

The following statements have been submitted – full details are attached:

	Name	Subject
CS01	CLlr Gary Hopkins	Rejuvenation of Town Centre
CS02	CLlr Patrick McAllister	Western Harbour Advisory Group
CS03	CLlr Martin Fodor	Missed Recycling Services - our council's responsibilities.
CS04	CLlr Tessa Fitzjohn	Public Rights of Way and Greens committee

CS01

Members Forum statement from Cllr Gary Hopkins

Subject: Rejuvenation of Town Centre

We welcome the issuing of planning consent for the rejuvenation of our town centre. I will be asking for money for our next door park from central cil funds.

Although parks in knowle have an above city average approval rating 90.2% v 71.6% and better usage 73.1% weekly or more compared to 56% this is down to local effort and not central council funding. In fact the last time we had significant funds was prior to the first mayor with the combination of city wide parks funding and locally generated funds from PGSS producing a major boost.

As local cllrs we have a long track record of getting value for money and have a draft list which includes new play equipment including for a wider age range

Outdoor gym
Refurbished toilets
Pavillion improvements
Path repairs
Some drainage work.

The new development brings in a huge amount of money to this council and we are asking that some of it is spent in the next door park and hopefully on other supporting facilities. We look forward to discussions.

CS02

Members Forum statement from Cllr Patrick McAllister

Subject: Western Harbour Advisory Group

The Western Harbour Advisory Group (WHAG) is currently being refreshed. This group will provide essential oversight and direction for one of Bristol's largest and most defining regeneration and infrastructure projects in decades. It is essential that it is done right, both to ensure strong decision-making and democratic legitimacy for the development of the Western Harbour area.

It was therefore disappointing to see that the Mayor's Office has decided to not permit local councillors to take places on the group. This is contrary to the expressed sentiments of councillors who attended the officer briefing on Western Harbour in late November, where the overwhelming feeling was that elected representation on WHAG was vital. It is also not what residents around the project area want – people want to know that their elected representatives have the ability to monitor and help steer this major development.

I ask that the administration reconsider its stance to exclude elected representatives from the Western Harbour Advisory Group.

CS03

Members Forum statement from Cllr Martin Fodor

Subject: Missed Recycling Services - our council's responsibilities.

My statement regards the need for our authority to prioritise and address issues affecting our own core services to the residents we serve.

The weekly recycling service is one of the highest profile ways we serve every home in the city every week, all year.

This authority promises regular collections of materials across the city, protecting public health and managing resources. It has performed relatively well but recently many councillors will know it has been having problems of reliability. Whole streets are sometimes missed - week after week or several weeks running - for reasons that the council itself should address; the council isn't delivering what it promises and our contractor can't do their job. Vehicles aren't able to access the road due to chaotic parking.

Look at reports from many wards on social media – you can see that this service seems to be experiencing recurrent problems: for instance streets in Redland ward and several others are regularly reporting whole streets with missed collections week after week. The knock on effect means repeated trips are then needed to try and gain access the next day - otherwise full recycling boxes are left abandoned on the pavement.

I asked about this last year; the Mayor acknowledged that this recurrent problem hadn't been monitored so that if the same street - like Melbourne Rd, Redland ward - crops up week after week it should get logged as such, not considered a single isolated incident every time. But that improved monitoring hasn't been analysed or acted on.

When this service failure is caused by parking obstructions at corners with no double yellow lines and no parking management the council should take responsibility and act. The council is letting people down and creating litter, risk of vermin, and walking obstructions on a regular basis for reasons it's responsible for.

So we know this is happening. What else can we do? In my ward:

- We've discussed this with the crews and their supervisors and we're told they aren't allowed to take the time to leaflet obstructive vehicles when the truck has to turn back.
- We've talked to the police and they're willing to keep an eye out for obstructive parking but they have to be present to witness and prosecute offenders. This isn't realistic or a practical way to run council services weekly, however.
- We've talked to the frustrated residents about action they could take when commuters and others storing vehicles at their street corners but don't believe this is the right way to manage our services and could create risks for them.
- We could tell residents the Mayor says they need to bid to allocate community infrastructure funds from developers to pay locally to make room on streets for our core services instead of choosing to invest in community facilities – but this is frankly unjust and some areas simply have no funds.

Managing parking to enable routine and emergency services access around our highways should be the council's strategic responsibility.

We'd like to see joined up action taken by services working together [ie convene joint work by the waste client and contractor, highways officers, legal services, and parking services]. But the council, despite sharing a draft parking strategy publicly in 2019, still lacks one. The resultant chaos is now undermining our own weekly services.

That inaction is why I'm here suggesting that the administration needs to start giving attention to deal with these routine issues of managing and maintaining day to day operations. Let's get the basics right before prioritising attention elsewhere. We've said before that investing to save and maintain operations [supposedly a budget priority, but a neglected part of the current spending plans] should not be so far behind invest to grow. I want to be able to promise our residents the council will now collaborate to identify solutions so these problematic street corners are treated. We need the legal and highway resource put together to ensure they get tackled and services get delivered as scheduled on the promised day.

Hence my questions:

Q1: what plans are there to identify the streets where remedial action to allow routine public services or emergency access is in the hands of BCC?

Q2: when can we promise our residents that the council is planning to address highway obstructions it has powers to tackle in a joined up way?

Please work with us and don't wash your hands of this any longer.

CS04

Members Forum statement from Cllr Tessa Fitzjohn

Subject: Public Rights of Way and Greens committee

Public Rights of Way and Greens committee does important work protecting and restoring invaluable short cuts across our cities and the rural landscape. They hold the history of centuries of walking, for many the only way to move around, and now increasingly for pleasure and health and they need our protection.

The Public Rights of Way and Greens Committee is responsible for the registration and protection of common land and grants permission and licences for work or changes. All the statutory committee Chairs receive a special responsibility allowance. These are discretionary payments intended to recognise the responsibility, accountability, time and effort required from those Members of the Council who perform duties significantly over and above what might reasonably be expected of them through the basic allowance.

I would like to draw Councils attention to the fact that PROWG has never been awarded an SRA, which means there is less incentivisation to Chair and demonstrates a lack of understanding of the scale and importance of the work to the officers and councillors involved.

In my view this is essential work, which is recognised by Council as demonstrated by the fact it is one of the two Development Committees. For example, if there is a public right of way, on land for development, planning permission can be stalled until negotiations have been successful in re-routing costing council and landowner money and time.

The PROWG team has two full time officers and is managed by Duncan Venison. The role includes at present addressing a considerable backlog of public path orders which officers have reduced by re-prioritising outstanding applications from 1998 and reviewing enforcement actions on longstanding obstructed paths.

A little-known fact is that PROWG works with two linked groups, Joint Local Access Forum and the Public Rights of Way Liaison Group. Together the three groups cover highway authorities, landowners, user interest groups like The Ramblers and public access issues across Bristol, B&NES and South Gloucestershire. This means we have the full understanding and connection to the strands that support the preservation of all aspects of PROWG.

The PROWG committee also oversees Town Green Applications. One such application is the Stoke Lodge Village Green Application which came to committee on May 24, 2023, with a confidential briefing on Wed 17 May. This application required considerable legal and essential work from the PROWG committee.

Since becoming Chair, Councillors have been encouraged to profile restored public rights of way in the press, and the Chair now receives the minutes and attends the meetings of the two linked groups when possible. This work has raised the profile of PROWG, and Officers and Councillors feeling valued.