



Agenda Item No: 4

Bristol City Council

Minutes of Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

14th September 2015

Councillors: Fodor, Hance (substitute for Denyer), Harvey, Hickman, Lovell (Vice-Chair), G Morris, Milestone, Negus (Chair) and Tincknell

Officers in Attendance:-

Alison Comley - Strategic Director Neighbourhoods, Romaine De Fonseca – Policy Adviser (Scrutiny), Kate Murray (Head of Libraries), Pam Jones (Service Manager – Environment and Leisure Operations), Kay Russell (Strategic Planning Manager), Angie Burton (Chair of the Officer Task Group for Co-ordinating the Approval of New Byelaws), Di Robinson (Service Director – Neighbourhoods and Communities), Mary Ryan (Service Director: Landlord Services), Becky Pollard (Director of Public Health), Lucy Fleming – Scrutiny Co-ordinator and Jeremy Livitt - Democratic Services Officer,

30. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Carla Denyer (substituted for by Councillor Fi Hance).

31. Public Forum

There were no Public Forum items for this meeting.

32. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33. Minutes of Neighbourhoods Scrutiny – 17th August 2015

Resolved – that the minutes of the above meeting be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to altering the word “Emma” to “Estella” (Minute Number 19 – Page 1 of the Minutes) and the word “them” to “waste (Minute Number 27 – Page 7 of the Minutes).

Action: Jeremy Livitt

34. Action Sheet – 17th August 2015

Libraries of the Future Update – Issues Raised at Public Forum (Eastville Library and Issues raised by Steve Crawshaw – UNISON) + Issue of Capital Investment Funding

In response to Members' questions, the Strategic Director confirmed that work was progressing with implementing the decision made at Cabinet following the approval of the Libraries of the Future report.

The Chair pointed out that a full update was required for the Scrutiny Commission on the current situation.

The following points were made by Councillors:

- (1) A clear decision was required as to what the nature of the provision would be during the period between the closure of Eastville Library and its replacement. It was important that this was provided at least 3 months in advance of the closure taking place. It was also important that issues such as the possible establishment of a Neighbourhood Trust were considered – local Councillors should be kept informed of developments throughout the process;
- (2) A full response was required to the various issues raised by Steve Crawshaw in his Public Forum statement, including discussions with Human Resources as appropriate;
- (3) The fact that Eastville Library was also a polling station needed to be taken into account;
- (4) The issue of resilience of the service was a concern – officers needed to provide statistics for opening hours for libraries over the last 2 years so that future provision can be assessed;
- (5) There also needed to be a response to concerns that had been raised about the potential loss of trained librarians arising out of the changes.

In response to the issues raised, the Strategic Director and Head of Libraries made the following points:

- (6) A report would be brought to the 16th October 2015 Scrutiny Commission providing a full update on a range of issues relating to libraries including those raised above;
- (7) Democratic Services were considering alternatives for the polling station at Eastville;
- (8) The Libraries service operated its own Work Life Balance Policy and, therefore, would report on the HR issues mentioned above;
- (9) The relevant JCC would be working with Trade Unions to address issues such as the number of trained librarians;

Resolved – that the Action Sheet be noted and a Libraries Progress Report addressing the issues outlined above be brought to the next meeting on 16th October 2015. ACTION: Alison Comley/Di Robinson

35. Whipping

There was no whipping for this meeting.

36. Chair's Business

The Chair stated that, since there were no Public Forum items, he would allow a longer discussion for Agenda Item 11 – Quarter 1 Outturn Performance Report

37. Updating the 2009 Waste Services Strategy

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced this report outlining the scope of the work required to update the Waste Services Headline Strategy and made the following comments:

- (1) There had already been significant stakeholder engagement in this area
- (2) Work had already started on Phase 1 as part of a process of refreshing the 2009 strategy;

Commission Members made the following comments:

- (3) The Strategy needed to take into account the importance of re-use and repair, as well as recycling. It should also reflect the need for environmentally friendly disposal. Input from other organisations and analysis of work carried out by other Local Authorities was required. Work with other partners (such as the Repair Café) should be considered. It was noted that places such as Exeter had a re-use centre. Other opportunities could be considered such as commercial food waste collections by Bristol Waste Company eg for smaller cafes throughout the city. All of this work could then help to assess the level of material that can be disposed of;
- (4) The paper was quite theoretical and required more detail, although it was acknowledged that this was expected at this stage of the process;
- (5) Greater emphasis on corporate social responsibility was required to ensure greater accountability by different groups ie traders in respect of take away waste;
- (6) Fly tipping was a problem in certain parts of the city, such as Lawrence Hill;
- (7) More effective enforcement was required – very few people were taken to court;
- (8) It was important that there should be no mixed messages in this area. Standards should build on the existing strategy and not be lowered, therefore ensuring that money continued to be saved;
- (9) Devolution was a key aspect of this issue. The damaging impact of previous interference from Central Government needed to be acknowledged;
- (10) A significant piece of work had been carried out in the Bishopston Cotham Redland Neighbourhood Partnership (BCR NP) on enforcement. An assessment of traders in Gloucester Road had indicated that 10% had been

unable to demonstrate that their disposal of waste was legal. A guide had now been created for traders in BCR NP and needed to also be created throughout the city;

- (11) The licensing of scrap metal was also a key issue – greater enforcement of vans who used this was required since many of them were illegal;
- (12) The Bullet Points from the Strategy Document should be circulated with the next report on this issue;
- (13) More information required to be included in the strategy regarding the opportunities provided by the Energy Company;
- (14) There was a need for increased emphasis on Street Scene
- (15) Objectionable materials needed to be separated;

In response, the Strategic Manager and Service Manager (Environment and Leisure Operations) made the following points:

- (16) Further detail would be placed in future waste models – the current report was an outline;
- (17) A piece of work had been started across the Council concerning enforcement, in particular how to do it more effectively;
- (18) A copy of the “Waste Story” was circulated providing a timeline for waste contract issues from 2014/15 through to 2023/4, as well as a summary of the information concerning Waste Treatment arising out of the Sub Group conversations;
- (19) There would be well in excess of 30,000 tonnes of waste each year that needed to be disposed of, so this information could be provided to any new contractor to ensure a commitment to deliver this from them on a yearly basis, together with a potential for a better negotiation of any price;
- (20) The type of treatment used would determine how objectionable materials were separated out;
- (21) The Policy need to ensure that the Council’s existing Environmental Management was reinforced to reflect a belief in the importance of environmental issues in relation to treatment.

Resolved – that a further report be brought back to a future meeting (preferably the next meeting on Friday 16th October 2015) setting out a “direction of travel” for waste and addressing the following issues:

- (a) Greater emphasis on repair/re-use in addition to recycling, including examination of best practice in this area;**
- (b) Greater amount of detail on the arrangements;**
- (c) Increase emphasis on corporate social responsibility from certain groups (such as traders);**
- (d) Including the Bullet Points set out in the Strategy Document;**
- (e) The need for more information on the opportunities provided by the Energy Company;**
- (f) Increased emphasis on Street Scene. Action: Alison Comley/Pam Jones/Kay Russell**

38 Tackling ASB In Parks and Green Spaces

Members received a presentation on this issue from the Chair of the Officer Task Group charged with co-ordinating the approval of the new byelaws by Scrutiny and Full Council. The presentation made reference to the following issues:

A Summary of Action To Date

Details of the Byelaws In Question, setting out proposals for activities not permitted, activities permitted only in designated areas and activities permitted only with consent.

Details of Task Group outcomes

The proposed communications approach

Consultation arrangements

Next Steps/Timeline

Commission Members made the following comments:

- (1) A community model of shared space was paramount;
- (2) Noise was a significant issue in parks – particularly in relation to very loud music. An enforceable byelaw was required to be used if people failed to respond to requests for turning down such music;
- (3) The issue of dogs in parks needed serious consideration – particularly in relation to previous attempts to ban dogs from certain parks primarily due to concerns about dog fouling;
- (4) Communication over the role of the byelaws was important to make clear that it is not an attempt to discourage park use;
- (5) The role of Neighbourhood Partnerships in helping to achieve solutions was important;
- (6) Enforcement in large open spaces (ie to prevent destruction of ancient woodland in Stoke Park) was also important – greater emphasis on community education could help in this respect;
- (7) The role of PCSO's was discussed – it was noted that they could not solely be relied on to enforce in areas where the Police had indicated they could no longer provide the level of enforcement they had been able to;
- (8) Officers should consider the approaches adopted in the United States where trained voluntary community activists had been used to intervene in certain situations;
- (9) The impact of fishing on wildlife would be one issue to be considered as part of a discussion concerning Designated Areas;
- (10) All Park Groups needed to be made aware of the timeline for discussion of this issue.

In response, the Chair of the Officer Task Group stated that the report to be submitted to 16th October Scrutiny Commission will set out a full Engagement Plan.

Resolved –

- (a) that the timetable on this issue be noted, including submission of the Full Council report to 16th October 2015 meeting, followed by a submission to Full Council itself on 10th November;**
- (b) that, in the meantime, the various Park Groups are kept advised of the various timescales and the opportunities for consideration.**

Action: Angie Burton – Chair of the Officer Task Group

39 Environment and Leisure Traded Services

The Strategic Director introduced this report setting out a position statement for Environment and Leisure Traded Services. She explained that officers in Business Change were carrying out a piece of work across the Council on Traded Services.

Commission Members made the following comments:

- (1) Other Local Authorities in the country in places like Kent and Sussex were adopting a progressive approach to becoming a trader in services they operate;
- (2) An analysis was required of the turnover of allotments to assess levels of underuse and voids;
- (3) There were some areas that seemed to be missing from the analysis, such as hiring of public buildings, park events etc – whilst these were in some cases within other Directorate's responsibility, the report needed to reflect those areas where there was overlapping responsibility with the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

In response to members' questions, the Strategic Director made the following comments:

- (4) The Traded Services Income and Expenditure 2015/16 Table showed in red a negative loss (ie a profit);
- (5) Services such as Ashton Court Catering were self-financing;
- (6) The Council set its own fees and charges, so could increase these if it chose to do so.

The Chair of the Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission indicated that this issue would be discussed at a future Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission as part of the Council-wide review referred to earlier. At this point, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would be requested to consider an analysis across all the Scrutiny Commissions. In response to a suggestion from the Chair (of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission), he agreed that it would be appropriate to set up an Inquiry day

to discuss this subject, in particular ways to make the services more business efficient. It was agreed that the request to the Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission should go through OSM.

Resolved – that the Scrutiny Commission requests that the Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission (via OSM) sets up an Inquiry Day on the issue of Income Generation for Traded Services to which all Scrutiny Commission Members are invited

Action: Reference to Lucy Fleming (Louise De Cordova to note) – Alison Comley to note – via Informal OSM.

40 Quarter 1 Outturn Performance Report

The Commission noted the Quarter 1 Outturn Performance Report. It was noted that the 5 targets identified in the context section of the report were incorrect.

Councillors made the following comments:

- (1) The report failed to show an appropriate direction of travel for many of the performance targets;
- (2) Some of the indicators (ie BCP004a and BCP004a) seemed to give different outcomes than indicated from data by other indicators;
- (3) Quality of Life has a separate mechanism for evaluating data – this needed to be co-ordinated properly;
- (4) Less than half of the targets had an indication of whether or not they had been reached (ie a coloured box) – the rest were white for various reasons (ie the criteria for operating them have changed etc). Where criteria did change, an interregnum system should be set up to allow comparisons before any new system was created;
- (5) Further detail was required with examples as appropriate;
- (6) The targets did not seem very challenging and in some cases had been lowered. Proper targets needed to be set (ie NH 585 – against a Government standard of 100%, a target of 27% had been set and only 7.5% had been achieved);
- (7) A new baseline was urgently required for targets NH501 and NH502;
- (8) If services were struggling to cope with levels of staff reductions and vacancies in the service, this needed to be made clear in the report. It was noted that there were unfilled vacancies in the structure and that information from HR about this to be included in the report would be helpful;
- (9) The Management Report in respect of alcohol was contradictory;
- (10) It was important to acknowledge that considering Quarter 1 in isolation might be unrepresentative of the financial year as a whole;
- (11) Since the Council was now operating an austerity budget, this would have an impact on key areas such as enforcement – a degree of understanding was required about this.

In response, the Strategic Director, Service Manager (Environment and Leisure Operations), Service Director (Neighbourhoods and Communities), Service Director (Strategic Housing) and Director of Public Health made the following comments:

- (12) The Performance Team were attempting to prevent the information in a standardised way. The Performance Indicators set out in the report were only a proportion of those picked by the Neighbourhoods Leadership team as challenging or significant – therefore, many were amber or red. In some cases, it had not been possible to provide information due to factors outside the Council's control ie a lack of information from key sources such as Public Health England;
- (13) There were a number of areas where the Council had not achieved its target for some time. In some cases, these were in the bottom quartile. Officers were being transparent concerning this. There were a number of factors explaining this ie vacancy management in those areas where recruiting staff was difficult. With some services, the processes were being considered to see if they could be improved;
- (14) Information was awaited from finance concerning NH501 and NH502 – officers were pushing hard to obtain this information as soon as possible;
- (15) In relation to NH079, it was noted that there had been a large drop in achieving this target. Unfortunately, there had been a delay in the contract being put in place – however, this had now been rectified and the required measures would be put in place;
- (16) Whilst the target relating to alcohol had not been achieved in Quarter 1 and was of concern to officers, it was noted that this was an area which was subject to long-term trends (such as Liver Disease) and was likely to fall for the entire year;
- (17) Discussions would take place with Mark Wakefield (Service Manager – Performance and Infrastructure) to improve the format of performance reports – in order to establish if a more simple over-arching report can be produced which addresses the key issues.

Resolved –

- (a) That the Strategic Director discusses the situation further with Mark Wakefield to establish if a more simple over-arching report can be produced which addresses the key issues**
- (b) That a discussion take place between the Chairs of the Scrutiny Commissions and key officers to discuss a means of improving the information that is provided in these reports**

Action:

- (a) Alison Comley (to discuss with Mark Wakefield)**
- (b) Item to be referred to Informal OSM for appropriate – Lucy Fleming**

41 Directorate Risk Register (DRR)

The Strategic Director introduced this report setting out the Directorate Risk Register for scrutiny by the Commission.

Councillors made the following points:

- (1) Further information was required to provide information on the mitigation required to meet the required targets;
- (2) The effect on the HRA of the welfare reforms would have a serious impact.

In response to Councillor's questions, the following points were made:

- (3) Officers had been looking at actions to resolve key issues relating to risks associated with Waste Management and the timescale for the handover of the service would then be clearer;
- (4) Resource would be targeted to address the current gap in life expectancy where the target had not been reached;
- (5) Work as needed to focus on key health areas such as weight loss and monitoring of blood pressure to achieve a quick gain but longer term issues such as people obtaining employment were also important – other key areas might include health checks, smoking and pregnancy;
- (6) If the Public Health grant was cut, this could also impact on the DRR in future.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

42 Housing Inquiry Day – 2nd October 2015

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced this report and made the following points:

- (1) There had been a series of member briefings concerning the event which had recently been held;
- (2) The Chairs of the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission and Place Scrutiny Commission would chair the session. Dr Madge Dresser (University of the West of England) would be attending;
- (3) Councillors were requested to advise officers about any issues they wished to raise on this issue;
- (4) An Information Pack would be provided for the Inquiry Day session;
- (5) The first peer challenge conversations would take place on Tuesday 15th September;
- (6) Nick Hooper was delivering the local report;
- (7) The venue for the session was Horizon House.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

43 Work Programme

The Work Programme for the remainder of the 2015/16 Municipal Year was noted.

Members noted that there would be reports on ASB in Parks and Green Spaces, a Libraries Update and (if available) a Waste Direction of Travel report for the next meeting on Friday 16th October 2015.

44 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 10am on Friday 16th October 2015 in a Committee Room, Brunel House, St George's Road, Bristol.

CHAIR

The meeting finished at 12.50pm