

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Commission

15 October 2020 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Anthony Negus (Chair), Jo Sergeant (Vice-Chair), Jon Wellington, Donald Alexander, Barry Clark, Matt Melias, Martin Fodor and Carla Denyer

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

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

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Morris.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

4. Communities Scrutiny Commission Annual Business Report

The Communities Scrutiny Commission Annual Business Report was received. The Chairs of Scrutiny Commissions were agreed at Full Council in May 2020. Cllr Sergeant was proposed to continue as Vice Chair of the commission and this was **AGREED** by Members.

It was noted that due to the changes in proportional representation that Cllr Rippington had resigned from the commission.

Due to the impact of Covid-19, the anticipated number of Scrutiny meetings for the year was amended from four to three, with additional scrutiny work taking place within a working group.



AGREED; That the CSC Annual Business Report be endorsed by Members.

5. Chair's Business

The Chair clarified the agenda.

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the CSC meeting held on 12th March 2020 were approved.

7. Action Tracker

Certain items that were agreed to be reviewed in the 2020/21 year were impacted by Covid-19 due to changing priorities and capacity. The Action Tracker provided an update around the status of these items.

It was noted that a Public Forum supplementary question raised in the previous meeting had not been addressed. The question raised whether social impact reports are made available to Councillors and the public. It was confirmed that these reports are shared with Members regularly through PGL, and would be published annually.

RESOLVED; That an update on Libraries projects be requested for information.

8. Public Forum

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

Councillor Stevens asked a Public Forum question on how measurements of households which fall into homelessness could be measured. A written response was provided.

Councillor Stevens asked a supplementary question around whether it would be possible to create a package of measurements for longer term analysis. The Director of Homes and Landlord Services responded that a large range of indicators are monitored internally, which includes some longer term measures, and would be happy to share information on useful indicators.

Councillor Stevens asked a Public Forum question on how sufficient numbers of affordable new homes would be achieved. A written response was provided.

Councillor Stevens asked a supplementary question around whether the figure of 800 homes was sufficient, and whether the WECA duty to cooperate would be impacted by other upcoming challenges.



The Director of Homes and Landlord Services responded that work had begun on a new Spatial Development Strategy, and confirmed that Bristol would have the greatest need in the WECA area, and so would be most reliant on the duty to cooperate.

Suzanne Audrey asked a Public Forum question on public engagement around the Jubilee Pool. A written response was provided.

Suzanne Audrey asked a supplementary question to ascertain when the next public meeting was to be scheduled. Councillor Wellington responded that a Councillor meeting was scheduled to be held on 16th October which would map out future meetings, of which at least one meeting would be earmarked for local residents contributions.

Suzanne Audrey asked a question on an update on Section 106/CIL projects. A written response was provided. Members confirmed that a list had been verbally discussed at Area Committees meeting.

RESOLVED; The updated list of S106/CIL projects to be requested from Officers.

RESOLVED; That the Public Forum be noted.

9. Homelessness Support

The Head of Housing Options presented the Homelessness Support item. A presentation was published with the papers, and a number of Members had also attended a Member Briefing. The presentation summarised that;

- A significant challenge was that homelessness and temporary accommodation levels pre-Covid were already high, and requests for assistance had increased. It was expected that this would continue to rise as the economic and mental health impacts of Covid-19 become apparent.
- Homelessness is a multi-faceted issue requiring a multi-agency response, and Officers felt that Bristol had provided a good response to the challenge. This included housing 1,000 people over the last six months, wrap around drug and alcohol services, and food provision from 'Cheers Drive'.
- The recent focus was around moving people on from temporary accommodation, with plans for two ambitious multi-agency initiatives to prevent homelessness; the One City Move On project to deal with the bottle neck in supported housing and providing more accommodation for those ready to move on; and Change for Good, a partnership initiative to improve how agencies work together to support people with complex needs.
- Bristol City Council successfully bid for £1.9million from the Next Steps fund, and await the results of further bids. However, it was understood that government funding levels were insufficient. It was hoped that for the next financial year that funding levels would be maintained, with additional funds available for those impacted by the Covid-19 crisis.



Members were invited to ask questions. Discussion included the following points:

- It was confirmed that over 900 households were housed in temporary accommodation; this included those placed in hotels, and those with No Recourse to Public Funds.
- Preparations for winter, including a severe weather protocol, were being made. Government guidance around opening shelters in a Covid secure way was planned to be reviewed and some small pots of funding have been made available specifically for winter pressures.
- It was clarified Pathways is the homelessness supported accommodation process, in which people work their way through levels of support as required.
- Officers concerns were focused around the as yet unknown impact of the pandemic, and around the financial strain on other parts of the system which may have a knock on effect. At this point it was not known what funds would be received for the next financial year, but it was thought that a rollover budget was most likely.
- A stipulation of the first round of capital spending was for completion by 31st March, which ruled out new build projects. In future rounds it was hoped to be more creative.
- It was known prior to the Imperial Apartments deal that there was a risk attached associated with the owners, and work took place to ensure risks were mitigated, including onsite workers and site facilities. It is not being used as temporary accommodation but private rented assured shorthold tenancies.
- It was confirmed that 'extreme rent arrears' for evictions generally involve non-payment over a number of years. The priority is to work with tenants.
- The prioritisation of moving people from supported to private rented accommodation is around easing a bottleneck by finding more Move On accommodation rather than increase the competition for existing social housing.
- Officers confirmed that during the pandemic response a number of people were housed in emergency accommodation that may not have otherwise been eligible. The aim was for no one to return to the streets. Bristol City Council engaged with the refugee sector in Bristol for further input around making plans for those being accommodated. Some of this population are now eligible for support.

The Director of Homes and Landlord Services and Head of Housing Options were thanked for their attendance and input.

10. Moving Forward Together

The Programme Manager for Moving Forward Together presented the Moving Forward Together (MFT) item. A presentation summarised that;

- MFT is a service wide transformation programme for Housing and Landlords Services.



- It was produced through co-design including a strong response from a wide ranging survey which delivered clear priorities. By the end of the co-design phase all teams within Housing and Landlord Services would have provided input.
- The six priorities included; Local; Listen; Easy; Trust; Safety; Security. A breakdown of these priorities was provided.
- The programme remained in the co-design phase, with the expectation to complete the operating model by mid-October 2020. This would then be reviewed by wider stakeholders and a Full Business Case prepared for mid-December.
- A test pilot was planned, although it was not yet known which area this would fall in. The programme start date was estimated as early 2021, with an aim to complete by the end of 2021.

Members were invited to ask questions. Discussion included the following points:

- It was hoped the MFT would be different from other change programmes as there was a strong mandate from residents on what was needed to be delivered, produced in co-design. Upskilling staff would be essential for this programme, and dedicated HR and other personnel were being put in place to support.
- A strong message was that residents miss having a personal relationship with those managing properties. The aim was to ensure residents know who to approach, by increasing visibility for staff.
- It was not expected that job roles would significantly change, but specialisms would reduce in order to minimise the number of people it would be necessary for residents to be in contact with. The pilot would help to ascertain how workloads and areas should be divided.
- The aim was not for top down change, but to identify what was and was not working through residents and staff.
- The role of the delivery partner was to support the largescale transformation programme as they had relevant sector experience and additional capacity. Over 2021 they would support Bristol City Council to build internal capacity and run the pilot.
- A significant piece of work on benefit realisation was being conducted and a suite of success measures developed in order to assess the success of the pilot. Regular input from residents was also planned. The Benefits Realisation plan and success measures would feature in the Full Business Case.
- It was noted this would be a staff and resource intensive programme, which had previously been problematic. It was hoped that the MFT would result, in the long term, in fewer pressures on staff due to minimising duplication, improving access and delivering good outcomes more efficiently.



Members agreed that this was a useful presentation and were in favour of the programme, with an interest in seeing how the programme developed.

11. Q1 Performance Report

The Chair presented the CSC Performance Report. It was noted that some figures were skewed by the impact of Covid-19.

Questions raised to bring to Performance officers included:

- Under the management notes for measures BCP3B307 and BCPB308 it stated that these were ahead of target for Q1, although it is not clear how this is possible unless assessed seasonally.
- In the appendix of the report there are several responses under 'methods of calculation' in which it appears a formula is missing.

Members queried what the process would be for trends and tracking of targets to be reviewed as further information becomes available. The Chair agreed to bring this to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

RESOLVED; That Performance Officers clarify Member questions around measures BCP3B307 and BCPB308, and a potential missing formula.

RESOLVED; That the Chair bring the issue of any future amendments to the Performance Report to OSMB

12. Q1 Corporate Risk Report

The Risk Register was noted for information.

13. Work Programme

Members drew attention to work taking place around Wildlife verges, and wider issues around wildlife management as related to the Ecological Emergency Strategy. This had not been added to the Work Programme at the date of the meeting, but it was agreed to be taken forward with the CSC leads.

The Bristol Impact Fund was noted as an item that was identified in 2019/2020 as requiring further consideration. It was agreed that this would be taken forward.



RESOLVED; That the CSC leads invite Cllr Shah, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate, Ecology and Sustainable Growth, for discussion of Wildlife Management in Bristol.

RESOLVED; That further information and updates would be sought on the Bristol Impact Fund.

