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Bristol City Council

Minutes of Place Scrutiny Commission

21st January at 10.00am



Members Present:-

Councillors Bolton (Chair), Cheney, Hiscott, Khan, Pearce, Mead, Thomas, Watson and Wright

Officers in Attendance:-

Johanna Holmes – Policy Adviser (Scrutiny), Alex Minshall - Sustainable City and Climate Change Service Manager, Bill Edrich - Commercial Director Energy, Paul Isbell - Energy Service Manager, Mareike Schmidt - Service Manager Energy, Barra Mac Ruairi – Strategic Director Place, Kate Cole – Performance Improvement Officer, Kathy Derrick, Sustainability Team Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Threlfall sent her apologies.

2. Public Forum

The Commission received and noted the following questions and officer responses:

PQ 01 Ian Townsend– ‘Conham Gap’ cycle route along the River Avon

The Commission received and noted the following statements:

PS 01 South West Transport Network – Update on Metro West Phase 2 and Rail Infrastructure

PS 02 South West Transport Network - Various

A copy of the questions, answers and statements would be placed in the minutebook (accessed via Democratic Services).

The following comments in relation to the submissions were made:

PS 01 The Commission were pleased to note that the number 81 bus had been reinstated until the 24th April 2016 and thanked those involved in the petition for their hard work. It was recognized that conversation needed to continue with South Gloucestershire Council regarding the withdrawal of bus services that affected areas of Bristol and the current consultation. **ACTION: It was also suggested that the press office be made aware of the consultation and its importance to residents in Bristol.**

It was agreed that Place Scrutiny Commission would send a statement to the Joint Transport Executive **RESOLVED: Councillor Cheney offered to write to the Joint Transport Executive (with reference made to the previous letter sent by the Commission in September 2015).**



3. Declarations of Interest

None were received

4. Minutes – Place Scrutiny Commission 19th November 2015

The minutes of the 19th November were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Scrutiny Work Programme & Expert Witnesses 2015/16

- a. The work programme was noted.
- b. With reference to the 11th February 2016 transport themed meeting, it was suggested that Government Watchdog representatives be invited to attend.
- c. It was confirmed that the meeting planned for the 14th April 2016 was cancelled.

6. Action Sheet 19th November 2015

The current action sheet was noted. The Policy Advisor – Scrutiny had contacted Cllr Mead regarding raising concerns about community infrastructure in relation to planning applications at the DC leads meeting.

7. Chair's Business

There was none.

8. Consultation on Our Resilient Future: A Framework for Climate and Energy Security

The Commission received a report from the Service Manager: Sustainable City and Climate Change.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- a. When compared to other core cities Bristol had the second fastest reduction in emissions per capita.
- b. The consultation would close on 16th March with a decision sought following the May election. It was agreed that the Place Scrutiny Commission would submit written collective feedback. Comments would be fed to the Chair and Policy Advisor – Scrutiny.
- c. Officers reported that as coal fire plants ceased production, the National Grid had sought emergency back-up generators to meet dips in supply. Private companies were moving to fill that shortfall and Bristol was effectively the meeting point for grid infrastructure to the South West. Members were concerned about the subsequent planning applications for diesel generators in the City which were contradictory to the ambitions to be carbon neutral.
- d. Such applications were subject to normal planning policy and Council could respond in terms of air quality. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the Service Director; Planning to voice



concern and the need to strengthen the air quality policy in response to applications for the burning of fossil fuels in the City Centre and then also submitted into the consultation.

- e. Officers were exploring a different approach which included a funding mechanism for switching off so as to achieve a response by taking away demand.
- f. The document was positive and optimistic for job creation and cost savings although the detail of 'how' was dependent on global and national measures.
- g. Energy storage was a new emerging area of the energy industry with the establishment of a number of new technologies. It was suggested that the document could be strengthened in terms of energy storage options within the City.
- h. It was suggested that the TUC Green Work Places staff could be added to the list of consultees.
- i. The Chair suggested that the Place Scrutiny Commission prioritise the strategy in the next municipal year to help to progress. **ACTION: to be added to the work programme for 2016/17**

RESOLVED:-

- (i) The consultation draft of Our Resilient Future: A Framework Climate Change and Energy Security was noted, along with the new 2050 goal for carbon emission reduction.**
- (ii) That the Place Scrutiny Commission would submit written collective feedback. Comments would be fed to the Chair and Policy Advisor – Scrutiny.**
- (iii) That a letter to be sent to Service Director; Planning to voice concern and the need to strengthen the air quality policy in response to applications for the burning of fossil fuels in the City Centre and also be submitted into the consultation.**

9. Heat Networks

The Commission received a presentation from the Service Manager: Sustainable City and Climate Change and Energy Service Manager.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- a. The duct under Redcliffe Way would be installed when Metrobus was built.
- b. The Biomass Energy Centre would be built in March 2016. An additional energy centre to build capacity in the network was planned for 100 Temple Street. Feasibility plans were ongoing to consider how to link to Avonmouth as an opportunity to establish a low carbon energy zone and attract heat intensive industries.
- c. The business plan stage highlighted the desire and benefit of the plans although funds had not yet been identified and feasibility studies had to be completed.



- d. The City Centre plans would likely return to Cabinet in June 2016 due to the increase in scope to encompass University of Bristol buildings. Bristol City Council was involved in the works to Bristol Royal Infirmary as it was an opportunity for the City to expand the district heating network. Members requested that Bristol Grammar School also be included within the scope as an aged building with high energy wastage.
- e. Members welcomed the plans and were keen that development opportunities such as Hengrove Park be included in the future. The hot water source in Hotwells could also be reconsidered as a genuinely low carbon solution.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) **the presentation was noted.**

10. Warm Up Bristol Presentation

The Commission received a presentation from the Service Manager: Energy.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- a. It was reported that customers that had signed up and paid a deposit had been prioritized as the first phase and the latest figures showed that only six jobs remained. Of those who had paid a deposit but work had not commenced, it was hoped these would be completed by early summer. New customers could then be acquired.
- b. Members thanked officers for their work to move forward and help residents. Lessons learnt should be disseminated across the Council as the Council became more innovative and entrepreneurial.
- c. The complaints log was now fully analysed although complaints had decreased significantly. Customer feedback had been positive that the Council took responsibility and sought resolution.
- d. There was some concern that value for money for residents that went through the Warm Up Bristol Scheme was less than if residents had approached companies directly. Officers explained that the requirements of the public procurement exercise and door knocking exercise to ensure the scheme could reach everybody across the City had driven up costs. The benefit of the scheme was that it was Council backed and a high quality experience.
- e. Members suggested that the business model had been over ambitious which led to companies dropping out of the tender process. Officers clarified that the requirement for a Green Deal Provider had limited the field of companies that could bid.
- f. Members were concerned there had been warning signs about Climate Energy including its reputation and quality of previous work. Officers confirmed that they were aware that Climate Energy would need supervision but that their reputation in terms of ability to deliver was good.



- g. Members requested supplementary information about key statistics, profit and loss information and the ultimate bill to the Council. Also Members asked what would be the plan for the next 2-5 years to identify funding. **ACTION: Service Manager: Energy to provide supplementary information requested.**

RESOLVED:-

- (i) **the presentation and update was noted**

11. Energy Services

The Commission noted the presentation from the Commercial Director: Energy circulated to Members prior to the meeting (a copy can be provided by Democratic Services). There was no discussion on the item and it was suggested that it be placed back on the work programme for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) **the presentation was noted.**

12. Performance Report for 2015/16 Quarter 2

The Commission received a presentation from the Strategic Director: Place and the Performance Improvement Officer.

In discussion, the following was noted:

- a. Councillor Pearce reported that as Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board he sat on the Shareholder Group tasked with making recommendations of what issues should be on the scrutiny work programme.
- b. It was confirmed that OSMB now expected that individual scrutiny commissions should deal with performance reporting, with OSMB assisting where necessary. OSMB had requested the targets set by the Senior Leadership Team for monitoring and also residents perception as part of the Quality of Life survey in order to align performance reporting to public perception.
- c. It was difficult to present quarterly updates for some figures reported annually although a direction of travel should be reported with commentary. If there was an area of concern that should be reported to scrutiny before the formal reporting date.
- d. There was some concern about the reduced affordable housing targets not achieved. Officers agreed to investigate the latest position on delays on sites such as Whapping Wharf. **ACTION: Officers to confirm update for Members.**

RESOLVED:-



- (i) **the report was noted**

13. Directorate Risk Register Review

The Commission received a presentation from the Strategic Director: Place.

It was reported that the relocation of three traffic control centres to be upgraded and joined together at Temple Street carried risk and the mitigations were all being addressed. The new system would have a high level of security and could in future be integrated with other blue light services. Problems with the traffic system last month and also a virus that got through security measures recently demonstrated the risk present.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) **the report was noted.**

14. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting would take place at 6pm on 11th February 2016

Meeting ended 13.00

