



**Agenda Item No:4**

# **Bristol City Council**

## **Minutes of Place Scrutiny Commission**

10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 10am

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### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors Bolton, Cheney, Khan, Pearce, Thomas, Threlfall, Watson, Weston, Wright**

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Barra Mac Ruairi – Strategic Director Place  
Johanna Holmes – Policy Advisor - Scrutiny  
Kate Cole – (item 9)  
Lily Roberts - (item 10)  
Alex Minshull - Sustainable City Manager (item 10)  
Jodi Savickas – Strategic Projects Team Manager (item 10)  
Patrick Goodey – Flood Risk Engineer (item 11)  
John Roy – Group Manager – Transport Assets (item 11)  
Bill Edrich – Commercial Director - Energy (item 14)  
Sarah Sims – Programme Manager - Housing (item 14)  
Sam Mahony – Democratic Services Officer

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Frost and Hiscott. Councillor Weston substituted for Councillor Hiscott.

## **2. Public Forum**

The following Statements were received and are held as a public record in the Minute Book.

### **Statement 1 – South West Transport Network**

Subject: Henbury Stub?

Cllr Bolton agreed to draft a statement (in coordination with the other Place Scrutiny leads Members) to the Joint Transport Board meeting of the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 which would outline that the preferred option of the Place Scrutiny Commission remained the Henbury Loop, however, if the JTB decided to go ahead with the Spur it should be 'future proofed' so that the Spur could be Looped in future.

Cllr Cheney agreed to draft a letter (in coordination with the other Place Scrutiny lead Members) to South Gloucestershire Council about the loss of bus services from Fishponds/Kingswood.

## **Statement 2 – Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways**

Subject: Henbury Spur Call In

**RESOLVED – The statements were noted.**

### **3. Declarations of Interest.**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **4. Minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> July 2015 meeting of the Place Scrutiny Commission (agenda item 5)**

**RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the commission held on 13 July 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **5. Action Sheet**

The commission noted and reviewed the action sheet relating to the 13<sup>th</sup> July meeting.

Councillor Pearce agreed to draft a process which would consider whether expert witnesses should be invited to meetings when there were particular items on the agenda.

**RESOLVED – that the Action Sheet be noted.**

### **6. Whipping**

None reported.

### **7. Chair's Business**

There was none.

### **8. Scrutiny Work Programme 2015/16**

It was highlighted that the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 had been cancelled as the Housing Inquiry Day would take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015.

### **9. Quarter 1 Performance Monitoring**

The Strategic Director (Place) presented the report summarising the main areas of progress towards delivery of the Corporate Plan 2014-17 and management reports on measures with performance categorised 'well below target'.

With reference to the target 'Number of visitors to Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives', officers highlighted the seasonality of visitors and that figures were likely to increase over the summer with initial indications that the Shaun the Sheep Trail had surpassed expectations. It was also suggested that although visitor traffic could be diverted to Weston

Super Mare and Dismaland, there were other Banksy attractions in Bristol that were signposted well.

With reference to the target 'increase the number of affordable homes delivered in Bristol' it was confirmed that the topic would be discussed at the Housing Inquiry Day.

Members raised the high number of student flats being converted from office blocks in the city centre. Officers were asked to consider the impact of this and start modelling of effects on the low value rental market. It was highlighted that other cities, such as Leeds, had found knock on effects of vast building programmes for students. Members also requested information about what level of permission was required to turn houses of multiple occupation back into family homes.

Officers reported that although there were some positive effects such as the office stock that was brought into use, there were also negative effects in terms of the local shops and broadness of use. Also, as well as not counting towards affordable homes totals, they were private developments that could not be allocated to housing stock. Officers agreed to consider evidence and research into the impact of increased student accommodation within the city centre in preparation for the Inquiry Day.

Council officers were working with registered providers to deliver against the targets. Officers conveyed that there were low levels of affordable housing across the country due to issues of high cost of land as well as supply of materials and staff to developments as delivery had gone from low to high levels of buoyancy within the housing market. Providers were returning to the Council unable to deliver what was agreed through the planning process seeking Council funds to ensure delivery. Indeed, consideration could be given to other sources of funding such as Section 106 money.

## **10. Air Quality – Update**

Members were updated on the latest air quality monitoring results (2014) within Bristol as well as results of community engagement work in Avonmouth. The officer's report also contained a summary of the major strategic transport initiatives towards improvements in air quality.

Public transport schemes such as Metrobus and Metrowest continued, as well as investment to improve the cycling network as outlined in the Bristol Cycle Strategy. Private cars in the City were the principal source of emissions and therefore the key link to improvements in air quality.

Following the presentation of the report by officers, the following points were discussed;

- Policy choice for the last 10-15 years included focus on monitoring areas where there were likely to be higher levels of pollution. Officers confirmed that there were no other monitoring data from other sources, apart from Central Government, which the Council had access to.
- It was suggested that consideration should be given to changing some bus routes to roads with less emissions, such as Feeder Road and Hengrove Way, in order to reduce levels on current routes such as the Bath Road and Old Market. It was

suggested that a monitoring station on the Feeder Road could provide baseline data in order to assess the impact of the arena and enterprise zone.

- Officers were evaluating the impact of a small scale pilot low emission zone and speaking to traders in the Old City to best understand their freight and delivery needs. Future plans depended on external funding opportunities.
- There was some concern and disappointment regarding choice of vehicles within the Metrobus scheme. It was noted that if engine standards had been downgraded from Gas to Diesel it would mean higher level of pollutants and fines. Officers confirmed that the provider specification for Metrobus remained for the European standard and reassured Members that the shift away from private cars would be the main impact. Officers agreed to confirm the current vehicle choice for Metrobus and consider current engine technology advances such as whether there were any moves towards start-stop technology for buses.
- It was confirmed that particles were measured at the Defra site. Officers agreed to forward details of the site and monitoring results to Members.
- In relation to the health impacts of traffic pollution, namely particulates and nitrogen dioxide, increasing evidence had shown that as particulates were broken down to meet regulation standards, there were unintended consequences for health from the higher levels of smaller particulates.
- Officers agreed to email Members an enlarged version of the map included in the papers to show the road details and provide as A3 in future.
- An Air Quality Strategy for the City was suggested by Members outlining the current position, the factors to be considered and powers that could be used with bus companies, taxis etc. Officers confirmed that there were measures outlined within the Local Transport Plan and live monitoring could be found at [www.bristol.airqualitydata.com](http://www.bristol.airqualitydata.com)
- Members and officers discussed the impact of the 20mph schemes on air quality within the City in preparation for the upcoming debate at Full Council. Officers confirmed that most pollution for key periods of the day was from the stopping and starting of engines within congestion, rather than cruising at the speed limit - whatever that might be. Members were asked to consider the impact of 20mph on health as part of a change to the transport system as a whole rather than an isolated measure. It was argued that the modal shift benefit resulting from 20mph zones led to an increase in other road users such as cyclists, because of the speed reduction. There were also the benefits to health from additional active travel and decrease in childhood injuries.
- Members were informed about an Air Quality briefing in October (tbc). Officers confirmed that they would try to include the policy context, health impacts, engine technologies, results of low emissions zones, engagement and monitoring plans, licensing powers, relationships with bus companies and the process for continuing the current strategy.

Members were informed that an Air Quality Conference would take place in Bristol on 22/23 October and officers would circulate further information.

## 11. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Officers reported on the progress related to the actions detailed in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). Bristol was one of the top ten cities in the country at risk of flooding, this was particularly with reference to surface water flooding. BCC had a statutory duty to complete and maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy with a significant aspect of the strategy being encouraging sustainable drainage. The final full version of the Strategy can be found via <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/city-transport/floodstrategy/results/bd5963---local-flood-risk-strategy-draftv5.pdf> Maps of high risk surface water flooding areas are on Pinpoint via <http://tinyurl.com/oxzfn>.

During the discussion the following comments were made:

- Whilst there was overall support for sustainable drainage, there was some concern regarding the ongoing and future maintenance of sustainable drainage systems such as permeable surfaces on driveways, when stipulated as part of the planning process. Officers confirmed that the Lead Local Flood Authority was not responsible for the maintenance and that it was a matter of enforcement. It was also noted however, that 90% of the city did not require planning permission for driveways.
- Members were pleased with the progress made to date but suggested more performance based measures in the future, although it was acknowledged that outcomes were difficult as recent flooding events had been relatively minor in scale. Officers outlined how benefits to flood risk management through the planning process were linked to flooding risk areas using the wider maps within the strategy.
- Officers had been engaging successfully with the housing delivery team to integrate flood resilience into their development plans. For example, sustainable drainage measures such as planters for down pipe rainwater had been installed which reduce the risk of flooding during heavy rainfall events.
- The Flood Team were a statutory consultee and advised on applications for planning permission on flood risk grounds. The process established through work with the West of England partnership.
- Active citizenship was being encouraged within a new campaign to encourage citizens to clear leaves from road drains which was about to launch. Officers were working with the Bristol Waste Company to encourage active citizenship under the banner of community resilience.

## 12. Housing Inquiry Day – Draft Scoping Document

The Housing Inquiry Day would take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 from 09.30 – 15.30. There would be a programme of four briefings leading up to the event which would feed into the process.

There had been a good response from speakers including National Housing Federation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, DeMontfort University, Joseph Rowntree, Birmingham City Council. The day would be jointly chaired by Councillors Bolton and Negus, with external assistance from Dr Madge Dresser of University of the West of England.

The overarching purpose would be to develop recommendations to lead to more affordable housing.

**13. It was RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12a to the Act, Category 3 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006. (agenda item 13)**

**14. Warm-Up Bristol**

This item was exempt under paragraph 3 – relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Commission received an exempt presentation of the Commercial Director – Energy. It was suggested and agreed that a public version of the presentation with updated figures that was able to be shared by Councillors, to their residents, would be provided by officers.

Officers were asked to respond to Councillor Khan outside of the meeting, to discuss a community engagement event to help residents engage within his ward.

**15 Date of next meeting**

It was noted as 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 starting at 2pm

END: 1.35pm

(Chair)