

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Supplementary Information



Date: Monday, 25 January 2021

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Virtual Meeting - Zoom Committee Meeting
with Public Access via YouTube

6. Public Forum

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item

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Overview & Scrutiny Management Board 25 January 2021 Public Forum



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Public Forum Questions

Question 1: Suzanne Audrey

Background

I was concerned to read the following in Grant Thornton's Review of Governance Arrangements for Bristol City Council's Subsidiaries 2019/2020:

Arrangements for communicating key inputs to Cabinet from the Shareholder Group and Bristol Holding Limited, as well as the outcomes of scrutiny from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), were inadequate.

OSMB has had the opportunity to scrutinise key decisions made by Cabinet regarding BE, performance, both mid and year end and has provided its response to Cabinet. These responses have been confidential and, if they were discussed by Cabinet, the **minutes and meetings were not recorded**.

OSMB's ability to scrutinise reserved matters has been restricted as it has not routinely been made aware of these decisions. These decisions are made by the Deputy Mayor, in line with the scheme of delegation, but are not routinely published on the Council's website.

These decisions relate to the issue of funds and appointment of members of the Board, which will become public following notification to Companies House. **In our opinion, this is not in line with the philosophy of open and transparent decision making, or with our experience of other local authorities which own companies. It also reduces the opportunity for OSMB to scrutinise these decisions, or to scrutinise the governance arrangements.**

Question

In the light of the concerns raised by Grant Thornton, are appropriate procedures now in place to ensure OSMB can effectively scrutinise reserved matters, decision-making and governance arrangements for Bristol City Council's subsidiaries?

Answer

The Council is committed to ensuring a high quality of discussion and decision making. Reserved Matter Decisions taken by the Shareholder Representative follow receipt of advice from various members of the Shareholder Group and officers and are not key decisions (which are always taken by Cabinet) but they are nevertheless recorded in a formal Decision Record and tracked on a Decision Register. Consideration is being given to whether an equivalent process to Officer Executive Decisions (which are decisions which do not meet the criteria for a formal key decision to be taken at a Cabinet meeting but are considered important enough to be open to public scrutiny and as such published on the ModernGov website) can be adopted for reserved matter decisions to enable full transparency.

Public Forum Statements

Statement 1: David Redgewell, South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside

We would like to raise the following issue; the need for progress on North Somerset Council joining WECA Mayoral combined authority following legal advice that progress can now be made between WECA mayoral elections. To ask what progress is now being made with the WECA scrutiny commission on the reform of WECA mayoral combined authority governance.

Public accountability of the Planning and Housing board, the Transport board Public transport forum Scrutiny meetings - the need to move the full public transport function from the city and county of Bristol, Banes Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

The need when North Somerset joins to set up a railway executive and a division to oversee a light rail system for Bristol and Bath city region.

We also need to make progress on a devolution deal on a light rail system for the Greater Bristol Bath city region and money for Temple Meads station public transport interchange facilities and money for Temple Quay and St Phillips Marsh.

Money to develop public transport network in North Somerset Council park and ride at Weston Super Mare metro bus from Bristol to Nailsea and Clevedon.

Work to stations for disabled access at Weston Super Mare transport interchange facilities and disabled lifts.

Full disabled access to Nailsea and Backwell station and Weston Super Mare to Locking Banwell, Winscombe new road and metro bus route to Cheddar and Wells bus station.

Powers to precept the for public transport service railway bus services and ferry services.

We need to make progress and holding the Western Gateway partnership to scrutiny account and the Western Gateway transport board.

The allocation of housing and affordable housing is very important in all four Greater Bristol authorities.

We would like to see progress on the city region governance by the growth and Regeneration Commission and WECA Mayoral Scrutiny Commission.

On the budget we would like certainty that budgets are transferred to WECA Mayoral Transport Authority to operate supported bus services in south Bristol link to south Bristol hospital East Bristol network and North Bristol network from Shirehampton and Avonmouth Lawrence Weston Westbury on Trym to Southmead hospital bus station to Bristol Parkway Bradley Stoke and Thornbury.

It's very important WECA mayoral transport authority has a revenue support budget and money for phase 1 of metro west from Severn Beach St Andrew Road Avonmouth Dock, Portway Parkway Station, Shirehampton, Clifton Down Redland, Montpellier, Stapleton Road Lawrence Hill, Bristol Temple Meads Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa Freshford, Avoncliffe, Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge Westbury, Warminster or Frome.

On public toilets we need to see a budget - this is very important in view of the temporary toilets in Queen Sq and the harbour with disabled access.

We need a budget for public toilets with disabled access in our city centre and shopping centres and parks - any capital raised through sales of toilet blocks should be reinvested in new public and community toilets.

On Covid-19 we need to see more patrols on the Greater Bristol and Bath bus network by Police and Covid-19 marshals especially with an attack on a NHS Nurse on a bus travelling into central Bristol; [the nurse] was spat at by a passenger with a scooter. This issue is being investigated by the Avon and Somerset police.

We need Covid marshal patrols on the bus and local rail network with the Avon and Somerset police and the British transport police and port police.

We are very concerned about lack of progress on Portway Parkway railway station.

Network rail western routes and WECA mayoral transport authority have not started work on this project with First Great Western railway. The Department for Transport grant runs out on 31st of March 2021 .

Of course money is needed to regenerate the Governor and Bristol and Exeter hotel and the derelict buildings in the High street around Castle Park - these are long term projects along Newfoundland Road corridor that need attention.

The need for a transport plan for Severnside Bus links from south Bristol via the south Bristol hospital link and the Portway and Portway Parkway station to Severn Beach Cabot Park and the St Andrews Road station area.

We need the Henbury loop to operate to Avonmouth and St Andrew's Road.

Severn Beach Station needs a car park and Pilning station needs rebuilding for the new development.