

Member Forum

12 September 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.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Patrick McAllister**Subject: Avon Crescent and the Chocolate Path**

Avon Crescent

Previously this year in response to member questions, the administration said that Avon Crescent would not be reopened. A planning application to reopen the road was withdrawn last-minute in the face of widespread local opposition.

Now, Avon Crescent is being reopened to traffic against the wishes of the community who have not been consulted. Concerns about safety are being addressed through the addition of painted white lines and planters, and we are already seeing cars parking in that new lane.

Additionally, I was told by an officer that keeping the road closed was not considered a priority for the administration.

1. Would the administration be willing to clarify its earlier statements that there were no plans to reopen Avon Crescent?

Chocolate path

Last week brought news of another delay to the reopening of the Chocolate Path on Spike Island (at the time of writing it is expected to be reopened by the time of Member Forum). The reopening of this path was pushed back repeatedly from its original date. Residents along the New Cut also had to put up with repeated delays to the reopening of the Gaol Ferry Bridge (also expected to be reopen by the time of Member Forum).

2. What measures are being put in place to ensure that future repair contracts of this nature contain safeguards to keep the time and cost of works to an acceptable level?

REPLY:

1. Our intention was very clear, we were not going to reopen Avon Crescent while the Temporary Traffic Order was in place. That order has now expired.

It is important to remember that Avon Crescent was closed under a temporary traffic regulation order to facilitate the works to repair the new cut walls, not to reduce traffic levels on Avon Crescent and it was nothing to do with the metrobus planning conditions. As with any TTRO for roadworks, when those roadworks come to an end the TTRO comes to an end and roads are reopened.

While the works have been ongoing we have installed a bus gate on Cumberland Rd to prioritise buses on that route, this prevents through traffic from travelling inbound on Cumberland Rd. This will naturally lead to greatly decreased traffic volumes and as Avon Crescent is already closed to through traffic outbound there will be very little traffic on Avon Crescent. We think it needs to remain open one way to keep access for visitors and businesses to spike island.



We face many challenges across the city with accident blackspots, congestion, delays to buses, places where people need pedestrian crossings and many other urgent priorities, and we don't have the resources or funding to deal with them all. So, bearing in mind what has already been done on Avon Crescent to reduce traffic levels, it is neither a priority nor is it necessary to put in place further restrictions.

2. Across our infrastructure projects we have to use project managers and contract specialists to protect our interests. We know that given the scale and complexity of these projects, it does happen routinely with public sector projects. As well as the scale of something like this, there are things out of control, Brexit, pandemic, inflation, supply chain issues etc.

This particular project is a large and very complex multidisciplinary Civil Structural Engineering Stabilisation Project has been largely executed during pandemic restrictions under many transportation constraints. There were also unforeseen ground conditions on an unstable river retaining wall, working within far ranging tidal conditions on the New Cut. This had to be done whilst at all times endeavouring to keep one lane of Cumberland Road open to general traffic. This inevitably has led to some unforeseen delays during the course of this project, which are out of scope of the contract.

I am pleased that Chocolate Path has now opened. The most recent delay, i.e. five days and is due to a combination of Principal Contractor staff shortages (due to staff resignations and sickness), as well as adverse weather conditions which prevented work being completed.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Bennett, Eastville Ward**Subject: Gainsborough Square & Council Housing**

1) I'm very pleased to see the council buying the derelict pub on Gainsborough Square, building council housing and community facilities in its place.

I understand the council will be consulting residents on what they would like the community facilities to be – with the Mayor's blog referencing the possibility of a café.

If residents respond to the consultation stating they would like a pub to be built there, is this something the council would support?

2) Please could the Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update on other recent council-owned housing projects, including Goram?

REPLY:

1. The next stage of the development process following the successful CPO of the former pub, is the demolition, whilst we procure a contractor to undertake the development works.

During this period, we will start the consultation process and ascertain what the local residents' views are. Once this consultation period is over the HRA will review and consider the most appropriate route forward with regards to the community/commercial space.

2. We're building more Council Houses than Bristol has seen in a generation. Council Homes Delivery Programme:

Seven sites under construction due to complete in 2024/25 delivering 187 homes:

- Lawrence Weston (57)
- St Peters (28)
- Brentry (34)
- Brunel Ford (32)
- Romney Avenue (12)
- Kingsland Road (8)
- New Kingsland (16)

Five sites due to commence in Summer 2023 and complete in 2024/25 delivering a further 36 homes:

- Bell Close (9)
- Marshall Walk (12)
- West Street (7)
- Avonvale Road (1)
- The Square (7)

Airport Rd (BoKlok) due to complete in 2023 delivering 75 homes.

Romney House, Cedar House and Hengrove Bookend Apartments are on site and will deliver 225 new homes.



Six further sites are either in planning and/or have achieved planning and being progressed to construction for 2024 delivering a further 243 homes:

- Leinster Ave (71)
- Cameron Centre (34)
- Branwhite (48)
- Kingswear (34)
- Filwood Cinema (30)
- Greville House (26)

Accelerated Housing Delivery Programme (AHDP) has commenced delivering 90+ homes (Conversions, Interim, Fast-track MMC, Acquisition of Homes).

The HRA are working with Goram Homes on the further acquisitions pipeline being worked on (including Hengrove Park Phase 1B, Baltic Wharf, New Fosseway and Dovercourt Depot)

Goram Homes are working on the sites identified in their business plan, they on site at:

- Romney House - Outline and Reserved Matters planning consented, Under construction (as of May 2022). Delivering 268 homes, (147 affordable)
- Hengrove Bookends - Started on site September 2022 delivering 53 affordable units for the HRA

They are working of reserved matters planning applications on:

- New Fosseway - Reserved Matters for phase 1 (general needs housing) submitted in May 2023.
- Reserved Matters for extra care parcel to be submitted in October 2023. Delivering 200 homes, (65 affordable, 70 extra care).
- Dovercourt - Reserved Matters for phase 1 (general needs housing) submitted in May 2023. Delivering 140 Homes (70 affordable).

They are also looking to progress on the remaining sites in the Business Plan



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor John Goulandris (Stoke Bishop)**Subject: BLOCKED HIGHWAY DRAINS**

There appears to be a problem with highway drains not being cleared even after being repeatedly reported as blocked by residents. In my ward, drains at various locations on Stoke Hill have been reported, but remain blocked. Every time it rains heavily the junction of Saville Road and Stoke Hill becomes a lake. Cars can with care still drive through the floodwater, but cyclists and pedestrians are inconvenienced. Water flows down Stoke Hill at speed and builds considerable momentum as the drains along the way are unable to cope with the deluge.

1. Please can the Mayor advise what action is taken, when a drain is reported as blocked by a resident?
2. Specifically, having now raised the issue in this forum, can the overwhelmed drains on Stoke Hill be reviewed and cleared?

REPLY:

1. When blocked highways drains are reported, they are sent though to our contractor who have up to 28 days to attend and clear them. They also carry out a test to ensure that the connecting pipework is free flowing and clear of blockage.
2. Yes. We will take a look at all the gullies at the junction of Saville Road and Stoke Hill and all the gullies on Stoke Hill and arrange cleansing where that has not been carried out within the past six months.

We will also arrange survey where testing has suggested issues with the connected pipework, i.e. it is not freely flowing.



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

The West of England Combined Authority is currently consulting members of the public on the A4 strategic corridor between Bristol and Bath. I wish to thank the Mayor for speaking out against the proposal to construct a new main road along the former Brislington Railway Line in my ward of Brislington West. This is an issue I have been campaigning on since 2016, when Bristol City Council were proposing to do the same thing.

Over the last 60 years, the abandoned railway line has become an important space for nature, with regular sightings of badgers, slow worms and bats, all of which are protected species. My alternative vision for this site is an active travel corridor, which would protect the wildlife, provide a fantastic local amenity, and do a lot more to promote sustainable journeys than building a road!

We will shortly be debating the new Local Plan for Bristol. Unfortunately, the plan in its current form affords the former Brislington Railway Line no protection whatsoever, other than as a Safeguarded Transport Link. Given the Mayor has announced an ecological emergency, and an intention to set aside 30% of land in Bristol for nature, will he give this important wildlife corridor enhanced protection by designating it a Local Green Space?

REPLY:

I will give you the assurance I've always given and gave during the mayoral election, we will not support the use of the disused railway path for road traffic.

However, we will keep open the option of keeping that land for mass transit that the city desperately needs.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Gary Hopkins

Subject: Newquay Road issues

1. A well-attended meeting initiated by residents focussed on the problems on ASB, drug dealing and crime in the area at the bottom of Newquay Road concluded that a team approach from agencies was needed to tackle the problems.

Some detached youth work has been arranged but a base is needed. Last month when I asked about a local facility, I was pointed at the new facility at inns court.

While that might be a good facility it will not tackle the local problems.

Will the mayor now engage with residents, myself and other agencies to tackle the serious local problem.

2. Before I was asked to get involved there was a confusing situation with work on safety measures on the corner of Newquay and Cossington road. Work for a new street light, to which the police will add CCTV was authorised and then cancelled without apparent reason.

A simple wall is needed to help to deal with the knife crime and drug dealing. Property officers have confirmed that this was authorised and then cancelled and they are mystified as to why. Police objections was one rumour but that is hotly denied by the police. Concern was expressed that delay may now be caused by tendering rules as the cost of the work has inflated above a limit. A further officer is now trying to get the funding available. Whilst these 2 related pieces of work will not solve all of the problems the failure to deliver saps local public confidence.

Will the mayor now delegate an officer or team that has the authority to actually get this work done please.

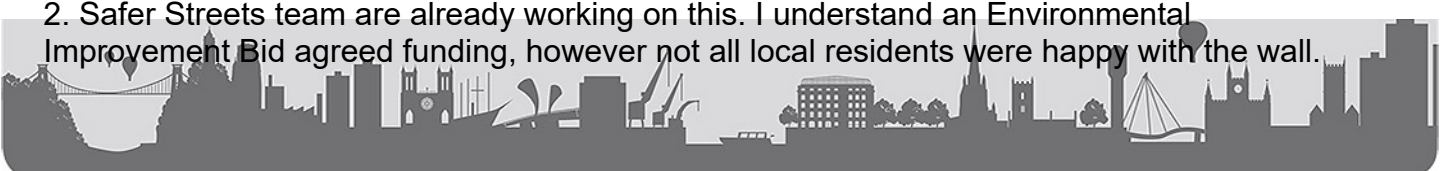
REPLY:

1. Our Safer City Manager recently met with Children's Services and Community Development teams to discuss ASB on Newquay road. From this, they are standing up a response that will be jointly led by Safer Communities, Community Development and Families in Focus. Other partners, and council teams such as Tenancy Management, Neighbourhood Policing and Parks, will be joining in this community led approach. The team will be in contact with you.

I will just say this is a city-wide challenge which sees street violence taking place, including recent fatal incidents.

The Youth Zone is a massive investment to support youth services in our city and I hope future administration will complete the second Youth Zone in the north of the city to give us wider coverage.

2. Safer Streets team are already working on this. I understand an Environmental Improvement Bid agreed funding, however not all local residents were happy with the wall.



The proposal should be reviewed and supported by a Police Design Out Crime Officer DOCO to confirm it will be effective.

The submission to the Police Crime Commissioner to consider as part of the government's "Safer Streets fund 5" includes Newquay Rd. One of the interventions will be around situational crime prevention (which could include building a wall). However, as mentioned, the works will need to be done on the basis of an Environmental Visual Audit carried out by the DOCO.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor David Wilcox

Subject: RAAC in buildings, family cycling centre

1. Given the recent government scandal regarding school buildings that were constructed using RAAC - Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete – can the Mayor provide a list of all buildings that the council owns that are affected by this issue, please?
2. I understand that the council was unsuccessful in bidding from the Levelling Up Fund for a replacement for the Family Cycling Centre, which will be used to build homes in Hengrove. The proposal was to move it to Lawrence Weston; what is the status of this project to support families to cycle safely in a protected environment?

REPLY:

1. All of Bristol's council maintained schools were checked earlier this year and thankfully no evidence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was identified. The Department of Education (DfE) are commissioning further specialist surveys at a small number of educational settings in Bristol, who we continue to support.

A wider audit of other council maintained sites is underway. No reports have been received to indicate the presence of any RAAC in those buildings either. We will provide an update as soon as possible.

2. The new Bristol Cycling Centre project is a key element of Bristol's plans to boost levels of cycling in Bristol. The project is still live and alternative funding is being sought since the levelling up bid.

One potential source could be Utilising underspends from the current phase of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme, and we'll continue to explore other options with WECA.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Massey, Southmead Ward

Subject: Schools

Parents around the UK would be rightly concerned by the government's last-minute announcement that some schools with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete were not safe – with the government failing to even immediately announce which schools.

A former senior civil servant has stated that in 2021, when the Prime Minister was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Tory Government cut the budget for school repairs by half – leading to the situation we have today.

Q1) How much funding for repairs has the Government cut from schools in Bristol?

Q2) Are any of our looked after children who are currently living outside of Bristol attending schools with concrete problems?

REPLY:

1. While parents and staff across the country will be concerned both about the safety of buildings thankfully no evidence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete has been found in any Bristol's Local Authority maintained schools.

Of course, it is difficult to count what we haven't been given, but it's clear that the lack of investment we've seen nationally over the last decade in education.

Some schools in Bristol were among the very last ones in the UK to be rebuilt by Labour's Building Schools for the Future programme, which the coalition government cancelled.

2. Not been made aware of any of our looked after children attending any of the schools, but this is still a changing situation.

Some of these year groups have faced significant interruption through the pandemic so it is important they are in safe facilities as soon as possible to minimise disruption now.

Unfortunately, despite us sending information to DfE at the start of the year, the government only took action two days before the start of a new school term, just before the end of the summer holidays.

It is little comfort that, as Government has explained, "most schools are unaffected".



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

Subject: DIFFERENTIAL CLEANSING REGIMES

1. Can the Mayor explain why there are disparities in cleaning rotas for various parts of the city – for example Clifton benefits from a weekly cleansing schedule whilst in my own Ward it is conducted monthly – a quarter of the frequency?
2. Please can you provide comparative details for each ward?

REPLY:

1. Ward boundaries are not factors in cleaning rotas. Cleansing regimes are scheduled based on the type of road and the amount of footfall an area has.

For example:

- City Centre and shopping roads/high streets – cleansed daily
- Arterial roads - Daily/Weekly depending on location
- Residential urban – weekly to monthly
- Residential suburban – Fortnightly to monthly

Clifton, like some other areas, will receive a more frequent service than your ward because of the commercial and leisure activities in the ward. Other areas will receive less if they have more residential roads.

2. As explained above, we don't have ward based data.



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

Subject: Bus Services

1. BSIP and supported bus services

Can the Mayor share with me what conversations have occurred between Bristol City Council and WECA, at either an officer or member level, about additional supported bus services for the city from the BSIP funding this year?

2. Bus services in Whitchurch

Once again, the residents of Hengrove and Whitchurch have seen another cut to bus services in our area with the replacement of the 92 bus with the 73 which will no longer provide a vital link to South Bristol hospital. Will the Mayor and Bristol City Council support local councillors calls and lobbying of WECA for a new supported bus service to be implemented for the area which could restore bus services to the South Whitchurch area?

REPLY:

1. We work closely with WECA all the time at officer level, with the combined authority directly and with other neighbouring authorities.

At the next committee meeting we will be receiving an update on the situation with BSIP. This report provides a progress update on the BSIP work programme and spend to date, with reference to key impacts where they are now available. It also provides an explanation of the response to the changes to BSIP funding rules made by the Department for Transport in relation to supported bus services.

2. We will need to review the update from WECA as it comes in. I am sure you'll make representations at the WECA meeting. The challenges created by the current model of bus services and reduced patronage since the pandemic show why we need ambitious plans for transport in Bristol, including a mass transit, and why bus franchising as a first step to public ownership should be explored.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Chris Davies**Subject: Parks**

1. Dave Wherrett is our retired community youth worker and is still highly regarded by very many people in the area. Just over 10 years ago he led, with our support, the successful move to install useable tennis courts, a MUGA and other facilities in Redcatch Park. A condition was that the facilities remain on a free access basis. Officers have been keen to move courts to pay to play ever since and recently spoke to us at the last minute about a consultation they planned to run to change the basis of the management.

We did not try to block the consultation and indeed encouraged people to take part but asked that it was balanced to give residents and users an open and unbiased choice. This was refused and we now have the position where access to the data results, despite a freedom of information request, was blocked.

Officers referred us to your office but your only communication indicates that you have a misunderstanding about what is actually happening in practice.

Data and a previously promised meeting have been withheld until after an officer decision has been made. Now probably enacted between submission date of this question and this meeting.

Will the mayor now agree to meet with us to examine the factual situation regarding this scheme and the way matters have been conducted and work with us to agree the way forward favoured by the community.

2. Can the mayor please confirm that a section 106 fund set up by my ward colleague Gary Hopkins in the pre-mayor cabinet still exists and is available for improvements to sports facilities in parks. Can the mayor tell us the remaining size of this fund and if there any restrictions that would prevent it being spent on our tennis courts?

REPLY:

1. The decision has now been taken to bring Redcatch Tennis courts into the city wide offer run by Wesport. In making that decision we considered the consultation responses which include sizeable support for the improved offer which includes tennis lessons and restored courts.

We also considered input from the Lawn Tennis Association and the success of the city wide tennis app. The new system has grown participation at each location bringing more people into active sport and recreation.

2. No. At the most recent budget we allocated funds to improve parks and there is £230,000 Sports Section 106 money available.

A contribution of £30,000 – £40,000 has been proposed towards floodlighting two of the tennis courts at Redcatch Park (subject to planning approval) as part of their inclusion into the sustainable parks tennis operating model.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Christine Townsend

Subject: Street cleaning and planning applications

1. Bristol Waste have street grades around cleanliness levels for their staff – how are these differing levels decided upon and what weight is given to levels of economic and social deprivation within the criteria?
2. What processes do officers undertake to ensure planning application declarations are truthful? How many false declarations have been picked up and acted upon using this process in the last 12 months?

REPLY:

1. I am not sure social deprivation has a relevance to the amount of litter generated. The cleansing grades (the level of litter present) for the City based on City Centre is grade A and rest of City is grade B.

The cleansing regimes are scheduled based on the type of road and footfall

- City Centre and shopping roads/high streets– cleansed daily
- Arterial roads - Daily/Weekly depending on location
- Residential urban – weekly to monthly depending on need
- Residential suburban – Fortnightly to monthly depending on need

2. Applications and associated documents are taken to be correct on the basis that applicants have to declare their veracity as part of submitting an application.

However, where anything gives rise to concerns or there are discrepancies, officers challenge applicants on these points and ask to make revisions where consultees raise issues or these are necessary for planning law and/or policy reasons. Submissions from third parties are similarly treated in good faith. Depending on the severity of issues/matters contested it is possible to ask applicants to submit affidavits or sworn statements alongside applications.

Naturally such requests need to be made in a proportionate manner and as such would only be requested where there is a specific requirement to establish ‘truthfulness’.

It would be very difficult to quantify how many “false declarations” have been picked up because it’s the sort of issue that gets considered through the negotiation process of a planning application.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Hulme, Horfield Ward

Subject: HMO Licensing / Playpark Funding

Question one - HMO Licensing:

I am pleased that the council is looking to expand its landlord licensing schemes. Whilst its main benefit is ensuring better regulation and standards for tenants in the private rented sector, the HMO licensing scheme has the secondary benefit of allowing the council to keep track of the number of HMOs in the area.

This helps us to create balanced communities and will be an important tool in stopping an area becoming over-saturated with HMOs.

Please could the Mayor / Cabinet Member for Housing provide an update on HMO licensing, and how it has improved the council's data on HMOs?

Question two – playparks:

I read an article in the Guardian highlighting the dire state of playgrounds across the UK – with some councils forced to cut their parks department by 80%. It highlights Brighton as an example, but I am relieved to read that the newly-elected Labour administration has pledged £3m to improving playparks in their city.

How much funding does Bristol City Council have dedicated to playparks, including Strategic CIL, local CIL bids, funding for playparks on HRA land, and all other funding streams?

REPLY:

1. HMO Licensing data is shared with Development Management to enable informed decisions when planning applications are received for change of use to a new HMO.

By mapping the licensed HMOs they are able to use a tool to measure density and therefore whether planning permission should be refused in certain areas, in line with their [HMO SPD](#) (Supplementary Planning Document). This will help inform future areas where Article 4 Directives* may need to be considered.

Section 232 of the Housing Act 2004 require Local Authorities to maintain a public register of licensed properties. Once a property is licensed, it is included on a public register and onto our [pinpoint mapping system](#), that can be accessed to search for licensed properties online to see their location, as well as licence holder and manager details.

* An article 4 directive removes permitted development rights in certain parts of the city so that planning permission is required before converting a property to a small HMO.

2. We are delivering a strong capital investment programme, with particular focus on play facilities for children and young people. The capital programme has over £4m currently allocated to play schemes across the city including upgrading popular facilities at sites such as Oldbury Court Estate and Hengrove Play Park.



The allocation by Cabinet this year of £1.5m from Strategic CIL will particularly focus on improving access to play facilities for children of all abilities and our wider parks investment is acting to improve access to our green spaces.

A further investment of £2m of Strategic CIL will be made to the city's parks and green spaces over the next four years with the potential for those funds to further improve facilities for children and young people.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Steve Smith (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)**Subject: WRITTEN OFF DEBT - PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES**

A report to the Audit Committee (24th July 2023) revealed that Council had written off over 41,000 parking tickets worth £3.4m in 2022/23. This excludes any data relating to the operation of the CAZ.

1. Does the Mayor believe the Authority can afford to lose this substantial amount of income through failing to collect on these penalty charges?
2. How much income is the proposed introduction of pay and display charges on neighbourhood car parks, including the one at Westbury Village in my ward, projected to generate each year?

REPLY:

1. There is a statutory process for the recovery of Penalty Charge Notices, which is followed in full, with additional steps added recently in line with the Council's approach to ethical debt collection. The process culminates in a warrant for the recovery of the debt being issued to Enforcement Agents (Bailiffs).

Cases are only written off if the bailiff cannot recover the debt within the 12 month duration of the warrant. The main reason why enforcement agents cannot recover debt is that the debtor has moved away from the address held by DVLA and cannot be traced. In these circumstances, there is little further action that the Council can reasonably take.

The amount written off reflects the value of the cases at the point they are written off. Had the cases all been paid within 14 days of issue during their discounted rate period the amount the Council would have received would have been significantly less (c £1.2m).

2. The introduction of charges in some of the neighbourhood car parks is still subject to statutory consultation, and therefore the precise details are yet to be finalised. Consultation on the proposed new charges is expected to take place in the Autumn.

Modelling of the initial proposals suggests that the new charges may generate up to £400,000 per annum towards transport related improvements.



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

Subject: Schools, RAAC

1. Can the Mayor confirm that all Bristol's schools have engaged with the Department for Education's process for identifying buildings with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)?

2. What steps has Bristol City Council taken to proactively identify RAAC issues in schools and other public buildings in the city, and what has been the outcome?

REPLY:

1. All of Bristol's local authority maintained schools were checked earlier this year and thankfully no evidence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was identified.

The Department of Education (DfE) are commissioning further specialist surveys at a small number of educational settings in Bristol, who we continue to support.

2. A wider audit of other council maintained sites is underway. No reports have been received to indicate the presence of any RAAC in those buildings either. We will provide an update as soon as possible.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Emma Edwards**Subject: Muller Road works**

Works on the northern section of Muller Road, known as Muller Road Phase 1, started in August 2022 and were scheduled to finish in the spring, with an initial completion date of March 2023. (<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/start-date-announced-muller-road-7439383?cmdf=muller+road+works>)

It's now September, and despite residents and councillors being given completion dates of June, July and August previously, it's been quietly announced that the works will be finished on September the 16th – six months later. (https://twitter.com/bristolcouncil/status/1691396683685298176?s=61&t=IBU0Z8sUaeqXrZmaDq22_A)

I have had reports from residents over the past four months that this site has been inactive for days on end.

1. What sanctions have been applied to ETM, the contractors, for the extremely late delivery of this scheme?
2. What is being done to ensure that this latest deadline is adhered to?

REPLY:

1. Excavation of the site discovered uncharted utility services that were not known to present beforehand and this has caused delays.

The necessary diversion of these utilities takes time and requires input and resource from utilities companies that is often beyond our control when discovered in the excavation phase and therefore unplanned.

The delay and absence from the site were primarily caused by the utility diversion works. For obvious reasons, work must be stopped immediately when this scenario occurs, and utilities companies take time to plan their work.

The project team are doing routine checks on site and the contractor has recently provided additional resource to achieve the deadline. As these delays are outside of the control of the contractor, there are no sanctions that can or should be applied.

2. Please be assured work is progressing as fast as possible, unfortunately the nature of the unforeseen utility diversion issues has prohibited the scheme progressing as originally programmed.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Goodman, Filwood Ward

Subject: Eagle House

The council is aware of allegations about the conduct of the Mountains of Fire and Miracles Church – an organisation currently leasing Eagle House in my ward, after the building was declared surplus to requirements in 2015.

Locally, I have also heard from residents who state that they have been unable to get permission to use the building for community meetings – which is a provision in their current tenancy contract.

Q1) Please could the Cabinet Member for Communities confirm that following the expiration of the current lease, the council will hold an open process to find tenants for Eagle House, rather than automatically renewing the current lease when it expires?

Q2) In the meantime, could the council set up a meeting between appropriate officers, ward councillors, and Filwood residents to discuss what the local community would like from this site in the long term and how they can access it for meetings in the meantime?

REPLY:

1. The lease is due to end May 2026 and does not contain a right for the tenant to renew. There is no intention to offer the current tenant a new lease, or to renew the existing lease.

The tenant has been informed that the Council will not offer a new lease.

When the lease ends, the Estate Strategy Board will consider whether the property should be re-let to a new tenant, or redeveloped, or disposed of. Redevelopment of the site for residential and a new, purpose-built youth and community space could create a new home for the Eagle House Community Centre.

2. As the lease comes to an end there will be a review with Housing and Community Development and you are welcome to add value with any information you have.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)

Subject: DEFICIT ON DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT (DSG)

The deficit on the DSG is expected to escalate from £39.7m on 31 March 2023 to £128.2m by 31 March 2028 unless action is taken to address it. However, I understand a statutory override has been provided by Government to 31 March 2026 and a DSG management plan is in place to reduce the deficit.

1. Please therefore can the Mayor provide the forecast for the cumulative deficit on the DSG at the end of each financial year between now and 31 March 2028 assuming the DSG management plan is implemented successfully and the consequences for the Council if the plan is not implemented successfully or the statutory override is not extended.

REPLY:

I will ask finance to send this to you directly as soon as possible and publish for member forum in due course.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tom Hathway

Subject: Serviced apartments and drains

Serviced apartments

There are multiple instances in our ward and across the wider city of developers applying for C3 planning permission for dwellings, or using office to C3 Permitted Development Rights, and then operating the finished dwellings as serviced apartments for short term let purposes. This does nothing to increase our housing supply, and makes getting a clear picture of the mix of uses in an area difficult. Some serviced apartments instead seek planning permission for C1 use.

1. Would the administration take the appropriate steps to introduce a Supplementary Planning Document setting out a clear policy on serviced apartments?

Drainage jobs

In July's Member Forum it was confirmed there were 35 drainage jobs on hold due to contractors refusing the work.

2. What progress has been made on getting these jobs allocated and can the list be made available?

REPLY:

1. I can appreciate how this is a problem, however I think we have to be realistic about resource available to the council, given where we are with the significant work involved in the Local Plan.

With the Local Plan preparation, consultation at the end of this year and examination over the course of 2024 it is unlikely that there will be sufficient capacity within the planning policy teams to take on additional supplementary guidance work at this time.

We are already committed to the production of some SPDs as part of the local plan production (particularly to ensure the quality of design and living quality of all residential proposals).

However, we will explore whether there are any opportunities to include supplementary guidance on serviced apartments as part of any SPDs being brought forward as well as closely watching ongoing developments at the national level.

2. I am pleased to share that the third ranked contractor on the Highways Maintenance Framework has agreed to undertake the work. That commenced in late August and the contractor have since completed five jobs, with the remainder to follow though to completion.

The list of jobs is as follows:

- Collins Street
- Heathcote Walk
- Rectory Gardens
- Cardigan Road
- Fishponds Road x 2



Mariners Drive
Millpond Street
Sheene Road x 2
Pembroke Road x 3
Upper Belgrave Road
Ellicott Road
Muller Road
Deep Pit Road
King Edward Close
Raymend Road
Southmead Road
Waterloo Street
Truro Road
Kingsway
Meadowside Drive
Branscombe Road
Sunny Hill
Strathmore Road
Bromley Road
Ashley Down Road
Bloomfield Road
Hillside Street
Hotwell Road
Wellgarth Road
Whiteladies Road
Bishopsworth Road
Vale Lane x 3
Argyle Place
Pile Marsh
Palmerston Street
West Street



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jackson, Filwood Ward**Subject: Youth Zone**

The Youth Zone will be fantastic for children in Knowle West and south Bristol. I'm very pleased to be a member of the party which helped make this massive investment a reality.

We recently received an update on Filwood Broadway, another big investment into Filwood, but I would also appreciate an update on the Youth Zone, which I can pass back to residents who have been making enquiries about it.

Please could I have an update on the south Bristol Youth Zone?

REPLY:

This is a huge investment in youth services in south Bristol, and I am delighted to have your support. The Council and OnSide are working together and moving at pace in delivery of the Youth Zone. Full planning permission has been granted.

OnSide are responsible for construction of the facility and expect to be starting on site early next year. Start on site will be between November and Jan depending on contract close. Full opening expected late summer 2025.

Young people will be involved throughout the development of south Bristol's Youth Zone with Youth Moves. A Young People's Development Group has been set up and the group have developed two brands for the Youth Zone which are currently out to a public vote with young people in south Bristol. The winning name and brand will be revealed later this year.

It's estimated 4,000 young people from South Bristol will sign up in the first year of opening. They'll have opportunities to engage in activities and access support from skilled youth workers, helping them to develop their skills and reach their full potential.

The Youth Zone will be open 7 days per week, with members having opportunity to access over 20 activities every night, ranging from sports such as football, boxing and climbing, to creative arts, music, drama and employability training as well as dedicated youth worker support – all for just 50p per visit and £5 annual membership.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Richard Eddy (Bishopsworth)**Subject: PLANNING DEPARTMENT BACKLOGS AND DELAYS**

The Mayor will be aware of major backlogs in the Planning Department. Complaints from residents to Members about lengthy delays, even for very simple planning applications, are now commonplace. This unacceptable state of affairs has been drawn to the Mayor's attention on many occasions both by Members and by residents via public forum statements made at Full Council meetings. Indeed, to help ease the situation, the Conservative Group last year proposed a budget amendment to provide additional resource within the Planning Department, which the Mayor rejected.

1. What percentage of householder applications is determined within the 8-week statutory period for determination?
2. How does that performance compare with the situation 12 months ago?

REPLY:

1. We have been making the point for years now is the reduction in backroom capacity for the council's planning.

I was on a session with Chris Skidmore MP last week who has asked to meet with 3Ci (of which we are a founding member) so we should think about potential alignment with our work and his Net Zero review. It was in that session that I talked about that very issue that this was not a political point but a practical point. After 13 years where we have directed resources to frontline services away from the backroom capacity. I pointed it out to him that while many people, rightly, campaign to protect crossing patrols or public toilets, they do not campaign for the planners, lawyers and project managers who deliver on the projects we need.

In August 2023 household applications were delivered in the timescale in 18 out of 36 cases (ie 50%).

(Note that the statutory period for deciding householder applications is within 8 weeks unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.)

This situation arose as a result of substantial vacancies in the householder team that were only starting to be filled over August and September. We do now expect this situation to improve gradually over coming months.

2. 12 months ago: 74/93 = 80%



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Tim Wye**Subject: EV charging and gullies**

Over the past few months Green Group members, and I am sure others, have been contacted by residents enquiring about installing, at their own expense, EV charging gullies outside their homes. This appears to have accelerated since the CAZ and is a good indication of people wanting to switch to cleaner vehicles.

I am aware of the concerns over trip hazards and this is a genuine and sensible concern. Indeed when I have spoken to disabled groups they would want assurance that gullies would not detrimentally effect their access rights. I have approached Oxford where this has been trialled and the results seem positive. Crucially, some of the newer products and ones used in Oxford (in their case from a company called Gul-e) have shown that trip concerns can be mitigated.

1. Can the Administration explain how gullies fit into the Council's overall EV charging strategy?
2. Can the Administration review these newer products and consider at least a pilot where residents can apply to install gullies at their expense (similar to dropped curbs) in order to facilitate the roll out of EVs?

REPLY:

1. Bristol City Council in partnership with Bristol's strategic partner, City Leap are regularly meeting to discuss strategies and policies regarding on street EV Charging and the electrical infrastructure required to facilitate these charging systems. The teams are currently engaged in gaining funding via certain government funding streams to roll out and deploy more on street chargers in Bristol.

Gullies have been discussed with various groups and departments, however, at this moment in time, gullies are not deemed as a viable option and the favoured option is to install more on street chargers and target areas where the chargers will be best utilised.

The future of charging is hubs – in the long term electric charging hubs will work the same as petrol stations currently, instead of personal charging at housing.

2. Several members of the EV team have visited Oxford but deem the gullies at this moment in time not suitable for Bristol's on street EV charging strategy, in favour of hubs. That said, we're happy to explore more with you if you want to develop a response to the Oxford trial.



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

Subject: The Cameron Centre

I find it beyond belief that Cllr Wilcox would 'call-in' (bring the application to a committee if it is set to be approved) a proposal to build 100% council-housing with community and retail space on the ground floor.

His reasoning for the call-in is apparently due to the building being four stories tall, making it visible from a park.

Does the Mayor believe the apparent downsides of having a four-story building that's just about visible from a park outweighs the upsides of 37 council homes and space for community facilities?

REPLY:

I agree that this is incredibly disappointing.

The Green councillors claim to support house building, but frustrate much needed homes. They oppose or abstain on all the key issues at the moment of having to make a decision. It's the same with heat networks, affordable homes on the Zoo site, liveable neighbourhoods, expanding cemetery space which is essential for multi-faith and Muslim burial space.

This is council housing.

This is just four stories.

This is brownfield land, which the co-leader of the green party said on TV is their policy to support building on. But there is scant evidence of this in Bristol.

Cllr Wilcox highlighted the lack of facilities for Lockleaze in a recent tweet, but now delays the delivery of homes, community space and retail unit.

He cites concerns about a view *from* a park. You can't live in a view. I support the council homes, the community facilities and retail unit.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Graham Morris (Stockwood)**Subject: Strategic Corridors Project**

Stockwood Ward is full of significant rat runs. If the proposal to ban the right hand turn from Wells Road into West Town Lane, the Council will knowingly increase the rat running along all roads off the Wells Road. This will have a hugely detrimental effect on Beryl Grove, Mowbray Road, Imperial Walk, Hazelbury Road, Davids Road and Woodleigh Gardens. It will in fact increase rat running throughout all the ward. The local councillors have raised the issue with the officers and cabinet member for transport. It is therefore imperative that any business case which bans this turn includes funding for significant road safety measures in Stockwood Ward. In the roads mentioned as well as Stockwood Lane and Craydon Road and Sturminster Road.

As the Mayor knows, this funding is not available through the Area Committee Process and failure to secure the funding for road safety measures should mean the banned turn should not be allowed to go ahead.

1. Can the Mayor please confirm whether road safety measures for the roads will be requested as part of the outline business case?
2. Can the Mayor please advise why zebra crossings are not supported on all of Sturminster Road and Craydon Road and Stockwood Road and Lane, but they are on West Town Lane?

REPLY:

1. The Project Officers are looking at options for traffic calming measures along these roads you mentioned. Funding will be sought through the CRSTS programme for implementation once potential measures have been assessed.
2. We do support zebra crossings that are technically deliverable. Project Officers and Engineers have looked at how they might install zebra crossings more widely, however there are site constraints in most locations. We will ask officers to share their thinking and work with you to find solutions.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ed Plowden**Subject: Parking controls and Temple Quarter masterplan**

Parking Controls

The Mayor regularly refers people requesting an RPZ in Windmill Hill area to take up the issue with me and Cllr Stone, citing the plans for an LTN in the local area. However, residents are reporting commuting parking, constructor contractors parking (from Bedminster Green) and even holiday parking (given the proximity to the airport bus and to Temple Meads) all crowding up the streets, making their access difficult and blocking emergency services and Bristol Waste access. It is well known that in situations like this a significant proportion of the traffic is circulating to try and find a parking space, which will not be solved by an LTN without parking restrictions, and may even undermine one.

1. Can the Mayor help me to explain to people who are referred to me and Lisa, how he believes an LTN close to City Centre employment and National travel hubs can work without parking restrictions and how quickly people will be able to see progress on the South Bristol LTN?

Temple Quarter

The Mayor has previously indicated that a masterplan for the Temple Quarter area will help tackle the poor active travel infrastructure between Temple Meads and the Three Lamps. Additionally, there is now a major and ambitious proposal to update the transport infrastructure between Bath and the Three Lamps.

2. What is the timetable for the TQ masterplan and what liaison is taking place between the people working on the TQ masterplan with the WECA-led project to ensure a comprehensive approach to improving sustainable and active travel in this area?

REPLY:

1. I'll repeat what I said before: if you want a residents parking zone, you have to demonstrate overwhelming support.

If you would like to present evidence of support that is enough for us to hold a residents survey they we are happy to consider it.

I am struggling to understand your party's position on Liveable Neighbourhoods and LTNs – you appear to support them in theory but oppose them in practice. You don't seem to view them positively and your party backs off every time there is any form of local opposition. The Green councillor for Lawrence Hill and your national co-leader have stopped short of publicly endorsing the approach in Barton Hill.

2. This month we have finished the procurement process for a masterplanner to help bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of Bristol Temple Quarter. We expect to appoint the masterplanner in late September and they will then work with the team for the next 12 months.

The masterplanning process will involve extensive community and stakeholder engagement across the city-region, including with Members.



The Masterplanning process will also look in detail at connectivity within and in/out of the Temple Meads, including public and active transport. The Temple Quarter team is engaging with the WECA-led Bristol-Bath project to ensure alignment between the two interfacing projects.

The joint delivery vehicle will then take the process forward to delivery.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Jonathan Hucker (Stockwood)

Subject: INSTALLATION OF NEW LITTER BINS

On 22 August 2022, I requested that a litter bin to be installed next to a bus stop in Craydon Road. I have chased this on at least six occasions but have yet to see any progress.

1. Can the Mayor please explain the Council's policy on the installation of litter bins in the city?

REPLY:

Thank you for raising this issue, this case will be reviewed. Please share any of the information with my office so they can escalate.

The installation of litter bins depends on a number of factors; footfall, proximity to sources of litter, ease of servicing by crew, near areas of congregation, distance between bins etc.

All requests for litter bins are assessed before installation, as the bins costs £500-£600 each. The annual costs of servicing of a bins can cost approximately £1,000.



Questions to the Mayor from Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend**Subject: Housing Asylum Seekers**

1. Given the news that the Home Office has taken over an entire hotel for asylum seekers, what assurance has BCC been given that the vulnerable occupants will be housed in a manner that does not infringe their human rights through overcrowding and the approaches seen elsewhere in the country?

REPLY:

The City Council and other public agencies will be working with the hotel to ensure the health and wellbeing of the residents in the hotel and to address any community issues.

- There is a partnership meeting each week which oversees the management of temporary accommodation sites like this one which will ensure the safety and wellbeing of the families and children living in this hotel.
- The Haven Primary Care Team are working with the families to ensure access to health services.
- The Council's Attendance and Belonging Team are supporting applications to schools. There is a city centre primary school with experience of working with refugee children who have spaces, and we anticipate the children can be accommodated within local schools.

The Home Office has given the Council a small budget to support asylum seekers, and this will be used to fund three refugee organisations to provide activities, advice and support within the hotel. Some funding will be allocated to Aid Box Community to manage donations and ensure the asylum seekers have access to clothing and toiletries to meet their basic needs.

We encourage people who would like to make donations to look on the ABC website and see what is needed.

We are also making contact with the community development team and local community organisations to set up small grants for local people to get involved in integration events.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Henry Michallat (Stoke Bishop)**Subject: TACKLING WEEDS TO TIDY UP THE ROADSIDE**

Clean and presentable streets are a basic service to provide to residents across Bristol. It is appreciated that due to finite resources, weed control is something that must be carried out on a rotational basis. To this end, it would be helpful if councillors – and residents - had better access to information as to when these important cleansing operations are to be carried out in their area.

1. Can the Mayor ask officers to provide Members with a copy of the weed spraying programme (on request)?

Many of my constituents recognise that protecting the environment is of the utmost importance, which includes the reductions of harmful chemicals being used to kill roadside weeds. However, the current policy of doing 'nothing' has failed Council taxpayers.

2. Will the Mayor commit to working faster with officers within the Council to speed up the process to find non-pesticide alternatives to killing weeds and making our street presentable once again?

REPLY:

1. We can arrange for you to meet with Bristol Waste and review the weed spraying programme.

This year's weed spraying schedule has experienced some challenges from wet start to the year followed by hot period in June and then followed by wet periods in July and August.

2. Bristol Waste has recently been trialling a pivot away from the chemical spraying and using the team to manually remove the weeds.

This is more labour intensive, and the ground is covered more slowly, however the results are immediately visible but as experienced in your area it takes longer to get around the city.

At the moment, financially and effectiveness, its not stacking up as an alternative approach.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Geoff Gollop (Westbury on Trym & Henleaze)

Subject: FLYTIPPING STATISTICS

1. I am aware headline figures around the numbers of people fined are published on the BCC website. Can the Mayor confirm whether the Authority or our partner enforcement agents maintain a breakdown on the level (and type) of incidence by Ward?
2. Does the Mayor accept that such information is essential to identify where resources are most needed and to support initiatives like the clean streets enforcement campaign?

REPLY:

1. Yes, we do break it down, we record where fines are issued (including ward) and type. We can arrange for that to be shared.
2. The information from fines issued, reports and clearances of graffiti and feedback of issues from our waste services contractor inform the tasking of enforcement resources to tackle fly tipping accordingly.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor James Scott (Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston)

Subject: PARKING OFFENCES AND PARKING CHARGE NOTICES

1. How much money was generated from parking fines in the last twelve months?
2. Is the Mayor able to provide me with a breakdown by Ward on instances of parking offences recorded throughout the city?

REPLY:

1. Between the 1st September 2022 and 31st August 2023 the council received £3,319,739 in payments for parking Penalty Charge Notices.
2. PCN numbers are not recorded by Ward but we have a record of on street parking PCNs by general geographical area based on postal districts.

It should be remembered that areas with the lowest numbers typically have less enforceable parking restrictions than those with higher numbers.

District	Parking PCNs
ASHLEY DOWN	129
ASHTON	971
ASHTON GATE	258
AVONMOUTH	1,222
BARTON HILL	138
BEDMINSTER	5,937
BEDMINSTER DOWN	9
BISHOPSTON	2,927
BISHOPSWORTH	77
BRENTY	6
BRISLINGTON	760
CITY CENTRE	18,805
CLIFTON	18,330
CLIFTON WOOD	197
COTHAM	3,612
EASTON	3,212
EASTVILLE	2,007
FISHPONDS	1,758
GREENBANK	88
HARTCLIFFE	12
HEADLEY PARK	5
HENBURY	62



HENGROVE	714
HENLEAZE	32
HORFIELD	2,258
HOTWELLS	1,948
KINGSDOWN	1,576
KNOWLE	549
LAWRENCE HILL	289
LAWRENCE WESTON	83
LOCKLEAZE	106
MONTPELIER	1,346
OLD MARKET	2,084
OLDBURY COURT	5
REDCLIFFE	2,683
REDFIELD	454
REDLAND	3,206
SEA MILLS	5
SHIREHAMPTON	200
SNEYD PARK	12
SOUTHMEAD	356
SOUTHVILLE	1,513
SPEEDWELL	14
ST ANDREWS	302
ST ANNES	24
ST GEORGE	2,264
ST JUDES	1,614
ST PAULS	5,516
ST PHILIPS	4,232
ST WERBURGHS	210
STAPLETON	252
STOCKWOOD	9
STOKE BISHOP	281
STOKES CROFT	1,812
TOTTERDOWN	249
Westbury on Trym	543
WESTBURY PARK	120
WHITCHURCH	37
WHITEHALL	253
WITHYWOOD	2
Grand Total	97,675



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Lesley Alexander (Frome Vale)**Subject: CAZ APPEAL CASES**

The Mayor will be aware of the recent report concerning the high level of successful appeals by motorists to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal.

1. Aside from the loss of revenue arising from losing more than 50% of contested cases, can the Mayor provide a figure for the legal costs to the Authority as a result of all these proceedings?
2. Can the Mayor state whether a common failing has been identified in the administration of the scheme which accounts for or explains why a motorist is more likely not to have to pay these fines?

REPLY:

1. The Traffic Penalty Tribunal is the Independent Adjudicator for Local Authorities in England and Wales outside London. They are independent legal professionals and are funded by a levy placed on all councils who pay 30p for each Penalty Charge Notice that is issued. This is a statutory fee that Council's must pay regardless of how many motorists take an appeal to the tribunal, and applies to parking, bus lane and clean air zone PCNs.

The Council does not generally incur any direct legal costs for dealing with TPT cases. They are dealt with by a senior, experienced PCN Appeals Officers.

The number of cases heard by TPT is typically less than 1% of the number issued. Effectively this means 0.5% of cases are rescinded on appeal.

We are expecting CAZ appeal rates to be slightly higher than normal because this is a new type of enforcement that people are not used to. The majority of motorists will have to pay their PCN, although as CAZ is new and we want to educate motorists and encourage behavioural change, the team has been sympathetic when dealing with appeals and this is reflected in the statistics.

2. No common failing has been identified. In many cases, the motorist has simply provided additional evidence to TPT that they hadn't previously provided to the Council. When officers see this evidence they can accept it and choose not to contest the case.



Question(s) to the Mayor from Councillor Kevin Quartley (Bishopsworth)

Subject: HARTCLIFFE WAY RECYCLING CENTRE

1. Does the Mayor agree with me that to maximise use of these facilities, residents should be offered as wide a range of services for reprocessing discarded materials as possible?
2. Will the Mayor explore with Bristol Waste the option of obtaining a license to handle or deal with organic/food waste at the south Bristol site?

REPLY:

1. Yes, I agree.
2. Yes. The operational feasibility of providing a food waste drop off service at the Hartcliffe Reuse and Recycling Centre will be explored.

