

Member Forum

11 July 2023

Questions and replies



Procedural note:

Councillors are entitled to submit up to 2 written questions each.

- The questions submitted and written replies are enclosed.
- Councillors are also entitled to ask a maximum of 2 supplementary questions at the forum. A supplementary question must arise out of the original question or answer given.
- Via the group leaders / whips, questions have been submitted in priority order.
- At the forum, the asking of supplementary questions will be rotated between the political groups that have submitted questions, taken in priority order.



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Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Barry Parsons**Subject: Rent Controls**

I welcome the extensive work that went into the Living Rent Commissions report on improving affordability and quality in the private rented sector in Bristol. It includes a clear steer to engage with government on the case for a national system of rent control and the possibility of devolving powers to city level to control rents.

Q1: Given the suggested U-turn on rent control support from the national Labour party, can the administration confirm it will continue to lobby for rent control nationally and further develop local policy options as outlined in the report recommendations?

Q2: Another recommendation in the report involved reviewing the use of informal vs formal enforcement and this was also resolved in a full council motion in January. Is there a timeline for reviewing enforcement policy?

REPLY:

Q1. I am glad to see that Green councillors now welcome the report, after they organised the disruption of the commission's first meeting.

Labour says mayors and local leaders should have powers to freeze rent increases, while acknowledging the impact of regulation in the sector. We continue to call for more powers and the sector needs to be locally controlled. As I said on the BBC Radio 4's Today programme with Justin Webb there are complex realities, but interventions are required.

Currently Local Authorities do not have any devolved powers to control private sector rents or manage rent increases in their areas. The Living Rent Commission is recommending a national discussion on how a rent control policy could be developed and adapted to local circumstances.

The solution is building houses, something Green Councillors oppose at almost every opportunity.

Q2. The Living Rent Commission report will be recognised at September Cabinet. All of the Living Rent Commission's recommendations, including enforcement options, will be considered as part of the development of a new Private Rented Sector Strategy. We're also sharing the report and recommendations with our local MPs and networks such as the LGA and Core Cities.

The new strategy will consider good practice and options available to work with and improve the private rented sector in Bristol learning from successes in other areas. We currently exercise a range of enforcement powers in the PRS to protect tenants and this has included the use of banning orders on rogue landlords.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Massey, Southmead Ward**Subject: Dentists**

Q1.

Whilst I sadly couldn't make it, Horfield and Southmead Labour councillors held a street stall last weekend focussing on the crisis in NHS dentistry. I know Councillor Cole has also been campaigning against the closure of Bupa in St Paul's, which would have left people without access to affordable dental care. Clearly, this is a big issue for people in Bristol.

Please could the Mayor make a statement on the state of dentistry in Bristol, and reiterate the Labour administration's commitment to working with providers and the Integrated Care Board to ensure all Bristolians have access to affordable dental care?

Q2.

In my ward of Southmead, the only dental surgery closed down when its sole owner sadly passed away. After a few years, I was relieved that new, unrelated owners took over the practice.

The property they lease is owned by Bristol City Council. I was surprised to hear, that despite the new owners having nothing to do with the previous owner, they were told they were liable to pay his rent arrears – which totalled over £9,000.

I believe it is only right that these arrears are waived, as I do not believe the new dentists are in any way responsible for it. Do I have the mayors support in doing this, and can he ask the finance team to look at refunding the dentistry as soon as possible?

REPLY:

Q1. There has been a steady fall in the number of patients in Bristol who have been able to access an NHS dentist. The latest data available shows that the percentage of adults seeing an NHS dentist in Bristol has decreased by 6.2% from 43.5% in 2021 to 37.3% in 2022.

The access rate for the adult population, measured as the proportion of people who have seen an NHS dentist in the past 24 months, is 37.3% in Bristol, closely in line with the access rate for England 37.4%.

The key issue affecting access to NHS dentistry across the country is workforce. A shortage of dentists in Bristol affects the ability of high street practices to deliver their contracts.

Responsibility for commissioning dental care practices passed to the Integrated Care Board on 1st April, from NHS England. Both Cllr Ellie King and Cllr Cole raised concerns about the BUPA practice in May and the Public Health team asked the ICB for a position statement. The ICB have been inviting other nearby practices to take on additional dental activity.



Cllrs Holland and King have invited the ICB to bring an item on dental access to the next formal meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Q2. The risk was that Bristol would lose the NHS dentist in Southmead, an area where NHS dentists are urgently required.

My office intervened to ensure that the lease was renewed. Clearing the rent arrears of the deceased previous tenant was one of the terms agreed with the deceased estate in order to secure the surrender of the previous lease.

Following the surrender the Council and the current tenant were able to agree terms for a new lease. As there are now negotiations to extend that lease this would be the appropriate time to consider refunding the arrears payment by reducing the rent payable.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy (Bishopsworth)**Subject: YEW TREE FARM AND COUNCIL FAILURE TO PROTECT ANCIENT HEDGEROW**

The recent failure of officers properly to process an application to remove part of an important hedgerow at Yew Tree Farm, Bishopsworth, resulted in the application being approved by default.

It has now emerged that the application was based on false information and that the wrong part of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 was relied on. This has recently been communicated to the new Chief Planner. This means that the deemed consent is invalid and that any attempt to remove the hedgerow would be illegal.

1. Will the Mayor, as Cabinet Lead responsible for Development Management, now instruct Officers to notify the applicant that their deemed consent is invalid, and that the hedgerow may not be removed?
2. On Saturday, 3rd June 2023 almost one hundred Bristolians - incorporating eleven cross-party councillors, which included two Labour Cabinet Members and myself - demonstrated their support at Yew Tree Farm for the preservation of this protected hedgerow.

Can the Mayor publicly confirm what steps he has personally taken to support the campaign to save this hedge and the adjoining meadow?

REPLY:

Q1. As you know, I can't directly instruct planning officers to grant or invalidate a consent. However, I know the newly appointed chief planning officer is looking into this issue following the initial error. I've given my view publicly about the circumstances of the errors.

Council officers have comprehensively reviewed the Hedgerow application made in relation to land close to Yew Tree Farm. Further detailed, technical investigations by the planning and legal teams are still ongoing. Until these are concluded it is not possible to determine whether the suggested action could be legally taken.

Related to these unfortunate errors have been made on this application which led to the current situation. The officers involved have apologised for these errors and put measures in place to prevent these from reoccurring.

Q2. It is important to recognise that while Yew Tree farm is an important asset, it currently occupies land that it rents with leases that expire. This means it is at risk and will remain at risk as landowners chose not to renew lets.

The Council has not renewed its rental agreement on land that has always been allocated for burial use. The plans for the extension of the South Bristol crematorium is being brought forward.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Varney, Brislington West**Subject: Brislington Greenbelt**

The Mayor is undoubtedly aware of the bitter disappointment among Brislington residents over the recent decision by the planning inspectorate to permit development on the Brislington Meadows. The Mayor put the blame at the door of his predecessor for allowing the Meadows to be included in the Local Plan. However, the Mayor is now in a position to prevent another disaster for Brislington by removing the Brislington Greenbelt from the new Draft Local Plan. Will he do so?

REPLY:

There is a housing crisis and an acute need for new homes across the City and for a mix of sites. The Local Plan process must look at the opportunity appropriate green field (and in this case Green Belt) sites provide to help meet this need. The Local Plan is worked on by a cross party group. You'll have a chance to vote on it at full council.

Land at Bath Road, Brislington will be recommended for inclusion within the Local Plan when it is brought to Full Council in October. The site represents an opportunity for a mixed-use urban extension to the City and could help to provide for a mix of housing types, including family housing.

We defend the Brislington Meadows development on the grounds that it is an SNCI and should not have been included by the previous administration. We have to have a strategic approach. An allocation within the Local Plan can set important policy requirements including the need for a comprehensive masterplan and joined up approach to infrastructure planning, including transport infrastructure. Given your party opposes the development of brownfield sites at Broadwalk, Bristol Zoo's Car park and council plans at Hengrove Park, where would you build homes? As I so often have to ask Green party, "If not there, then where?"



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Community Asset Transfers

Q1 The Redcatch community centre is a mainstay of our community, unlike many other community centres it functions without council subsidy, charges low hourly rates and is always busy. It is chaired by my fellow ward Cllr Chris Davies and has been run by a small group of local volunteers for many years. Most recently after a CAT.

Officers recognised it as a success and selected it and 2 others as examples around the city of the CAT process working well for a scrutiny paper.

Unfortunately, despite all this praise the financial aspect of the report on a spreadsheet showed it as negative as the projected rent in its present condition might be significant and of course is not collected. Not only did this not recognise that the potential rent when this was taken over 20+ years ago as a wreck was zero but no figure could be given for its value to the community.

Will the mayor commit to a process that gets a real value for asset transfers and potential asset transfers and do this as a matter of urgency

Q2 a number of our residents living in the most financially challenged part of Knowle ward at the lower end of New Quay Road have complained to me about the asset transfer that was done on a former youth club in the area. The building sat empty for some years and questions have been raised about alleged involvement in "treatment" for gay people by the church.

There is a considerable demand for a youth and family support facility and a base for a food project. We have people to help with this project and the police are anxious because of severe ASB nearby and feel that diversion could help to tackle issues.

Will the mayor agree to a multi-agency meet, with local reps, the police, SARI and youth workers to tackle the community safety issues and how a positive intervention at the ex-youth club could help.

REPLY:

Q1. I am not aware of the scrutiny report you refer to. There is a CAT lease that has been place for some time and there is no consideration of changing that.

Q2. You should invite Asher Craig and Ellie King and I am sure they'd be happy to pick up any community safety interventions.

You can use the meeting as an opportunity to welcome our investment in the area with the South Bristol Youth Zone.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Hathway**Subject: Drains and EV Charging**

There are two adjacent gullies on Pembroke Road in my ward with collapsed and partially collapsed pipework. These are at a busy crossing point and whenever there is medium to heavy rainfall, the resultant flooding completely submerges the pavement and about half of the road. I first reported the issue at the start of 2022, and a job was raised for the repairs at the end of last year. However, the contractor refused the job, and the second rated contractor refused the job too, with still no date set for repair.

Q1: How many similar jobs across Bristol are still pending following refusal by our first rated contractors?

The recently announced £7 million boost towards EV charging in the West of England region is very welcome. Almost 80% of my ward is flats so there's little opportunity for off street charging, or involve an application to pave over a front garden exacerbating biodiversity loss.

Q2: How much of the money is allocated to Bristol and what will be the process for deciding where in the city this will be spent?

REPLY:

Q1. We currently have 35 drainage jobs which on hold for this reason, which includes the repair work at Pembroke Road.

Q2. Your questions highlights why prioritising on-street charging sites is an already outdated approach. Investment in lampposts is misplaced as the ratio of EV per street will grow in the next few years and the number of lampposts will not. Effectively this means the problem you highlight for people living in flats will be the same problem for people living without driveways in dense areas.

So our solution is to support investment in hubs on brownfield sites such as shopping centres and other areas.

Working through WECA we have secured £123k to develop a bid for Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure funding.

The city region has been provisionally allocated £6.6m of capital funding and a further £560k of revenue funding to deliver this infrastructure. A bid needs to be submitted to central government to secure this funding and we are currently preparing this bid with WECA. The bid will set out in more detail what the funding will seek to deliver and how to determine where that funding will be spent, at present there is no agreed split of funding. The process will come to cabinet and the administration will decide.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Pearce, St George Central Ward

Subject: City Leap and the Clean Air Zone

Q1.

I was concerned to see some councillors vote against a low-carbon heat network. Their comments implied they thought the scheme was too ambitious and instead wanted it salami-sliced into smaller projects, where local councillors could block Bristol's decarbonisation efforts because they might find a substation unattractive. This is of course very troubling.

Please can the Mayor reiterate Bristol's commitment to delivering City Leap, and reassure us and our current and any future partners that Bristol's biggest ever decarbonisation project will be delivered in full?

Q2.

I recall Full Council meetings where Green Party councillors called for the Clean Air Zone to be city-wide. Does the Mayor know if the Green Party still holds these views?

REPLY:

Q1. We are fully committed to delivering the entirety of City Leap, as are our partners.

It has a five year plan to deliver 140,000 tonnes of carbon savings, £61.5m of social value including £50m of contracts delivered by local supply chain, 1,000 jobs, all paying at least the 'Real Living Wage'.

Whether it is done so depends on whether the future administration match our ambition and delivery.

Q2. That's a question for the Green party but it has been their view consistently.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)**Subject: MANAGEMENT OF THE CLEAN AIR ZONE**

I am conscious that both the Mayor and Cabinet Member for Transport have previously given reasons for not sharing 'prematurely' statistical details around financial facts and the environmental impact of the Clean Air Zone. We are told that a comprehensive report will be published on this in the Autumn. The same rationale was used to reject a recent Freedom of Information Request. Notwithstanding this delay, it should still be possible to provide some answers on the broader administration of the scheme.

1. Can the Mayor confirm what changes have been made in the operation of the CAZ (for example, improving the ways people are notified they are entering it or have been fined) since introduction?

2. In relation to the payment of PCNs, is the Mayor aware of failings in the BCC portal whereby motorists on entering their case reference code are not informed of the amount due? Such a shortcoming has the obvious potential to cause confusion and delay in the processing of these remittances.

REPLY:

Q1 The Clean Air Zone is operated on national central government instruction and no changes have been made to the operation of the CAZ since it began.

We are not authorised to obtain vehicle keeper details for vehicles that have entered the CAZ. The council's authorisation for CAZ keeper details is only initiated by non-payment by a non-compliant vehicle within the payment window.

It is the motorist's responsibility to know if they have entered the zone and to pay the charge if necessary. The national payment window is open for 6 days after the day of travel which gives plenty of time for motorists to check their journey against the map if they aren't sure.

We did a good level of promotional work prior to the CAZ launch on publicly available, privately owned smart phone apps. These are free to use, automatically show you whether your car is compliant and how much you need to pay. For smart phone users I would recommend this is the best and easiest system to use and they are free to use.

Q2. The CAZ is clearly signed with both advance signage and boundary signage.

Our online payment portal covers payments for many council services, and it does not interface with the PCN system in order to 'pre-populate' the amount owed.

The online PCN portal, which customers can use to see the real time status of their PCN, does show the outstanding amount. Subject to the exact status of their case, customers can choose to submit an appeal or make a payment – which will take them to the payment portal where they can input the amount owed.





Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kent, Hengrove and Whitchurch Park**Subject: Clean Air Zone and Transport**

Many councillors have heard from disabled residents who don't qualify for an exemption for the Clean Air Zone. With limited mobility these residents often rely on their cars to get around. Will you consider additional exemptions or assistance for residents with blue badges?

South Whitchurch has been left with no bus service since the cancellation of the 516 service, leaving many residents with well over a kilometre walk to a bus stop. What conversations have you, or the Cabinet Member for Transport, had about restoring a bus service to this community with the WECA Mayor who has funding that could bring our bus back?

REPLY:

Q1. I secured an extended temporary exemption period from national government until the end of March 2023 to allow more time to prepare for the changes. There are no powers to extend the temporary exemption period even further, and this would affect how quickly Bristol meets the legal direction from government to reduce air pollution to legal limits in the shortest possible time.

Vehicles that carry disabled tax class are permanently exempt from Clean Air Zone charges under a national government exemption.

Financial support is available for Blue Badge holders who are on a low income of less than £27,000 per year. This was extended from the £22,000 originally proposed after negotiations with government. You could receive up to £2,000 for a car and up to £4,500 for a van.

Some local exemptions will remain in place after 31 March. This includes an exemption for a limited number of hospital patients and visitors at the BRI hospital complex. More information on hospital exemptions can be found on [the NHS website](#).

Data shows compliant cars are available at remarkably low prices. In many cases people could change their non-compliant car for a compliant one at none or very small cost.

Q2. BCC Officers are in discussion with Combined authority colleagues in relation to funding opportunities for bus services. This has included how to restore lost connections in South Bristol. There are constraints to this funding as it is time limited. It is therefore likely to be directed where there is most likelihood of ongoing service provision without further financial support at the end of the BSIP period.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend

Subject: Trans Rights

Recent years have seen a raised awareness of the existence of trans and non-binary people and an increase in acceptance and empathy amongst society as a whole.

Unfortunately recent years have also seen a backlash, with hate crimes upon the LGBTQIA+ community on the increase. We've had recent physical attacks upon the trans community in Central Ward, as well as right wings hate speakers. Nationally central government continues to introduce policies that endanger trans and non binary children, such as forcing teachers to out children to their families and mandatorily not using the preferred pronouns of a student.

In July 2022 this council passed a motion in support of trans rights.

In October 2022 BCC drew up a draft Trans Inclusion and Gender Identity Policy. This was "to support our efforts of ensuring we provide clarity on how best to support trans and gender-diverse service users and citizens".

Trans and non-binary people in our city need our support more than ever, when can we expect the Trans Inclusion & Gender Identity Policy to be adopted?

REPLY:

We have received and carefully considered the responses from the public consultation on the draft Trans Inclusion & Gender Identity Policy, including the majority of view that were opposed to the policy. These comments have been taken into account in updating the draft policy. The policy will allow for council departments to develop their own policies specific to service delivery.

The final updated policy will be adopted through the Council's decision pathway process next month and published.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jackson, Filwood Ward**Subject: Bristol Parks Tennis / Pavement Parking**

Q1.

While the sun's out and Wimbledon's on, I know a lot of my residents in Filwood will be enjoying the Tennis Courts in Redcatch Park.

The courts could use a bit of funding to refurbish them, but sadly Cllr Hopkins rejected the funding as he did not want it to be part of the Bristol Parks Tennis Model in 2017. I think this is a shame and users of the tennis court would be better served by it being part of the project.

Please could the mayor give us an update on how the Bristol parks tennis programme, including the participation numbers and the amount of investment that has gone into it?

Q2.

I've seen petitions regarding pavement parking. It is my understanding that councils do not have the power to enforce action against the vast majority of pavement parking offences and that in the few situations where the council does, we are using the powers to their fullest extent.

Please can the Mayor clarify the legal position, confirm the council is already using the few powers it has, and confirm the council has already lobbied the government for more enforcement powers?

REPLY:

Q1. The Bristol Parks Model was implemented in 2018 across Eastville, St George and Canford Park after their courts received a total of £140,000 investment.

Since this time, we have seen a huge success in the scheme with a steady rise in participation. Residents purchase pay as you play passes at £5.00/session and household memberships at £35.00 per annum or a concessionary rate of £25.00. So, for a household of four people, it would cost just £8.75 per annum to play on the courts.

There have been 17,000 registered contacts since the model was introduced and there are currently 1,300 annual household memberships.

In 2022/23 there were over 28,000 court bookings and at least 56,000 people who played tennis across these three park sites which operate the model.

The benefit of this model is that it provides long-term sustainable funding for future maintenance and repairs, and it provides certainty that a court is available once you've booked through the accessible booking system.

It also supports the delivery of our citywide inclusive and affordable tennis programme, which provides opportunities such as coaching (with qualified coaches) for children, holiday tennis,



activities, sessions for refugees, together with free tennis sessions and loan of equipment on the day for people who cannot afford to pay.

This is a clear demonstration of the success of the scheme in growing active participation with tennis of adults and families. The consultation is currently live and we would expect Redcatch Park tennis courts to become part of that success story.

Q2. You're correct Bristol City Council Parking Services enforce parking restrictions under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA 2004) and local Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Under the TMA 2004 and local TROs the Council can only take enforcement action against vehicles parked on land classified as adopted highway and that the offence in question is covered by the relevant legislation. The restrictions must be marked and signed in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulation and General Directions 2016. Examples are double yellow lines and adjacent pavement, residents parking bays, bus stops and pavement/footways with appropriate signs, mandatory cycle lanes.

What you're seeing is an example of Green party campaigning for action on things the council don't have powers to do. There was a government consultation exercise, [Managing pavement parking – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) which we responded to. We are not yet aware of any outcomes or changes as a result of this consultation.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)**Subject: HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE & POTHOLE DAMAGE CLAIMS**

Bristol City Council, as the Highways Authority, has a statutory responsibility for maintenance of the roads. If a resident suffers loss or damage arising from a road that has not been properly maintained the authority will refuse to accept responsibility if the maintenance has been contracted to a third party, and the third party has not performed their obligations. In this scenario the authority would suggest the resident attempts to claim from the third party, with whom he has no contractual relationship. This is obviously completely unfair on the resident.

1. Will the Mayor undertake to review this policy please?

Research by Compare the Market's car insurance team (using the Road Indicator Report) has highlighted that the condition of the roads in Bristol are worse than in any other authority. Although I suspect the results should be caveated, it is reasonable to assume that there is room for improvement. I therefore welcome the fact that the Government has made almost £1 million available to the authority to address this problem.

2. With regard to pothole damage, can the Mayor please advise the number of claims received and settled by the authority, and the cost of the settlements, over the last five years?

REPLY:

Q1. We undertake safety inspections of the highway network in order to fulfil its statutory duty under the Highways Act (1980).

Defects found during these inspections will be raised to our highway maintenance contractor for repair and appropriate deadlines are set based on the severity of the defect, in line with the Highway Safety Maintenance Strategy. The contractor is then responsible for delivering the repairs within this timeframe.

If a repair is undertaken the contractor is fully responsible for 1 year post repair for any loss or damage incurred to the claimant's property due to failure of that repair

It is not for the Local Authority using funds from the Public Purse to cover any negligence caused by the contractor within this time period

If a contractor does not undertake a repair within the specified time frame the contractor may be liable for any claim after the time frame.

If a claim is received as a result of works carried out to the highway by a Utility Company, the Utility Company are wholly responsible for any damage caused to the claimants vehicle for failing to repair the carriageway to a statutory level.



It seems that you are asking the council to take on all the liability for utility companies and 3rd party contractors or represent the citizen to the third party. If that's correct, then we're not able to agree to that proposal based on the potential cost to the council.

Q2. Since 1st April 2018 to date the authority has received a total of 807 claims relating to pothole damage. During this period we have made total payments of £29,819

There is £42,339 set aside in reserve against unsettled claims dating from the financial periods 2022-2023 and 2023-2024.

Due to a change of IT system we do not have records between the period 21st November 2020 and 1st April 2021. There has been a year on year reduction in potholes between 2016 and 2021 with a slight increase 22-23 due to the wet winter.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Brown, Hengrove and Whitchurch Park

Subject: South Bristol Bus Corridors

At Cabinet on May 2nd, Cllr Wilcox asked when the Full Business Case would be presented for the A37/A4018 Strategic Bus Corridors. The answer focused solely on the Central Section of the planned improvements.

What are the timescales for delivery of a) a Business Case and b) Implementation for the South Section (which includes works in my ward) and, for completeness, the North Section.

REPLY:

The Full Business Case (FBC) for the Southern Section will be completed in Spring 2024. It is intended that statutory consultation will take place prior to submission of the FBC. Statutory Consultation is currently planned to commence in early 2024. Construction is due to commence in the summer of 2024.

A re-baselining exercise is ongoing with WECA currently and we will be reviewing dates and milestones as part of that process.

The Northern Section will be subject to a revised Outline Business Case and is on a longer timeline than the Southern Section in terms of commencing construction. As with the Southern Section, high level milestones are currently being reviewed as part of the re-baselining exercise and following this a detailed project plan will be prepared. The current plan is to complete the OBC in Spring 2024

My office has been in dialogue with Cllrs Morris and Hucker who made practical suggestions.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Martin Fodor

Subject: Parks and streets funding

In the council's approved budget for 2023-24 and onwards a Green budget amendment was incorporated to allocate Strategic CIL to create an annual fund for improvements to streets and parks.

Q1: Please describe the progress on making these funds available across the city.

Q2: Cllr King made clear at a Cabinet meeting that there would be input from communities and ward members to identify how these funds would be spent. What is the process for this involvement?

REPLY:

Q1. Green councillors didn't vote for the amended budget – so your reference to a green party budget amendment is factually inaccurate.

However, when we talk about implementing the labour budget this funding has to be prioritised against other planned programmes of work. Existing workloads are heavy and resource is limited so funding has not been immediately allocated.

Q2. As resource becomes available proposals for how to allocate this funding will be worked up. Cllr King will lead that engagement work.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bradshaw, Bedminster Ward

Subject: BS3 Liveable Neighbourhood

Can the Mayor or Cabinet member provide a progress update on scoping a liveable neighbourhood for Bedminster ward and the surrounding area in BS3?

Can I remind him that funding to scope this project was agreed as part of the February 2023 Budget.

I would like a written response so I can share his detailed and hopefully positive reply with fellow Bedminster residents.

REPLY:

As we've always said, we will look to trial two liveable neighbourhoods. We've also made it clear that we will start with Bristol East trial in St George and Barton Hill and will ensure we take all the learnings from that scheme before rushing to another scheme.

The BS3 Southville scheme has some allocated funds from the 2023 budget and we'll be looking to free this up for some early engagement with the community.

You will have noticed in the local media recently strong opposition from members of the community to the EBLN and there are councils that have implemented and withdrawn the schemes.

We will ensure that we bring communities with us in making these improvements and ward councillors will be asked to lead the engagement and design. However, officer time is currently fully resourced in rolling out the EBLN and this remains our priority. We are more than happy for the local councillors to lead on a scoping and engagement exercise.



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

Subject: AUDIT OF BRISTOL WASTE COMPANY

1. Is the Mayor aware of the widespread disillusion and dismay felt by many of those formerly in-house cleaners and security staff (due to changes in their conditions, work patterns, and management) who were transferred to this business by his Administration?
2. Given the absence of any adequate explanation for some of the managerial decisions concerning how this company is being run, does the Mayor agree that a formal investigation into its governance has now become necessary?

REPLY:

Q1. No. Could you share the data that underpins your question. Bristol Waste Company has not been as successful as hoped at growing the contracts covered by Bristol Workplace but we have appointed an interim Chief Exec who specialises in transformation and will expect to see growth and improvement in the near future.

When we transferred cleaners and security staff they went with TUPE+ conditions and have security of employment at the best levels we can offer.

Q2. We appointed as chair with a clear remit of improving governance and we have reinvested in a board and interim chief exec. We have made it clear we expect the company to be run with the highest standards of governance and we maintain a strong client management function to monitor governance and performance.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Patrick McAllister

Subject: Bins

Over the last couple of months, the improving weather has brought many more people out onto the streets of Bristol, especially to open and breezier areas like the harbourside. While all of us welcome the increased socialisation and economic activity this brings, it comes at the downside of more waste.

Overflowing bins and litter-strewn streets have become the norm across large parts of the harbour region, resulting in unsightly and off-putting vistas, noxious smells and pests, and pollution of the harbour itself.

Dealing with this problem would improve Bristol's environmental credentials and make our city a more welcoming and attractive place for visitors and residents alike, with obvious economic benefits.

Q1: Can the administration please commit to liaising with Bristol Waste to install more bins in high-traffic and touristy areas of the city such as around the harbour, and provide the regular collections that they require - particularly at weekends?

Fixed Penalty Notice fines for littering can help fund private enforcement officers to curtail littering, and the existing excess over the costs of their hire should be used to "tackle environmental issues".

I understand from reviewing a previous question on this topic that much of this surplus funding goes towards community litter kits and the like.

Q2: Would it be possible to use surplus revenue from FPNs to fund more bins and bin collections in high-traffic areas instead?

REPLY:

Q1. Money is the issue here. Where do you propose the further funding come from?

The council has regular meetings with Bristol Waste Company regarding the management of litter and waste issues in the city centre during periods with the highest footfall.

BWC recently introduced night-time cleansing in the city centre Sunday to Thursday, which will mean bins being emptied later and more frequently.

Bristol partnered with the environmental charity Hubbub to introduce the Bristol is Binning Campaign, which saw 50 brightly coloured bins installed around the Harbourside and City Centre designed to encourage their usage.

On 14 June 2023 BCC partnered with Hubbub and the InTheLoop Grand Fund to introduce new brightly coloured bins around the Harbourside and City Centre designed to encourage the recycling with yellow bins to recycle empty plastic and cans and teal bins to recycle glass

bottles



Q2. Central area already gets more litter collections and bins than any other areas.

We have recently introduced more bin and collection capacity in the city centre and Harbourside. So, we will monitor the impact these interventions have on littering issues, which will include deploying the enforcement contractor to the harbourside more frequently.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bailes, Hartcliffe and Withywood Ward

Subject: Moving Traffic Offences Cameras

I was pleased that the Mayor submitted a bid to install a traffic to monitor illegal left turns on the junction of Hareclive Road and Anton Bantock Way. Following the tragic death of Keith Pullen there in 2016, his family and I have been calling for preventative measures there to ensure this didn't happen again. The Labour administration installing a camera there is therefore very good news for Hartcliffe and Withywood.

Currently, the council needs permission from the Department for Transport to install a camera there, and for other cameras around the city. Has the Mayor received permission for this yet?

REPLY:

A letter was received very recently confirming that as of 22nd July 2023 Bristol will receive the powers necessary to carry out MTE across Bristol.

There will be six initial sites to enforce with one of them being Hareclive Road/Anton Bantock Way. Enforcement will not take place straight away as camera's and back-office systems need to be installed and commissioned.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kevin Quartley (Bishopsworth)**Subject: NEW CENTRAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

I have been asked about the lack of a Tourist Information Centre in the centre of Bristol to promote some of the places of interest and excursions which start from the centre. Having such a site, perhaps located in the Corn Exchange, would be a real improvement since the closure of previous premises.

1. Is this something the Mayor would consider looking into and actioning?

REPLY:

Tourist information is run by Visit West., using the brand name visit Bristol. Most of their promotional work is carried out online, and they have an excellent website. Tourist information centres have low footfall and are very expensive.

In addition to the online presence, all Bristol's tourist sites have their own online sites and experience has proven visitors have already planned their excursions. Walk around the city and you'll see adverts for several tourists attractions and excursions.

If you want to open a centre then you could discuss the idea with Visit West and make any budget proposals in the 2024/25 budget.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor David Wilcox

Subject: Muller Road Developments

Ford depot site

Q1: Can the Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update on this uncontroversial 100% affordable housing site, please?

I understand that one developer has already walked away from building this site in 2022; the Lockleaze councillors do hope we can break ground on this site as soon as possible.

Muller road phase 2

I note that the West of England Combined Authority signed off on spending £388k on writing a full business case for Muller Road Phase 2 – the section from the Railway Bridge to J2 of the M32.

Q2: Can the cabinet member for Transport indicate when the Public Consultation for this phase will start, please?

REPLY:

Q1. Glad to hear a green councillor support homes as they usually vote against most of them.

Since November 2022 the appointed contractor has been discharging planning pre-commencement conditions and has been determining designs and approvals from the utilities including drainage.

In order to commence construction on site, the contractor requires final approval of the drainage diversion proposals and the connection of utilities. This is being delayed until the drainage works in Muller Road are completed.

The construction contract is in the process of being signed and construction work is programmed to commence during autumn 2023.

I understand you are getting a full briefing paper on this matter which is currently being finalised.

Q2. We welcomed the confirmation of funding from WECA, which we had applied for earlier this year.

In readiness for this decision we had requested that the Design Team prepare a proposal for the next stage of the project. This next stage will primarily be focused on preparing an Outline Business Case, which is a further test on the viability of the scheme in strategic, economic, and financial terms.

The public engagement is not yet scheduled in and we will notify you in due course of it.



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

Subject: SAFEGUARDING SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION INTEREST (SNCIs)

1. Does the Mayor accept that any administrative or bureaucratic errors in the accurate recording of the boundaries of SNCIs locations should be rectified at the earliest possible opportunity?
2. Can the Mayor provide an assurance or commitment to ensure that any or all necessary changes in denoting the true extent of designated sites will be made in time for the next iteration of the Local Plan Policies Map?

REPLY:

Q1. There are no errors in how planning policies and SNCIs are shown in the 2014 Local Plan. That plan was all agreed by a planning inspector following an examination.

The problem with that local plan was the poor policy decision taken by the previous administration which should not have allocated SNCIs for development in that plan.

Q2. The local plan is being worked on by a cross party group.

The publication version of the Local Plan will be accompanied by a Policies Map which reflects the policies in the new local plan. This will show SNCI boundaries on an OS base.

Previous development allocations at Western Slopes and Brislington Meadows will no longer be included in the local plan.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christine Townsend**Subject: Planning Delays**

How many planning applications are past their determination deadline and how many of these are CIL liable?

REPLY:

There are currently 624 applications that are beyond the 26 week determination date. Of these 55 are majors (and likely to attract most CIL). All of these are allocated to an officer who will be working with the applicant to resolve outstanding matters as quickly as possible. In most of these cases it is likely that an agreement for extension will be in place.

The Council has carried many vacancies in development management, while we face a cost of operating crisis. The new chief planner is prioritising tackling the backlog including reducing applications beyond their determination deadline without agreement for an extension. Identifying those without agreement that are CIL liable would require substantial effort as this data is not readily available.

Information about whether developments will be liable for CIL is added to the Uniform Planning System when applications are received, but it only becomes relevant if a consent is subsequently granted. Therefore knowing the number of currently undetermined applications that would (if granted) have to pay CIL is of limited use and therefore is not recorded.

CIL is only payable when development commences, and this (especially in respect of major schemes) is largely determined by economic cycles and market confidence. Whilst the above mentioned resource issues will have impacted on the determination of planning applications, there is no evidence that this is impacting on CIL Receipts.



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

Subject: MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL TENANTS

1. Please confirm how many full-time equivalent Housing Officers are currently operational in the Council property estate compared to a complete roster of staff?
2. Are there any plans to increase sanctions or deterrents regarding tenants who display significant anti-social behaviour (such as displaying large, bladed weapons or harassing neighbours who have disabilities)?

REPLY:

Q1. Whilst the full establishment is 57 Housing officers and three Housing trainees (60 in total), at any given time there will be vacancies which we're recruiting to following staff movement and staff sickness.

As of 7th July 2023, there are approximately five vacant Housing Officer posts and four Housing Officers who have been off sick for more than a week.

Q2. As a social landlord, our action is to take a victim led approach in cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB), establish the facts and put in place appropriate safeguards for victims. The current tenancy agreement has several references to prohibiting tenants from engaging in various forms of ASB, hate crime and general nuisance (ground 2). In addition, an external review of our tenancy agreement will be undertaken during this financial year which will look to strengthen and clarify wording to help facilitate more effective management of the housing stock, including ASB.

There are already a number of remedies available for tackling ASB which are consolidated within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and include Anti-social Behaviour Contracts (ABC's), injunctions, exclusions and possessions. The Act introduced an absolute ground for possession, providing the landlord can prove that one or more of five conditions are met (in each condition a court will have already made certain findings against a tenant).

Where we seek possession, enforcement decisions are made by the courts and in many cases the difficulties for us taking forward cases are in gaining sufficient evidence, particularly where witnesses are reluctant to come forward and are worried about the escalation of problems.

An internal ASB Working Group is working currently on an ASB Improvement Plan to improve our overall approach to reporting, investigating, and taking enforcement action against perpetrators.

If there is a specific issue in your ward you are welcome to approach Cllr Tom Renhard as housing cabinet lead.



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

Subject: PROHIBITION ON 'TIP TAXES'

1. Does the Mayor welcome the recent ruling by Ministers that the disposal of DIY detritus must be treated as ordinary household waste and therefore not subject to additional charges or fees?
2. Can the Mayor confirm when the charges will be removed as, at the time of writing, Bristol Waste Company's website says that these remain in place?

REPLY:

Q1. No I do not. Local Authorities should be enabled to manage their waste services in line with legislation. The DIY charges for rubble, plasterboard and asbestos are reasonable and target residents who are able to renovate their homes. This approach is "producer pays" and stops the cost being spread across all council taxpayers. Waste costs are going up, labour costs are going up impacting on our ability to provide an effective service for residents. All your government is doing is ensuing services are less efficient.

Q2. Any changes to current charges will be made following the Government's change to legislation and full guidance, which we believe will be announced in September. We will then consider the changes/guidance and will implement Bristol's response and communicate with residents.

