

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Harbour Committee

23 July 2024 at 3.30 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Andrew Brown (Chair), Kye Dudd, Patrick McAllister, Ani Stafford-Townsend

Co-optees: Will Stanley, Kevin Mowat, Andy Brigden

Officers in Attendance:- Jonathan James (Head of Natural and Marine Environment), Patsy Mellor (Director, Management of Place), David Towns (Project Manager), Tony Nichols (Harbour Master), Eric Dougall (Harbour Estates Manager), Amy Rodwell (Democratic Services)

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and did a round of introductions.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ellie King and Kathryn Davis.

3 Declarations of Interest

Andy Brigden declared that he had previously worked with Fisher Associates who undertook the Bristol Harbour Operations Review in May 2022.

4 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Committee noted:

The appointment of Councillor Andrew Brown as Chair of the Harbour Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year. And;



The appointment of Councillor Patrick McAllister as the Vice-Chair of the Harbour Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year.

5 Committee Membership and Appointment of Co-opted Members

The Committee noted:

The Harbour Committee membership for 2024-25 municipal year as follows:

- Councillor Andrew Brown
- Councillor Patrick McAllister
- Councillor Ellie King
- Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend
- Councillor Kye Dudd

And;

The appointment of co-opted members to the Harbour Committee for the 2024-25 municipal year which are as follows:

- Will Stanley
- Andy Brigden
- Kevin Mowat
- Kathryn Davis

6 Meeting dates 2024/45

The Committee noted meeting dates for the 2024-25 municipal year as follows:

- Tuesday 23rd July 2024
- Tuesday 3rd September 2024
- Tuesday 19th November 2024
- Tuesday 4th March 2025

All meetings to start at 3:30pm unless otherwise stated.

7 Public Forum

The Committee received the following Public Forum submissions:

- Two questions from Martin Rands (attended)
- Three questions from Joanna Booth (not in attendance)
- One question from Ben Carpenter (attended)



There were no statements received.

Resolved; That the Public Forum be noted.

8 Harbour Committee Terms of Reference

The Head of Natural and Marine Environment briefly introduced the report which was to approve the Terms of Reference for the Harbour Committee as set out in Appendix A of the report.

- The Chair advised that the Harbour Committee is advisory and that any key decisions were to be made by the Economy and Skills Policy Committee. Those key decisions would be brought to the Harbour Committee for noting to allow Committee Members to make any comments and propose recommendations to the Economy & Skills Policy Committee.
- Members asked for a structure chart for each of the Committees and groups involved for ease of understanding and were advised that this would soon be available on the new Harbour website that was currently being developed. It was noted that Committee Members would receive training on the Harbour and its functions. **Action:** Officers to advise Committee Members when the Harbour website goes live.
- It was noted that the Terms of Reference would be reported back to the Committee's AGM meeting at the beginning of each municipal year for noting and if required, the document could be amended.

Resolved; That the Harbour Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

9 Harbour Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference

The Head of Natural and Marine Environment briefly introduced the report which was to approve the Terms of Reference for the Harbour Stakeholder Group as set out in Appendix A of the report.

- The membership of the Stakeholder Group would comprise of 10 members who will represent local businesses, residential communities, and harbour service users.
- Organisations operating in and around the harbour have been invited to nominate representative(s) to join the Stakeholder Group. They have been asked to submit names and contact details of their nomination(s) by 26th July 2024.
- The Group would be administered by the Harbour Service who were currently drafting a Memorandum of Understanding and colleagues would liaise with individuals on their appointment with aim of convening the first meeting in mid-September.
- A member of the group will be asked to come forward as Chair.
- Harbour Committee Members are invited to attend meetings of the Harbour Stakeholder Group in an observational capacity.



Resolved; That the Harbour Stakeholder Group Terms of Reference be approved.

10 Appointment of Duty Holder

The Head of Natural and Marine Environment briefly introduced the report which was to note the appointment of the Duty Holder.

- The Duty Holder role was introduced as part of the work carried out in the Harbour Review in 2022.
- As recommended in the Port Marine Safety Code, Councillor Andrew Brown would undertake this role as Chair of the Economy and Skills Committee and he had received the relevant training.
- This was a national standard to ensure the safety for everyone in the harbour environment, and although it is not mandatory, it is expected that the Harbour service and Harbour Committee comply with the Port Marine Safety Code.
- Along with the Duty Holder, there was a requirement to appoint a suitable Designated Person who would provide independent assurance on safety matters.
- The Designated Person service is currently provided by ABPmer but the contract would expire at the end of 2024.

Resolved; That the Committee noted the appointment of the Duty Holder as Councillor Andrew Brown as recommended under the Port Marine Safety Code.

11 Harbour Work Programme 2024-25

The Head of Natural and Marine Environment briefly introduced report which was to review and approve the Harbour Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year.

- The Chair advised that the work programme would be a working document and welcomed input from Committee Members on items they would like to add.
- Members were keen to see a more detailed events programme including a breakdown of the finances to help identify opportunities for income generation through event fees. It was suggested that a report be brought to Committee in September. **Action:** Officers to produce an events programme update report to be added to the Work Programme for the September meeting.
- Members would like to see a report on water quality data and water testing schedules for the harbour. **Action:** Officers to produce a water safety report to be added to the Work Programme for a future meeting.
- Members raised concerns on the rise in harbour fees and charges as businesses and residents had expressed that they were struggling with the uplift and felt that the quality of services and amenities required improvement.



- Officers explained that the fees and charges hadn't increased for nearly a decade and there was a need to ensure the service was self-sufficient. The service had been subsidised by the Council Tax fund for many years and it would not be viable to continue.
- It was noted that there were 40 vacant moorings and members suggested this be considered when reviewing the fees.
- It was noted that colleagues would engage with local residents and businesses throughout the process and the Harbour fees and charges would be reviewed by the Stakeholder Group and the Harbour Committee ahead of any decision being taken by the Economy and Skills Policy Committee. **Action:** Harbour fees and charges to be added to the work programme.
- There was a discussion around capital investment and asset management which was to be discussed at the September Committee meeting.

The Committees agreed on the additional items to be added to the work programme and it was;

Resolved; That the Work Programme 2024-25 be noted.

12 Harbour Revision Order Overview

The Head of Natural and Marine Environment briefly introduced report which outlined the progress on the Harbour Revision Order (HRO) application.

- External legal advisor Ashfords had reviewed the application and produced a set of proposals to ensure the harbour service was operating within the relevant legislation.
- It was noted that in addition to the Bristol Harbour, the service also had responsibility for Portishead port, including the pier.
- Officers noted that the HRO application had been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation and may be processed by Autumn 2024, with the aim of obtaining parliamentary approval by Summer 2025. An engagement process on the HRO would shortly take place which was scheduled to run for 42 days, and Committee Members would be notified when that consultation is live.

Resolved; That the Committee noted the Harbour Revision Order report and the progress made on the HRO application.

13 Harbour Master Report

Officers advised that the Harbour Master report would be a standing item covering the Harbour revenue and capital budget, safety report and events update.

Harbour Revenue and Capital Budget



- Officers noted the Member's views on separating out the Harbour finances within a separate agenda item, and to provide more detail on a 5 year plan for the budget. **Action:** Officers to provide a budget update and 5 year plan report at the September Committee meeting and ensure the budget update is separated out from the Harbour Master's report for future meetings.
- This year a ringfenced account had been created to work towards creating a more sustainable budget and an overview spreadsheet could be found within the reports pack.
- The service was still reliant on the general fund support to ensure a balanced budget and colleagues predict that it could take around 5 years to become self-sufficient.
- Colleagues had provided visuals showing a 'red line' where the harbour boundary lies which included a number of car parks and properties that were generating income.
- **Action:** Officers to provide a pinpoint map of development within the 'red line' for Members to better understand the Harbour estate.
- It was confirmed that the income stream from the car parks would go back into the service but the on street pay and display car parking was managed by the highways team.
- The Highways team are providing support with the management of car parking and issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and the team were currently in the process of developing a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The income generated from PCNs goes into the highways team.
- Officers welcomed benchmarking data from Kevin Mowat who previously worked with Torbay Council.
- There was a discussion around installing more electrical charging points and Members were advised that there was a mandate to City Leap who were developing this piece of work citywide they would need to distribute any funding.
- There was a discussion around income from street traders and pubs with outside space and officers advised that an updated licensing policy and pricing structure was in progress but since Covid-19, the maximum charge was £100 per year. However Kevin Mowat pointed out that the regulations covering docks estate is different and a commercial rate should be applied. There was a need to address the use of plastic cups as they often end up in the Harbour which incurs a cost to the service for removing.
- Officers mentioned that the residual budget left from the harbour pontoon mooring, facilities and CCTV upgrade would be reallocated to the Capricorn Quay Pontoon project, which would see a number of new pontoons installed and they hope that the project will be finalised by the end of 2024.
- Officers noted that the sluice gate system that controls harbour water levels is very old and requires updating. The service had recently secured funding from the Environment Agency to undertake these works to replace with a hydraulic system and this was due to be completed in Summer 2025.
- **Action:** Officers to organise a boat trip around the Harbour for Committee Members.

Safety Report

- It was noted that 8 accidents had been reported this year, none of which were a fault of the safety regulations, they were user error. 7 of these accidents resulted in no injury and 1 resulted in a minor injury.



- There were no reports of near misses so it would be difficult to analyse the risk. The team rely on individuals to report a near miss, but these are not always reported.
- The team currently work with the Police and Fire and Rescue services on serious incidents, but each have their own system with different records/data. Officers are working on a new online system which would enable the sharing of key information, but this is a work in progress as there are challenges around data protection.

Events update

- Officers noted that Members would like to see a full events programme at the next Committee meeting.
- Members raised concerns about the waste collection at Harbour Festival. There had been an issue with the contractor on the Saturday morning however officers noted that this was resolved quickly.
- Members noted that residents had expressed their concerned around the Capricorn Quay project. The team had been engaging with these individuals and had explained the planning permission criteria and plan to reach out again when work starts on the project.

Resolved; That the Harbour Master report be noted.

Meeting ended at 5:23pm

CHAIR _____

