

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



25 January 2023 at 5.00 pm

Members present:

Cllr David Wilcox (Chair), Cllr Andrew Varney (Vice-Chair), Cllr Marley Bennett, Cllr Jenny Bartle, Cllr Emma Edwards, Cllr Steve Pearce, Cllr Kevin Quartley, Cllr Mark Weston, Cllr Katja Hornchen (substitute for Cllr Tim Rippington)

Cabinet members in attendance:

Cllr Don Alexander, Cabinet member for Transport

Officers in attendance:

John Smith, Director: Economy of Place
Donald Graham, Director: Housing and Landlord Services
Ben Hooper, Risk and Insurance Senior Officer
Felicity Williamson, Strategic Intelligence and Performance Advisor
Adam Crowther, Head of City Transport
Marc Cooper, Regeneration Manager
Martyn Pursey, Housing Delivery Manager
Jez Sweetland, Project Lead, Project 1000
Jessie Wilde, Project Lead, Project 1000
Anesa Kritah, Head of Economic Development
Jason Thorne, City Centre and High Streets Service Manager
Johanna Holmes, Scrutiny Co-ordinator

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting, including Cllr Marley Bennett who was attending his first meeting after having replaced Cllr Chris Jackson as a member of this commission.

The Chair then explained the emergency evacuation procedure.



2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Tim Rippington and from Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet member for Housing Delivery and Homes.

It was further noted that Cllr Katja Hornchen was attending the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Rippington.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Commission **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission held on 29 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 Action Tracker

The Commission reviewed the action tracker relating to actions identified at the previous meeting on 29 September 2022.

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. Performance target BPC480 - Increase the % of monitoring sites that meet the annual air quality target for nitrogen dioxide: It had been confirmed that this performance figure did not take account of pollution from wood burning stoves, as this was not linked to nitrogen dioxide. However, a question on the frequency of use of wood burning stoves was included in the Quality of Life survey.

2. Planning enforcement:

- a. A link had been circulated to members to the list of ward based Tree Preservation Orders provided by the Bristol Tree Forum <https://bristoltrees.space/trees/wards/ward-info.xq>
- b. Possible letter to government from the Commission on planning enforcement: feedback was awaited from other core cities; this would inform a decision on whether or not a specific letter should be sent by the Commission.



3. Temple Quarter regeneration programme - Commission member comments on planned multistorey carpark and the possibility of a repurposed roof: The consultation on proposals had now been launched; details had been sent to members.

6 Chair's Business

None.

7 Public Forum

It was noted that public statements had been received as follows:

1. Alan Morris, Bristol Walking Alliance - topic: West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
2. Councillor Ed Plowden - topic: West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
3. Ian Pond, Bristol Cycling Campaign - topic: West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

8 Risk Report Quarter 3

The Commission considered and discussed the quarter 3 risk report setting out the Growth and Regeneration risks from the Corporate Risk Management report (quarter 3, 2022/23) as submitted to the Cabinet on 24 January 2023.

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. Risk no. CRR52 – ‘Fire safety in high rise residential buildings’ had been escalated from the Growth and Regeneration service risk registers to the Corporate Risk Register. In response to questions about the work to remove dangerous Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) cladding from high rise blocks, it was noted that there was a national procurement challenge around procuring contractors; progress was though being made and EPS cladding removal had recently been completed at Ecclestone House and Phoenix House.
2. Risk no. CRR41 - Capital portfolio delivery: Cllr Weston queried the relatively low risk tolerance level given the degree of slippage in the capital programme; it was noted that a written response would be provided on this point.
3. Risk no. CRR43 - Lack of progress for Mass Transit impact on city: It was noted that the West of England Combined Authority was leading the mass transit project; mitigating actions against the identified risk were therefore appropriately the responsibility of the Combined Authority.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:



- To note the report and the above information/points.

9 Performance Report - Quarter 2

The Commission considered and discussed the quarterly performance report (quarter 2, 2022/23).

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. This report had been submitted in line with the new corporate approach to performance reporting, with performance progress reports for each of the themes in the Council's Corporate Strategy, plus a data appendix specific for this Commission.

2. Action HCW2.2 - Improve outcomes for adults with mental health needs by developing the Community Mental Health Framework – Cllr Weston asked that further information be sent to him on how this business plan action was being implemented.

3. Thematic performance clinic report - Transport & Connectivity: It was noted that some actions in relation to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement under the Connectivity priority were behind schedule. It was also noted that Bristol's transport team were actively contributing to progress on a number of projects, including, for example, relevant aspects of the A37/A4018 and A4 transport corridor improvements.

4. Target BPPM474 - Increase the number of journeys on Park & Ride into Bristol: It was noted that performance was significantly below target; the return of Park & Ride usage to pre-pandemic levels lagged behind other bus services. Park & Ride services were also operating on lower frequencies which in itself constrained growth in passenger numbers. It was difficult for service frequency to be increased currently due to the (national) shortage of bus drivers.

In discussion, it was suggested that the introduction of more flexible approaches to timetabling may assist in mitigating the impact of the bus driver shortage – for example, in relation to the Brislington Park and Ride, it might be appropriate for Park and Ride services to be operated/focused on providing the best service frequency possible during the peak morning and early evening periods – during the middle part of the working day, when there was less demand, customers could be directed to access either the X39 or 349 bus services which ran regularly along the A4 corridor into central Bristol, with bus stops for these services accessible within easy proximity to this park and ride site. Officers indicated they would pass this suggestion on to the West of England Combined Authority as the relevant body for considering this matter.

5. Target P-TC3.3 - Introduce the Clean Air Zone for Bristol to improve air quality: Following the launch of the Clean Air Zone, data would be monitored in terms of the numbers of compliant/non-compliant vehicles in the zone. It was noted that the overall impact on air quality would be assessed/judged officially over a 12 month period, taking account of the fact that weather, for example, would variably affect air quality.



6. Target BPPM420a - Reduce the council's direct carbon dioxide equivalent emissions: a query was raised (to be checked by officers) about whether the energy recovery facilities had been factored into this target.

7. In wider discussion of climate/environmental targets, it was suggested that all possible action should be taken to encourage organisations across the city to undertake/promote carbon literacy training.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information/points.

1 West of England - Local cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

0

The Commission considered and discussed a report setting out an update on the West of England Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. An important distinction to make was that whilst the LCWIP document set out priority walking and cycling routes for investment, this was not the full extent of active travel projects that the council (or developers) were developing or had delivered.
2. There were a number of ongoing challenges to scheme delivery; in particular, there were skills and expertise shortages and recruitment challenges in relation to some aspects of technical work (e.g. work involving bridges); account also had to be taken of local sensitivities around tolerance of disruption associated with implementing particular schemes, especially if multiple works (e.g. highways; fibreoptics) had taken place in the same area. The short-term nature of funding and bidding windows also presented certain delivery challenges. It was suggested that account should be taken of the point raised in the public forum statement received earlier at the meeting from the Bristol Cycling Campaign about the need for a delivery programme for routes, with details of project timing and prioritisation of activity. This could also include consideration of local point closures where appropriate (e.g. as part of future liveable neighbourhood proposals) noting that longer term impacts of such closures would also need to be assessed.
3. In relation to Active Travel Fund 4, the assessment criteria for was awaited but it was anticipated that the government would be looking for schemes that provided a high benefit/cost ratio and could be developed and delivered within 3 years.
4. In response to a particular point raised by Cllr Hornchen, officers undertook to check the position in terms of whether the Temple Quarter regeneration project would in time see improved cycle links from there to the Feeder Road/St Annes area. It was noted that the nearby East Bristol liveable neighbourhood pilot project would bring local cycling benefits.



5. The regional/cross-authority context of developing cycling and walking improvements was also of ongoing relevance, especially in relation to schemes in the border areas between authorities. It was also important to be mindful of cycling improvements that could be achieved in outer areas of the city, e.g. in the Avonmouth, Henbury and Stockwood areas as well as central city improvements.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information/points.

1 Frome Gateway

1

The Commission considered and discussed a report setting out an update on the placemaking approach being taken for the Frome Gateway Regeneration Framework.

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. The Frome Gateway Regeneration Project aimed to bring about long-term, transformational change in the St Jude's area through the delivery of new homes, employment spaces, community and public spaces, and infrastructure. The project had been initiated as a result of changing planning policy for the city as per the emerging Local Plan review.

2. The Frome Gateway Placemaking approach was centred around:

- a. Green and blue spaces, including: opening up the River Frome through a river restoration project; enhancements to Riverside Park and Peel Street open space; integration of high-quality green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems into the public realm and highways.
- b. Sustainability and public health, including: high-quality walking and cycling routes to encourage active travel; multi-functional green infrastructure to build resilience to flood risk and heat stress and provide space for wildlife; community and social infrastructure to support growth and build community capacity.
- c. Movement and severance, including: addressing boundary and connection issues; prioritisation of sustainable and active travel routes.
- d. Employment and ground floor uses, including: consolidation and diversification of employment uses; a ground floor strategy to safeguard and re-provide a mix and range of employment uses and integrate community spaces and services to support growth.
- e. Embedding the importance of community cohesion and social integration into the regeneration framework as a key consideration to inform later stages, such as development and design briefs, funding bids and regeneration initiatives.

3. Recognising the key issue around embedding community cohesion and social integration, it was suggested that as part of this, it would be important to engage with people using/spending time in Riverside Park.



4. It was noted that as part of the consolidation and diversification of employment uses, the aim was to provide a greater range of pathways to training and employment for local people, as part of a 'mixed use' approach to regeneration which would retain some of the current employment uses.

5. It was noted that consultation and engagement were ongoing as part of the placemaking approach; additional issues to be considered included mitigation against air pollution from the M32, local sustainable transport improvements and avoiding gentrification of the area.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information/points.

1 Housing Delivery - Progress of Project 1000

2

The Commission considered and discussed a report setting out an update on the progress of Project 1000 a year on from its adoption in February 2022 (Project 1000 being the Council's plan to meet the Mayoral ambition of delivering 1000 affordable homes a year by 2024).

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. The Council was on track to deliver, or come very close to delivering the target of 1000 affordable homes in 2023/24. This delivery represented a significant increase in affordable housing delivery across the city as compared with previous years; the anticipated delivery for 2024/25 and beyond was also looking positive.

2. The collaborative work taking place across the city was key to delivery, involving registered providers, other third-party delivery partners, and the enabling team who supported them from within the council, together with Goram Homes, and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)'s own housing delivery through the in-house housing delivery team.

3. Whilst progress had been encouraging, all affordable housing providers faced ongoing challenges in relation to land/subsidy availability and scheme viability (especially in relation to Brownfield land) challenges within the supply chain, interest rate increases and capacity within the planning system, and impacts arising from the national economic situation.

4. In noting the progress, members stressed the importance of ensuring high standards in terms of housing design quality and other key factors such as spatial standards and sustainability/carbon neutrality considerations. It was noted that through HRA delivery, the in-house delivery sought to set an exemplar design model. Innovative approaches were also being encouraged such as the repurposing of some HRA garden land for small-scale new housing.

5. There was discussion around the importance of housing development being supported through the accompanying development of community infrastructure, including development in suburban outer areas



of the city which did not realise high levels of funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy. The example of Lockleaze was quoted where three major developments were taking place, all of which would bring increased affordable housing but appropriate improvements in community infrastructure remained a challenge.

6. In further discussion, it was suggested that when new development was being considered, careful assessment should be undertaken to provide the right type of homes to meet local community needs. It was noted in assessing new development, the in-house delivery team ensured that full account was taken of the housing needs assessment for localities.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information/points.

1 City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal

3

The Commission considered and discussed a report setting out an update on the progress of the City Centre and High Streets Recovery and Renewal Programme.

Summary of main points raised/noted:

1. The update was generally welcomed. It was noted that the programme was:
 - a. delivering £5.085m worth of investment across the city, to safeguard and create businesses and employment opportunities.
 - b. being delivered in collaboration with businesses, communities, and stakeholders, who had helped inform interventions ensuring they met needs and helped to reconnect places with people.
 - c. also supporting the recovery of key sectors that had been most affected by the pandemic, including retail, hospitality, culture and events sectors, and the night-time economy.
2. Extensive engagement had taken place in local areas to make sure plans were in tune with local people's aspirations around high streets. There had been delays in some public realm activities/delivery – some interventions would take longer to deliver than originally anticipated due to some impact on internal capacity due to the Council's financial challenges, and also due to contractor staffing capacity and availability.
3. £1.5m of Strategic Community Infrastructure had been allocated to high streets. In line with CIL regulations, this must be spent on capital infrastructure projects that supported areas of growth and regeneration. The plan was to focus on four priority areas from October 2023 - the City Centre, Ashley Road/Grosvenor Road (St Paul's), Oatlands Avenue (Whitchurch) and Crow Lane (Henbury).
4. Discussions were taking place about using some empty city centre premises as secure, well-lit and safe bike storage.



The Commission **RESOLVED:**

- To note the report and the above information/points.

1 Work Programme

4

The Commission **RESOLVED:**

- To note the latest update of the work programme.

Meeting ended at 7.20 pm

CHAIR _____

