

Public Forum

Committee Model Working Group

24th November 2023



Questions	
Number	Name
PQ01	Stacy Yelland
PQ02	
PQ03	
PQ04	
PQ05	Dan Ackroyd
PQ06	
PQ07	David Redgewell
PQ08	

Statements	
Number	Name
PS01	Stacy Yelland
PS02	Councillor Barry Parsons
PS02	Dan Ackroyd

Questions

Q1 – How will the council develop a strategic, citywide, cross-cutting approach to asset disposal and investment?

A1 – One of the Council's 4 transformation programmes is looking at a strategic approach to Property, which will include details relating to the management of the Council's property assets. It will be for the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider how such matters are dealt with under the Committee model.

Q2 – How will the council ensure the voice of communities are represented in decisions about CAT / assets?

A2 – The proposal in this report is that local communities will be able to make representation to Area Committees when they are consulted on any proposal to dispose of local authority land, community buildings or any community asset transfer, recognising that some transactions will be commercially sensitive. These Area Committees will be able to receive public forum submissions.



Q3 – Who in the council make decisions about the 80% allocation of strategic CIL funding and how can this be influenced?

A3 – The Strategic element of CIL is used as part of the Council’s Capital Programme for investment in strategic infrastructure in the City. Decisions are currently taken by Cabinet and will be taken by the relevant committee under the Committee Model, for example the Transport and Connectivity Policy Committee in respect of strategic highways infrastructure.

Q4 - How can we ensure that transfer applications are objectively and consistently assessed/offered?

A4 – The criteria used to determine whether a Community Asset Transfer should take place are set out in the Community Asset Transfer Policy which includes eligibility criteria and details of the process for the assessment of applications.

Q5 – If the number of Area Committees is changed, does this committee need to discuss how available CIL and Section 106 money be re-apportioned to the new arrangements for Area Committees?

My understanding of the amounts of monies in is as follows:

- AC1 CIL -£2,528.26 Section 106 £83,614.38
- AC2 CIL £3,939.86 Section 106 £59,541.00
- AC3 CIL £4,370.19 Section 106 £68,966.05
- AC4 CIL £433,621.81 Section 106 £270,322.92
- AC5 CIL £374,029.37 Section 106 £31,294.55
- AC6 CIL -£1,745.52 Section 106 £53,573.08

But please don't take those numbers as gospel. I couldn't see any discussion of this in the papers, but possibly the answer is trivial.

A5 – If the boundaries of the Area Committees are changed then this will require a review of the apportionment of CIL and Section 106 monies to align with the new boundaries. Any existing projects and associated funding will be transferred as appropriate.

Q6 - WECA are 'not great' at communication. It's almost certainly too big a question to be looked at in this meeting, but would it be possible for the Subgroup to look at how communications could be improved between citizens of Bristol (including Councillors) and WECA could be improved?

For a bit of context, the roll out of the Tier scooters has been 'quite suboptimal' and it seems quite a few people have grown frustrated with the lack of communication with WECA. Although some people are getting email responses from WECA, those responses aren't shared publicly, so many people are probably asking the same questions, which just doesn't seem like an efficient or good process.



Seeing as WECA controls the purse strings for really quite substantial amounts of public money that they are spending on behalf of the people of Bristol, we really need better communication.

A6 - This question should be addressed to the West of England Combined Authority.

Q7 - With the new committee system of government for Bristol city council, which committee will oversee the work of the west of England mayoral combined Authority and West of England joint committee. and West of England scrutiny commission.

Which committee will send representatives to these committees

Will the leader and Deputy leader represent Bristol at the Authority meetings with the metro mayor Dan Norris.

A7 – The Leader of the Council will be the Council’s representative at the West of England Combined Authority Committee. Other WECA related appointments will be made by the Whips, as in line with current practice.

Q8 - With the West of England mayoral combined Authority with North Somerset council, being the Regional Transport Authority Bristol city council now being the Highway Authority and city port Authority.

**The western Gateway being the Regional Transport Board and partnership.
With the levelling up Act now being law.**

And new Devolution deal now being allowed to happen like the local Enterprise partnership and North Somerset council being able to join the west of England mayoral combined Authority in 2025. Which committee will oversee a new Regional Devolution deal and city region government.

A8 – In the event of a new devolution deal, it is anticipated that this will be a decision for Full Council.



Statements

PS01 – Stacy Yelland and others

A Manifesto for Change - Safeguarding Bristol's Shared Spaces

Our community, civic, and cultural infrastructure has played an indispensable role in supporting our communities for decades and has proven its worth most recently through the pandemic and cost of living crises.

The current application of policies and practices within Bristol City Council poses a serious threat to the long-term sustainability of this vital network. The Council is aiming to raise £36m and make £4m in savings through estates rationalisation, which risks spaces we rely on for social, wellbeing and cultural activities within our neighbourhoods.

As community advocates and trusted guardians of the spaces that belong to us all, we are demanding Bristol City Council take urgent action to protect and enhance our shared spaces.

Our manifesto for change - recommendations

Changes to make now – immediate

Delegate authority to officer level to award 95 year CAT leases on renewal

If an organisation has successfully managed a community building and applies for a renewal, it is only possible to get another 35 years from officers. Anything longer requires cabinet approval, which council officers have no capacity to support. We request delegation to officers to award 95 years if an organisation proves it can manage a space effectively.

An officer from Neighbourhoods and Communities (Head of Service) should be a member of the CAT decision making committee

Currently decisions are made solely by finance executives within the officers. There is no understanding or appreciation for the value of the social infrastructure within this group. There needs to be someone representing communities in the decision-making process.

Review the Community Asset Transfer process

Invite all organisations together with experience of the CAT process to review the current system and make recommendations for change to be implemented in 2024. This includes reviewing how the council assesses social value and adopting a sensible matrix that is relevant to the work carried out in the VCSE sector running social infrastructure.

Homes and Communities Board to adopt a goal about community assets

In line with the One City Plan aspirations around an increase in community-led buildings, the Homes and Communities Board should adopt a goal to develop a Community Assets Strategy.



Delegate leadership for community assets to a cabinet member or committee

There is currently no leadership within the council at officer or elected member level for city social infrastructure yet this sector is called on continually to respond to crisis at community level. Having leadership within the council would provide more recognition of the cross-cutting benefits provided by community-led buildings to different council departments.

Changes to make in the medium term:

Create a framework for protection and disposal of council owned assets

- Review how decisions are made around the disposal of assets owned by the council.
- Develop a new 'community' asset class that prioritises the preservation and social use of community spaces. This offers a clear distinction between assets of community value and other assets in the Council's portfolio, helping to more clearly define and streamline decision making, and complementing the 'asset of community value' designation process.

Implement a Fair Rent Structure

- Establish a fair, transparent rent structure that considers the financial sustainability of community spaces and the social/investment benefits provided through free/subsidised leaseholds.
- Reward successful projects that have invested time and efforts in asset repair and renovation through fair rental review processes as part of leasehold renewals.
- Design a 'joint shareholder' option to asset transfer where BCC accepts a share of either the profit or liabilities during a specific period to enable a more dynamic partnership investment model.

Develop a Capital Investment Strategy

- Prioritise capital investment from available funds; for example, allocating a percentage of the strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for investment in community infrastructure.
- Establish an annual capital budget allocation for community organisations with CAT leases, supporting asset repair, improvements, accessibility measures, and green energy initiatives.
- Ensure existing capital budgets are optimised by redirecting existing resources into maintaining existing community infrastructure, that underpins a voluntary, civic and cultural sector that brings exceptional value to the city.

This is not just our call to action but nationally the value of community infrastructure for improving wellbeing, cohesion and economic growth is well documented, for reference:

[We're Right Here](https://www.right-here.org/) - <https://www.right-here.org/>

[Save Our Spaces](https://locality.org.uk/our-influencing-work/save-our-spaces) - <https://locality.org.uk/our-influencing-work/save-our-spaces>

[New Local](https://www.newlocal.org.uk/community-paradigm/), <https://www.newlocal.org.uk/community-paradigm/>

[Building our Social Infrastructure](#), Power to Change

What works wellbeing - <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/category/places-and-community/>

We look forward to hearing from you.



Signed:

- Stacy Yelland, CEO, Eastside Community Trust
Easton Community Centre and Felix Road Adventure Playground
- Emma Harvey, CEO, Trinity Community Arts, Trinity Centre
- Steve Sayers, CEO, Windmill Hill City Farm
- Sado Jirde, Director, Black South West Network (The Coach House)
- Suzanne Wilson, CEO, Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust
- Heather Williams, CEO, Knowle West Health Park
- Lucy Holburn, Knowle West Alliance
- Amy Kinnear, CEO, Southmead Development Trust
- Kate Swain, CEO, Redcatch Community Garden Limited
- Mark Pepper, CEO, Ambition Lawrence Weston
- Jack Gibbons, CEO, Bricks/St Anne's House
- Kathryn Chiswell-Jones, Company Manager, Artspace Lifespace
- Goska Ong, Centre Director, St Werburghs Community Centre
- Makala Cheung, Director, Filwood Community Centre
- Rebecca Mear, CEO, Voscur

PS02 – Councillor Barry Parsons

I support Option 2 for the new Area Committee boundaries, which would retain the connection between Easton and Lawrence Hill wards by keeping them in the same Area Committee. I am strongly opposed to Option 1, as it would separate the two wards.

Easton and Lawrence Hill wards are particularly closely linked through Eastside Community Trust. This key local anchor organisation serves both areas equally. It manages both Easton Community Centre, in Easton, and Felix Road Adventure Playground, in Lawrence Hill - key community assets for central East Bristol. As a membership organisation, its members are drawn from both wards, and as the successor organisation to Community At Heart, established in 2000, it embodies two decades of asset-based community development work across both Easton and Lawrence Hill wards. Close alignment with the council supports this work.

As a local councillor for Easton, I regularly experience the deeply felt connection between both wards when residents of Lawrence Hill tell me with absolute conviction that they live in Easton. Much of my work as a councillor crosses boundaries between the two, far more than with any other neighbouring ward.

The current arrangement, represented by Option 3, creates an area that is too large for meaningful local decision making, stretching as it does from the harbour to the eastern edge of Bristol.

For these reasons I recommend adopting Option 2.

PS03 – Dan Ackroyd

The felling of the statue of a famous slaver was a historic opportunity for change for this city. It gave us an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the slave trade and how the institutions that benefited



either directly from trading in slaves, or 'merely' benefited from trading in products produced by slave labour or the 'indentured' descendants of slaves.

Anyway, the 'We Are Bristol History Commission' was created, but doesn't seem to have accomplished anything and so that opportunity has been lost.

This committee was also a historic opportunity for change.

I know that it wasn't entirely in the control of this committee, but it seems a shame that none of the historic, systemic problems that have made the governance of Bristol so poor haven't been looked at let alone tackled.

Bristol West, Bristol University and U.W.E. have a huge amount of influence in how this city is run, to the detriment of people who actually live in the city, and to the benefit of people who live outside the city and commute in.

The decision that people will remember as the defining act of the Mayoral system, the choice to cancel the Arena in the city centre, was taken due to pressure from Bristol West and the University. Bristol West wanted that infrastructure money spent on creating a new suburb. Bristol University were eyeing the land to create a new campus.

They got what they wanted, and the people of Bristol lost out.

I don't fully understand how it's possible for regressive institutions to maintain power for such a long time, but I suspect at least in part it can be blamed on the public having a very poor level of democratic engagement, and politicians who don't push for progressive governance.

Anyway, although it's great we're moving to a more democratic method of local government, it's such a shame that Bristol wasn't able to have a conversation about the systemic problems we have. An opportunity has been lost.

PS04 – David Redegwell

We welcome the area committee structure as South Gloucestershire county council and Somerset unity council have such structures

We would hope that area committees could also be used by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and planning Authority.

To discuss Public bus service and raise consultation issues on bus services charges before their carried out or by First group plc buses or stagecoach west or Network rail or First Group plc Great Western Railway company to present details of New railway station like Ashley Down or Henbury on the boundary with South Gloucestershire county council.

Are cycling and walking routes.



Example if we had area committee now the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council would have consulted the people of Ashton vale estate, Oidbury court estate, Stapleton Broomhill Fishponds the Dings and Bristlington St Anne's park on the loss of their bus services .

But also input on local cycling or walking schemes or Highway improvement like the proposed Brislington bypass by the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority.
But also for example in South Gloucestershire county council theses area committee have been used to discuss pre planning issues,
Planning application, Wessex Water pennton now owners of Bristol water,south west water and Bournemouthwater ,or Wales and utilities and Western Power

National Grid on power issues.

Or services from Bristol city council like street cleaning, graffiti removal, fly timing Public toilets improvements Park and Gardens, sport facilities. Housing issues Green spaces and Green Belt .
Bristol local plan consultation, Avon and Somerset police British Transport police or port police ,Port of Bristol, or Bristol city council as Harbour Authority or any neighbourhood issues and consultation on any cross boundary issues that effect the area with south Gloucestershire county council in the North of the city Region or Banes or North Somerset in the south of the city Region.

Area committee work very well in South Gloucestershire county council and Somerset unity council is set up community networks it would be a good idea to look at community stakeholders partisapation in the neighbouring Authority's for best practice in South west England swindon Borough Council has area Parish councils that work Like area committees.

With regards to working with the west of England mayoral combined Authority and mayor Dan Norris we do think that area committee are the way forward Public transport user consultation. Regional planning issues effect local communities and skills.

Their needs to be more community engagement in Bristol city council services and meetings, whist Somerset unity council, South Gloucestershire county council, Gloucestershire county council have hybrid meeting of committees and full council.
allowing more disabled and older people to participate in city council meetings.
Even Yeovil Town Council has hybrid meetings.

All are committee venues must be accessible to people with disabilities and hybrid meeting options should be part of the arrangements.

Bristol city council and West of England mayoral combined Authority have not yet modernisation the way it meets.

Bristol city council so far expect every resident or community or stakeholders group to make their way to city Hall for meetings and make statement and not yet set hybrid meetings.



I residents and stakeholders could join a meeting on line more residents would communicate with council which is the case in South Gloucestershire county council and North Somerset council.

The west of England mayoral combined Authority has not modernised either
For an Authority working with North Somerset council covers an area
Of major parts of Somerset and Gloucestershire ,Greater Bristol and Bath.
And a lot of very important meetings are held in private, Transport and Housing Board Bus service
improvement plan Enhanced partnership Board ,even scrutiny commissions
Whilst other combined planning and Transport Authorities meet in Public
West Yorkshire, West Midlands ,Greater Manchester combined Authority, Liverpool City Region.

Their also the need to address the area of funding services and the new for more local community
organisations and trusts working in Partnership with Bristol city council to provide local services,

At a Regional level with Western Gateway Transport Board and Partnership with the west of England
mayoral combined Authority.
Which now the levelling up Bill is an
Act should now begin the progress of
the local Enterprise partnership, and North Somerset council joining the west of England mayoral
combined Authority in 2025 for the mayoral Elections.

But within the committee structure it got to be clear who is representing the city of county of Bristol
on the combined Authority and the role of leader and Deputy leader of council.
In Decision making meetings at the west of England mayoral combined Authority committee. and joint
committee.

With the ending of the Elected mayor's role in Bristol its important to see the west of England mayoral
combined Authority with North Somerset council.

Represent by the Regional to make sure Greater Bristol and Bath city region voice is held at UK
government and European and international level when Dealing with Public resources for Region plans
and project working with business and stakeholders.
City office and one city plan Including major Transport and levelling up money like metro west railway
or future west mass transit system, or Renegeration sites like Bristol Temple meads station and
Temple Quarter or western Harbour, or Fillwood in South Bristol.

It's very important that Bristol city council or the city and county of Bristol functions at Community and
area partnership level at city council level
And city region level and Regional level to UK government.
We need a modern progressive council
And more decisions made at local, city wide or west of England mayoral combined Authority or
western Gateway Transport Board partnership and Peninsula Transport Board level.

David Redgewell South west transport Network and Bristol Disability Equalities forum

Gordon Richardson Bristol Disability Equalities forum

