

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



12 February 2018 at 5.00 pm

Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board Present:-

Councillors: Geoff Gollop (Chair), Donald Alexander, Mark Bradshaw (substituting for Cllr Massey), Charlie Bolton, Jude English, Gill Kirk and Anthony Negus, Steve Pearce, Estella Tincknell

Members also present:-

Councillors Nicola Beech (in part), Asher Craig (in part); Helen Holland (in part), Mhairi Threlfall (in part).

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all those in attendance.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brook and Massey (substituted by Councillor Bradshaw). It was noted that Councillor Tincknell would be late.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes and actions of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meetings on 7th December, and 18th and 22nd January 2018 were agreed to be a correct record subject to;

- That the minutes on 7th December be amended to include the following paragraph in relation to Agenda Item 11 – Arena Position Paper;



‘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).’

It was agreed that the report previously requested in relation to Council Tax/Students would be added to the Work Programme as soon as possible.

RESOLVED;

That the minutes the meetings on 7th December 17, and 18th and 22nd January 18 be approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment detailed above.

5. Chair's Business

There was no Chair’s Business.

6. Public Forum

The following items of public forum business were received and a copy placed in the minute book;

No.	Name	Subject
1.	David Redgewell (SWTN)	Light Rail Around Bath and East Bristol
2.	Cllr Clive Stevens	Scrutiny T & F Groups

It was agreed that a written reply would be sent to Mr David Redgewell in response to the points raised about public toilets, with a copy to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for information.

RESOLVED; That a written reply be provided to Mr Redgewell following his comments about public toilets with a copy to OSMB.

7. Scrutiny Ways of Working

Members considered the options for the structure of Scrutiny going forward as set out in the accompanying report, noting that the majority of the OSM leads had formed an early preference for a revised version of ‘Option C,’ which consisted of 22 formal directorate based Commission meetings a year, plus 5 Task and Finish Groups (except with responsibility for budget scrutiny to pass from OSM to the Resources Scrutiny Commission). However, the Chair emphasised that a full discussion of the merits of all models was required and invited comments accordingly. The following matters arose;

- In the current Scrutiny model, the role of OSM had become too broad and consequently a large number of meetings had been scheduled to accommodate the significant workload. Going forward it was suggested that informal meetings of the Scrutiny Commission leads take place in order to agree the work programme/objectives.



- The Task and Finish Groups that had been running in 17/18 on a trial basis had been successful in many ways and should be continued going forward, although there were some areas that needed to be improved including tightening up the membership; better selection of topics; and clearly defining aims and objectives from the outset.
- A directorate based scrutiny structure could enable Members to develop expertise/keep a watching brief on a specific area and also aid transparency for the public, although there were concerns that Scrutiny agendas could be too tightly controlled by Commission Chairs without sufficient input from others.
- It was vital to avoid reverting back to the previous style of scrutiny which was to note multiple reports for information purposes, thus delivering very poor outcomes. Briefings for Members should be dealt with separately from the Scrutiny function but activities should be co-ordinated to maximise participation and information sharing.
- Whilst the structure of scrutiny was important, the value of outputs would be largely dependent on the suitability of areas selected for review, and also the quality of questioning from Members. It could be argued the structure of scrutiny should not be determined until the relevant topics/objectives/methodology had been chosen.
- Increasing public engagement in Scrutiny was a continuing challenge, particularly as one of the strengths of Task and Finish Groups was that by conducting much of their work in 'closed' meetings they were able to operate very flexibly. One option would be to arrange a number of 'open days' to showcase the policy development work of scrutiny.
- The reduced resources of the Council must be reflected in the selected model for Scrutiny going forward; the report set out suggested options for how the available budget envelope could be allocated. Members should continue with their efforts to support scrutiny projects outside of meetings and independently of officers where possible.
- Early population of the Forward Plan would aid Scrutiny in planning its work programme and representations had been made to the Mayor to that effect.
- The Cabinet had expressed a desire to work collaboratively with Scrutiny on early policy development activities, which was an opportunity that should be fully embraced
- There was a need for Scrutiny to allocate more time to reviewing the performance of the Council going forward.
- Policy development activities were taking place across the Council in a variety of forums/groups etc. Scrutiny needed to ensure it dovetailed with these initiatives in order to prevent duplication and add value.

Following the discussion, Members were asked to comment on the options within the report. It was agreed that a hybrid model consisting of both Commissions and Task and Finish Groups was preferred but that more discussion was needed to determine the appropriate balance between the two. Members confirmed that further consideration would be given to the matter at the Ways of Working Member workshop on 22nd February 18. Following the workshop, a report of proposals would be brought back to OSM for endorsement (provisionally) at the meeting on Thursday 8th March 18, with a view to feeding into the Constitutional changes that would be considered at the annual meeting of Full Council on 22nd May 18.

RESOLVED;

- **That the comments arising from the discussion inform the Scrutiny Ways of Working Member workshop that would be taking place on 22nd February 18; and**
- **That a report summarising the outcomes from the workshop be considered at the next appropriate OSM meeting.**



8. The Arena - scrutiny activity

Members considered the next steps for Scrutiny of the Arena agreeing that they had ongoing concerns that the Cabinet decision would be made without the opportunity for sufficient scrutiny of the proposals. Areas of interest were as follows;

- The location of the Arena and any potential planning implications of choosing an alternative site (from Arena Island).
- The opportunities and risks in relation to the economy, employment, transport.
- The arrangements relating to community consultation.
- The scope of the Value for Money Review that was being conducted by KPMG.
- The date on which the Arena Cabinet decision would be made (and when it would be added to the Mayor's Forward Plan).

The Board agreed that the concerns detailed above would be referred to Cabinet at their next meeting on 6th March, and that a briefing setting out the planning implications would be arranged to take place at the next OSM meeting on 8th March 18.

RESOLVED; That a statement be referred to Cabinet on 6th March 18 setting out the Board's ongoing concerns about scrutiny of the Arena; and

That a briefing be arranged setting out the planning implications of choosing an alternative site for the Arena (than Arena Island) at the next OSM meeting on 8th March 18.

9. Libraries Task and Finish Update

Members considered the situation regarding the ongoing review of the Library Service noting that clarification was needed regarding the next steps including the objectives and timeline. Areas of particular concern related to the remit of the Mutual Ventures review, the welfare of staff, and also the future of the library buildings that would become vacant by any reductions to the service. It was agreed that Cllr Asher Craig would be invited to provide a written update at the next meeting on 8th March 2018 and also attend to respond to further questions.

RESOLVED; that Councillor Asher Craig be asked to provide a written update regarding the review of the library service at the meeting on 8th March 18 and also be invited to attend.

10 Task and Finish Groups - Updates from Chairs

The Board noted the update report that had been provided and requested that in future the item be listed early on the agenda to allow more time for discussion.

RESOLVED; that the updates be noted.



11 Work Programme

During discussion of the Work Programme it was agreed that the following items would be added;

- The City Council's Business and Service Plans would be brought to a future meeting – March/April 18
- How to make consultation more effective (including possible joint working with the West of England Combined Authority) – date TBC
- Scrutiny of the Housing Company – potential date April 18
- Outcome from the Meeting in Common with South Gloucestershire Council to consider the UBHT's response to the Benjamin Condon case – March 18
- Waste Company collection methodology (including proposed schedule and type of vehicle) – asap target March/April 18
- Governance Arrangements i.e. how to improve the relationship between OSM and other bodies such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and West of England Combined Authority – to be listed for 18/19

RESOLVED; that the items listed above be added to the OSM work programme

12 Information Only Item: Mayor's Forward Plan

The updated Forward Plan was noted.

Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

CHAIR _____

