

## **STATEMENT PS 01**

**Submitted by Salem Bennett**

**Title: Committee System**

We have just had years of petty political point scoring that did no good for any of Bristol's residents. I was really hopeful going into this election because so many of the councillors and candidates said they wanted to pursue a more collaborative approach to leading the city.

So I was disappointed that representatives of the Labour group attended so few of the meetings to decide how we divide up the various roles, I accept that child caring duties can get in the way and make it difficult to attend these things but I'm surprised that neither the leader of a group or their deputies were aware that they would need to clear their diaries from the date of the election until today(21/05/2024) so that they could properly represent the people who voted for them in these negotiations

It makes me wonder going into this new system of governance if Labour are serious about representing the people who voted for them and with that the manifesto they voted for or if they're just going to snipe from the side-lines, criticising but not actually taking any responsibility

## **STATEMENT PS 02**

**Submitted by David Redgewell**

**Title: Committee System**

We welcome the new administration and committee system at Bristol city council,

Noting the no overall control of the council,

So will to be the leader and Deputy leader of Bristol city council and the chairs of Transport and planning policy committee that attended the west of England mayoral combined Authority committee and west of England joint committee with North Somerset council,

And councillors that represent the Transport ,Housing planning policy and skills and economic development and Tourism that attend west of England mayoral combined Authority sub committees,

In view if the importance of Regional funding and bus services improvement plan submission to the Department for Transport on 12 th June 2024

planning bus coach railway services and active Travel E scooter, E Bikes and public transport Network planning it importance that is clear to the passenger groups and stakeholders who is representing Bristol city council at the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority and North Somerset council with metro mayor Dan Norris and also on Western Gateway Transport Board which Bristol city council use to chair with councillor Don Alexander,

In view of the importance of city region for fund Transport, planning and Housing economy Development and Tourism,

With both Michael Gove secretary of state for levelling and Transport secretary mark Harper mp and local mp make it clear the importance of the Greater Bristol and Bath city region,

Also the position of louse Haigh shadow secretary of state for Transport,

It should be noted Bristol Airport and Bristol port Portbury Dock are located in North Somerset council administration area and are part of economy Development of the city Region, with the west of England mayoral combined Authority in special measures and the secretary of state for levelling up Michael Gove withholding £350 million pounds of local Enterprise partnership to North Somerset council and the west of England mayoral combined Authority,

What progress is the new Bristol city council working with South Gloucestershire county council, Banes North Somerset council west of England mayoral combined Authority and metro mayor Dan Norris in making North Somerset council a full west of England mayoral combined transport Authority member by May 2025 metro mayoral Elections.

## **STATEMENT PS 03**

**Submitted by Dan Ackroyd**

**Title: Committee System**

A warm welcome to the new Council

I hope is that Bristol will be run better under the committee system.

One of the cheapest and hopefully easiest things to accomplish would be for the council to be more transparent.

A very small example, it should have been announced that the report into the overspend at the Bristol Beacon was going to be delayed.

I realise that due to the emergency at Barton House, senior officers who were working long hours to handle that situation simply didn't have the time to produce that report.

It apparently wasn't a secret that the report was delayed, but at the same time, very few people appear to have been told that the report was delayed.

I also hope that all councillors will take their responsibilities seriously, and work with the goal of betterment for the people of Bristol.

Any political party that attempts to politicise a public health issue, such as whether air is clean to breathe, disgraces itself.

Distribution of committee seats

This might be a complete misreading of the LGA Independent Group guidance on how to distribute committee seats, but I'm not sure they have been done appropriately.

The LGA Independent Group guidance gives examples of how the calculations are to be done, and attempting to follow those instructions suggests that:

- \* Liberal Democrats have been allocated either the correct number, or one too few committee seats.
- \* Conservatives have been allocated either one or two too many seats.
- \* Labour have been allocated about seven seats too many.
- \* Greens have been allocated about six seats too few.

The mistake seems to be in attempting to make all committees have the exact same political distribution. The LGA Independent Group advice explicitly says that will be a rare occurrence, and that how to deal with distributing the uneven seat allocation:

"Groups are unlikely to have the same number on every committee. If Committees are the same size there has to be some negotiating between the group spokespeople on where the additional places should be."

Please note, the guidance from the LGA is incomplete. It does not say precisely how to perform rounding (and rounding can be biased), or what to do if a ward is lacking a councillor during the calculation of the distribution of seats.

My understanding is that the phrase "so far as reasonably practicable" means not arguing for a variance over half-a-seat. It is not meant to allow for a variance of seven seats to a particular party.

Perhaps this could be looked at after the next election, which I am surprised to learn is sooner than I had otherwise thought.

## **STATEMENT PS 04**

**Submitted by Suzanne Audrey**

**Title: Committee System**

This statement relates to two agenda items: Establishment of Committees 2024-5 and Allocation of Committee Seats 2024-5. It is unfortunate that, at the time of writing, the reports relating to both of these agenda items are not available.

Congratulations to all the councillors who have been elected. At the same time, I suspect many of us feel that some excellent candidates of all parties are no longer in the council chamber. They will be missed.

In relation to the new committee system, despite the lack of reports, there has been sufficient press coverage to learn that the Labour leader sees the new role of his party as 'opposition' and the Labour group has refused to Chair any policy committees.

This suggests a refusal to engage with the Committee System as developed and agreed by the cross-party Committee Model Working Group which included previous Labour cabinet members.

Nevertheless, the system has changed. We have a new start. I hope the majority of councillors of all parties are willing to make it work.

## **STATEMENT PS 05**

**Submitted by Bristol Tree Forum**

**Title: Committee System**

Statement to Full Council for its Annual General Meeting on 21 May 2024 This statement is directed to the Environment and Sustainability Committee and to Development Control Committees A & B. It relates to planning matters.

We have recently discovered that members of the public are prevented from submitting comments on the planning portal for applications to discharge or approve a condition after a planning approval (the planning number suffix for these applications is 'COND').

This prohibition extends to applications to approve post-approval biodiversity gain conditions imposed under amendments made to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by the Environment Act 2021.

These changes came into force on 12 February 2024 and impose an obligation on most planning applications to achieve at least a 10% net gain of the habitats found on a development site before development started.

Part 2 of the GOV.UK Guidance, 'Biodiversity net gain: what local planning authorities should do' states: 'after planning permission has been given, developers can submit their biodiversity gain plan for the LPA to review. The LPA will then need to decide whether to approve the biodiversity gain plan by considering whether the 10% BNG is achieved.<sup>1</sup>

We have challenged planners to state under what authority this prohibition is imposed but they have failed to give us a satisfactory answer.

Article 15, Publicity for applications for planning permission, of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 20152, imposes an obligation of LPAs to publicise all planning applications. Article 33, Representations to be taken into account, obliges the LPA to take any representations made under Article 15 into account. It must follow therefore, that the public has a legitimate interest in the substance of any application and is entitled to make representations on it. Furthermore, in the absence of an express power granted by parliament, the LPA has no power to prevent this.

We have also pointed out that, although some planning authorities prohibit such comments, others do not, for example, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire County Councils.

It cannot be right that stakeholders with a legitimate interest in such matters are to be denied a voice at this critical stage of the production of biodiversity gain evidence merely because of an historical arrangement which appears to have no basis in law.

We ask the Environment and Sustainability Committee and to Development Control Committees A & B to establish under what authority planners have imposed this prohibition

and to consider how it can be set aside if it is indeed the case that the public is prohibited from commenting on such applications as these.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-what-local-planning-authorities-should-do#reviewing-the-biodiversity-gain-plan>

2 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

## **STATEMENT PS 06**

**Submitted by Mary Page**

**Title: Committee System**

Congratulations on securing public support for your respective elections. I wish you every success in your new roles. Thank you for putting yourselves forward to represent all of us and our respective and diverse communities in your wards across the city.

When I and others formed It's Our City Bristol, we envisaged a future system where councillors would be prepared to work together to reach a consensus. From the report it is confirmed that there will be eight committees composed of councillors allocated in proportion to the number of council seats held across the city. It's not an electoral system of proportional representation, but it is roughly proportional to the results. I hope it will ensure that views across the city, and the political spectrum, are heard across every aspect of council decision making and that someone who represents our diverse communities and differing values is likely to be in the room.

I was disappointed to hear that the Labour Group Leader Cllr Tom Renard was less than willing to take part in the structure and governance of the Council in a constructive manner. That the Labour councillors are only willing to take a lead in the regulatory function but not contribute to the policy direction of the Council. I believe they are failing to represent the people who voted for them and their policies and it is an abdication of their responsibility. Especially when we know that many people are tired of the behaviour of politicians who disrespect each other and the public. We need meetings to be productive, and as professional as in any other workplace. Compromise should not be a dirty word, and consensus collaborative politics should be welcomed. For the enormous challenges that we are facing with Climate change, adaptation and mitigation, delivering public health and adult social care, supporting the education of all children and young people, especially those with special educational needs, and importantly providing homes, shelter and sanctuary for the vulnerable, we need to not only include everyone in discussion, but to take the best ideas wherever they come from in order to achieve better outcomes for most people, not leaving anyone nor their communities behind.

It was an honour and a pleasure to work cross-party on the It's Our City Bristol campaign to improve engagement and representation of the public in the council structure and I am hopeful that the Committee system will deliver on this objective. I am also proud that the cross-party campaign which included activists and councillors from four national parties (Conservatives, Green, Labour and Liberal Democrats) and one local one (Knowle Community Party) achieved a 59%-41% split in favour of moving to a committee system of governance. It was also representative democracy as the turnout of almost 95,000 voters was higher than at the 2012 referendum in which just under 77,000 people voted, and which had only narrowly backed the mayoral system, 53%-47%.

I wish you well for today's council and I hope that all councillors support and ensure that officers provide timely publication of the documents and reports, as these were only published yesterday. I believe this would help to restoring public trust in the governance



system. Regardless of what role you all personally take, please remember that it is us the people with no power, nor position who are reliant on you for the essential and life enhancing services which the council provides.