

A few months ago, I was in a planning meeting with other city leaders, looking at the future of Bristol up until 2050. One of our youth mayors stood up to give their perspective. The first thing she said left the room stunned. She said that in 2050 she was going to be 50. There were gasps, and laughs, as this sunk in to the 100 or so middle-aged city leaders, many of whom, at best, might be retired, and at worst, might not be here at all.

But it gave a new perspective - the young people we work with here at the Station will be living in the Bristol we create - long after we are gone. We want them to be grateful that we took decisions now that made their lives and future prospects better.

If we are going solve the problems we know they are going to be facing in 50 years time, we need to show courage now - whether that be on environmental issues, jobs, addressing inequality, the economy. Just as we are living with the decisions our predecessors made – both good and bad - so they will be living with ours. Right

now, we need to be investing our time, energy and money into Bristol's future.

That is why I have dedicated the last 25 years of my working life to Bristol and its young people. I have done all I can. Spent as much time, energy and money as I could find to make a real and practical difference to young people's lives, helping them to reach their potential.

We created this building, that is now the largest and most well attended youth centre in the South West, with over 10,000 young people using it every year. We turned a derelict space into something that has made Bristol a better place - creating jobs and changing lives.

That is a Mayor's job - to make a real difference to the lives of people in the city they serve, both now and for the future. This means having the courage to make decisions that are hard but that we know are right for the future of Bristol. This is what we did here at The Station.

Over the last few months I have met the companies on all sides of the debate SMG, Live Nation and YTL and considered all of the facts. I know that the Temple Meads scheme was ready to go but that it would have taken real courage for any Mayor to commit to it.

It is not something I take lightly but if things still stand as they are today if elected as your mayor, the first thing I would do is to revive the Bristol Arena plans at Temple Meads.

It is important to understand why I say this. It is a much bigger point here than just the arena. In power we cannot let the fear of austerity dictate what we can do as a city. Austerity is not the city's fault nor is it the Mayor's - that accolade belongs to the current Conservative government. But how we respond to it is our choice. Do we respond with courage and vision, or with indecision and inaction? We can choose to shy away from big decisions and batten down the hatches until things get better OR we can see these uncertain times as an opportunity to stand out from the crowd, to show the

country, and the world that Bristol is still open, optimistic, creative and fun.

An investment in the arena is not a waste of public money or a risk that is too big to take - it is an investment in our future and 'Bristol' giving something back to the people who live here and attracting more people than ever to our city. It is about jobs where they are needed – Lawrence and Barton Hill, St. Paul's and the often forgotten South of Bristol, it's about sustainable travel, building a powerful and diverse local economy. It is about having fun. It is a Green vision for Bristol.

It is also an opportunity that is here now. I know that to get things done in Bristol, build buildings like the one we are in now and change the city for the better you have to have the courage to take chances when they are presented. The station nearly didn't happen because the business plan didn't quite stack up and the funding was about to be pulled. 3 weeks of intensive work and meetings turned it around and we saved this building. The window of opportunity is closing on the temple

meads site. If we don't take it soon, then it could be years until another opportunity like this presents itself. We can choose a legacy of indecision? or a legacy of getting things done.

Leadership is most definitely about listening to as wide a range of voices and opinions as possible and weighing up the facts before making a decision – but it is then important to make a decision.

No one has a monopoly on good ideas I am lucky that my job takes me across the city from Hartcliffe and Stockwood to Fishponds and Southmead, St Pauls, Brislington and Hillfields. I have the good fortune that in any given day I might be meeting with young people in care or who are homeless and then meeting business and city leaders to look at how we tackle the strategic problems we face.

I understand that our wonderfully diverse city has communities that don't feel part of our success - communities in parts of South Bristol and our BAME

communities tell me again and again they feel excluded from decision making and left out of the growing wealth in Bristol.

These divisions are becoming sharper and inequality is growing. It's made worse by the 'winner takes all' mentality of mainstream politics that is hugely damaging and feeds the inequality and division we are trying to resolve - rich and poor, black and white, left and right. Division creates poverty - it doesn't solve it.

Politics should be about bringing people together and increasing our understanding of others - not playing to our personal prejudice and creating a them and us.

And I have hope - as I travel across the city and meet people I see that they are the beating heart of Bristol - those who visit their neighbours, run lunch clubs and youth centres, businesses that give back to their communities and those who are breaking down barriers and creating a happier, healthier city.

The Bristol Somali Voice visited a Hartcliffe community event over the summer and received a warm welcome, building relationships between these communities where there could be division; Ambition Lawrence Weston (a community organisation) has built a solar farm and is planning a wind turbine for the community – reducing energy prices for the poorest and reducing carbon emissions. Ujima Radio is another example - based here at the Station and with Bristol's Big Conversation with the Bristol Post – encouraging talking about race and diversity, and building relationships across our city.

Big companies also have a role to play. Burges Salmon for example who are investing in young people, helping them to find new careers they might never have thought of.

Together, these are the people and organisations who make Bristol great. These are people who are growing the new and shaping the future of our city. I've announced my candidacy for 2020 early because I want to spend the coming months getting to know Bristol even

better. Taking the time to reach out further in the city to understand it more, meet, talk to, and most importantly, listen to the people, business leaders, volunteers, community leaders, artists, workers and the diverse communities that make up our city. I want to listen to all these voices so that should I be successful in May 2020, on day one in office, we will be ready to start making the tough decisions together.

I want to repeat again, that no one community, party or politician has a monopoly on good ideas. As Greens, we understand this and are fighting for proportional representation. That is why, if selected as mayor I would bring the best and brightest of our politicians from all political backgrounds that share our vision and ambition for Bristol into a rainbow cabinet. That would be a commitment for my entire term of office. No ifs or buts, or changes if the going gets tough. Different views make for tough discussions but, in my experience, produce much better decisions that will serve the people of our city now and in the future.

Like you, I love Bristol; I have spent my entire adult life here - I have lived and found love, adopted two wonderful children and found my passion for young people. I would now like the opportunity to take that passion and experience and do more to tackle some of the problems we face and build on the huge talent and commitment of the people of who live here. In politics, I am learning that you can't offer many guarantees but today I can offer one. If elected, I will work tirelessly for this city, for the young people who live here and for all of our future.

Thank you.