



Agenda item 4

Minutes

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Place Scrutiny Commission Monday 17 November 2014 at 12.00 noon

Members present:

Councillor Martin (Chair), Councillor Bolton, Councillor Hiscott, Councillor Khan, Councillor Jackson, Councillor Negus, Councillor Pearce, Councillor Threlfall

Officers in attendance:

Alistair Cox, Service Manager - City Transport
Ed Plowden, Senior Project Manager - Sustainable Transport
Pete Woodhouse, Group Manager - Transport
David Bunting, Parking Services Manager - Transport
Gareth Vaughan-Williams, Highway Services Manager
Johanna Holmes, Policy Adviser - Scrutiny
Ian Hird, Principal Democratic Services Officer

43. Apologies for absence, substitutions and introductions (agenda item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Windows.

44. Declarations of interest (agenda item 2)

None.

45. Public forum (agenda item 3)

Public forum items were received as follows:

Questions:

Question 1 - questions from Dr Pauline Allen

Subject: Kingsdown residents parking scheme.

A written officer response was provided at the meeting.

Question 2 - questions from Michael Owen

Subject: Resident parking schemes (RPS).

A written officer response was provided at the meeting.

In response to a supplementary question, officers advised that there was a 7 year timescale for the Council recovering the costs of the full RPS programme.

Question 3 - questions from Robert Duxbury

Subject: Residents parking scheme finance update.

A written officer response was provided at the meeting.

In response to a supplementary question, officers advised that there were no plans to start charging for visitor permits, where these had been issued free of charge.

Statements:

The following statements were received:

Statement 1 - statement from David Redgewell

Subject: Rail issues and bus services

In presenting his statement, David Redgewell referred to the fact that the South West Transport Network had notified Network Rail of their concerns about meeting access standards under the Equalities Act 2010, with particular reference to the importance of ensuring appropriate access for disabled people at the Lawrence Hill and Stapleton stations. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- 1. that the Chair write to the relevant government minister, on behalf of the commission, to make representations on this issue.**
- 2. that officers be requested to forward the commission's concerns on this issue to the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee.**

It was noted that this issue had also been raised via the West of England Local Transport Board.

Statement 2 - statement from Martin Garrett

Subject: Temple Meads interchange

Update - questions submitted to the 23 October meeting of the commission regarding ferry operations:

In concluding the public forum item of business, the Chair referred to the questions submitted to the previous meeting by Steve Virgin in relation to ferry operations. It was noted that, as requested at the previous meeting, copies of the responses to a series of Freedom of Information (Fol) questions (also submitted by Steve Virgin on the subject of ferry operations) were being sent to commission members as soon as they became available. It was also noted that the Deputy Monitoring Officer had advised that an internal review would take place of the information provided by the Council to Steve Virgin.

In discussion, the Chair re-iterated his concerns (as expressed at the previous meeting) about the fact that officers had previously determined that the Fol process effectively “trumped” the public forum process. It was noted that once all the Fol responses had been received, and the Deputy Monitoring Officer’s internal review had been completed, a considered view could then be taken as to whether any future scrutiny of this issue was required, and about where this scrutiny / any further investigation should most appropriately take place. At the suggestion of the Chair, the commission agreed to request that members be advised of the outcome of the above mentioned internal review.

46. Minutes - Place Scrutiny Commission - 23 October 2014 (agenda item 4)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the commission held on 23 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

47. Action sheet – Place Scrutiny Commission – 23 October 2014 (agenda item 5)

The commission noted and reviewed the action sheet relating to the 23 October meeting.

Summary of main points raised / noted:

Arena project:

- a. The commission noted that subsequent to their 23 October meeting, the Proper Officer had determined that (ahead of the 2 December Cabinet), the Arena project should be scrutinised by the OSM Board. An extraordinary meeting of the OSM Board had then taken place on 14 November.

- b. In discussion, the Chair and other commission members expressed concern that the Place Scrutiny Commission had not received the opportunity to scrutinise relevant aspects of the Arena project, and in particular the travel and transport plans associated with the project. The Chair stated that, in his view, there should have been a “separation” of the scrutiny of the Arena project, to allow individual commissions to effectively scrutinise relevant aspects.
- c. Cllr Negus expressed concern that the opportunity may be being lost to secure appropriate Community Infrastructure Levy contributions in taking forward this project.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Chair write on behalf of the commission to the Mayor / City Director (the draft wording to be sent by the Chair to the commission members for agreement) :

- 1. expressing the commission’s concerns about the fact that this commission has not been permitted to scrutinise the Arena project ahead of the 2 December Cabinet meeting; and also expressing concern around the issue that the opportunity may be being lost to secure appropriate Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.**
- 2. advising that the commission wishes to have the opportunity to scrutinise the travel and transport plans associated with the project.**

Hydrogen economy:

The Chair advised that he would be seeking a response as soon as possible to the commission’s request (as made at their previous meeting on 23 October) for a “position statement” from the Mayor relating to the future use of hydrogen to support appropriate modes of transport. He pointed out that he had also submitted a question on this matter to the Member Forum held before the 11 November Full Council meeting.

48. Work programme 2014/15
(agenda item 6)

The commission considered the latest update of the work programme.

Summary of main points raised / noted:

- a. It was noted that an update on the Mayoral Homes Commission was scheduled for the 8 January meeting. Councillor Negus suggested that the opportunity should be taken to make appropriate linkages with all directorates with housing responsibilities.
- b. The agenda for the 5 December and 8 January meetings would be discussed / finalised at the agenda planning meeting (involving the Chair, Vice-Chair and scrutiny leads) scheduled for 20 November.

RESOLVED:

That the latest update of the work programme, and the above comments, be noted.

49. Whipping

(agenda item 7)

None reported.

50. Chair's business

(agenda item 8)

None reported.

51. Key decisions

(agenda item 9)

The commission considered the latest update, setting out details of key decisions scheduled to be taken by the Mayor at Cabinet.

Summary of main points raised / noted:

- a. Avonmouth and Portbury Docks - freehold: The Commission expressed concern that they had not had the opportunity to scrutinise this item.
- b. It was noted that the Forward Plan needed to be amended to reflect that the items relating to i) the establishment of an energy and technology company, and ii) the waste treatment contract would be submitted to the Place Scrutiny Commission for discussion / pre-decision scrutiny.
- c. Cllr Pearce stated that in his view, there needed to be a closer alignment and "read across" between the Forward Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was important to recognise that delays / adjustments in the submission of key decision reports may sometimes result in corporate financial consequences.

RESOLVED:

That the update and the above comments be noted.

52. Public transport update

(agenda item 10)

The commission considered a report setting out information of progress on the following topics:

1. Partnerships, agreements and contracts with bus operators.
2. Approach to Park and Ride provision.
3. Supported bus services.
4. Community transport.

Summary of main points raised / noted:

Partnerships, agreements and contracts with bus operators:

- a. In relation to bus quality contracts, it was noted that the legal framework was untested and could potentially be successfully challenged. Before implementing a bus quality contract, the Council would need to be satisfied that the scheme satisfied 5 public interest criteria, as follows:
- Increased use of bus services in the area.
 - Benefit to users by improving quality of services.
 - Contribution to the implementation of local transport policies.
 - Contribution to the implementation of those policies in a way that was economic, efficient and effective.
 - Any adverse effect on operators to be proportionate to the improvement of the wellbeing of persons living or working in the “quality contract area.”

No bus quality contracts were yet in existence although a number of authorities, e.g. Tyne and Wear (Nexus) had investigated options around this.

- b. It was noted that the introduction of a bus quality contract would conflict with the Better Bus Area agreement already entered into with the Department for Transport and bus operators. The funding arrangements associated with the bus quality contract approach would also need to be considered carefully.
- c. Following further discussion, it was agreed that it would appropriate for a future Place scrutiny inquiry day to be themed around improving bus services, particularly around the issues of pursuing a bus quality contract(s) and potentially establishing an integrated transport authority (ITA) across the West of England city region. Invitees should be sought from across the West of England area.
- d. In relation to the ITA issue, it was noted that the 3 other West of England local authorities had not been supportive of this suggestion to date.
- e. Cllr Negus suggested that the use of voluntary partnership agreements should also be explored.
- f. In relation to the Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP), it was noted that work was progressing on a refresh of the current agreement. In terms of the refresh, the fundamental objectives were likely to remain the same. It was anticipated that higher level operator engagement would be secured for the new agreement.
- g. Cllr Negus stressed the importance of learning lessons from / applying best practice from elsewhere – e.g. Transport for Greater Manchester used a strict monitoring regime in relation to their tendered services, such that operators could be removed from the approved supplier list if a defined level of performance was not maintained. Powys and Dorset have aggregated all home to school, SEN and tendered services provision into single supplier contracts.

Approach to Park and Ride provision:

- a. The update, as per the report, around the strategic approach to Park and Ride, and operational delivery, was noted.

- b. Cllr Negus stressed the importance of continuing to strongly push the case (with South Gloucestershire Council) for a Park and Ride solution for those travelling into the city from the north, north-west and north-east of the city.

Supported bus services:

In response to a point raised by Councillor Bolton, it was noted that during 2015, there would be wide consultation around which bus services should be subsidised in future by the authority. There would be an opportunity for neighbourhood partnerships / local groups to submit suggestions / comments as part of this consultation process.

Community transport:

In response to a question from Cllr Jackson, it was noted that a full review of community transport would be undertaken with a view to new arrangements taking effect from April 2016. Interim funding would be rolled forward to current community transport providers; communications around this (i.e. with providers) were being progressed.

Other issues:

- a. **Utilities works:** It was noted that (building on agreements already in place) officers were in ongoing liaison with the utilities around ensuring a joined-up approach, e.g. to maintenance works, to try to minimise and mitigate traffic disruption. Cllr Jackson commented that the potential impact of road works in relation to cycling safety needed to be taken more seriously.
(Councillor Jackson left the meeting at this point.)
- b. **Green Capital 2015:** The Chair and other members queried the contribution to be made by First as a sponsor of Green Capital 2015. In response, officers advised that discussions were being pursued with First around their fuel strategy; First had also given commitments around pursuing Smart ticketing technology and cleaner vehicles in terms of emissions.
- c. **Unauthorised taxis from outside of Bristol operating within the city:**
In response to a point raised by Councillor Khan, it was noted that the Council's licensing team were aware of this issue and were currently taking active action to address this.

RESOLVED:

That the report and the above comments / information be noted; and that it be agreed that a future Place scrutiny inquiry day should be themed around improving bus services, including the issues around pursuing a bus quality contract(s) and potentially establishing an integrated transport authority across the West of England city region.

53. Residents parking schemes (RPS) finance update
(agenda item 11)

The commission considered a report providing an update on RPS finances.

Summary of main points raised / noted:

- a. Cllr Negus advised that he had a series of detailed questions, which he would submit to officers separately.
- b. The Chair and other members drew attention to the fact that RPS was intended to be self-financing and not to run at a profit. Reference was made to the general trend, as evidenced in the report, for actual income being significantly above the forecast income level (it was noted that Redland and Cotham North were exceptions to this – in the case of Redland, income was low because the scheme borders had been redrawn after the forecasts were done). The Chair commented that it also needed to be borne in mind that the roll-out of RPS in Clifton and Clifton East in due course was likely to result in a high take-up of permits.
- c. Officers advised that it was important to recognise that the borrowing period had not yet finished. The amount of borrowing had been based on projections for the whole programme. As had been mentioned earlier at the meeting, there was a 7 year timescale for the recovery of the Council's costs.
- d. Members noted that the financial assessment for the full programme of inner ring RPS (section 6 of the report) was a 3 year assessment, running from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Following discussion, it was generally agreed that a further report should be submitted to the commission, presenting the current financial information and projections in comparison with the original (10 year) financial projections, as presented to the RPS member working group. A breakdown should be provided showing forecast permit income and actual permit income for each scheme. The Chair stressed the importance of ensuring full transparency about the income and expenditure relating to the RPS roll-out.
- e. Members expressed the view that if there was, in reality, going to be a surplus in terms of RPS income realisation, they would expect to be consulted on / involved in discussions about plans for the use of that surplus.
- f. In relation to the Easton and St Phillips area, Cllr Pearce drew attention to local perceptions that some people were parking in the St George area, and effectively using the area as an informal Park and Ride site. A request to adjust the permitted parking time to 1 hour had been submitted as a measure which would tackle this problem - it was noted that this issue could be addressed as part of the formal 6 monthly review of the Easton / St Phillips scheme.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the report and the above information / comments be noted.**
- 2. That a further report be submitted to the commission, presenting the current RPS financial information and projections in comparison with the original (10 year) RPS financial projections, as presented to the**

RPS member working group. A breakdown should be provided showing forecast permit income and actual permit income for each scheme.

