

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



7 December 2017 at 5.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Geoff Gollop (Chair), Donald Alexander (Deputy Chair), Charlie Bolton, Tom Brook, Jude English, John Goulandris, Gill Kirk, Anthony Negus and Jo Sergeant

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all those in attendance.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brenda Massey (who was substituted by Councillor Jo Sergeant and Councillor Graham Morris (who was substituted by Councillor John Goulandris). Members were advised that Councillor Anthony Negus would be arriving at 6pm and Councillor Kirk leaving at 7.30pm.

It was noted that Councillor Anna Keen had resigned following her appointment to the Cabinet and therefore there was currently a Vice Chair vacancy. Councillor Gollop moved that Councillor Don Alexander be elected as Vice Chair and was seconded by Councillor English. On being put to the vote there was unanimous support. It was therefore;

RESOLVED: That following the resignation of Councillor Keen, Councillor Don Alexander be elected Vice Chair of OSM

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.



4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 1st November 17 were agreed to be a correct record.

RESOLVED;

That the minutes of the meetings 1st November be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. Chair's Business

The Chair raised a number of matters, which could be summarised as follows;

- Members were asked to consider the best mechanism for future scrutiny of the Metrobus project, with suggestions to be emailed to the Service Manager, Democratic Engagement.
- Regarding the pilot of new ways of working in Scrutiny, the party leads had been considering the best approach going forward and would bring back some proposals for consideration by OSM in February 18.
- An extraordinary OSM meeting would take place at 5pm on 18th December 17 to consider the business plans for the Holding Company and Waste Company as well as the report following the Companies governance review. The Party Group Leaders (or a substitute) would also be invited to attend. Most of the meeting would be held in exempt session due to commercial confidentiality.
- Two additional extraordinary OSM meetings would be arranged in January 2018 to enable scrutiny of the budget proposals. The Board approved the suggested slots of 5pm on 18th and 22nd January.

RESOLVED;

That additional meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place at 5pm on 18th and 22nd January 2018 to consider the budget proposals.

6. Public Forum

Members received the following public forum business, a copy of which can be found in the minute book;

Statements;

No.	Name	Subject
1.	Philippa Bungard	Bristol Community Ferryboats
2.	David Redgewell	Bristol Temple Meads Station
3.	David Redgewell	Various
4.	Stewart Phelps	Cycle Ambition



Questions;

No.	Name	Subject
1.	Philippa Bungard	Bristol Community Ferryboats

Members noted, and shared, concerns raised by Mr Redgewell regarding the response that had been provided to him following his last statement to OSMB in relation to disabled access at the temporary bus stops near to Temple Meads station. It was agreed that the Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods would be asked to look into this with a revised response, which better reflected the Council's commitment to equalities issues, to be provided as soon as possible.

RESOLVED;

That a revised response to the public forum statement submitted at the last meeting from David Redgewell, regarding disabled access to the temporary bus stops near Temple Meads, be provided as soon as possible.

7. Budget Consultation

The budget consultation timeline was noted. The Chair suggested that Members submitted questions for officers in advance of the scrutiny sessions to enable them to prepare.

RESOLVED;

That the budget consultation timeline be noted.

8. Council Tax Base Report 18/19

Following a brief introduction from officers Members went on to consider and comment on the information provided. The key points were as follows;

- Students were legally exempt from paying Council Tax but Bristol, in conjunction with the other Core Cities, were in discussion with the Department for Communities and Local Government to raise the issue. It should be noted, however, that there were also significant benefits to the city from attracting students particularly in their support to local businesses. It was agreed that a separate report setting out the numbers of students within the city (and projected future increases), and the implications for Council Tax would be provided.
- The City Council had in the past been accused of being too risk averse in terms of setting the Council tax base so the report for 18/19 had tried to set a more realistic picture.
- The Council Tax discounts available to single persons were being monitored due to dishonest declarations, which was an issue at national level.
- The implications of Brexit on the city population, and therefore the income from Council Tax, were being assessed and a reserve had been put in place until the picture was more certain.



RESOLVED;

That the update be noted and a report setting out the situation in relation to the numbers of students within the city (and projected future increases), and the implications for Council Tax be provided.

9. Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit Report 2017/18

Officers presented the report and responded to questions from Members. The salient points were as follows;

- A deficit of £37k was projected for the Collection Fund in 17/18, which was relatively low considering the total budget of £2m.
- Following the review of Business Rate levels there were a number of appeals outstanding with the government recommending that 4.7% of the Council's net budget be set aside to meet potential costs. In addition, some NHS Trusts were applying for charitable status which, if successful, would have significant repercussions for the Council (with costs of up to £35m). A further aggravating factor was that businesses could delay their appeals for some years in order to maximise the amount owed to them and some companies were offering to pursue these cases on a 'no win, no fee' basis. The City Council was making representations to the Government to challenge the situation in conjunction with the West of England Combined Authorities and the Core Cities.

RESOLVED;

That the update be noted.

Councillor Kirk left the meeting.

Councillor Negus arrived at the meeting.

10 Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Boards Annual Reports 16-17

Members received a presentation from Louise Lawton Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board and Sally Booth, Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Board a copy of which is appended to these minutes at Appendix A.

Following the presentation, Members went on to comment on the information provided and ask for additional information in a number of areas. The main points were as follows;

- Key issues affecting adults in Bristol included modern slavery (a particular problem in large cities) and the rise of homelessness and sexual exploitation.
- Funding levels around safeguarding were currently being negotiated and unlikely to significantly reduce. However, the Safeguarding Boards wished to refresh their Strategic Plans to improve provision so increased efficiencies were being considered.



- The Adults Safeguarding Board were making valuable contributions to help to reduce the number of suicides within universities. They were also to be commended for their partnership working around 'hoarders,' which could lead to significant costs in relation to re-housing etc.
- The Boards had excellent working relationships with the Police, although Avon and Somerset Constabulary was going through a time of significant change which had resulted in the loss of some key personnel.
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary's finger nail campaign to highlight modern slavery had received some negative media attention but had led to a significant increase in the number of reports from the public.
- A national review (the Wood Review) of Safeguarding arrangements had recently taken place (involving Ofsted style inspections) and more than half had been assessed as 'good' or 'outstanding'.
- The Safeguarding Boards measured their effectiveness in a number of ways including regular monitoring of performance data. There were also internal audit procedures in place. The Boards took a proactive approach to training and development to increase performance where appropriate.
- Bristol's Youth Select Committee were campaigning to make PHSE training mandatory within schools. The Children's Safeguarding Board could support this via their Education Sub Group who were doing a lot of work around 'educate and celebrate' to promote social inclusion.

RESOLVED;

That the update be noted and the 17/18 annual reports be added to the Scrutiny Work Programme for 12 months' time.

11 The Arena - position paper

Members the noted update paper that had been provided and went on to comment as follows;

- Scrutiny should be provided with more details of the financial aspects of the Arena project and also the costs of the KPMG review which would be considered by the Cabinet on 23rd January 18.
- All aspects of the KPMG review would be made public unless there were commercial sensitivities. OSM requested that confidential material be redacted where possible (so that reports could at least be published in part).

It was agreed that OSM should scrutinise the Arena proposals following publication of the KPMG Value for Money review, possibly as the subject of a future Task and Finish Group.

Members were particularly interested in exploring the wider implications of the chosen site for the Arena including the impact on the economy, transport and employment (including ensuring that the Social Value opportunities were maximised where possible).



RESOLVED;

That the update be noted and future scrutiny of the Arena be programmed to take place following publication of the KPMG Value for Money Review.

12 Scrutiny Work Programme - including arising items

The update was noted.

13 Task and Finish Groups - updates from Chairs

There were no updates.

14 Ways of Working - Feedback (verbal item)

There was no discussion on this item.

15 Budget Monitor Report

The budget monitor report was noted.

16 Mayor's Forward Plan

The update was noted.

17 Information Item: Scrutiny Dates 17/18

The dates were noted.

18 Standing Item: Task and Finish Group Reports

The following matters were discussed;

- Chairing vacancies had arisen on the Children's Centres and Council Assets Task and Finish Groups. Expressions of interest for these positions were encouraged else the Whips would be asked to fill the positions at their meeting on 15th December 17.
- The Youth Council were seeking assistance with their manifesto pledge to campaign for the Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum to be rolled out across all schools but discussions were underway regarding the best way the Councillors could support this.



- The Parks Task & Finish Group that would be meeting on 11th December would be considering the outcomes of the Your Neighbourhoods Consultation. Members noted that a recent meeting had been cancelled at short notice and asked that their dissatisfaction be recorded.
- Members were reminded that Task and Finish Groups were free to conduct their meetings as they saw fit, which included inviting guests or holding sessions in public as appropriate.
- Consideration was being given regarding the timetable for the second phase of the Libraries Task and Finish Group that was initially proposed (in order to assist with recommendations around the delivery of any new model for the library service).

RESOLVED;

That the updates be noted.

The meeting ended at 8pm.

CHAIR _____

