

Strategy and Resources

Policy Committee

Supplementary Information



Date: Monday, 19 May 2025

Time: 2.00 pm

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

6. Public Forum

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item.

(Pages 3 - 16)

Any member of the public or councillor may participate in Public Forum. Public Forum items must relate to the remit of the committee and should be addressed to the Chair of the committee.

Members of the public who plan to attend a public meeting at City Hall are advised that you will be required to sign in when you arrive. Please note that you will be issued with a visitor pass which you will need to display at all times.

Please also note:

Questions

1. Written public questions must be received by 5.00 pm, at least 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this meant that questions were received at the latest by **5.00 pm on Tuesday 13 May**. Public questions should be submitted via our webform: www.bristol.gov.uk/publicforum
2. Any individual can submit up to 3 written questions.
3. Written replies to questions will be available on the Council's website at least one hour before the meeting.



4. At the meeting, questioners will be permitted to ask up to 2 oral supplementary questions.

Statements

1. Written statements must be received at latest by 12.00 noon, at least 2 working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this meant that statements were received at the latest by **12.00 noon on Thursday 15 May**. Public statements should be submitted via our webform: www.bristol.gov.uk/publicforum
2. Statements, provided they are no more than 1,000 words in length, will be circulated to all committee members and will be published on the Council's website at least one hour before the meeting.

Issued by: , Policy Committee Team

E-mail: policycommittees@bristol.gov.uk

Date: Monday, 19 May 2025



Strategy and Resources Policy Committee 19 May 2025 Public Forum



Public forum questions have been received as listed below (full details are set out on the subsequent pages):

- Q1. Jen Smith: Legal action and social media
- Q2. Jen Smith: Data collection on members of the public
- Q3. Jen Smith: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Qs 4 & 5. Cllr Graham Morris: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Qs 6, 7 & 8. Cllr Mark Weston: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Qs 9, 10 & 11. Cllr Jonathan Hucker: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Qs 12, 13 & 14. Suzanne Audrey: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Q15. Andrew Lynch: Bristol Port’s political donations
- Qs 16, 17 & 18. Joe Banks: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy
- Q19. Dan Ackroyd: Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy - E- mail retention process
- Q20. Dan Ackroyd: External legal advice
- Q21. Dan Ackroyd: Public interest test – agenda item 13 – Commercial property disposals

Public forum statements have been received as listed below (full details are set out on the subsequent pages):

- 1. Jen Smith: ‘Council Motion: Council's Communications Retention Policy’
- 2. Suzanne Audrey: ‘Freedom of information requests’
- 3. Joanna Booth: ‘Democracy needs transparency, accountability and scrutiny’
- 4. Dan Ackroyd: ‘A Crisis of Transparency in Bristol’
- 5. Cllr Christine Townsend: ‘Golden Motion, agenda item 10’

Please note: The views and information contained within public statements are those of the individuals concerned and not of the Council.



PUBLIC QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1 FROM JEN SMITH

Legal action and social media

How many legal cases or legal action taken by either members of the public or Bristol City Council between 2018 and 13 May 2025, has referenced Twitter AKA X, Twitter users, Twitter posts or social media posting? This is legal cases regarding anything and everything in any department of Bristol City Council?

Response:

The Council does not hold this level of detail on individual cases.

QUESTION 2 FROM JEN SMITH

Data collection on members of the public

What methods does Bristol City Council use to surveil/monitor and/or create profiles of members of the public? Please consider all data collection such as the following – but this is not an exhaustive list: Online, through council external communications, CCTV, voice programs, voice recognition, facial recognition, computer programs building profiles on people such as in social care, program analysing phone calls by members of the public which might build a profile on their 'honesty' such as in revenue and benefits

Response:

The Council holds information in relation to members of the public to enable the delivery of services. Information is collected and processed in line with the Data Protection Act and related legislation. The data is not held for surveillance purposes.

QUESTION 3 FROM JEN SMITH

Update on Council motion – Council's communications retention policy

The Update on Council Motion – Council's Communication Retention Policy states: 'It is the requirement of all officers to ensure they are following the requirements of both the Freedom of Information Act, and those under the UK Data Protection Act around Subject Access Requests. Training is provided on both pieces of legislation initially via our E-learning platform (the courses are not mandatory, but those officers responding to requests are encouraged to complete them). There is also a sizeable amount of guidance on our internal source pages that explains and support officers in responding to disclosure requests.' If this is the case, then why has Bristol City Council refused point blank to release SARs after being legally requested by both members of the public and their solicitor? I can provide evidence of this if so required by democratic services.

Response:

This matter should be directed to the Data Protection Team for a response. The Committee is not able to comment on individual Subject Access Requests.

QUESTIONS 4 & 5 FROM CLLR GRAHAM MORRIS

Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy

Predictably this report response confirms the organisational view that the Authority’s practices comply with the law and best practice. However, it is clear that there is room for improvement and exceptional cases have revealed shortcomings in our existing arrangements.

Members have already demonstrated that they support changes to current retention policies and systems.

Question 4

Can you clarify whether or not ICT has the ability or there are ways and means of data retrieval even after email records have been deleted outside the 30-day, 2 year or 4-year retention periods?

Response:

Current Microsoft functionality allows retrieval of emails 30 days after they are removed from the deleted items. An email will be deleted from a user’s inbox upon the retention period (2/4 years), it will then go into the user’s deleted items for 30 days, upon which it is removed. It then remains retrievable for a further period of 30 days, although recent attempts have shown that is not 100% successful. In terms of a leaver, their inbox will be deleted after 30 days, and then the same 30-day retrieval may be attempted.

Question 5

If such retrievals are technically available, what are the obstacles to utilising such methods in order to satisfy a FOI request?

Response:

See answer to question 4.

QUESTIONS 6, 7 & 8 FROM CLLR MARK WESTON

Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy

Question 6

Please can a detailed explanation be provided as to why emails are not regarded or treated as an appropriate storage system?

Response:

Email is used as a method of communication. The Council has SharePoint for long term retention of information, that is easier to manage and ensure continuity of access in the event of an officer leaving or being absent. Services also have (where appropriate) line of business systems, such as our Adult Care system, where information should be stored to ensure all relevant information is stored in a single appropriately accessible location.

Question 7

In what way are SharePoint and OneDrive superior products for these purposes?

Response:

See answer to question 6.

Question 8

Can officers confirm those instances where email records older than 2 or 4 years may be kept (as legitimate derogations) under GDPR obligations?

Response:

Any emails that need to be kept for longer than 2 (or 4) years will need to be aligned to one of the retention policies set out under our document retention schedule. These will then need to be moved to an appropriate storage location (SharePoint, services line of business system).

QUESTIONS 9, 10 & 11 FROM CLLR JONATHAN HUCKER

Update on Council motion – Council’s communications retention policy

Question 9

Cost factors and the law will impose reasonable limitations on the number of individuals whose electronic communications should be kept for extended periods. It is anticipated that any exceptions to standard practices will only apply to senior individuals within an organisation. Given the ramifications of controversial policy decisions taken by leading political figures may well not play out within a short timeframe, will any review of records management consider archiving these on a public interest basis?

Response:

See response to question 8. In relation to emails being retained after an officer/member leaves the council, as mentioned in the report, there is a process that can be used to retain these if there is a requirement to do so. How that process will work, and what those requirements will be, will be looked at as part of the work to implement the actions from this report.

Question 10

When will internal audit likely commence their Data Retention Policy Compliance Audit in FY25/26?

Response:

The audit work is likely to take place between June and September 2025.

Question 11

What opportunity will Members have to contribute or input to this important work aside from simply receiving a report to the Audit Committee in 6 months' time?

Response:

Internal Audit Officers will discuss with the Chair of the Audit Committee and Cllr Hucker as part of the scoping of this piece of audit work.

QUESTIONS 12, 13 & 14 FROM SUZANNE AUDREY

Update on Council motion – Council's communications retention policy

Question 12

BACKGROUND: The report on the Council's Communications Retention Policy indicates: "In terms of the council performance in regard to disclosure, and how we discharge our duties under the various legislation; the information we disclose; and how we meet our requirements, there have been very few cases where our approach to the release of information has been called into question." However, the Council's response rate to Freedom of Information requests within the required timescales is consistently 'unsatisfactory' (around 75% rather than 90%) and the council fails to report sufficient information about the handling of requests.

Question: Please provide the following information for FOI requests 2024/2025 which should be readily available if the correct records are kept:

- The number of requests where the information was granted in full;
- The number of requests where the information was refused in full (you may wish to separately identify those where this was because the information was not held);
- The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part;
- The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review (this needs only reporting annually).

Response:

- The number of requests where the information was granted in full; = 1219

- The number of requests where the information was refused in full (you may wish to separately identify those where this was because the information was not held); = 526

Information Not Held = 209

Exempt = 317

- The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part;= 434

Number of cases rejected due to no clarification or withdrawn = 17

Number of Request not answered =39

This was from a total of 2235 requests received from 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025.

- The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review (this needs only reporting annually). = 93

Question 13

BACKGROUND: It is my understanding that there are outstanding FOI requests relating to senior politicians and staff under the previous administration.

Question: Please will you describe the steps undertaken through which it was concluded that “there are no outstanding FOIs that relate to senior figures in the last administration. Currently these have all been answered by BCC”?

Response:

A search of our FOI case management system (iCasework) was conducted at the time of drafting the report. There is one current FOI relating to costs of the previous administration compared to costs of the current committee system. This was received in March.

Question 14

BACKGROUND: The report states: “Prior to the close down of the previous administration office (Mayors Office), the team were reminded that email is not used for storing information, and to move anything that needed to be kept to SharePoint.” However, it is my understanding that, in law, an email is considered “information”: emails are recognized as a form of documentary evidence and their content can be used in legal proceedings. I can understand that attachments may be moved and kept on SharePoint, but deleting the emails is likely to remove contextual information that may be important.

Question: What is the Council's understanding of the legal status of emails as a form of documentary information?

Response:

Any written information that the Council holds could be used as documentary evidence in legal proceedings and this includes email.

QUESTION 15 FROM ANDREW LYNCH

Bristol Port’s political donations

Bristol Port, in which Bristol City Council holds a non-voting 10% stake, has made political donations amounting to tens of thousands of pounds to the Conservative party, Vote Leave and local and national Conservative politicians over the past decade and more. I questioned this in March 2003 when Liam Fox, MP for North Somerset, noted a £10,000 donation from the port in his register of financial interests. I received this ambiguous reply from the council. “Bristol City Council has no oversight of the port’s day to day business and no voting rights and therefore have [sic] no say in how the port conducts its business. This donation will have had no impact on the level of dividend Bristol City Council receives.”

As it turned out when the port’s accounts for that year were later published, a £10,000 donation was paid instead from the majority owners’ separate company, First Corporate Consultants. However, according to the port’s accounts for the full year up to July 2024, another £10,000 political donation was paid in April 2024, which matches the donation from Bristol Port registered by Liam Fox. While the amount Bristol council loses may seem small - £1,000 for the most recent donation – these amounts add

up. What is more important is the principle concerned. The majority owners are making decisions that may hurt the interests of a minority shareholder. It is exceptionally poor corporate governance and demonstrates a contempt by the majority for the people of Bristol.

What action will this council take to prevent these donations continuing?

The majority owners have, in effect, admitted that they should not be using Bristol Port funds for political donations in switching the 2003 donation. Now they should recompense the council for all the money it has been deprived of over the years.

Response:

It remains the case that Bristol City Council has no oversight of the port's day to day business and no voting rights and therefore do not have a say in how the port conducts its business.

QUESTIONS 16, 17 & 18 FROM JOE BANKS

Update on Council motion – Council's communications retention policy

Question 16

Email retention period:

The Golden Motion on the council's communications retention policy was passed unanimously at Full Council. All political parties supported its aims and three members of this committee gave spirited speeches in the council chamber asserting that change was required to how the council operates in this area. Several councillors referred to the Nolan principles of public life, highlighting the necessity of accountability and transparency. The Deputy Leader of the council spoke about "cultivating a culture of openness and co-operation". They all correctly identified that the council's current closed culture of secrecy and obfuscation has undermined public confidence, contributing to the low regard the council has in the city and further poisoning attitudes towards institutions and to politics more generally. The response advocated to address this was more access to information, more openness; that the workings of the council should be made much more legible and accountable to the public. Incredibly, not only does the officer report provided today in response to that Motion offer no remedies to the failings identified by all parties, it actually proposes to weaken the policy on email retention by reducing the amount of time they will be retained. It says: "Currently we do not enforce a retention period on email, it is currently kept for as long as the member of staff is employed. To enhance our compliance with GDPR and reduce our IT storage costs, we are looking to implement a 2-year retention period on emails. Therefore, emails will only be retained for 2 years after they are sent or received. This proposal will also look to alter that for Councillors to include 4 years or emails, therefore covering their period in office." Does the Chair of this committee think that this proposal, and the report more generally, reflects the wishes of the council's democratically elected members, as expressed at Full Council on 10 December 2024?

Response:

The Chair will respond verbally to this question at the meeting.

Question 17

Historic emails:

Is it physically possible for historic emails to be accessed by council IT staff if a council email account has been closed down?

Response:

Current Microsoft functionality allows retrieval of emails 30 days after they are removed from the deleted items. An email will be deleted from a users inbox upon the retention period (2/4 years), it will then go into the users' deleted items for 30 days, upon which it is removed. It then remains retrievable for a further period of 30 days, although recent attempts have shown that is not 100% successful. In terms of a leaver, their inbox will be deleted after 30 days, and then the same 30 day retrieval may be attempted.

Question 18

Mangled sentence:

What is this mangled sentence in the report trying to say? "The council values and behaviours, alongside our leadership framework set out the responsibilities for officers, including (but not limited to) taking accountability, and showing integrity."

Response:

This part of the report emphasises that officers are expected to follow the concepts set out in the Councils values and behaviours document, alongside those expectations set out in the Leadership Framework.

QUESTION 19 FROM DAN ACKROYD

Update on Council motion – Council's communications retention policy - Email retention process

It says in the paper for Agenda item 10 that:

"Prior to the close down of the previous administration office (Mayors Office), the team were reminded that email is not used for storing information, and to move anything that needed to be kept to SharePoint."

What process used for identifying emails that need to be retained, particularly those of senior staff and all politicians, because it can't possibly be left to individuals involved, right?

Response:

Each service area is responsible for ensuring the information they hold is retained for the appropriate retention period. Therefore, in this instance, the Mayor's Office were responsible for the appropriate retention of information as part of their close down activities.

QUESTION 20 FROM DAN ACKROYD

External Legal Advice

What is the process for a committee to get outside legal advice, separate from that provided by the lawyers in this council?

Response:

The Council has an in-house legal service which is responsible providing legal advice to the Council and its Committees. The commissioning of external legal advice is a matter for the legal service and will be made on a case-by-case basis if additional capacity or expertise is required.

QUESTION 21 FROM DAN ACKROYD

Public Interest Test – Agenda item 13 – Commercial Property Disposals

For Agenda item 13. Commercial Property Disposals, please can the individual factors that were considered in weighing that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information?

I would like to see each individual factor considered, and the weighting given to each.

Response:

The public interest test was applied to this exemption to weigh the public interest in maintaining the exemption against the public interest in disclosure.

There is a public interest in disclosure to support transparency in relation to

1. the public's right to know
2. accountability in terms of how decisions are being made.

This was balanced against the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

In this specific case, officers confirmed the information is commercially sensitive and confidential –

1) prejudice to the commercial negotiations and impact on both the Council and the third party purchaser would happen if the details were shared in an open report.

2) Disclosure may further harm the Council's negotiating position in future sales through less favourable terms or lower sale prices.

The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosure due to the harm to the Council's commercial negotiations now and the potential harm in the future alongside the impact on the third party.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS

STATEMENT 1 – Jen Smith

‘Council Motion – Council’s Communications Retention Policy’

The paper Update on Council Motion – Council’s Communications Retention Policy, states that 'There are no specific legal implications arising from this report which is for noting.'

I would like to disagree quite strongly. I have had a great deal of personal experience over the last two years about the way the council handles information – particularly emails.

The reason it has taken over two years is because the council has been entirely unwilling to supply requested information to my solicitor.

To run the case, my solicitor was forced to use the limited data I was given by Bristol City Council under a SAR. One that took the best part of a year and then had to be shared with Bristol City Council's external solicitor because the council would not communicate with them.

To make this crystal clear, Bristol City Council would not communicate with the very solicitor it paid to represent them. To access data regarding the case, I had to provide it to them. This is despite the data being heavily redacted to the point of useless and most likely entirely unlawful.

It gets worse. The council refused entirely to provide a SAR to a second person involved in the action, for which the solicitor had to mine through my data for any mention of them.

Over a year after Marvin Rees and other councillors left office, requested information through SAR from his and another councillor's mailbox was not provided, despite it being requested months before.

The paper also says: 'It is standard process that once an officer, elected member, or other staff, leaves the authority, their emails are deleted after 30 days. There is no proposal to change that practice, as that follows best practice guidance.'

The problem with this is that FOIs and SARs are not being turned around in acceptable amounts of time.

As of the 10 May 2025, I have been waiting 40 working days for a response to an FOI I made to Bristol City Council.

In October 2021 when the council was taking a keen interest in what I was saying on social media, they were also attempting to block FOIs. This can be seen in the email which I received in a SAR below.

'Think the vexatious response letter is proportionate for [redacted]. I think there is more nervousness about [redacted] response? We have two outstanding for [redacted] which can be refused under the 18 hour rule if combined which is perfectly reasonable given they can in at the same time. Also a less contentious response to vexatious. Happy to go with either but if concerns over a backlash the 18 hour time limit is also available.'

The Corporate Strategy alignment at the bottom of the paper says: 'This report aligns to the council’s values and Leadership framework. Particularly taking accountability, and showing integrity.'

Well that's a little debatable isn't it.

STATEMENT 2 – Suzanne Audrey

‘Freedom of information requests’

The Information Commissioner's Office has set out the following requirements for reporting on compliance with Freedom of Information requests in ‘How to report on your performance on handling requests for information under FOIA 2000’.

Compliance Statistics:

8.5 Public authorities with over 100 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees should, as a matter of best practice, publish details of their performance on handling requests for information under the Act. The information should include:

The number of requests received during the period;

The number of the received requests that have not yet been processed (you may also wish to show how many of these outstanding requests have extended deadlines or a stopped clock, e.g. because a fee notice has been issued);

The number of the received requests that were processed in full (including numbers for those that were met within the statutory deadline, those where the deadline was extended and those where the processing took longer than the statutory deadline);

The number of requests where the information was granted in full;

The number of requests where the information was refused in full (you may wish to separately identify those where this was because the information was not held);

The number of requests where the information was granted in part and refused in part;

The number of requests received that have been referred for internal review (this needs only reporting annually).

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/eir-and-access-to-information/how-to-report-on-your-performance-on-handling-requests-for-information/>

As far as I can tell, Bristol City Council has repeatedly failed to provide this information to the public and only reports the total requests, responses issued/not issued within statutory deadline, and the basic compliance rate.

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council/data-protection-and-foi/freedom-of-information-foi/freedom-of-information-foi-published-information/freedom-of-information-compliance-statistics-2023-to-2024>

Why is Bristol City Council failing to report the required information? What is being done to ensure that the information is available to the public?

Furthermore, the ICO indicates that the response to FOIs is unsatisfactory if:

Fewer than 90% of requests are responded to within 20 working days.

Fewer than 90% of internal review requests are responded to within recommended timescales.

Complaints to the ICO about late responses and failure to respond are frequent and often upheld.

The compliance rate at Bristol City Council is 75% and has been classed as “unsatisfactory” for years.

What is actually being done to improve the Council’s FOI response rates?

STATEMENT 3 – Joanna Booth

‘Democracy needs transparency, accountability and scrutiny’

Democracy has weakened so substantially under the new committee system that I find it difficult to even articulate the ways in which this destruction has been conducted.

We could look at the little ways in which access to information has been delayed and refused: Under the mayoral system, a member of the public could send a statement to a meeting “by no later than 12 noon on the working day before the meeting.” This has increased to two working days.

I was not able to send a statement about the Families First Transformation programme going (again) to Children and Young People’s committee, which meant there is no public record of my concerns. The criticisms of the financial modelling were not raised at committee. The worries about the ‘discreet cohort’ of children who are being stepped down to family care in order for the council to save £5.5m were also not heard.

I wasn’t able to raise the worries about the approach of paying £7.5m to an external partner for a 12-month project containing data analysis and ‘deep dives’ of the data, or the risk/reward structure of the payment which the government considers has the following risks: Misdirected focus of service provision, Burden of proof on actual achievement of results, Cash management issues, and the Lack of appeal for SMEs.

In the Transformation papers going to Strategy and Resources today, the report stating the costs still says £7m and not the new and revised £12m. I don’t know how councillors can examine this programme if they don’t even have the right information in front of them.

Transparency and accountability are not just ways to irritate politicians, regardless of what those in power may think. The public’s scrutiny and the council’s transparency are essential means for helping the city function better. Democracy strengthens decision making. Hiding the assets being sold off is very specifically a weakness of our democracy and yet today, councillors are selling off assets with no information available.

Regarding FOIS, reducing the storage time for emails to two years is also a weakening of our democracy. The SEND spying motion under Labour empowered an inquiry into the behaviour of officers and politicians. The spying happened over two years ago and reducing the availability of evidence will hinder any justice we can expect as a city.

I note the report about FOIs says that all FOIs about senior figures have now been answered. I dispute this statement, strongly. I have asked to see the Labour mayor’s communications about the Bottleyard and I was refused. I have taken that matter to the ICO. Refusing FOIs does not mean they are resolved. The ICO could still order the council to find that information.

All the little destructions lead up to big failures.

Democracy is knowable and it is practical. What I have seen over the past 12 months makes me despair for all the lessons lost and all the ways we are being harmed.

STATEMENT 4 – Dan Ackroyd

‘A Crisis of Transparency in Bristol’

The city chose to get rid of the Mayoral system because it was dictatorial.

The legal department in this council seems to think their duty is to take the side of politicians, and 'protect them' against the public. This made the position of Mayor far more powerful than it would have been with a judicious legal department.

This council had a failing FOI service under the previous administration, which was suffering from 'political interference' according to a cabinet report. The council that received an enforcement notice from the ICO to improve the FOI service. But because the council has appealed that enforcement notice, enforcement of that has been on hold. If nothing else, it seems wrong to me that a failing service can decide to spend public money on appealing that enforcement notice. I would have thought this would be a key decision that needed to be made by politicians.

It also seems wrong to me that people have had their FOI requests refused on the grounds that the mayor's emails have been deleted, and this paper claims there are no outstanding FOI requests.

The legal department at this council has simply not been acting in the interest of the public. The legal department has decided:

- * that senior councillors can register their interests in a secret register rather than in public, even when that interest ends of receiving land from the council.
 - * that it was not in the public interest for this council to be informed that directors at Bristol Waste resigned.
 - * that it was not in the public interest for the unlawful loan of money from Bristol Waste made to a Councillor owned company to be published, on the grounds that "We've reported it in secret, and that's good enough."
- <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s99407/Action%20Sheet%20PDF.pdf>

If nothing else, this is a clear violation of the Nolan Principles.

- * advised multiple chairs to violate the Freedom of Expression of members of the public through 'blocking' public forum items.
 - * has refused to follow 'pre-action protocol' which ran out the clock for Judicial Reviews for people on legal aid.
- That the paper proposes reducing the period of time emails are kept to 2 years, for politicians handling a £1.7bn budget, is a sick joke.

I have to question why the Chair allowed the paper to be brought to committee.

That the Green party is so conveniently incurious to the handling of FOI requests, makes it possible to think they are performatively principled, rather than being serious about better governance.

There is a planned inquiry into the Barton House emergency evacuation. If the emails have actually been destroyed, it would deprive the people of Bristol from being able to learn from an event that traumatised people and cost millions of pounds in emergency spending.

This is clearly wrong, and I strongly suspect it is a criminal act.

That the senior politicians in this city seem so complacent about it is an outrage.

STATEMENT 5 – Cllr Christine Townsend

‘Golden Motion, Agenda Item 10’

Within the motion it states ‘emails now represent a primary mode of contact between officers, members, residents and external organisations’ this is not disputed.

There are posters around this building, from the corporate strategy that list one of the values and behaviours as ‘We show respect...we treat each other fairly’ it therefore follows that emails will be a key source where this value is demonstrated.

This response in no way acknowledges this element of what it is to be a public service ie human interaction as a form o communication! The response focuses on decision making and formal record keeping whilst ignoring the importance of interpersonal communication as an element of what it is to communicate.

These responses attempt to downplay the importance of email as a form of communication, when it is in fact a key element of what it is to communicate.

I question the length of time after leaving the organisation emails are proposed to be kept. Whilst documentation that refers to council decisions or officially how decisions were made may be stored elsewhere for ensured access, two years in the life of an ex-employee, resident or member is nothing. Emails will contain rich evidence of how a person has communicated with others – to delete them after two years is to delete an evidence chain that may be needed in future investigations concerning human interactions – it is these human interactions where this above ‘value’ will be captured.

It is unclear to me how long emails will be stored. The paper states ‘for two years’ this is in addition to the entirety of the length of service plus two years or whether after two years of service an employee who continues in the employment of the council then starts to have emails disposed of? Emails will contain a level of evidence of the true nature of a person’s communication in a way other formal documents simply never will.