

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



2 November 2020 at 3.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Geoff Gollop (Chair), Celia Phipps (Vice-Chair), Mark Brain, Stephen Clarke, Claire Hiscott, Brenda Massey, Anthony Negus, Paula O'Rourke, Jo Sergeant and Lucy Whittle

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed the attendees. The meeting was conducted via video conference.

2. Apologies for absence.

No apologies for absence were received.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 5th October 20 were deferred for approval at the following OSMB meeting on 30th November 2020.

5. Chair's Business



The Chair advised that he'd been made aware of some costs relating to the attendance of external partners at Scrutiny meetings and asked for it to be noted that Scrutiny Members had not been consulted about the expenditure in advance.

6. Public Forum

Public Forum questions and statements were published prior to the meeting and can be viewed [here](#).

Councillor Negus presented two questions on the management of the Mayor's Forward Plan directed to the Chief Executive. It was agreed that a written response would be provided in due course, and that the Head of the Executive Office be invited to join the OSMB Lead Members for a discussion regarding improvements to the Forward Plan.

Councillor Stevens presented two questions on the Forward Plan and on 'notice period' required to perform sufficient Scrutiny. Written responses were provided.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Stevens, the Chair advised that, in his personal view, one month's notice of amendments to the Forward Plan was acceptable providing that sufficient details outlining each item were also provided.

The Committee noted all other statements.

RESOLVED:

That the Public Forum be noted; and

That the Chief Executive be asked to reply to the question from Councillor Negus in relation to the Forward Plan prior to the next meeting.

7. Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

The Director for Strategy, Policy and Partnerships presented the draft Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and responded to questions from Members. The discussion was as follows;

- Officers were seeking early comments from Members in order to help to shape the final draft policy.
- The criteria set out in the policy would apply to the Council's own advertising spaces, as well as some of those managed by a third party.
- Advertising platforms owned or used by Bristol City Council included around 180 LCD-TFT bus shelter screens; 17 billboard sites; screens across BCC facilities; and social media channels. Income through advertising stood at around £1million per year, and it was acknowledged that a change to policy could impact on this.
- The comments raised through Public Forum were noted, particularly the suggestion of greater restrictions around promotion of junk food and high polluting vehicles etc. It was noted that creating definitions for



these items would require some consideration. The draft policy was based around legislative rather than discretionary compliance.

- It was confirmed gambling was specified as one of the areas that would not be promoted through advertising.
- The definition for regulatory purposes of 'High Fat, Salt and Sugar' (HFSS) foods was provided for reference.
- The policy referred to 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. Under advice from colleagues at Stonewall the policy would cover gender identity and expression, as well as gender reassignment.
- It was clarified that the scope of the policy was around advertising on Bristol City Council owned platforms as the Council holds limited control over the wider environment.
- The wording that 'some adverts themselves would need planning permission' was agreed to be clarified and it was confirmed that this referred to physical infrastructure. Ongoing conversations with Planning colleagues in the development of the policy were planned.
- The Advertising Standards Agency is the regulating body for advertising and has a defined role; the aim of this policy was not to duplicate this work, but to comply with all necessary requirements.

In response to the presentation, Members commented as follows;

- The introduction of the policy was welcomed but it would benefit from being more challenging and having greater specificity around the categories that would be unacceptable.
- The comments raised through Public Forum were apt and useful.
- Any loss of income could potentially be offset by health and social benefits.
- Greater focus on how decisions would be made around individual advertising applications should be provided. It was agreed that the draft language would be looked at, with options for escalation of concerns included.
- Officers were asked to review the impact of advertising screens on light pollution. This was noted and agreed to be raised through the Planning process.
- The implementation of this policy with partnerships and partly owned companies was identified as an issue which was being considered.
- Some clarification of 'political influence' was requested.

Members were invited to send any additional comments to the Director of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships.

The Director of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships stated that while it had been hoped to finalise the policy by the end of 2020, the second Covid-19 lockdown anticipated from 5th November 2020 and the ongoing management of pandemic response impacted the priorities and timescales for this. The policy was hoped to be finalised before the end of the financial year.

It was requested that OSMB be informed if and where the comments from Public Forum were to be incorporated.

RESOLVED; That Officers note the comments from Members and those made during the Public Forum submissions to help inform a future draft of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.

8. Scrutiny Working Groups - Reports



The final Working Group reports of the People, Health, and Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commissions were presented.

People Scrutiny Commission: Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Commission commented on the report produced by the Working Group:

- The People Scrutiny Commission (PSC) Working Group focused on the effect Covid-19 had on safeguarding children and young people in Bristol, the city-wide response, and what had been learnt. In light of an anticipated second lockdown this report was particularly relevant, and it was hoped the content could inform and assist the Council and its partners.
- Strong contributions were received from local partners, officers, and national experts. It was recognised that Children's Services staff had worked above and beyond, with examples of excellent practice and partnership working. The PSC Chair extended thanks to all staff and contributors.
- Recommendations in the report highlighted the importance of detached youth workers throughout the City, and how this work could be built on.
- Another important finding was around the need for more child friendly messaging on Covid-19.
- The high level of commitment and hard work shown by the Council's leadership team and the whole workforce was recognised, and the report recommended the Council should consider ways to offer extra support to ensure wellbeing of staff.
- Commendations on this report were received from outside of the Council, and the PSC Chair recommended that it be shared with partnership boards including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership and Learning City Partnership Board.

The Cabinet Member for Women, Families and Homes responded to the key points of the Executive Summary, commenting as follows;

- Scrutiny Members were thanked for their work on their report. The sessions were useful with positive responses from witnesses.
- A concern was raised over the time period that the work was conducted. As sessions took place during summer 2020 at a point where the lockdown was easing, it was not possible at that time to measure the full impact on children and it was expected that the impact would be more fully recognised once children had returned to school or other safe spaces.
- It was suggested that the report lacked context around the short notice given to professionals before lockdown was announced, the impact of a number of years of austerity measures on social care, and the impact of the complications in rolling out the laptop scheme. Digital exclusion was a national issue.

The Cabinet Member for Women, Families and Homes confirmed that the recommendations from the report would be considered.

The Chair of the PSC responded that the terms of reference for the group specified a tight focus to enable learning to be captured quickly. It was recognised in the course of the sessions that the full impact on children and young people would only be known at a later date, but this was balanced against the value of capturing immediate experiences.

Members thanked the Working Group for the report and agreed that it be formally submitted to the Cabinet on 1st December 2020.



OSMB conveyed thanks to Children's Services.

Health Scrutiny Committee: Impact on access to Planned Healthcare

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) commented on the report produced by the Working Group:

- The HSC Working Group examined how Covid-19 had impacted access to planned healthcare in Bristol. This group carried out the Health Scrutiny committee's statutory function to ensure accountability of, not only Council provision of health services, but also that of the NHS and local health providers.
- The Group's findings were organised into three key areas: (i) Communication and messaging, (ii) Communities and support, and (iii) Capacity and ways of working.
- The Group found that health providers had clearly worked hard to reassure patients, but a great deal of people stayed away due to concerns, including fear and anxiety of catching Covid-19 in hospital, and had not attended their elective care appointments.
- Communication was also noted as an issue that prevented timely access to health care, and older people in particular struggled with digital engagement.
- Local communities were able to rise to the challenge in a significant way, providing care and support in the community.
- The increased perception of the vital roles of healthcare workers was noted as a benefit.
- With the expected second lockdown over winter it was noted that mental health would likely be negatively impacted and the report recommended further preparation should be prioritised.
- It was proposed to share this report with regional partners, including Members of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission, the Healthier Together Partnership Board and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The report would also be shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was agreed that the learning obtained would be useful beyond Bristol. It was suggested the report should be sent to the Local Government Association.

It was recognised that Health partners across the city had undertaken exceptional work with reduced capacity.

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission: Active Travel Fund

The Chair of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission commented on the report produced by the Working Group:

- The G&RSC examination of this topic was timely and useful. It focused on both strategy and delivery.
- There had been some expectation of a greater degree of negative feedback on the strategy of both encouraging Active Travel and taking the opportunity to make improvements to air quality, however this did not materialise across Members and stakeholders, and the approach was recognised as a sensible decision. Officers came prepared to meetings having already undertaken a degree of reflection on problem areas (eg. lack of agility and coordination of ownership), which enabled improvements and recommendations to be recognised early on. The hard work of officers was welcomed and allowed changes to be made quickly.
- Some criticisms were made around communications, but it was recognised that as emergency procedures had been introduced there was little time for consultation. There was an expectation that Phase 2 would allow more time for engagement.



- Members queried the longer term plans and impacts on cycle routes and the Healthy Streets project. The G&RSC chair stated that the focus of the group was on phase 1; much of the longer term impact and options was expected to emerge in phase 2 bidding, but agreed these elements could be revisited.
- While the Public Forum statement on the placement of cycle lanes outside the BRI was noted, few objections were identified during the course of the Working Group.

Members raised a concern over the closure of Bristol Bridge, and whether using Covid-19 specific funding was appropriate for this. The Chair of the working group acknowledged this view, but had found few objections and opposition to the approach taken.

Members noted that some views have been expressed in both South and North Bristol that the actions taken only moved the locus of the problem rather than solve it. It was agreed that this was an issue that could be taken forward for further discussion by OSMB and G&RSC.

Members agreed that the findings of the Working Groups were positive examples of effective Scrutiny. The Chairs of the Working Groups were thanked.

It was agreed that all Working Group reports were endorsed by OSMB.

RESOLVED; That the PSC, HSC and G&RSC Working Group reports be submitted to Cabinet for consideration on 1st December, and submitted to additional interested bodies as relevant.

9. Mayor's Forward Plan - Standing Item

This item was submitted for information. The Chair noted that it was agreed that items scheduled to take place 'before 5th May 2021' would be amended to take place 'before the Pre-Election Period'. This applied to 14 items.

10. Work Programme

The next OSMB meeting was scheduled for 30th November 2020 and would include a Clean Air Zone update on the agenda. Early Scrutiny involvement in the Full Business Case, anticipated in February 2021, was also requested.

Members agreed that the meeting on 30th November would be shortened in order to accommodate a Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission meeting.

Company Business Plans were confirmed as scheduled for the OSMB agenda on 18th January 2021. A potential timing clash with the Corporate Parenting Panel was identified.

Members agreed that some flexibility over certain items was required.



RESOLVED; That the timing for the OSMB meeting on 18th January 2021 be checked for potential clashes and confirmed.

11. Minutes from the WECA Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Standing item (For information)

This item was submitted for information only.

12. WECA Committee and WECA Joint Committee Forward Plan - Standing item (For information)

This item was submitted for information only.

