

Bristol Homes and Communities Board

Minutes of the meeting 16 January 2020, 3.00 pm Venue – City Hall, Bristol

Board members:

Councillor Paul Smith, Cabinet Member for Homes & Communities (Chair)

Peter Daw, Housing Management Board

Peter Daw, Tenant Representative, Housing Management Board

David Ingerslev, St Mungo's

Tom Renhard, ACORN

Jez Sweetland, Bristol Housing Festival

Penny Walster, ACFA: Advice Network

Other attendees:

Corrina Haskins, Democratic Services, Bristol City Council

Andy Hawkins – Consultant

DeeAnne Klein, Housing Policy and Projects Manager, Bristol City Council

Wendy Murphy – Housing Consultant

Jez Sweetland – Bristol Housing Festival

Paul Sylvester – Head of Housing Options, Bristol City Council

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr Nicola Beech, Alistair Allender (Bristol Housing Partnership), Rob Kerse (Bristol University), James Durie (West of England Initiative) and Cathy Provenzano (Chair of Bristol Association of Letting and Property Management Agents).

2. Public Forum

There was no public forum.

3. Minutes of the last meeting - 20 June 2019

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the 20 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Bristol Homes Board Terms of Reference including Annual Impact Statement



Terms of Reference

The Chair introduced the report and drew attention to the proposed change of name to the Bristol Homes **and Communities** board to align with the themes of the One City Plan. He welcomed the opportunity to invite new members, especially representatives of the black and minority ethnic community to reflect the diversity of the city. He asked Board Members to consider appointing a co-chair in line with the practice of other Boards and asked that this be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Terms of reference be agreed with an amendment to refer to the Bristol Homes **and Communities** Board and to list the membership of the Board;
- (2) That the appointment of a co-chair be included as an agenda item at the next meeting and Board Members consider putting their name forward for the position.

Annual Impact Assessment

Wendy Murphy (WM) reported back on the work carried out following the Away Day in October and drew attention to the questions that had been drafted with a view to producing a social impact assessment. Members agreed that it would be useful to use this as a tool to measure the value that the Board adds to delivering priorities. Members discussed whether there should be key performance indicators to help measure delivery against priorities.

It was also suggested that the following may be able to assist in the process:

- City Fellows;
- University e.g. Alex Marsh (Professor of Public Policy);
- Tessa Coombes (PhD in Bristol Housing Policy in the context of the Mayoral election).

WM confirmed that the following items had been suggested for discussion at a future meeting:

- Responding to the climate emergency;
- Big development schemes e.g. Cumberland Basin;
- Changes in private renting sector;
- Contribution to one city plan with homelessness as the key issue.

It was noted that reducing homelessness/households in temporary accommodation had been voted the top priority by partners at a recent One City Plan gathering. Board members also stressed the importance of “moving on” accommodation to support people in housing after a period of homelessness.

RESOLVED

- (1) That DK answer the questions based on the input at the Away Day in October;
- (2) That a standing item be added to future agendas “Reflection “
- (3) That Board Members be canvassed on the date of an Away Day to be held later in the year.

5. One City Plan Update on Objectives and Communications



PS reported back on the joint meeting with the Health and Wellbeing Board which had taken place in December:

- There was a discussion about problems associated with different specialists using different language e.g. “rehabilitation” having a different meaning in housing than in the context of health and wellbeing.
- There were cross Board themes where it would be useful to meet with the other Boards, e.g. Environment Board to discuss buildings in the context of co2 emissions and Health and Wellbeing Board to discuss mental health.

The following comments were raised:

- It may be useful to have a housing representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- Mental health issues were wider than just “housing”; often it was the impact of anti-social behaviour caused by neighbours/social isolation;
- Design of housing developments was also a key issue and it was disappointing that the new University of Bristol campus design was not taking advantage of interesting technologies used elsewhere;
- Consultations on planning developments were not always well publicised and therefore experts may miss the opportunity to feed into the design process.

Following on from the discussion it was;

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Robert Kerse be asked to give a presentation on Bristol University’s strategy on mental health and links with housing in the student population;
- (2) The Hengrove development be included on the agenda for a future meeting;
- (3) The agenda for the Away Day to include consideration of the One City Plan:
 - with input from the community safety team to look at issues around crime and safety;
 - to check that the housing targets in the plan are the right ones.

6. Tackling Homelessness

Paul Sylvester gave a presentation on tackling homelessness with the support of DI and PW, and the Board’s attention was drawn to the following:

- There had been an increase of 25% in those presenting themselves to the Council as homeless, although these figures did not capture the full picture;
- The annual counts for rough sleeping was fundamentally flawed as it only included those engaging with services;
- There was the usual post-Christmas spike in the figures, but unlike in other years, there had not been a slump in the pre-Christmas period;
- There were more homeless people with complex needs;



- The annual social housing lettings had reduced;
- The Homelessness Strategy Partnership had been set up with partners to:
 - bring people together to utilise energy and passion;
 - identify main priority areas to align with the One City Plan:
 1. Tackling rough sleeping;
 2. Prevention and early intervention;
 3. Improving health and wellbeing;
 4. Delivering equality, diversity and inclusion in all services;
 5. Working in partnership.
- There were a lot of different organisations trying to help homeless people in a variety of ways and the Partnership was trying to work with the organisations to ensure a more co-ordinated approach.

Board Members responded to the presentation as follows:

- The gap between social and affordable renting and home ownership was so great that people could not afford the move from one to the other and this was causing a shortage in this type of housing;
- Other suggested reasons were changes to universal credit; difficulties in getting a mortgage; increased migration to Bristol, including an increase in students with the expansion of Bristol University and discretionary licensing. PS questioned the impact of discretionary licensing as this had only come into force in pilot areas;
- The Council was looking to secure a relaxation in the criteria for extra care as there were vacancies in extra care and so encouraging people in would free up housing;
- Although it was good that there were a lot of organisations supporting homelessness, there was a problem with sharing myths and little co-ordination and there was a need to counter the misinformation on social media;
- As these organisations tended to provide food, bedding and tents they were not addressing the core issues or supporting homeless people in moving on;
- The Mayor had been leading an initiative to get the groups together to harness and focus the resource;
- There were concerns about sleep pods as they were difficult to carry around;
- The 365 project was a positive solution to providing shelter on a short term basis although it was acknowledged that shelters were not a long term solution.

On reflecting on what the Board could do to help, KP acknowledged that developers were disengaged from homelessness as an issue and asked what the sector could do to have the biggest impact. PS referred to the East Street Mews project led by Gavin Bridge of Cubex (Chair of LandAid's South West Board), which was an initiative to create 11 apartments to provide affordable housing for young homeless people in Bristol. He recommended that KP contact Gavin Bridge with a view to getting involved in similar projects. It was also suggested that Developers could use corporate resources and volunteer time to work with St Mungo's.

It was acknowledged that Developers such as the Vistry Partnership wanted to add social value and supported projects on a voluntary basis, but there should also be a requirement for Developers to contribute as part of the planning process.



7. Housing Delivery Programme 2019-20

Members noted that there were a lot of schemes in the pipeline but due to a variety of reasons (e.g. the planning process and the due diligence involved in establishing Goram Homes) the programme was not being delivered as quickly as anticipated. PS confirmed that he was meeting with Council officers to discuss how this could be accelerated through the Housing Festival; buying back Council Housing lost through the right to buy scheme and talking to Housing Associations. He also reported that the Council would be introducing policies relating to Community Led Housing/Self Build Schemes which would help bring smaller schemes forward and that Board Members could support the Council by bringing such schemes forward at the earliest opportunity.

In response to concerns raised about the impact of a possible recession, PS confirmed that the Council housing schemes would not be impacted in the same way as the private sector.

In response to questions about whether the delay in the Joint Spatial Plan would impact on the update of the Local Plan, PS confirmed that it would be delayed for at least a year but the Council was working to get it back on track. In response to a question about whether some of the policies could be brought forward as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), PS responded that SPD could only build on an existing policy but asked Members to contact Cllr Nicola Beech, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and City Design.

RESOLVED – that the Board continue to receive updates and future reports contain more detail on variances and numbers relating to “move on” accommodation.

8. Future Items for March and June Meetings

- Responding to the climate emergency;
- Big development schemes e.g. Cumberland Basin;
- Changes in private renting sector;
- Contribution to one city plan with homelessness as the key issue.

Meeting finished at 5.20 pm

CHAIR _____

