

Member Forum  
20 March 2018  
Statements from councillors



**Procedural note:**

**STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:**

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).



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

CS 01 - Cllr Mead – Bristol Arena

CS 02 - Cllr Bolton – CIL/destruction of neighbourhood partnerships (agenda item 12)

CS 03 - Cllr Stevens – Area committees (agenda item 12)

CS 04 - Cllr Jackson – Staff using their own vehicles during the worst spells of snow and ice

CS 05 - Cllr Negus – The real value of an Arena for Bristol



## STATEMENT CS 01

Unfortunately, I will not be speaking at today's Full Council regarding the Bristol Arena. But, I feel strongly that it would be worth the Council's while looking at the planning policies, both national and local, that clearly indicate that the current site is the only viable one for the Arena. That is probably why the Filton site has never been considered before. The Filton site goes against BCS2, BCS7, BCS10, BCS12, BCS13 and BCS21 of the Core Strategy, BCAP9 and BCAP35 of the Bristol Central Area Plan, DM7 and DM23 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan and sections 2 and 4 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states clearly that any application for an Arena at a site like Filton should be refused by a planning committee.

It is also worth noting that there is a great deal of evidence to suggest that a location almost entirely dependent on car travel would discourage greater use of public transport. Banister, D, and Anable, J, (2009) cited on P 287 of Town and Country Planning in the UK, 15th Ed, Routledge 2015 state: "(e) Development which is near public transport interchanges and corridors have a higher level of accessibility and are less car dependent. (f) The availability of parking is a key determinant in the level of car use."

The concern agreed at the planning committee meetings in 2016 was that the inclusion of a tiny car park at the Arena would encourage people to drive to the Arena and cause chaos trying to find a parking space. Instead, the Bristol Arena would be following the sustainable transport strategies of other arenas, including Leeds and Manchester that are easy to access via public transport, but also make use of existing city centre car parks. It is also worth noting that the majority of people coming to events at the Arena are expected to come from outside the former Avon county area, and the current site is easy to access via train on the national rail network, and is easy to access from the Bus Station. It is also easy to get to from city centre hotels, and many people will choose to make a trip of their visit to see their favourite performers, just as I did when I attended a gig in Manchester last year, and will be again in April when Miss Coco Peru makes her second visit to the UK in as many years. I went by public transport and stayed in a modest priced hotel near the bus station, which was further away from the Arena than many city centre hotels in Bristol would be from our Arena, but was still easily walkable (as well as being on bus, rail and tram routes), and many people from further afield will prefer to stay the night in Bristol, than to have to travel home after a late-finishing gig at the Arena. The Filton site has very little existing public transport (the 75 bus stops somewhere near it), and would force virtually everyone attending a gig to go by car. This runs contrary to existing national and local policies.

We have an acceptable city centre site with planning permission that is ready to have an Arena built on it. We have no alternative option currently being considered that would be able to be recommended for approval by a planning committee. It would make it less likely for city centre businesses, including hotels and eating places, to benefit from the knock-on economic benefits of having an Arena in Bristol, if the local hotels etc were based in South Gloucestershire. When city centre businesses are doing well, they will pay business rates that pay for frontline services provided by Bristol City Council. We stand to benefit financially, and it is supported by local business leaders and the venue operator, Live Nation, who have a fine track

record for running successful arenas. These are people whose views are worth listening to, as they have more experience of running successful businesses than most local government politicians.

A short version of what our policies state is that new leisure, entertainment and culture venues should be located in the city centre, and should promote the use of walking, cycling, and public transport to access them. This would also help with current work being done by the administration to address the issues of congestion and air quality. BCAP9 and BCAP35 mention that the Arena is to be built in the Bristol Temple Quarter, and will be an integral part of the new development in the area. DM7 states that an out of centre site would only be appropriate if no city centre sites are available, and "the proposal would be in a location readily accessible on foot, by cycle and by public transport." And also that: "Retail, leisure or office development outside of centres will not be permitted if: I. It would be liable to have a significant adverse impact on the vitality, viability and diversity of existing centres; or II. It would impact on existing, committed and planned investment." P 18 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local Plan.

Lastly, it is worth referring to the NPPF:

Paragraph 24, P8, states: "Local planning authorities should apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up-to-date Local Plan. They should require applications for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, then in edge of centre locations and only if suitable locations are not available should out of centre sites be considered."

Paragraph 27: "Where an application fails to satisfy the sequential test ... it should be refused."

It is worth noting that: "The NPPF must equally have the status of a material consideration and so the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the NPPF must be a material consideration." Paragraph 11.56, p 187, A Practical Approach to Planning Law, Moore and Purdue, OUP 2014.

In other words, the content of the NPPF is something that should be weighed up when considering an application at a planning committee, but whether a large corporation is offering to pay for a development that goes against both local and national planning policies is not a factor for consideration. It is also worth noting that, in the event of an appeal or legal challenge, any decision taken by the Council that went against the NPPF would place us on very weak ground with the Planning Inspector or any court of law, and could lead to much-needed public money being wasted on legal fees, instead of frontline public services.

I would urge the Council to provide the leadership the city needs, and encourage the Mayor to get a move on and build the Arena in the only location currently under consideration that both adheres to planning policy, and already has planning permission for it to be built. It could lead to the creation of jobs for local people, and benefit local businesses, especially our Broadmead and Cabot Circus retail district that would benefit from additional visitors to the city.

#### Core

Strategy: [https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/Core%20Strategy%20WEB%20PDF%20\(low%20res%20with%20links\)\\_0.pdf/f350d129-d39c-4d48-9451-1f84713a0ed8](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/Core%20Strategy%20WEB%20PDF%20(low%20res%20with%20links)_0.pdf/f350d129-d39c-4d48-9451-1f84713a0ed8)

#### Bristol Central Area

Plan: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/BCAP%20Adopted%20March%202015%20-%20Main%20Document%20&%20Annex%20-%20Web%20PDF.pdf/d05a0c22-ab91-4530-926a-f26160ab72a5>

#### Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Local

Plan: [https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/BD5605%20Site%20Allocations\\_MAIN\\_text%20V8\\_0.pdf/46c75ec0-634e-4f78-a00f-7f6c3cb68398](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/34540/BD5605%20Site%20Allocations_MAIN_text%20V8_0.pdf/46c75ec0-634e-4f78-a00f-7f6c3cb68398)

#### National Planning Policy

Framework: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

Councillor Olly Mead, Horfield Ward

## **STATEMENT CS 02**

Agenda item 12 - CIL/destruction of neighbourhood partnerships

I submit this statement to register my disgust at the way this Labour administration has chosen to treat communities in Bristol, and these proposals in particular.

I believe there are all sorts of benefits to having strong local communities in all areas of Bristol.

The obvious one is that they work together to improve their local area. Less obvious are the fact that people get to know each other better, extend their range of friends and acquaintances - and therefore keep an eye out for each other more. This is particularly important to help those living alone and the elderly or vulnerable. It also works because community groups get to know the each other and the local establishment better. To put it simply, it works for individuals, it works for groups, it works for the authorities and it works for the environment (in its broadest meaning) of the area a whole.

But for this to work, those thinking of starting a community project need to feel they can actually get somewhere. There needs to be a chance of an outcome. There also needs to be a recognition that they are doing something which is supported by the council. They also need to feel there is local control of the outcome.

These proposals represent an enormous fail on these counts. Simply using warm, fuzzy words simply hides the reality that neighbourhood partnerships - which were at least LOCAL are being abolished, and replaced by much more remote and basically unfunded organisations.

In my case, I will be expected to adjudicate on proposals from Brislington and they will be expected to adjudicate on proposals in Southville. They are the length of Bristol away.

Second, the well-being grants seem to have disappeared into the sunset. The big benefit of these is that they allowed local groups to get on with it. They were seed money for them. It gave them the incentive to start.

Third, CIL - the small proportion of community infrastructure levy available to neighbourhood partnerships will now be dealt with by these much more remote bodies. In the past, local parks groups in BS3 were able to apply for funding, and numbers of projects were delivered. The idea of doing fewer projects voted on over a wide area not only destroys the local element. It makes the likelihood of succeeding that much harder.

I'd add that the larger the area, the more likely it is that decisions will be made on party political lines.

And I have to say I also reject the notion that distributing CIL over a larger area somehow promotes equality. The amounts - generally - are too small. But isn't the purpose of CIL to mitigate the local impact of development?

It is my view that the Labour administrations dismemberment on neighbourhood partnerships far exceeds what is necessary. Yes to cutting the bureaucracy, but these proposals also throw out most of the good things about neighbourhood partnerships. It is a power grab, and a centralisation of power for no good reason.

And it will also have a knock-on and negative effect, in those areas going ahead - in terms of less community cohesion. Those communities where 'local' has worked well will find it harder to do so going forward.

In essence, Bristol Labour are telling the people who care for the area they live in not to bother.

## **STATEMENT CS 03**

### **Member Forum Statement for 20th March - Cllr Clive Stevens - Area Committees**

Later on today, Councillors will be asked to vote for the new arrangements regarding the allocation of developer money called CIL and S106 to regarding “larger value” local projects.

The paper we are voting on has some glorious goals: “moving to community self-organisation and action” and “the Council should get out of the way”. These goals are laudable, shooting for the stars and I totally and fully support them.

But the goals are up there, this paper describes something in the depths, and builds a submarine not a rocket and is a million miles from the Council getting out of the way. Let me explain.

The Council did start getting out the way in the early days of the Neighbourhood Partnerships back in 2009/10. The public and councillors were able to fund new community groups with a little seed funding for this project or that. We were able to listen to local problems and councillors and officers would take these issues away and get things done. I was chair of the BCR Neighbourhood Partnership during those heady days, they lasted a couple of years, we didn't quite reach the stratosphere but felt we were on the way. We got things done, decisions changed and new groups started.

But then more and more bureaucracy was heaped upon us; S106, CIL and other decisions that needed a mini Council structure we were simply submerged and that was that to the exciting, community led culture. Submerged we were.

This Area Committee/CIL/S106 paper describes an efficient submarine. That's fine. It does not shoot for the stars. It does not describe anything that would encourage community self organisation and certainly not the Council getting out the way.

So lets not disguise this. The report describes an efficient submarine: one meeting a year, big projects, redistribution of money and just six areas. Any, what used to be called “well being” money, is cut and now controlled by an officer.

If the Mayor wants to move to community self-organisation and enable the Council to get out the way that's great and can even be done BUT the mechanism to do that isn't before Councillors today.

Marvin - if you truly want to do introduce something to develop community resilience



then you need a different system. These Area Committees are fine for doling out developer money but won't achieve the aims as set out at the beginning of the paper.

And as to how I'll vote? I plan to listen to the speeches. And if someone can convince me that this is actually going to reach for the stars and achieve those goals then good, but I'm very doubtful at the moment. I know a submarine when I see one.

## **STATEMENT CS 04**

Following the recent inclement weather over the course of the last month, conditions made travel challenging. I would be grateful if the Mayor could advise members as to the risk assessments of and health and safety considerations given to Bristol City Council staff using their own vehicles during the worst spells of snow and ice – including yesterday (Monday 19 March).

Cllr Chris Jackson

## **STATEMENT CS 05**

**Statement to the Mayor at Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018.**

**Cllr. Anthony Negus (Cotham, Lib Dem councillor)**

### **The real value of an Arena for Bristol.**

Important decisions should be informed by analysis, conducted by experts. Although the reason for the mayor's review of building the arena on the Temple Quarter site is all about financial viability, the questions to be answered should be about value in its broadest sense.

This is not just about value-for-money but overall value to the city and its residents. For such a big decision we should know about the value of:

- regeneration (including improvements to transport)
- job and skills creation
- cultural and lifestyle offers
- visitor increases to the city
- direct and indirect revenues - including council tax
- opportunity cost

as well as understanding the real cost of mitigating impacts such as transport infrastructure, environmental pressures and on our health and well-being. Many of these will affect and interact for and against others

Only some of this list is within the scoping document to the consultants just released for scrutiny, and they are bundled very lightly. Councillors have not been told when this study will be complete and when they can review it. At the same time another similar study has been commissioned (that Councillors have not been allowed to see!) for the Brabazon site at Filton.

This site is just within Bristol's boundary with South Gloucester where an alternative scheme is proposed by the Malaysian developers who own the adjacent huge housing site. This has poorer connectivity with public transport but better road access. It is likely to cost less as a development than the Temple Quarter site but will generate less value, or overall benefits, to Bristol. It could develop into an axis with Cribbs Causeway that in time could challenge Bristol as the heart of the sub-region.

The Mayor may consider this a reasonable price to pay to release the Temple Quarter site for a straight sale or development as a hotel/conference centre. This could deliver his arena promise, albeit devalued, and provide some spare cash. Unless the cash difference is massively more than unconfirmed estimates (and this is the information scrutiny is seeking) then I believe that the central site scores much higher.

National planning policy rules that an arena should be in the centre of the city if feasible, which it is because a 12,000 seat arena already has planning permission. But its nearest rival would be a proposed 16,000 seat arena near the railway station in Cardiff which due to mayoral fainthearts might be built first. Interestingly the Filton arena might now be argued as a challenge to Cardiff at 15,000 seats which could not be fitted on the Temple Quarter site, which might be an argument to overcome the 'sequential' planning test.

Such decisions need much weighing. The LibDem administration, of which I was a member, considered alternative sites and had the finances in place to deliver our preferred site at arena island/Temple Quarter. Decisions have been slower since and costs have risen. I fear we are going to be told that it is now too expensive to build Bristol's Arena on arena island but there will be financial consequences if it isn't. Filton may appear cheaper but cannot hope to deliver the same broad and regenerative benefits to our whole city.

This is an overview of the main considerations around this hot topic. Clearly some of them are not complementary and data and best estimates are either unavailable or being withheld. However this my view which is broadly shared by my LibDem councillor colleagues is that Temple Quarter is the better site for Bristol's Arena. It is in the better location and also brings considerably better benefits to the city – some immediate and some spread over a long time – than the Filton prospect. Both would create transport issues, but might also generate bold solutions but again the Bristol site probably scores best there too.

The Arena is a big playing piece to be best placed on our sub-region chess board. When we factor in that the city's planned focus for regeneration and development is in East/Central Bristol then surely this council must be a serious player, and demonstrate its commitment to this generational project by placing the Arena where it will do the most good for the future of our city.

Cllr. Anthony Negus