

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee



23 August 2024 at 10.00 am

Members present:-

Councillors: Stephen Williams (Chair), Emily Clarke (Vice-Chair), Tom Blenkinsop, Lisa Durston, Ed Fraser, Fi Hance, Cara Lavan, Abdul Malik and Bador Uddin

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that there were no apologies for absence from committee members.

Apologies were noted from John Smith, Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration, and from Christina Gray, Director: Communities and Public Health.

3 Declarations of Interest

None.



4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Blenkinsop, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

- To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee held on 21 June 2024 as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair.

5 Chair's Announcements

The Chair referred to the recent report submitted to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on the Council's challenging financial position. The finance update report to be considered later at this meeting (which would be a standing item on the committee's agenda) needed to be viewed in the context of the overall financial situation.

6 Public Forum

It was noted that 18 public forum questions had been submitted to this meeting as follows:

- Q1. Bob Radford: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q2. Ruth Hecht: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q3. Richard Curtis: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q4. Tim Beasley: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q5. Sarah Freeman: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q6. Catherine Potter: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q7. Roger Mellors: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q8. Joanna Mellors: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q9. Lorna Lindfield: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q10. Dave Adlam: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q11. Debbie Wyatt: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q12. James Jones: Healthy weight and diet
- Q13. John Daw, Woodcroft community orchard: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q14. Vanessa Harvey-Samuel: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q15. Tess Price: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q16. Hugh Holden: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q17. Nathalie Griffin: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement
- Q18. Cllr Lorraine Francis: Allotment rents and tenancy agreement



In response to a supplementary question on Q1, the Chair advised that at this meeting, the Committee would be considering a proposal to invest in allotments and food growing. He also confirmed that he had met with stakeholder groups in advance of this meeting to discuss the allotments rent issue; a number of issues raised through these discussions were addressed in the report.

In response to a supplementary question on Q2, it was noted that the report on allotment rents as submitted to this meeting had been developed in liaison with the Chair and Vice-Chair; lead members of all the political groups had been appraised of the report content prior to publication.

In response to a further supplementary question on Q2, the Chair confirmed that paragraph 7 (of the report included on the agenda concerning allotment rents) set the direction of travel for taking forward this issue over the next 12 months, i.e. the intention was for the service to undertake stakeholder engagement on the review of the current fees and charges structure; this review would consider options which were fair and proportionate for individual allotment holders and collective food growing groups and would take into account the legal notice required for introducing rental increases as defined within the Allotment Act.

In response to a supplementary question on Q8, officers outlined the rationale for reviewing the allotment rent/pricing structure; the approaches taken by other local authorities had been examined as part of this.

In response to a supplementary question on Q11, it was noted that the issue of the capital sum available from the sale of statutory allotment land at Brislington was referred to in the report included at agenda item 8 (Investment in allotments and food growing).

In response to a supplementary question on Q12, it was noted that whilst the wider issues around healthy weight were of ongoing interest to the committee, the decision to be considered at this meeting under agenda item 10 (Commissioning of targeted healthy weight services for adults, families and children) was essentially a procurement decision.

In response to a supplementary question on Q14, it was noted that through the process of the development of the report brought to this meeting on allotment rents, the Chair and lead members had sought greater clarity about the financing of the service. It was also noted that since the publication of the original agenda papers for this meeting, a supplementary document had been published setting out additional financial information on expenditure on allotments and smallholdings.

In response to a supplementary question on Q15, the Chair stressed his commitment to ensuring effective engagement and consultation arrangements on an ongoing basis with allotment stakeholders as part of moving to a fit-for-purpose allotments service.

It was noted that 49 public forum questions had been submitted to this meeting as follows:

1. Richard Matthews: Allotment rents



2. Ben Davidson: Allotment rents
3. Bob Radford: Allotment rents
4. Harry McPhillimy: Allotment rents
5. Bea Angus: Allotment rents
6. Richard Curtis: Allotment rents
7. Jo Pengilley: Allotment rents
8. Ruth Hecht: Allotment rents
9. Cllr Bador Uddin: Allotment rents
10. Sarah Rogers: Community Resilience Fund
11. Michaela Andrews: Healthy weight / diet
12. John Daw: Allotment rents
13. Tom Bosanquet: Allotment rents
14. Rob Acton-Campbell: Funding for area committees
15. Emma Lynsay: Allotment rents
16. Cllr Rob Bryher: Funding for area committees
17. Christopher Faulkner Gibson: Allotment rents
18. Bristol Allotment Forum, rules review sub-group: Allotment rents
19. Sarah Freeman: Allotment rents
20. Cathy Spence: Allotment rents
21. Penny Russell: Allotment rents
22. Abdullahi Farah: Community Resilience Fund
23. Stuart Lindsay: Allotment rents
24. Dave Adlam: Allotment rents
25. Alexander St Jean Dick: Allotment rents
26. Jenny Poppy: Allotment rents
27. Ena Yarde: Allotment rents
28. Sally Wyatt: Allotment rents
29. Len Wyatt (Bristol Parks Forum): Finance report
30. Sophia Foster: Allotment rents
31. Joanna Mellors: Allotment rents
32. Tamara Evans Braun: Allotment rents
33. Katy Ladbrook, on behalf of Allotment Forum Subgroup for Rents and Allotment Forum Subgroup for Value for Money: Allotment rents
34. Vanessa Harvey-Samuel: Allotment rents
35. Caroline Dalcq: Allotment rents
36. David Baines: Allotment rents
37. Ellen Rowland: Allotment rents
38. Bridget Ely: Allotment rents
39. Tess Price, Troy Tanska, James Martin, Dom Francis: Allotment rents
40. Gem Lindsey: Allotment rents
41. Chris Dowell: Allotment rents
42. Jordan Smith: Allotment rents
43. Ana Sanchez: Allotment rents



- 44. Tim Beasley: Allotment rents
- 45. Ian McCaig: Allotment rents
- 46. Karen Zahra Coles: Allotment rents
- 47. Cllr Guy Poultney: Funding for area committees
- 48. Lorna Lindfield: Allotment rents
- 49. Cllr Lorraine Francis: Allotment rents

Within the time available for the public forum, individuals in attendance at the meeting presented their statements.

The Committee noted the statements, noting also that their content would be taken into account as part of their consideration of the relevant agenda items.

7 Funding for Area Committees

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 7) outlining the financial gap that currently existed in respect of the funding of area committees and seeking agreement of an approach to the funding of area committees in 2024/25.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision would have a significant impact on 2 or more wards in the city.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. The following correction to the report was noted: Page 2, in the table showing the ward structure of area committees, in relation to Area Committee 5, the reference to 'Easton' ward should be deleted and replaced with a reference to 'Frome Vale' ward.
2. It was noted that the report sought a specific approval of an allocation of estimated part-year costs in 2024/25 of £90,000, to be funded from the Council's Resources operating reserve. Recurrent future funding for the area committee structure would then be proposed and considered as part of the Council's budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy process subject to validation of the structure required and alternative potential funding, if identified.
3. It was noted that the current arrangements for area committees extended their remit, reflecting the Council's revised constitution under the committee governance system. The area committee arrangements would be subject to a further review towards the end of the 2024/25 Council year (the timing of this to be determined by Full Council).



4. A concern was raised about the fact that the funding gap identified in the report had not been identified through the 2024/25 Council budget development process. It was noted that this had been an oversight, hence the proposal now being brought forward to fund the gap through the operating reserve for this year.

5. With reference to comments raised in the public forum, it was noted that funding for Area Committee 6 was relatively low compared to other areas, reflecting a relatively low local Community Infrastructure Levy allocation; a smaller number of wards also comprised this area committee. Further to 3. above, it was noted that the boundary structure, funding, remit and decision-taking powers available to area committees would be reviewed at an appropriate point, also to take account of the experience of running the committees under the revised arrangements now in place for 2024/25. It was noted that the creation of the Equity fund enabled a further opportunity for area committees to access funding.

6. In response to a question, it was confirmed that under current national legislation, area committee meetings must be held in-person and could not be held in either online or hybrid formats.

7. In response to a question, it was noted that in circumstances where a particular time-critical decision was required, an additional meeting of an area committee could be arranged where this was deemed essential, although it was important to recognise that the capacity/resource for enabling additional meetings was limited.

The Chair then moved the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Clarke seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- 1. To approve the allocation of funding to support the Area Committees as set out in the report.**
- 2. To note the arrangements for funding projects and schemes as set out in the report.**

8 Allotment rents and tenancy agreement

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 8) seeking approval for:

- new allotment rents and water service charges to be implemented from September 2025.
- progressing a stakeholder engagement process to review the way in which allotments rents and charges were structured, and to review and where necessary update the allotment tenancy agreement and tenancy rules to reflect current allotment legislation and practice.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision would have a significant impact on 2 or more wards in the city.



Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. The Chair commented that in terms of immediate measures, the report essentially proposed:

- revised allotment rents and charges as set out in the report and at Appendix A;
- the expansion of the discount scheme to enable more people on low incomes to benefit from a 50% reduced rent.

2. As per paragraph 7 of the report, it was noted that the current allotment pricing structure using the banding system was accepted as being irregular. In light of this, under this proposal, the service would commit to stakeholder engagement on the review of the current fees and charges structure within the next 12 months, to include an approach derived from using a square meterage rate. It was proposed that the review of the way in which the rents were structured would consider options which were fair and proportionate for individual allotment holders and collective food growing groups.

3. It was noted that the Council's fees and rents for allotments had not been revised since 2018. The allotments service was not currently self-sustaining financially and was subsidised through the overall parks budget.

4. As per his comments during the public forum, the Chair reiterated that through the process by which the report had been developed, including discussions at meetings of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee Chair's Briefing (attended by the Chair and Vice-Chair), greater clarity had been sought and received about the financing of the allotments service.

5. In discussion, a number of members expressed the view that whilst they were supportive of the principle of and case for increasing allotment rents, they were not supportive of the immediate level of increase proposed.

6. Cllr Clarke expressed concern that an amendment submitted by the Labour group members had not been able to be considered at this meeting. It was noted that the amendment as submitted had been ruled as inadmissible by the Director of Legal Services.

7. The Chair suggested that, as a matter of urgency and in terms of effective governance in relation to all policy committees, it would be useful for guidance to be developed and issued around the submission of amendments.

At the conclusion of the discussion on this matter, the Chair advised that he would not be moving the report recommendations.

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Hance, the Committee then **RESOLVED** (6 members voting in favour, with 3 abstentions):



To defer the report and that discussions take place between the Chair and the committee's party group leads with a view to agreeing a revised proposal to be brought back to the committee at its 11 October 2024 meeting.

9 Investment in Allotments and Food Growing (citywide)

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 9) seeking approval for capital investment that would increase the number of allotments plots available, convert land to be used for food growing and allotments, and support allotment infrastructure repairs.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision would have a significant impact on 2 or more wards in the city.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that this capital investment responded to the growing demand from Bristol residents for space in which to grow their own food and help contribute to a healthier, more equitable food system.
2. In response to a question, it was noted that a capital sum of £1.14m was available from the sale of statutory allotment land at Brislington Meadows. The green spaces that may benefit from this investment were yet to be further defined as feasibility work was needed on appropriate opportunities identified through a green space mapping exercise. However, the same principles would be applied as per the other proposals under this capital investment, i.e. prioritising the creation of new allotment plots and collective food growing areas by upgrading existing allotment land or converting spaces.
3. In response to a question, it was noted that the provision of accessible plots would be prioritised in taking this work forwards.

The Chair then moved the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Clarke seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

1. To approve the investment of \$106 sums into Dovercourt Road Smallholdings, Cotman Walk Former Allotments, Oatlands Avenue allotments and Fortfield Road Allotments as outlined in the report.



2. To approve the investment of capital receipt sums from the sale of allotment land at Brislington Meadows using the approach set out in the report.

3. To authorise the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee, the S.151 Officer, and Director of Legal and Democratic Services to take all steps required, which may be above the key decision threshold, to spend the funding including to procure and enter into contracts required to deliver the proposals and investment approach as outlined in the report.

At the conclusion of this item, the meeting was adjourned at 12.02 pm and reconvened at 12.15 pm.

10 Commissioning for Healthy Weight adults, families and children

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 10) seeking approval to procure and award a contract for the commissioning of targeted healthy weight services for adults, families and children.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision involved spend of more than £500k.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that this service would form part of a citywide approach supporting healthier weight environments.
2. It was noted that the causes of overweight and obesity were complex and required a multi-faceted approach that encompassed wider social, environmental and economic factors that had the biggest impact on the overall health and wellbeing of the population. Healthy weight objectives also included tackling issues around those people who were underweight.
3. Whilst noting that the decision for consideration at this meeting was essentially a procurement matter, it was noted that a wide spectrum of activity was taking place around the healthy weight agenda. Noting the link between poor diet and deprivation in some areas of the city (which was also a national issue), the One City Food Equality Strategy and action plan set out a pathway of practical steps to help improve food equality across the city; steps taken included setting up local food clubs at low cost to participants and offering cooking class opportunities in communities. It was suggested that encouraging healthy eating in schools should be an ongoing, important consideration.



4. It was noted that a more detailed member briefing around the wider work taking place on healthy weight would be held on 4 September.

5. In response to a question, it was noted that work was taking place in liaison with the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Partnership Board to develop a system-wide approach to healthy weight and a Healthy Weight Declaration linked to this work.

The Chair then moved the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Clarke seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

1. To authorise the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Executive Director: Adult and Communities and the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee, to take all steps required to procure and award a contract(s) for the period of 5 +2 +2 years, with an annual amount of £250,000 to deliver targeted healthy weight services for Bristol, in line with the report and in accordance with the NHS Provider Selection Regime regulations, use of which are to be approved in line with the Council's prevailing Procurement Rules and maximum budget envelope (£2,250,000).

2. To authorise the Director of Public Health to apply for, accept and allocate any additional external funding (up to a value of 50% of the contract) relating to healthy weight services in accordance with the Council's prevailing Procurement Rules and any associated funding restrictions (including procuring and awarding contracts).

11 Community Resilience Fund

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 11) seeking approval to work within the approved budget to extend the timeline of the Community Resilience Fund by 18 months, from 1 April 2026 to 30 September 2027.

The Chair commented that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision would have a significant impact on 2 or more wards in the city.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that the Community Resilience Fund was a one-off grant fund responding to the recommendations of the report 'Designing a New Social Reality'. A collaborative process had led to a list of recommended projects for funding. 31 projects were underway, with 3 completed. It was anticipated



that a total of 43 projects would be completed by 31 March 2025; an estimated 8 projects would need the additional 18 months to deliver their project, hence the proposal to extend the timeline.

2. The proposal to extend the timeline to enable projects to be completed was generally welcomed. It was noted that the organisations concerned would continue to receive support and guidance.

The Chair then moved the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Clarke seconded this motion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- 1. To approve an extension to the Community Resilience Fund so that grant funded organisations have a further 18 months to 30 September 2027 to spend their capital grant.**
- 2. To authorise the Executive Director: Adult and Communities, in consultation with the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee to take all steps required to amend the project grant agreements, where required, to enable the extension.**

12 Finance report update

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 12) presenting information and analysis on relevant aspects of the Council's financial performance against the approved 2024/25 budget and its forecast use of resources at Quarter 1 (Period 2).

The Chair commented that this was an information report, for noting.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that the General Fund budget attributable to the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee was £14.4m. This was constituted from a number of budgets sitting across directorates and was reporting a nil variance at Period 2.
2. It was noted that Public Health Grant of £36.4 million had been awarded for 2024/25 by the Department of Health and Social Care. At the end of Period 2, Public Health was reporting no variance to this budget.
3. It was noted that the Capital Programme forecast outturn was £9.3m against the revised budget for 2024/25 of £9.8m. This represented a forecast underspend of £0.5 million (5%) and was comprised of an underspend of £0.3 million in investment in parks and green spaces and £0.2 million underspend on sports outdoor equipment and facility improvements. In response to a question, it was noted that if the



position remained the same at financial year-end, this underspend on the capital programme would be re-profiled into the following financial year.

The Committee **RESOLVED**:

To note:

- 1. The Public Health and Communities General Fund forecast outturn revenue position of a balanced position with no variance to budget at Quarter 1/Period 2 2024/25.**
- 2. The breakeven position on Public Health Grant funded services (Appendix A1).**
- 3. The forecast underspend of £0.5 million against the Capital Programme revised budget 2024/25 (Appendix A2).**

Meeting ended at 1.00 pm

CHAIR _____

