

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



4 September 2023 at 3.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Tony Dyer (Chair), Mark Bradshaw (Vice-Chair), Geoff Gollop, Brenda Massey, Steve Pearce, David Wilcox, Martin Fodor, Steve Smith and Christine Townsend

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed the attendees. Health and safety information was provided.

2 Apologies for absence.

No apologies were received.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting held on 6th June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

5 Chair's Business

There was no Chairs Business.

6 Public Forum



The Public Forum was published and can be found [here](#).

Dan Ackroyd submitted three public forum questions and written responses were provided. Mr Ackroyd submitted an additional supplementary question following the response to question 1b requesting further details on ensuring accuracy. The Chair stated that queries about the accuracy of minutes should be directed to the Chair of the relevant meeting, in this instance Cllr Steve Smith acting as delegate in the place of the Lord Mayor. Where matters affected code of conduct these were to be directed to the Monitoring Officer, the Director for Legal and Democratic Services.

As a supplementary question following the response to question 1c Mr Ackroyd noted that a reason for a video of a recent meeting being set to private had not been provided. Following discussion it was agreed that this constituted a complaint and the relevant complaint processes should be followed.

RESOLVED; That the Public Forum be noted.

7 Annual Business Report

The Head of Democratic Engagement presented the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Annual Business Report 2023-24 for noting. This included details of membership and the Terms of Reference. Attention was drawn to the dates for scheduled meetings.

The Report was approved, including the agreement for the Call-in Committee and Chair rotation.

RESOLVED; That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Annual Business Report 2023-24 be noted.

8 Goram Homes Annual Report

The Managing Director of Goram Homes presented the Annual Report, including an overview of the financial performance which had been shown to be better than predicted in the 2022-23 forecast.

A Member noted the uncertainty of the market and queried the implication of falling house prices against interest rates remaining high. The Managing Director stated that the business structure allowed for flexible responses to fluidity in the market. Factors were considered on an ongoing basis to support a dynamic position.

A Member noted that the National TOMS (Themes, Outcomes, Measures) Framework had been used to assess Social Value and asked for the individual scores and the proportion of the projects given to Social Value. The Managing Director agreed that the National TOMS scores for individual projects could be provided outside of the public meeting. Social Value would be determined at the point where a delivery partner was sought and selected.



A Member queried the number of homes that had full planning permission. Full planning permission had been granted at the 1 Lockleaze development which comprised around 300 homes. As a relatively new organisation the remainder of the projects were progressing through the planning phase, a number of which required a two-stage planning process. The first homes built by Goram Homes were expected to be available by the end of 2023.

The Chair of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission extended an invitation to the Managing Director to the following meeting of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission in November 2023 as a planning item was anticipated.

A Member requested a forecast towards profitability for the future as this had previously been available, as well as a narrative on the corporation tax as it was noted that a significant proportion of the improved projections had come from both deferred tax and interest receivable. It was queried why an increase in interest receivable directed to Goram Homes was not matched by an increase in Bristol City Council's interest receivable. The Finance Director of Goram Homes noted that the interest payable to Bristol City Council was higher than planned, and suggested a separate session outside of public scrutiny to discuss the elements of the financing structure which were commercially sensitive.

A Member noted the work undertaken around the Construction Skills Academy and queried how attendees were targeted. It was clarified that attendees were coordinated by the College of Bristol. The Head of Communications for Goram Homes had worked with Partners in Bristol, a College of Bristol subsidiary, and stated that outreach had taken place with referrals received from local job centres.

The WECA brief for Education and Skills was discussed. The Chief Executive noted there may be work for Officers to consider how to support joined up working between WECA, Bristol City Council and council commissioned entities around education and skills opportunities for groups such as care leavers.

A Member asked if the Skills Academy could be replicated in South Bristol where the College of Bristol and Advanced Construction Hub were based. This was confirmed.

The issue of the selection of locations for projects was raised. Sites were driven by land availability from the council. The Managing Director welcomed suggestions from Members should they become aware of potential sites.

The arrangements around risk and audit were queried. A new Non-Executive Chair of audit and risk had been appointed and the value of this was noted. Work had been undertaken on integrating a performance management system that linked risks, objectives and key performance indicators. It was expected that OSMB would have the opportunity to examine performance more closely with the planned scrutiny of the Goram Homes business plan.

The risk around construction costs was raised. Costs were being assessed as stable but dependent on a number of complex factors. The relationship with national partners supported a comprehensive search for the best price points to drive down cost position. It was also added that local labour was prioritised and more local community led developments were planned.



The Goram Homes representatives were thanked for the report and discussion.

RESOLVED; That OSMB note the Goram Homes report.

9 Report of Climate Change Working Group

Councillor Grant presented the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) report to OSMB with a view to approving submission to Cabinet.

The CCWG was created to examine Bristol City Council progress toward the target of Net Zero by 2030. Thanks were directed to the Officers involved in supporting the Working Group.

Attention was drawn to the recommendations regarding governance of future work as the recommendation to extend the term of the Working Group through 2023-24 had not been unanimously agreed.

It was agreed to submit the report to Cabinet. The Chair noted that this would be submitted for the Cabinet scheduled for October 2023 rather than September 2023 in order to allow Cabinet Members sufficient time to read the report and allow for further discussion.

In terms of extending the term of the CCWG, the resourcing of future meetings was raised as a concern. It was noted that OSMB and Scrutiny had a full workload, and it was agreed for a discussion of the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023-24 year to be held at the next OSMB Leads meeting in order to consider this. The intention for the Environment and Sustainability Policy Committee to undertake this work from May 2024 was also highlighted. Varying viewpoints from Members were put forward.

The cross-cutting nature of the issue was discussed, with consideration that all Policy Committees could potentially have an impact on the Net Zero target. The importance of ensuring alignment was agreed.

The Chair proposed that following the submission of the report to Cabinet that the OSMB Leads be convened to consider the options around the future work of the Working Group. This was agreed.

Cllr Grant and the Working Group were thanked for their work and the report.

RESOLVED; That OSMB recommend that the Climate Change Working Group report be submitted to Cabinet for October 2023, and; that a meeting of the OSMB Leads be arranged to consider available resources and options for future work.

10 Quarter 4 Performance Report

The quarterly Performance and Corporate Risk Reports were brought to OSMB for noting with the intention that the relevant sections be brought to individual Scrutiny Commissions for more detailed assessment. They were discussed as a joint item.



Members were reminded that prior notice should be given around a line of questioning in order to ensure that the relevant Officers could be present to address. Where this was not possible questions would be taken away as actions.

A Member noted the presentation of percentages as on or above target, and the implication this had for the reader.

Following the meeting Performance Officers provided the following comment:

- *The actual number 'on target' is minimal so the Performance team focused on "on or above target". Whilst this could be displayed as on or below, in terms of aspiring to achieve it seemed sensible to present it as shown. The reader can deduce that if 55% are on or above target then 45% are below.*
- *The Performance Team would be open to displaying it however the reader would find helpful, but the issue had been previously discussed and agreed to leave as shown.*

It was queried how the risks within the Risk Report were segregated, and whether this supported the identification of the highest priorities. The Chief Executive stated that improvements had been made in the previous 12 months, and the way risk was calibrated was consistent across the report. There was a recognition that all items had an individual risk score.

It was noted that the amount of narrative provided was inconsistent, which should not be the case at year end. It was not always clear why a position had changed, as indicated by the arrows.

Following the meeting Performance Officers provided the following comment:

- *The amount of narrative in text boxes does vary according to the officer completing it. In some cases it may not merit a lengthy response whereas in others there would be more detail by way of explanation. There is no hard and fast rule, although the Performance Team do provide guidance on how to write Management notes. However, as noted, by Q4 all metrics should have content.*
- *Overall only 5 metrics did not have narrative, but all 5 were in the Children & Young People Theme. As noted by the Chief Executive, this is being raised by the Performance Team with relevant colleagues in Children & Education.*
- *Most boxes without "arrows" were Actions, which are in-year only, and most Performance metrics do have arrows to show whether that KPI is doing better or worse than the year before. However, if the metric is new or changed from the year before, or data was not reported the previous year, there is no arrow to show change. As it happens the Children & Young People Theme had multiple metrics impacted by these issues, partly due to reduced reporting of Education and Public Health data the year before (due to Covid restrictions). Apologies this was not clear why the arrows were missing on those metrics.*

A Member noted a lack of progress against Transport items. It was agreed that specific questions could be directed to the relevant Cabinet Member or Officer, and brought to the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission.

A Member noted that while individual actions appeared to be doing well only half of targets were on track to be achieved, and queried whether this indicated ambitious targets or whether the actions taken to achieve those targets were incorrect. The Chief Executive agreed with the assessment that there was a



distance between activity and outcome measurement but that this was being worked on as part of continual improvement.

Following the meeting Performance Officers provided the following comment:

- *'Actions' are standalone actions that the performance team monitor progress against over the year, and this is set out in the relevant narratives. 'Actions' do not have specific 'metrics' or targets, the metrics are separate. This is articulated in the Business Plan.*

RESOLVED; That feedback be provided to Performance Officers (*completed and comments included in minutes*).

RESOLVED; That the Performance and Risk Reports be noted.

11 Quarter 1 Corporate Risk Report

See previous item. The Q1 Corporate Risk Report was discussed as a joint item with the Q4 Performance Report.

12 Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted. It was raised that the work programme might require reconsideration in light of the resources available to support planned work and matters arising.

RESOLVED; That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

13 Mayor's Forward Plan - Standing Item

The Chair noted that further work was needed in improving the notice given on items brought to Cabinet.

RESOLVED; That the Mayors Forward Plan be noted.

14 (Draft) Minutes from the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee - for information (standing item)

RESOLVED; That the minutes of the last meeting of the West of England Combined Authority Scrutiny Commission be noted.

