Cabinet

Supplementary Information

Date: Tuesday, 7 February 2023

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR

2. Public Forum

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THIS ITEM IS DEFERRED TO MARCH CABINET	
Agenda item 20 - Financial update report - February 2023	
None	
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None	
Agenda item 22 - Q2 Quarterly Performance Progress Report – Q2 2022/23	
None	

Issued by: Amy Rodwell, Democratic Services
City Hall, Bristol, BS1 9NE
E-mail: democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk
Date: Tuesday, 07 February 2023

Statement: PS08.1

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Brigid Scott

I am writing to raise my concern over the proposed gypsy site on Hengrove park.

I am a resident on St Giles estate and we already experience on a nightly basis being terrorised by gangs of youths that gather at the park facilities you should sort the existing problems before thinking about creating new ones. As I am sure the youths in question and the new proposed gypsy residents will create even more problems for our overstretched police force .

A very concerned resident

Statement: PS08.2

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Daniel West

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed gypsy and traveller site at [Location]. I am a resident of BS14 and I am deeply concerned about the impact this development will have on our community.

Firstly, I am worried about the strain that this development will put on our already overburdened infrastructure and services. The local schools, hospitals, and roads are already under considerable pressure, and I fear that the addition of a large number of new residents will only make this situation worse.

Additionally, I am concerned about the impact this development will have on the local environment, I believe that this development will cause significant harm to the local wildlife and their habitats.

Finally, I am worried about the impact this development will have on the safety and security of our community. I understand that many members of the gypsy and traveller community are law-abiding and hard-working individuals, but I also know that there have been incidents of anti-social behavior and crime associated with similar sites in the past.

I urge the council to consider these concerns and to look for alternative solutions that will not have such a damaging impact on our community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Statement: PS08.03

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Mrs Susan Prytherch

I am writing to oppose the above site on the grounds that:

1. Facilities in the area are already over stretched with all the houses being built.
2. It will take away habitat for wildlife, and be the cause of more pollution on a very busy road. Where already lots of trees have been removed along this road for housing. The council say they will replace trees but this will take years to have any effect.
3. There has always been a problem with travellers in the area, and I think this will cause more problems. Especially if more travellers try to access the site or surrounding areas.
4. There must be a better place for a travellers site than on the edge of a main road.

Statement: PS08.04

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Alan Smith

To whom it may concern,

I am a local resident living next to the proposed site.

I would like to register my objection to the plan to put a permanent traveller site on this land. It is wrong to cut down so many trees and needlessly displace the established wildlife already living there.. Also the council along with many others have put huge additional strains on my family's budget. I would expect something given back to the ratepayers before we help these or any other groups.

Regards

Alan Smith

Statement: PS08.05

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Jane Green

Thank you for the letters for the " heads up" that we are about to have a traveller site put in our residential area. I am all for accepting walks of life, any gender and all need a second chance in life, work and housing however why the south of Bristol .. again?I am sure there are other parts of Bristol that can accommodate their needs providing access to roads and local services? We are scared and scarred by the last visits from the " travellers" who left mess, rubbish (not put in the bins provided) toileting in the bushes, burning of the trees , abuse when we walked past , many animals left unattended and countless number of big jeeps and 4x4 driving over the green area .
So my questions are -
Will they know their boundaries ? within the area ? Will they start to encroach on other parts of the old airport once they arrive.
Will it really be only 6-8 permanent pitches once other get wind of the site - they will be joined by other families/travellers.
Will there be some sort of security measure put in place ? You say they will be managed by one of the UKs experienced site providers- in what way?
I know I speak for many of the elderly local community who are worried about what will happen if this goes ahead .
I look forward to your responses.
Regards
Jane Green

Question: CQ08.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 08 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Question submitted by: Councillor Marley Bennett

Question 1: I'm pleased to see this site allocated for travellers - having permanent, regulated sites is in the best interest of the GRT community.

The Equalities Impact Assessment says GRT people have 'the lowest educational attainment levels of any ethic group in the country, the worst health outcomes of any group in the UK or Europe and have a life expectancy considerably lower than all other non GRT communities'

Please could the Mayor / Cabinet outline some of the support services the council offers to this community?

Statement: CS08.1

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Cllr Graham Morris

I quote from the report re the Western Drive and the reasons why the site is suitable:

The site is '…small, flat, accessible piece of land close to local schools, healthcare, retail outlets and other amenities. It is close to other neighbourhoods, which presents opportunities for social integration, but it is not immediately visible from other existing houses, allowing some privacy for site occupants. It has good road and bus links and is in an area of development that may afford employment opportunities for site residents. Gypsy Traveller sites around the UK are often placed in out of the way locations that show a lack of care and empathy towards Travellers; the location of this site demonstrates the value placed on including Travellers and the contribution that they can provide in the heart of the city.'

There are few sites which meet the criteria as specified. If the council is truly serious about the camp being 'in the heart of the city' what consideration has been given to the Caravan site in Hotwells, off Cumberland Road? Or using some of the generous government grant of £95m of Levelling Up Fund to secure a site around by Temple Meads? Surely one of a central option which will be 'in the heart of the city' and will show greater 'care and empathy towards Travellers'. If not here, where else in the city centre can a Traveller camp be built? There is surely, in central Bristol, a more suitable location to meet the emotive language used in this report. Where else has been considered?

The lack of information regarding which other sites have been considered; the lack of local engagement and to suggest a site which does not place Travellers 'in the heart of the city' does not appear a fair way to proceed and the suggested location does not best suit the requirements as laid out in section 5 of Evidence Base.

Statement: CS08.2

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 8 - Gypsy and Roma Traveller permanent sites

Statement submitted by: Cllrs Brown, Kent & Classick

First, we want to make clear that we understand and emphasise with the need for the provision of sites for Gypsies and Roma Travellers. Indeed, we have already had one enquiry from a resident in our ward about how they might apply for the site assuming that planning permission and funding are obtained.
However, we do have concerns about the way this site has been progressed, the lack of an overall strategy, and how this proposal ties in with the developing local plan and the wider plans for the area. Others may have additional concerns but these are our primary considerations.

Communication with Councillors/Residents
We became aware of this after seeing it on the Forward Plan – there had been no communication with Councillors to discuss the possibility of this land being developed for this use. We then sought to establish a meeting with Officers so that we could understand what was being proposed, and discuss some of the concerns that we knew residents would raise with us.
We find it regretful that this and other examples suggest there is a culture of secrecy amongst some officers and departments of the Council. This gives the appearance of not trusting Councillors with confidential proposals whereas advance engagement with us would have meant we were better able to answer residents' queries as and when plans find their way into the public domain. Instead, we were once again forced into a rear-guard action, lobbying officers so as to obtain an understanding of proposals, discuss our concerns, and formulating responses to social media rumour and residents' correspondence.

Lack of a whole strategy
As noted above, we are aware that the Council has an obligation to provide pitches for Gypsy and Roma Travellers, although as we understand it there is no longer any formal governmental target in place. We believe that a more appropriate approach would have been to identify sites that would provide sufficient land to meet identified/projected need and to have brought these to Cabinet in a paper explaining how they had been selected along with a strategic approach to the delivery and funding of these.
This would have the benefits of a) showing that the Council was serious in meeting need and not bringing forward proposals in a piecemeal fashion, b) give Gypsies and Roma Travellers greater confidence in the Council's approach, and c) not letting any one area of the city be left with the impression – however erroneous – that it was being "singled out" in the way that some of our residents clearly feel Hengrove has been.

Process for identification of a site
A related point is how this site was chosen. A strategy document that laid out the criteria for selection of sites along with a list of suitable and discounted sites would have made things clearer for residents and councillors. As it is, all we know is that this

parcel of land came to the attention of Officers and the proposal was developed from there.
We would therefore welcome greater transparency on the way the Council identifies and brings forward sites for development of any sort, particularly where these contradict designations in local or neighbourhood plans. Again, consultation with Councillors and relevant neighbourhood groups would help our communities not to feel like plans are imposed upon them fully formed. Instead we feel bounced into making this statement which feels like a less than constructive way to conduct the dialogue we would have welcomed during the development of this plan.

How this site relates to the local plan and surrounding developments
We have concerns about the loss of employment space here as well as at the adjacent Leisure Park. In the draft local plan, this site is earmarked for light industrial use, and it is adjacent to other such units on Western Drive. This proposal drives a coach and horses through the considerations that went into that allocation on what appears to be an arbitrary basis.
Furthermore, both Hengrove Park and Hengrove Leisure Park are going to be subject to extensive development and we do not believe that the relationship of this site with those has been fully considered.

We ask that the report be withdrawn pending development of a coherent strategy that provides clear criteria for site selection, proposal development, with a clear communication and engagement strategy involving Councillors.

Cllr Andrew Brown
Cllr Sarah Classick
Cllr Tim Kent
Hengrove and Whitchurch Park Councillors

Statement: CS09.1

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 9 - Bristol Heat Pump Ready Project

Statement submitted by: Cllr Martin Fodor

I'm writing to support this proposal and the bid made to BEIS. Thanks to officers for seeking to win the funds for the city. We should not have to compete to take this essential action but that's the current government approach to funding.

The city needs to make progress in becoming fossil fuel free to achieve the goals of the Climate Emergency Declaration, led by Greens in November 2018 with a deadline of 2030 for the city to become carbon neutral.

Efficient sources of heat in well insulated homes are essential to cut emissions. The partnership with Sustainable Westbury on Trym is a practical way to gain experience of heat pump installation and replacement of gas boilers in 'able to pay' homes. The opportunity for the City Leap preferred partner to gain learnings from this is a bonus. We shall need to support and enable more community led projects across the city to keep making progress in many ways.

The city needs a skilled installer workforce and effective supply chains. The successful budget amendment I made for budget year 2020-21 was specifically to use unspent apprenticeship levy funds to train our staff to fit heat pumps and other energy saving equipment. We need the private sector to have these skills too, plus the confidence to ensure products and parts are available through their businesses when needed and at scale. All too often the stop-start nature of government funding has crashed the preparations for energy saving and damaged progress. I hope WECAs skills and supply chain initiatives for the green economy in our region complement this project.

We also need to increase confidence in the way heat pumps can play their part. My suggestions for this project are:

- to prioritise quality assured, guaranteed installations with good after sales service;
- to ensure assessment process does make sure the homes taking part are suited to the specific characteristics of heat pumps, low grade heat input and management; if not then I'd like to see referrals encouraged to follow up to other forms of advice;
- provide good follow up reviews to make sure the installations are properly calibrated and run; this is a key factor for success;
- ensure clear guidance is available to all participants about the specific ways of managing home heating when using a heat pump system with gradual provision of warmth compared to central heating or more instantaneous and responsive forms of heating;

- to answer the questions and doubts that exist around the use and adequacy of heat pumps through a set of FAQs that answer common queries and myths;
- consider ways to encourage those able to pay to complement use of heat pumps with renewable electricity generation to avoid pressure on the electricity distribution system;
- to address any issues that need to be managed of fitting in listed buildings or where there is conservation areas status; we can't keep avoiding these issues as they affect many homes and areas of the city.

I look forward to progress reports on the project if it's successful with funding. These sort of relatively modest and targeted initiatives are a great way to see progress scaled up across all the different neighbourhoods and sectors in our city.

Cllr Martin Fodor
Redland ward Green Party councillor
Green Group spokesperson for Waste and Energy

Question: CQ09.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 09 - Bristol Heat Pump Ready Project

Question submitted by: Councillor Philippa Hulme

Question 1: I'm pleased that we're seeking £3.3m worth funding from BEIS to decarbonise 200 homes. How many properties will be decarbonised by the £424m investment secured by the City Leap scheme?

Question: PQ10.01 & PQ10.02

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 10 - Filwood Broadway Framework – utilisation of funding

Question submitted by: David Redgewell

Question 1: We very much welcome the framework for Fillwood centre and the award from the Department for leveling up. Especially replacement of the cinema with a modern Devopment. As South Bristol requires Employment how many local jobs will this scheme create in local community in construction and permanent jobs in the Filwood community?

Questions 2: With the Regeneration of Filwood which is to be very much welcomed from the leveling up fund one of very few awards in South west England.
What provision is Bristol city council mayor Rees making to improve public transport bus services and sustainable transport walking and cycling facilities with the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority mayor Dan Norris to improve access to the Regeneration area?

Statement: PS10.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 10 - Filwood Broadway Framework – utilisation of funding

Statement submitted by: David Redgewell

Filwood Broadway Regeneration
Leveling up grant .

We welcome the Department for levying up grant for Filwood Broadway .
Whist it would have been nice to save the cinema.
But the area is in urgent need of regeneration of the shopping centre and housing area .
South Bristol urgently need to improve local employment both in construction and jobs and community jobs .
The area also needs more housing especially rented homes and affordable housing the 30 flats are to be welcomed and a community space and shop
We would like to see some of the flats built to m standard so they are wheelchair accessible.

This government grant one of the very few leveling up grants in South west England.

We also need to see improvement to pavements walking and cycling facilities
The area also need drop Kerbs for wheelchair access.
The public realm around Filwood Broadway is in a very poor state
and we would like to see high quality pavements and improve in the highway with drop Krebs
The shopping centre is in need of major regeneration.
With housing being built in Knowle and Hengrove / whitchurch former Airport Hengrove Park site .
Their is a need to improve the shopping centre facilities at Filwood Broadway .
and create locial jobs .

But also improvement in public transport bus access to the rest of South Bristol.
Shopping centres in knowle and Tesco in Brislington and imperial park.
not just to the city centre.
We are very concerned about the cut to the 96 bus service that cross South Bristol.
From Hartcliffe,Hengrove, knowle Bristlington st Anne's park.
This route should be developed with all this housing Development in the area not being cut as per the west of England mayoral combined transport Authority bus strategy.

We welcome investment in this part of South Bristol.
South Bristol needs to see some of the Economic growth that we have seen in the city centre and North Bristol.
With jobs and housing.

With improve to public transport in the bus Network and metro bus.

This is a major investment in Filwood Broadway and is to welcomed
David Redgewell South west transport Network
Gordon Richardson Bristol disablity equlities forum.
Filwood Broadway Regeneration
Leveling up grant .

Question: CQ10.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 10 - Filwood Broadway Framework – utilisation of funding

Question submitted by: Councillor Chris Jackson

Question 1: The £14.5m investment into Filwood Broadway is great news for people in my ward. The also report says:

‘Bristol City Council are developing an Active Travel bid which is due to be submitted to the Department for Transport later in 2023. The bid may include the introduction of cycling and walking infrastructure throughout Filwood Broadway and therefore could support the Re-Create Filwood Public Realm Project’

Please could Cllr Alexander provide more details of this bid?

Question: CQ10.02 & CQ10.03

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 10 - Filwood Broadway Framework – utilisation of funding

Question submitted by: Councillor Zoe Goodman

Background:
The development of Filwood Broadway as one overarching project rather than piecemeal individual projects is very much welcomed.

The report mentions:

- "Site 4: the redevelopment of the current Filwood Library site could provide a considerable number of new homes"
- It also mentions under Site 2 the redevelopment of the former Swimming Pool site for 29 affordable new homes.
- Given that the development frameworks for the area had denoted the Swimming Pool site for mixed commercial and residential development and the library site for residential development, I believe there should there be consideration for a mixed commercial and residential development of the library site.
- One consideration might be for flexible work spaces for start-up businesses, alternatively organisations or shops currently based elsewhere on the Broadway might want to relocate to that space, or it might be a combination

Question 1: Will there be consideration for a mixed commercial and residential development of the library site rather than developing it purely for housing and how will the community be consulted on these alternative uses?

Question 2: The large amount of funds going into Filwood Broadway, including the additional £14.5m funding, is also very much welcomed. What measures will be taken to optimise social value within the local area during the construction period, such as through utilising contractors that employ local people and/or that offer apprenticeships and work experience to people from Filwood or South Bristol College, or the broader Bristol City Council area?

Question: CQ11.01 & CQ11.02

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 11 - Housing IT and Transformation Programme

Question submitted by: Councillor David Wilcox

Background:
Capability gap in service
On pages 79, 95 & 103, the current system components are described as being End of Life, Out of Support or Out of Contract by May 2024.

Pages 93 and 124 state the earliest date for delivery of the new system is October 2024 or later.

Page 143 states there is only a 50% chance of delivering any part of the systems by May 24 and a 25% chance of the system not being delivered by January 2025.

Question 1: Can the mayor provide more details of the contingency planning to assure members that our residents will not be impacted negatively by this project?

Background:
Budget for the project
Page 148 States that the contingency budget for the project is 15%; the finance advice states the budget is £7.5m, so that's £1.125m allocated. I agree that this is overly optimistic for a project of this scale and complexity, especially given the current inflation rates.

Page 93 Calculates the Contingency Budget as "Calculated as 20% of BCC and 30% of supplier delivery costs sought, plus £217k (10%) for ongoing support charges.", but does not give a figure.

Question 2: Will this be reviewed and reported to members?

Question: CQ12.01 & CQ12.02

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 12 - Grant determination for the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme 2023/24 & 24/25

Question submitted by: Councillor Christine Townsend

Question 1: The Holiday Activity Fund grant will continue until at least March 2025. The Grant Determination letter allows for up to 15% to be used for other vulnerable groups of children. I see the decision pathway names children in receipt of an EHCP and those without course to public funds – this is welcome. For what reasons does this group not extend to Children in Care, children adopted immediately following being in care and those with a Special Guardianship Order?

Question 2: In the EQIA report, point 2.3 states 'key stage 2, 3 and 4 free school meal entitlement is particularly accurate'.Universal Free School Meals were introduced in Sept 2014 meaning all children up to and including Year 7 were entitled when in KS1. What actions has the administration taken/will take to ensure all entitled children receive their free school meal and the pupil premium funds that will sit behind it under the pupil premium 'Ever 6'?

Statement: CS16.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 13 - Delivering Better Value in SEND programme grant allocation

Statement submitted by: Cllr Tim Kent

I have read through the Cabinet paper with interest as well as the report to Schools Forum in January.

Clearly the overspend in the High Needs Budget is concerning and unsustainable in the long term. But it is essential that any programme brought in to reduce the gap between expenditure and funding is not done so at the expense of young people in our city.

Often these issues are more complex when you dig beneath the surface. Is the higher cost for Independent placements due to a lack and depth of provision in maintained provision?

Is the large increase in the non-statutory top up funding due to the delay in issueing EHCPs? Is there less to be saved here than first thought.

Do we provide enough support services to mainstream schools to maximise their inclusion? Is the Council interested in bringing forward the recommendations of People Scrutiny that an inclusive league table be established for Bristol schools to help promote best practice and inclusion and so hopefully reduce pressure on the High Needs Budget.

Finally, I would like to point out to you that your report states under Corporate Strategy Alignment: "Over the course of this Corporate Strategy, we expect our SEND provision to continue improving, co-designing appropriate support with children and families to meet their needs."

There has been no co-production at a strategic level with parents in this city for over 12 months. We still await the announcement on the independent investigation into the social media monitoring of SEND parents by the Council. When will either of these start?

Statement: PS15.01

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 15 - Short Breaks Innovation Fund Bid

Statement submitted by: Jen Smith

There are 129 autistic children and young people in Bristol right now who are unable to attend school due to extreme anxiety.

What follows on from this number in the report, is a shocking inability to grasp the fundamental reasons why. Why is it pupils experience anxiety so debilitating it means they are unable to attend their education setting or participate in their local community?

And were this not bad enough, it is not introspective in any way. The Local Authority does not look at the barriers it puts up itself and instead, resorts to victim blaming language.

'socially self-isolating'

'Negative cycle of anxiety management'

'young people are withdrawing themselves from situations and environments that cause anxiety'

Having been through this scenario as a parent since around 2016 – the year the council unlawfully turned down our first EHCNA, I am very informed on where each and every failure is continuing to live through them.

What is actually happening is that autistic children and young people face daily disability discrimination. This might be from schools – and has been documented in your own independent ALP report. And they experience disability discrimination from Bristol City Council.

Take for a moment the fact that these pupils could well have been supported through your own Disabled Children's Team.

However, the professional stance this team takes through a management lead is that autistic pupils are not disabled enough.

Parent carers, including myself, have repeatedly been told that autistic pupils may not have a Section 17 assessment because the child is only autistic. This is not lawful, but your own team has perpetuated this lie for many years.

When I've mentioned these failings on Twitter – and without tagging in the council – managers from the team have screenshot these posts, shared them with each other

between private and council accounts and made negative comments about it. I know this because the council forgot to redact this bit in my We Spied On You SAR.

But the fact is, if the council had properly been supporting families whose autistic children experienced significant barriers leading to them dropping out of education, the 129 number would not be so high.

How on earth do you break the cycle by 'building positive trusting relationships'? One thing many autistic pupils generally excel at is spotting the dishonest, the insincere, the fake. Three special things this very Labour administration wants to see stamped out from dissenting autistic adults on Bristol Twitter for starters.

If the anxiety is caused by a school discriminating against the pupil's disability, and I know of a few cases of disability discrimination won against schools locally, how do you propose to hold the school accountable? It doesn't happen. It's swept under the carpet. A massive fence gets built around it. But that discrimination adds to the trauma that the autistic child faces in their daily lives.

If it's your own council services causing it – such as refusing S17 assessments and support, an EHCP process taking a year, refusing to put in EHCP section F interventions, how do you propose an autistic pupil is going to be 'building resilience in managing and experiencing
anxiety'?

These pupils are probably more resilient than you will ever be. They have had to be having been forced into hostile education settings. Not having their needs met. Being in the wrong school. Having no school. Waiting two years for a CAMHS appointment. Having their families blamed and being told to take a few deep breaths and flash a five point scale.

You say this service will benefit the city by reducing demand on 'the city by reducing demand on other, higher cost, service such as Alternative Learning Provision, Hospital Education.'

It's this kind of billy-big-talk we've heard time and again in Bristol that never happens. Until you treat autistic pupils with more respect than the offensive way they are written about in this report, and have a hard look at the failure within your own services, Bristol is going to be paying out for years for its consistent failure to support its autistic population. And that's a best-case scenario.

Question: PQ15.01 & PQ15.02

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 15 - Short Breaks Innovation Fund Bid

Question submitted by: Sally Kent

Question 1: I'd like to ask for a breakdown of information in regard to the 129 children who are currently not attending school.

https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s80726/SB%20Innovation%20Fund%20Feb%202023.pdf

How many have EHCPs
How many are going through the EHCP process
How many do not have a plan and are not going through the EHCP process.
How many are on the roll of mainstream schools
How many are on the roll of special schools
How many are not on the roll of any school
How many girls
How many boys
How many currently waiting for a special school place to the paragraph regarding schools.

Question 2: Does the council have any intention of developing and co-producing information/pathways/strategy on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)? Currently nothing exists and despite the reports alternative use of the term 'Socially self- isolating due to negative cycles of anxiety management' this new service is clearly targeting children who have EBSA whilst failing to address the underlying root cause as to why 129 autistic children in this city cannot currently attend school.

Petition: PP16.1

Cabinet – 7 FEBRUARY 2023

Re: Agenda item 16 - Future of St Barnabas C of E Primary School

Petitioner: Sophie Higgins Wheeler & Lotty Cronk

Signatures: 2,495

St Barnabas CE VC Primary School has been at the heart of the St Paul's and Montpelier community for 150 years. Generations of local families have attended the school. It is a hidden oasis in the heart of the city centre, with its fields, woodland, vegetable gardens and playgrounds. St Barnabas is a small, nurturing community, offering amazing support to children and families. Its SEND provision is second to none among mainstream schools in Bristol, and the school won a national Covid response award in recognition of the support it offered to families through the pandemic, opening a community food bank and providing every child with laptops and tablets so they could continue to learn. It is truly a community school, and everyone who spends time there describes it as a unique and very special place.

However, due to an overprovision of primary school places in the local area following the opening of two new primary schools in 2012 and 2015, the number of pupils at St Barnabas fell dramatically, and the school budget subsequently went into deficit.

School leaders and governors tried everything they could to increase the number on roll, including bidding to be the site of an autism resource base which would have added two classes to the school, and applying to join a Multi-Academy Trust. Unfortunately they were blocked at every turn.

In November 2022, staff and parents were informed that Bristol City Council had begun the process of closing St Barnabas Primary permanently. Everyone was shocked and devastated. The school community is now pulling together to fight against this short-sighted judgement, before the Council Cabinet makes their final decision in January.

Please support St Barnabas to stay open. Our children deserve the chance to carry on learning with their friends and teachers, in a loving school where their needs are met by amazing staff who do not deserve to lose their jobs. And the school deserves the chance to grow, succeed, and keep serving the community it has served for so long.