

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



9 January 2020 at 6.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Paula O'Rourke (Chair), Fabian Breckels (Vice-Chair), Mark Bradshaw, Tom Brook, Martin Fodor, Kevin Quartley, Jon Wellington, Mark Weston and Mark Wright

Officers in Attendance:-

Stephen Peacock (Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration), Colin Molton (Consultant), Zoe Willcox (Director: Development of Place), Nuala Gallagher (Director, City Growth, Investment & Infrastructure), Alex Minshull (Sustainable City and Climate Change Manager), Johanna Holmes (Policy Advisor - Scrutiny) and Lois Woodcock (Principal Corporate Property Officer)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair introduced herself and asked everyone around the table to introduce themselves as well. This included those from the following external organisations:

L&G (Legal and General)

Pete Gladwell, Fran Leon and Ben Rodgers

MPC (Meeting Place Communications)

Nikki Davies, Tom Phipps and Nikki Knowles

Zara Hadid Architects

Jim Heverin

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Cllr Margaret Hickman substituted for Cllr Carole Johnson

3. Declarations of Interest

None



4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Scrutiny Commission agreed the Minutes of the Previous Meeting as a correct record of the meeting.

The Chair asked that thanks be put on record to the Scrutiny Advisor for managing the Public Forum Questions that were accepted late into the afternoon of the day of the meeting.

5. Action Sheet

The Scrutiny Advisor asked Members to refer to the up-dated Action Sheet that had been re-issued earlier that day. The Action Sheet was approved by the Members.

6. Chair's Business

The Chair explained that the meeting agenda order would be altered from that which was publicised. Agenda Item 13 (Temple Island) would now become Item 9 (the first substantive item taken). At this point the Chair also said the Temple Island Item would be split into two sections: Legal and General (L&G) presentation with question and answers then the discussion with BCC Officers and the Executive Member. The Chair would also make a statement after L&G presentation

7. Public Forum

The following Public Forum was received:

Public Forum Questions		
1 - 4	Joanna Booth	Bristol Housing Festival
5 - 8	Suzanne Audrey	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
9	Councillor Clive Stevens	Corporate Property Strategy (Agenda Item 12)
10	Stuart Phelps	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
11	Peter Corr	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
12	Councillor Clive Stevens	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
13	Joanna Booth	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
14	Councillor Jerome Thomas	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)



Public Forum Statements		
1	Sarah Sharp	Update on the Mayor's Climate Emergency Action Plan and development of the One City Climate Strategy
2	Jon Eccles	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)
3	Councillor Clive Stevens	Temple Island Regeneration Approach (Agenda item 13)

8. Work Programme

The Work Programme was noted

9. Performance Report Quarter 2

The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor introduced the report and provided a brief summary of the key points in the report:

Of the 14 measures reported this quarter:

- 5 (36%) are on or above target
- 7 (50%) are below target
- 7 (50%) are performing better than at the same time last year
- 2 (14%) have no quarterly target

Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

- **BCP475 - Metro-bus Statistics:** This follows on from previous questions Members have asked about passenger numbers. Officers pointed out that the up-dated Action Tracker provided some information about passenger numbers. Members would still like further information that compares the current numbers against the original forecast passenger numbers. It was also asked if the numbers were subject to seasonal trends. **Action: Officers to continue to pursue further information about MetroBus passenger figures and how they compare to original estimates.**
- **BCP334 - Reduce the percentage of the population living in Fuel Poverty:** Members said the indications were quite alarming, and asked if the figures matched the Council's own understanding. It was said to be even more concerning that this was heading in the wrong direction considering the number of local initiatives that had been put in place. **Action: Officers agreed to pursue further information about this and report back.**
- **BCP410 - Increase the number of visitors to Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives:** Members queried if the target had been set artificially low for 19/20. Officers said the target for 19/20 had been set lower than the 18/19 outturn figure because there had been some high quality exhibitions and events the previous year, such as the Wallace and Gromit Trail. This did not necessarily guarantee the same figures could be expected the following year. The target figure could however be elevated again.



- **DGR124b - % of non-major residential planning applications processed within 8 weeks or as otherwise agreed:** Members said that the 74% figure was quite worrying because it suggested that lots of applications were stalling. The Director – Development of Place responded by saying that it was recognised the figure was low and that officers were doing everything they could to improve the figures. However it should be clarified that the majority of these were small applications which sometimes have some quality issues. They are often not completely developed and require officers to undertake additional work with the applicants, which can cause delays. However this was a much better course of action than refusing applications, it just took a bit longer to complete.
- **BCP425: Increase the number of affordable homes delivered in Bristol:** Members said they were still unconvinced that the target for this year was going to be reached.

10 Corporate Risk Report (Quarter Two)

The Executive Director – Growth and Regeneration introduced the report. The following points were discussed:

- **CRR30: Failure to deliver Bristol City Council's wider Clean Air Plan (excluding traffic clean air zone) Communication/engagement with stakeholders does not result in sufficient behavioural change:** Members asked if and why there was a separate risk for the traffic that's not included in this indicator. Officers said they thought it was because it hadn't flagged as a high enough risk to be elevated on to the Corporate Risk Report but they would look into it. **ACTION: Officers said they would enquire about this and report back.**
- **CRR1 Long Term Commercial Investments and Major projects:** Members said it appeared there were a lot of risks bundled into this one risk for example, Colston Hall and Bristol Energy. Could the Commission have information about the individual projects whilst they waited for a Directorate based Risk Report? Officers said yes this was possible and they were looking at the approach to reporting risk. **ACTION: Members to let officers know if there are specific risks they would like further information on in future.**

11 Update on the Mayor's Climate Emergency Action Plan and development of the One City Climate Strategy

The agenda item was introduced by the Sustainable City and Climate Change Manager who took Members through a short presentation (attached to the minutes) which summarised the key actions and explained some of the main challenges. It was explained that the Council cannot make the City carbon neutral, it needs to stimulate action. It was however making good progress in a number of areas including the energy programme which included heat networks and domestic retrofitting. Members were taken through a time-line of key dates which demonstrated how the working was progressing.

Members wanted to know generally how quickly the work was taking shape and whether there were any delays. Officers said there were many challenges but the scale of change was transformational.

A Member raised the West of England - Energy Strategy that had recently been discussed at a West of England Combined Authority (WECA) meeting, noting that 'people were very critical of it'. What was being done about that? Officers said work was being done to strengthen that Strategy.



The Chair asked about the original reported 64% gap in getting to Carbon neutral by 2030. Officers said they would be able to provide more information about 'gap' when they next reported to scrutiny.

It was discussed when officers should bring this back to scrutiny. It was decided that the beginning of the new municipal year was agreeable to all. It was also agreed that further Member Briefings would be provided as and when necessary in the meantime. The next one was already arranged for the 29th January.

The Commission thanked officers for their time.

12 DRAFT Corporate Property Strategy

The Chair began the item by alluding to the previous Scrutiny Assets Task and Finish Group from two years ago. This she said had been a frustrating experience and so she was therefore very pleased to see this Draft Strategy.

The Director - Economy of Place said that the Strategy was on track to go to the March Cabinet meeting. So, if Scrutiny Members wanted to feed into it would be helpful if they could let officers know in the next two weeks. It was reiterated that there had been some resource issues in the past which had had an effect on the speed of progress in developing the Strategy. The Director then introduced the new Head of Property to the Commission.

The Principal Corporate Property Officer summarised the published report but stressed this was still very much a draft document that they were also still consulting on it internally with officers. There were to be some changes to it anyway, for example, the parks prospectus and carbon reduction targets. Officers were keen to receive further comments from Members.

A Member asked if the Council knows what property it owns. Officers said yes they had a data-base that recorded all ownership. This point had been raised at the previous meeting in September and officers had completed a spread-sheet which contained 35,000 property records. However it needed to be noted that some assets had more than one record on the data-base. Officers were happy to provide this to Members but it needed to be decided how this happened as it was currently very large. **ACTION: Property officers to confirm how and when the information is made available to Members.**

Officers confirmed that they have the required data on what property the Council owns but there are some gaps about the condition of some of the property which they are also working on.

- It was asked what happens to land that isn't being built on and is no longer required, where does that sit now? Officers said that this sits with the Operational Property Team but developed land that has potential to be used but is not being used is categorised as 'surplus land'.
- It was confirmed that non Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and high streets are both also being looked at by officers across the Council such as the Economic Development Team.
- Members asked about the Corporate Landlord Model and how links to 'Social Value'. Officers said this is the accepted way to work now i.e. it is the Government's preferred model. Bristol still has some way to go before it is compliant. A conversation was had about who should be consulted. Officers said there is a process for local authorities to go through and new protocols and procedures will be a need to be introduced in some areas.
- Members inquired about developments in the One Public Estate (OPE) programme as this was seen as important with regards to the disposal of land and property. Officers said this was referenced in the draft



Strategy under 'Working with Partners'. The Director reminded Members of the existence of the West of England Joint Assets Board and said this was an ongoing piece of work.

- The Role of Members as 'community leaders' discussed and it was asked why they were not mentioned in the strategy. Officers said they would consider this point. It was pointed out that on page 33 of Appendix 1: Surplus Property Procedure / Disposal of Property that it said details will be 'circulated to the relevant ward councillors'. A Member suggested that it should also say 're-purposed'.

The Chair thanked officers for their time and said the Draft Strategy was a welcome step forward.

13 Temple Island Regeneration Approach

It was confirmed that this item would be split into two sections as follows:

- 1) Representatives from external organisations presentation on the 'Proposals for Temple Island'
- 2) Bristol City Council (BCC) Officer Question and Answers

Presentation slides (are):

Representatives from Legal and General (L&G), Meeting Place Communications (MPC) and Zara Hadid Architects presented a slide deck which is attached to the minutes.

The following key points were noted from the presentation:

- It was suggested that the previous designs and images that had been provided should be disregarded or forgotten because the designs were still at the development phase. Aspects such as the levels of density and height were still being considered and it needed to be exemplar.
- The space between the buildings was more important than the actual design of the buildings.
- Public transport connections were already in place and good.
- The near-by development at The Paintworks could be learnt from as a good example of this type of development.
- They recognised that Temple Island is a key gateway to and on the boundary of city centre.
- All car parking will be off-site.
- There is a seven metre gradient down from the Bath Road to the site
- Access for cycle paths and access to Temple Meads is being considered as part of the design.
- Roof terraces are likely to be a feature of the designs.
- The design would not be rigid but would reflect character and vibrancy of Bristol
- The Social Value Portal (SVP) is involved but couldn't attend the meeting. A case study of SVP and L&G in London is available

The Commission Members made the following comments and asked the following questions:

- The earlier suggestion that the 'space between things was more important than the design' was worrying. One Member said it made them 'nervous about the designs being potentially poor.'
- Why was the risk being put on the Bristol tax payer? If this was to be a 250 year contract why was the tax payer underwriting it? Officers said they were currently working on the Cabinet report and this point would be addressed in that.
- Another Member said they agreed with the 250 year question but asked if Temple Island would inevitably be private or public land. For example, Temple Quay there are signs that say what used to be public land is now



private land. Would this also happen on this site? The response was that a new thoroughfare would be created but whether it would be private or public land had not been decided yet. This was potentially something that the suggested Working Group could look into.

- The idea of a working group was welcomed by the Commission but it must be provided with accurate and timely information.
- It was asked when the external organisations first engaged in conversation with BCC about this site. The reply was 'in 2015'.
- It was said the 'vision' hadn't been made clear; was this a residential or commercial development? This was a genuine mixed development was the response.
- How was it known that there is a demand for much more office space i.e. was this really viable? It was replied that there was a demonstrable need for more affordable housing (AH) and office space in that location. This wouldn't however be just commercial office space some of it would also be used by the University of Bristol.
- Members asked about the affordable housing target of 40%. Was this 'affordable housing' in the true sense? Members were informed that yes this would be 'genuine affordable housing'.
- A brief conversation was had about 'social value' and how it would be weighted. The Chair was keen to understand more about this point. It was suggested that the Social Value Portal could advise the Working Group about this.

The Commission thanked those who had attended the meeting from outside organisations.

2. Bristol City Council (BCC) Officer Question and Answers

At this point the Chair of the Commission read out a statement that she had prepared (this is attached to the minutes). One of the main points in the statement was the request for Scrutiny Members to be able to look at more information before this goes to Cabinet: the Chair put it to Members that the report should be postponed until the February Cabinet meeting or until has been fully scrutinised.

A discussion was had about what options the Members had and what the best way forward was on this. It was suggested that it might be easier and more pragmatic to organise another scrutiny meeting prior to Cabinet. However, the Members were sceptical about their ability to influence anything once the reports had been published for Cabinet meetings. It was suggested that decisions had already been made before papers were published for Cabinet meetings. Other Members said that if scrutiny was really valued then it would be agreed to postpone the decision until either the February or the March Cabinet meeting.

It was underlined that Members had been waiting for the relevant meeting papers since the 20th December.

The Chair said that the Commission were told they would have access the 'Heads of Terms' and legal advice. Also it was being assumed that the legal advice must have changed since July.

One Member said they weren't necessarily convinced the information had been held back on purpose but they agreed that the Cabinet decision should be delayed. They added that this was a 'flag-ship development' for the City. It was likely, given the nature of the information, that Members would need the Heads of Terms and legal information explained and they would want to be able to ask questions as well.

The Chair said she had been told the Commission could see this information but until now they haven't been able to.



The Chair agreed with other Members that scrutinising Cabinet meeting papers once they had been published was too late to be able to have any influence on decisions. After a short discussion it was agreed to propose that the Cabinet decision was is postponed until March 2020.

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission Members took a vote on whether they should call on the Mayor to postpone the January Temple Island Cabinet item so that it could be scrutinised in order to ascertain if it was a good deal for the City.

The vote was as follows:

7 For

2 Against

1 Abstained

The Scrutiny Commission Resolved: “The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission call on the Mayor to postpone the Temple Island paper going to Cabinet in January, as Scrutiny has been not been able to properly scrutinise the full Cabinet paper. Documents relating to the disposal have not been made available. Members want to scrutinise the legal and financial details before they are published. It is requested that all papers be made available to the Members who would call an extraordinary meeting to view the documents to understand if the disposal is a good deal for the City”

Meeting ended at 8.35 pm

CHAIR _____

