcatch Park we must consider how we manage the council's assets in a financially responsible way.

QUESTION PQ 21**Subject: HMOs****Question submitted by: Simon James Lewis**

By an Order made by the City Council commencing on 29th June 2020, permitted development rights were removed for the change of use from Class C3 (dwelling houses) to Class C4 (houses in multiple occupations) in central wards, including; East Bristol to prevent the character of the area being threatened by and becoming overrun with shared homes and the loss of communities, along with antisocial behaviour, parking, litter and noise complaints.

These restrictions withdraw permitted development rights for small HMOs so that they would need consent after being considered against planning policy and the effect they would have on the local community.

However, despite properties having been refused planning permission when compared to planning policy (due to the number of HMOs already at maximum capacity), why is Bristol City Council's licensing authority granting licences to landlords of privately rented HMOs that do not have planning permission in the East Bristol area without first checking that planning consent for this change of use has been granted?

Question 1

Can I implore the Mayor to review the operation of the separate planning and licencing so that they work in a coordinated way to address HMOs?

Answer:

- We agree with your assessment. BCC has lobbied central government to change legislation to bring planning and licensing under one regime. Unfortunately, this never materialised.
- Therefore, our Planning and Housing departments have adopted a co-ordinated approach. We have an Asset Register that we use to see whether planning permission is granted. Whilst we have no statutory powers to prevent granting a licence where an HMO has yet to pass planning permission, we strongly encourage applicants to apply for planning permission.

- Applicants are sent an information pack that explains the application process which includes obtaining planning consent and we also use the Asset Register to track any proposed conversions which is used to identify unlicensed properties including potential breaches of the planning regime.

Question 2

Is this why there are insufficient family homes available for rent? And is this why the Bristol rental market is in crisis?

Answer:

- Housing has become increasingly unaffordable, with renting and purchasing a house out of reach for many.
- Multiple factors influence the availability of family homes available for rent:
 - High housing demand, outstripping supply;
 - Increasing demand enables landlords to choose tenants able to pay high rental costs.
 - Increasing students numbers following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions;
 - Renters are remaining in properties for longer resulting in reduced availability;
 - Increased regulation may be resulting in landlords leaving the sector;
 - Proposed legislative changes included in the Renters' Reform Bill;
 - Taxation changes and recent increases in mortgage rates reducing rate of return;.
 - Landlords taking properties out of the market into short-term holiday lets.
- In contrast, the introduction of planning measures (Article 4 Directions and the HMO Supplementary Planning Document), may have increased supply of family homes and led to a reduction in the number of HMOs in some areas.
- We built 2,563 homes in 2021/22 – with 474 affordable homes – the most in 12 years.
- We continue to utilise brownfield sites, while ensuring we meet our ambitious housing targets, deliver on our climate objectives, and secure investment in social infrastructure. We want people to be able to access green spaces, local shops, health services and schools near their homes. The redevelopment of Whitehouse Street is an example of us moving forward with this work for Bristol, building much needed homes for our communities.

- Cabinet recently approved Goram Homes' new development pipeline, including 15 brownfield sites that will be transformed into new homes. And 1,300 plus affordable homes are currently being build by Goram Homes and others.

QUESTION PQ 22

Subject: Bristol Harbour Review

Question submitted by: Molly Petts

1. An Accommodation needs assessment of boaters is a statutory duty under Section 124 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. I have included guidance from the NBTA below.

[https://www.bargee-traveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-](https://www.bargee-traveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-12_V7_NBTA_Best_Practice_Guide_Boat_Dweller_Acommodation_Needs_Assessments_S124_HPA2016.pdf)

[12_V7_NBTA_Best_Practice_Guide_Boat_Dweller_Acommodation_Needs_Assessments_S124_HPA2016.pdf](https://www.bargee-traveller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019-03-12_V7_NBTA_Best_Practice_Guide_Boat_Dweller_Acommodation_Needs_Assessments_S124_HPA2016.pdf)

This guidance document amplifies and complements the guidance to local housing authorities published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Question 1

Why hasn't an accommodation needs assessment of boaters been carried out?

Answer:

- We haven't changed anyone's residential status or accommodation needs so we don't need to do an assessment.
- Other than the 8 people with residential licences there is no need for a wider needs assessment, as everyone else agreed to a leisure licence and supplied their residential address.

Question 2

The Harbour had previously been allocated 400k and I quote for the 'upgrade of facilities and services – to increase revenue streams including licence fees (with any increase over inflation following consultation'.

Why hasn't either the upgrade in facilities or the consultation prior to the increase above inflation been fulfilled?

Answer:

- We have launched our survey for boaters and businesses. This will support us in assessing how many people may be interested in a mooring in Bristol harbour.
- We are waiting for planning approval for the Capricorn Quay project which will see investment in new facilities. By bringing the fees in line with other harbours with the first commercial review in 20 years, we'll be able to secure the finance to invest more in the facilities for licensees.

QUESTION PQ 23**Subject: Bristol Harbour Review****Question submitted by: Trevor Gray****Question 1**

It's widely accepted that Bristol Harbour is no longer a commercial operation and today has many uses, mainly leisure and residential. Managing the harbour is no longer simply about dealing with commercial operations. The intricacies of today's harbour uses and users surely requires a much broader set of skills to ensure its managed efficiently and correctly. The mayor stated on Bristol Live 17th March 2023 that the HR would change how the harbour is managed. How will it therefore be managed in the future, is there to be a harbour board made up of councillors, professionals and stakeholders who will make decisions on its future interests.

Answer:

- That is not widely accepted – it remains a commercial operation.
- Future arrangements will be determined by the Harbour Review which will be published for, and decided by, Cabinet

Question 2

Despite any official line the harbour has for decades knowingly accommodated a community. Many are low income or retired. Could the mayor please give reassurance that concessions can be put in place for those members that are unable to afford the new fees in April. Please don't let us work against each other, working together is in the best interested of the harbour, together we can ensure the harbour pays its way whilst also becoming the incredible asset we all desire it to be.

Please, can we find some middle ground and ensure we limit gentrification of the Harbour where the long-standing community is simply displaced for those can afford it.

Answer:

- The residents of Bristol currently subsidise the harbour – the place where very many of those residents cannot afford to live. We can no longer subside the harbour operation

and it must become self-sufficient. Cabinet has already agreed fees will increase from April.

QUESTION PQ 24**Subject: Bristol Harbour Review****Question submitted by: Phoebe Arrowsmith-Brown****Question 1**

Parks get allocated funds from the central budget as it is a benefit to the wider community. Recently the proposed cuts of £1.5m to the Parks Service, as listed in the budget consultation, have been withdrawn. The Capital Plan has £3.5m of spending on parks and green spaces in 23/24. This is welcome news as shared spaces need to be supported. Why can't Bristol harbour be set up in the same manner as it is a city asset funded by many?

Answer:

- The harbour is not the same as a park. Parks are enjoyed by most residents in the city and are open to all.
- The harbour needs to become a city asset for all residents of Bristol. Making the harbour self-sufficient is a step towards this as will be the Harbour Review which will deal with placemaking approach to the harbour.

Question 2

The new proposed license fee includes a liveaboard category, if these are being introduced why is the housing minister Tom Renhard not being involved and why has an accommodation needs assessment not been undertaken to ensure longstanding members of the community needs are met?

Answer:

- We have not yet agreed to a live aboard category. This is being considered in consultation with harbour users.