

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



18 January 2024 at 4.00 pm

Members Present:-

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

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

Cllr Tony Dyer welcomed the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. Health and safety information was provided.

2 Apologies for absence.

Cllr Pearce and Cllr Massey sent apologies.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Minutes from the OSMB meeting held on 4th December 2023 were not available.

RESOLVED; That the Minutes from the OSMB meeting held on 4th December 2023 be published and approved at the next OSMB meeting.

5 Chair's Business

No business was declared.



6 Public Forum

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

Suzanne Audrey submitted four questions and received written responses.

As a supplementary question to the response to question 3 regarding 'rat-running' in Totterdown Suzanne Audrey asked whether there was a plan for further monitoring. The Head of City Transport stated that these issues were known prior to the introduction of the CAZ. It was noted that there had been an increase in the allocation of funds to transport schemes, and options around how to address issues such as those identified in Totterdown were for consideration as part of the allocation of those funds.

Dan Ackroyd submitted a question regarding the obligations in the publication of the Mayor's Forward Plan. As a supplemental question he stated that he did not feel the question had been satisfactorily answered as the Mayor's Forward Plan was not currently covering the expected four-month period. The Chair confirmed that the statutory minimum number of 28 days' notice was being provided, and further notice was not always possible. However, concerns were shared and noted, and as Bristol City Council moved into a Committee System model of governance it was hoped that improvements to the Forward Plan would be made. Dan Akroyd also submitted a Public Forum statement.

David Redgewell presented a statement regarding CAZ and funding to highway schemes, and also presented a statement on behalf of Bristol Older People's Forum regarding how elderly and disabled people had been left with limited travel options due to the withdrawal of some public transport services.

RESOLVED; That the Public Forum be noted.

7 Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Report

Clean Air Zone (CAZ) Evaluation Report

The Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration and the Head of City Transport presented the Clean Air Zone Evaluation Report. Members were directed to [Item 12](#) of the Cabinet 23rd January 2024 agenda, and the Head of City Transport summarised the paper. Key points included;

- A summary of the CAZ was provided
- A report from the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) on whether air quality levels had met legal compliance was expected in June 2024.
- Monitoring had found that the nitrogen dioxide levels had decreased by about 10% across the city. The data quality was flagged noting that the impact of Covid on traffic levels in 2020-21 had made a direct comparison with this period difficult, so the use of 2022-23 data had been preferred.



- It was noted that there had been no significant change in footfall in the city centre which had previously been raised as a potential concern.
- Increases in traffic in surrounding areas had not led to increased nitrogen dioxide concentrations.
- A table showing the breakdown of journeys through the CAZ area demonstrated an increase in the amount of compliant journeys since the implementation of the CAZ. It also reflected the expected decrease in the number of locally exempt journeys.
- The difficulty in drawing conclusions around the use of public transport was noted due to the impact of Covid, and subsequent reductions in bus journeys due to driver shortages.
- An overall financial summary was provided for the first year of income (noting that this did not constitute a financial report) demonstrating income of £31million; or £26million after costs.

Members were invited to ask questions.

The Chair asked what measures would have been taken had the CAZ not been implemented. The Head of City Transport stated that prior to the CAZ the Active Travel Fund had been used to support a number of measures to reduce traffic. Modelling had showed that this would have achieved some but not all the aims in improving air quality. The implementation of those measures had had sufficient impact that a smaller CAZ scheme was implemented than would otherwise have been necessary. The longer term focus was to continue with measures that would support sustainable travel approaches.

Members expressed disappointment that the reports had been published at a late date, reducing the amount of time available for consideration.

The difficulties in benchmarking data due to other factors (impact of pandemic, impact of other measures, etc) was noted, but it was understood that air quality had been improving prior to the implementation of the CAZ. A Member queried whether the 12 months of available data had been sufficient for assessment. Officers were confident that the modelling that had taken place demonstrated the efficacy of the CAZ. It was estimated that while other measures would also have led to compliance, this would have occurred around 2027-28, while the CAZ was estimated to bring about compliance at an earlier date.

The increase in emissions at site 638 (A4044 – Southmead) was noted and a request made for further information. This was noted. Officers agreed to provide maps to demonstrate improvements in air quality.

Members queried the financial summary, and considered some information was missing (such as around how income would be reflected in the March 2024 budget, and the bad debt provision). It was noted that further financial details were provided in Appendix 3, and further discussions on Growth and Regeneration finance were to be discussed at a budget meeting in January 2024.

The number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) written off was queried. Officers had taken a sympathetic approach to enforcement. It was noted that at an early stage some cameras were faulty. Officers were confident that these were now working, and that processes were improving. While the figures for PCN



were provided for the 12-month period, Members expressed an interest in seeing a quarterly breakdown of this in order to assess changes over time as part of assurances of improvements made. This was noted.

Potential future targeted work was raised. Officers suggested that Area Committees would be best placed to consider individual measures.

The importance of a reliable public transport network was emphasised. The recent increase in funding for travel schemes was intended to support this.

Members noted that the data provided was comprehensive but difficult to parse. Officers agreed that further refining was required, as answers were not readily available for outliers at that stage.

It was noted that PCNs for visitors from outside of Bristol were slightly higher than expected. Work had been undertaken with National Highways around signage.

Application of Bristol Clean Air Zone Net Proceeds

Members were directed to [Item 13](#) of the Cabinet 23rd January 2024 agenda, and the Director for Economy of Place delivered a presentation on the proceeds from the CAZ. This included:

- Clarifying the legal basis for the 5 year and 10 year plan, originating in the Bristol CAZ Charging Order from 2022. The 5 year programme was due to proceed to Cabinet 23rd January.
- £7Million had been received in the 2022/23 financial year (noting that the first 12 months of CAZ did not align with the financial year), and had seen a reduction in the number of non-compliant vehicles entering the zone.
- It was estimated that an income of £81million would be generated by the end of the implementation of the CAZ, ie. once compliance had been achieved.
- The Cabinet report set out the four thematic areas for the application of the net proceeds, namely:
 - o Improving Public Transport
 - o Match funding for City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)
 - o Improving and Maintaining Infrastructure
 - o Enabling Local and Neighbourhood Transport Schemes

Members were invited to ask questions.

Members raised frustration regarding transport related neighbourhood schemes. A list of 55 longstanding projects that had been agreed but not progressed had been identified. The Executive Director for Growth and Development reiterated the commitment to those projects, and thanked Cabinet Member Cllr Alexander for his work in progressing the issue. The delay had been due to significant cuts combined with increases in costs over previous years. A plan had been put in place to progress those projects.

The involvement of Area Committees with the identification of projects and use of funds was flagged.



A Member raised a concern around ensuring the sustainability of funding to long term projects as it was acknowledged that CAZ funding would cease once compliance was achieved. Officers were aware of this and noted the concern.

Concerns were raised over the limited financial information available, and Members would have preferred to see a transparent record of how the estimated £81million was being proposed to be spent, and when it was likely to be achieved. Officers welcomed further discussion and would aim to provide this. It was clarified that modelled funding had not been allocated against financial years, but that the purpose of the report was the outlining of the 5 year programme.

It was confirmed that the total allocated to the Transport Levy had been agreed at £10.3million. This figure had been agreed in discussion with WECA.

It was noted that the World Health Organisation (WHO) had changed the safe level of nitrogen dioxide; the aims of the CAZ continue to be working towards the JAQU agreed level of compliance. A Member suggested future work in bringing compliance in line with the higher standard set by the WHO, including around other harmful particulates outside of nitrogen dioxide levels.

Councillor Don Alexander, Cabinet Member for Transport, and Officers were thanked for their work.

It was agreed that OSMB would submit a referral to Cabinet regarding CAZ.

RESOLVED; That the CAZ Evaluation and Finance reports be noted, and;

That a referral regarding CAZ be submitted to Cabinet to contain the issues raised by OSMB Members, and;

That the following information be provided to Members i) information regarding the increase in emissions at site 638 (Southmead); ii) a quarterly breakdown of PCN charges and iii) assurances of improvements made; iv) information regarding the CAZ income by year and a breakdown of the application of net surplus; v) maps of Bristol demonstrating improvements in air quality by area.

8 Q2 2023-24 Performance Report

The Strategic Intelligence and Performance Manager presented the Q2 2023-24 Performance Report for OSMB.

A summary of performance of the Business Plan themes showed a slight fall in Quarter 2, notably that the Economy & Skills and Homes & Communities themes had been marked as Behind Schedule / Amber.

A Member stated that it was encouraging to see no themes marked as Red / Significantly Behind Schedule. This was agreed, but noted that as summaries the table referenced did not contain the granular detail of individual performance metrics, some of which were now marked as Red.



The Chair noted that Lead Officers for the different themes had been identified, and suggested that Members with directorate specific questions direct them to the appropriate Officer.

It was noted that a workshop for the development of the 2024-25 business plan and performance framework had been scheduled for February 2024.

The guidance available on how to use the Performance Dashboard was highlighted, and the Strategic Intelligence and Performance Manager welcomed further questions.

It was suggested that training on the use and understanding of the Performance Dashboard and supporting reports form part of the planned Member Induction for 2024-25. It was confirmed that this was in hand.

RESOLVED; That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

9 Scrutiny Work Programme

RESOLVED; That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

1 Mayor's Forward Plan - Standing Item

0

A Member requested that concerns be raised regarding the Mayor's Forward Plan. It was agreed that a statement on this would be included in the submitted referral to Cabinet.

RESOLVED; That the Mayors Forward Plan be noted, and; that concerns regarding the Mayor's Forward Plan be submitted as part of a referral to Cabinet.

1 Minutes from the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee - for information (standing 1 item)

The most recent minutes of the West of England Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee were published on 2nd October 2023 and had been noted at a previous OSMB meeting.

