

Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Public Health and Communities
Policy Committee



17 January 2025 at 9.30 am

Members Present:-

Councillors: Stephen Williams (Chair), Emily Clarke (Vice-Chair), Lisa Durston, Carole Johnson, Ed Fraser, Cara Lavan, Abdul Malik, Bador Uddin and Sibusiso Tshabalala

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and led a round of introductions.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Carole Johnson to the Committee who had replaced Councillor Tom Blenkinsop.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Fi Hance with Cllr Sibusiso Tshabalala attending as substitute.

3 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lisa Durston declared a pecuniary interest in relation to item 10 (Community Safety Annual Assurance Report) who works for a domestic abuse charity.

Cllrs Cara Lavan and Sibusiso Tshabalala declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 10 (Community Safety Annual Assurance Report) who both sit on the Police and Crime Panel.



4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Chair noted actions from the previous meeting around support for nighttime and early morning workers and the tobacco and vapes bill would be picked up in due course.

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Clarke, the Committee **RESOLVED;**
That the minutes of the previous meeting on 22nd November be approved as a correct record.

5 Chair's Announcements

The Chair provided an update on the budget setting process which had been discussed at a meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee on Wednesday 15th January.

6 Public Forum

It was noted that the Committee had received 3 Public Forum questions and 1 Public Forum Statement for this meeting as follows:

Questions:

Number	Name	Subject
PQ01, PQ02, PQ03	Sarah Freeman	Stakeholder Engagement Process for Allotments

- Sarah Freeman was not in attendance, but the Chair advised the Committee that the Allotments service would employ a new Allotments Officer in the next financial year who would lead on the engagement process for the review of the allotment tenancy agreement.

Statements:

Number	Name	Subject
PS01	Gary Hopkins	Springfield Allotment



7 Finance Report Update P8 2024/25

The Committee received an update on the financial forecast at period 8 against the budget within the remit of the Public Health & Communities Policy Committee.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers noted that whilst the report highlights undelivered savings for catering outlets in parks, allotment fees and event fees, other savings areas had overdelivered meaning the Committee were still reporting a balanced budget at Period 8.
- Members raised concerns around the domestic abuse figures which was forecasted as an underspend in the general fund, as this service was a priority for the city.
- Officers advised that the underspend did not affect the current level of service and that this was due to a grant funded project that had ended, and a deleted vacancy that the service believed they could manage without. Officers also noted that the service was mostly grant funded which had seen an uplift this year.
- Members raised concerns around financial pressures in the parks and cemeteries service. Officers advised that they would be reviewing income targets as part of a Council wide piece of work and would look at a more realistic approach going forwards. As part of this, the service would like to identify ways of generating additional income.
- Officers confirmed that responsibility for Hengrove Leisure was within Public Health but was managed corporately, and that the financial risk was related to utility costs. **Action:** Officers to provide more detail on this after the meeting.
- Members were interested in opportunities for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding in the parks service. Officers advised there were no new CIL allocations currently but would be open to opportunities.
- The Parks service had been allocated £3m by Cabinet in the previous administration for improvements which the team were in the process of delivering, and the Green Recovery Fund project had been allocated £1.2m for green spaces over the next 2 years.

RESOLVED; That the Committee for Public Health and Communities noted:

1. **The Public Health and Communities General Fund forecast outturn revenue position of a balanced position with a £0.1 million underspend in comparison to budget at Q3/P8 2024/25.**
2. **The breakeven position on Public Health Grant funded services (Appendix A1).**
3. **The balanced position with no variance to budget for the Capital Programme. (Appendix A1).**



8 Blaise Plant Nursery Supplies of Goods for Sale

The Committee considered a report which sought approval to spend up to £4m in the next four years for the supply of horticultural goods at Blaise Plant Nursery.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers noted that the current procurement contract was due to end in 2025, and the proposed £4m investment was based on a 5% uplift over four years and 10% annual sales growth.
- It was noted that Blaise's retail offer accounted for 60% of income, transitioning from wholesale markets, and officers had planned minor investment for workshops and training sessions as the taster sessions were successful showing demand.
- It was noted that the plant nursery worked with local communities and has apprenticeships offer, along with an offer for Layhill prison placements. Members were pleased to hear about this work but urged social value is embedded in any future procurement contracts.
- Members were interested in food growing and opportunities to expand in other areas of the city. Officers welcomed ideas but noted that further commercialisation in the service would require capital investment.
- Members suggested more community outreach engaging with communities in more deprived areas of the city.
- There was a discussion around environmental sustainability around solar panels, water recycling and reusing materials.
- Members noted that demand from other local authorities was shrinking due to budget constraints, prompting the need for customer base diversification.
- Officers noted that sales growth in 2023/24 was mainly driven by retail expansion, including a café that encourages longer visits, and that the plant nursery were looking at setting up an online shop to expand revenue streams.

The Chair then moved the recommendations as set out in the report. Cllr Clarke seconded the motion.

The Committee RESOLVED (unanimously) to;

- 1. Authorise the spend of up to £4M over the next four years for Blaise Plant Nursery supplies to allow the service to resale the supplies and be self-sustaining.**
- 2. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Chair of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee to pursue an appropriate and compliant route to market for Blaise Plant Nursery supplies to accommodate a spend of up to £4M over four years.**
- 3. Authorise the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration to invoke any subsequent extensions/variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in this report.**



9 Quarterly Performance Progress Report – Q2 2024/25

The Committee received an update on performance against the BCC Business Plan as relevant to the remit of the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee at Quarter 2.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers advised that 6 of the business plan actions were on target with 1 action around managing the risk of trees impacted by Ash Die back was reporting behind schedule.
- The Chair advised that an update report on Ash Die Back would be brought to Committee.
- There was a discussion around community development work and accessing community hubs.
- Members were concerned that the Quality of Life Survey would now take place every 2 years instead of annually and how this would impact the performance data.
- It was noted that the performance data came from a wide range of sources and not just the Quality of Life Survey.
- The Chair noted that the development of a new Corporate Plan was in progress which would inform new performance measures going forwards, and the Committee would be able to feed into this process.

The Committee RESOLVED;

1.To note performance against the Business Plan relevant to this Committee, including the issues raised and measures to address performance issues to be implemented by relevant services.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06am.

The meeting was reconvened at 11:19am.

10 Communities safety annual assurance report

Cllr Durston withdrew from the meeting for this item due to the pecuniary interest declared.

The Committee considered the Community Safety Annual Assurance Report which provided an overview of the Bristol Community Safety Partnership activity for 2023 to 2024.

It was noted that the report was produced in collaboration with Avon and Somerset Constabulary and Mark Runacres, Neighbourhood Policing Superintendent and Chair of the Bristol Community Safety Partnership, was in attendance for this item.



The Chair noted the cross cutting nature of the Community Safety Annual Assurance Report (item 10) and the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Annual Report (item 11), but Members should be advised that these are separate organisations, and the reports should be considered separately.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers noted that Community Safety was a statutory duty and that the local authority was required to scrutinise this function every 12 months.
- There was a discussion around the roles of the Domestic Abuse Survivor Forum and Preventing Serious Violence Partnership Board and Members highlighted the importance of hearing from those with lived experience in order to develop further in policing.
- There was a discussion around the knife crime offences in the city and it was noted that although the data presented an increase in knife related assaults, Bristol had lower rates in comparison to the other Core Cities.
- It was noted that the Police were looking to identify any links between offences and were working to mitigate any risk.
- Members highlighted the importance of early intervention and ongoing engagement with local communities, specifically those effected or those who are less likely to engage.
- Officers noted that they were working to strengthen the Preventing Serious Violence Partnership Board and would take away an action to extend the reach.
- There was a discussion around drugs trade in the city and how this was often related to other crime. Members would like to see perpetrator prevention as well as support for victims and families.
- There was a discussion around drug related deaths, and it was noted that according to recent data, there had been 59 drug related deaths in Bristol in 2023, which was comparable to other Core Cities.
- There was a discussion around substance abuse services as officers had been informally advised of the possible closure of the Acer unit which was located in Bristol but was a regional centre. Officers advised that they would look to mitigate the impact of the loss of beds in the region, working alongside other local authorities and new substance abuse services provider, Turning Point.
- There was a discussion around hate crime and violence against women and girls. Members noted the need for cultural change and suggested early intervention, collaborating with schools to encourage positive behavioural change.
- Members would like to understand how they can support the Prevent Partnership. **Action:** Officers to confirm Member involvement.

RESOLVED; That the Public Health and Communities Policy Committee:

1. Noted the assurance report into Bristol's Community Safety Partnership activity from 2023 to 2024 and confirmation the Council is complying with statutory duties and delivering against priorities.



11 Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Annual Report

Cllr Durston returned to the meeting at this point.

Cllr Johson left the meeting at this point.

The Committee considered the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Annual Report which provided an update on the safeguarding work of the partnership for 2023/24.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers noted that the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership had oversight of strategic safeguarding responsibilities children, adults and communities, and there was a statutory responsibility to produce an annual report.
- It was noted that work was underway to create a multi-agency safeguarding hub along with delivery of training, resources, and development of policy.
- Officers advised that there had been a number of statutory reviews including safeguarding adults, domestic homicide and child safeguarding practice which enabled colleagues to identify key themes and learning. It was noted that there was a task & finish group on self-neglect.
- There was a discussion around the domestic homicide review which was recently debated at the Home Office.
- Members highlighted that the terminology be accessible and consistent in future reports.
- Members were concerned around the number of children awaiting support for mental health. Officers advised that this was a priority for the Keeping Children Safe Group who were working to streamline data across the partnership.
- Members were interested in funding for the Partnership and officers noted that there was a statutory obligation for safeguarding and partners were accountable and committed to providing the relevant services.

REOLVED; That the Committee for Public Health and Communities note:

1.The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership Annual Report 2023-24 in its relation to safeguarding communities (as well as children and adults).

12 Substance Use Services Contract Award

The Committee received an update report on the new substance use services contract award.



Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

- Officers advised that the Director of Public Health was given delegated authority by Cabinet in July 2023 to procure a new Substance Use Treatment Service and following the tender process, a contract was awarded to Turning Point commencing on 1st April 2025.
- It was noted that the value of the contract was £6.6m per annum for a period of 5 years.
- It was noted that Turning Point was a national provider but had established partnership agreements with local providers for the delivery of services.
- Members raised concerns around the risk of loss of beds due to the possible closure of the Acer unit. Officers advised that Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health (AWP) operated this unit, but officers would look to mitigate the impact of the loss of beds in the region, working alongside other local authorities and engaging with other providers.
- There was a discussion around delivery of social value as part of this contract award and engagement with minority groups.

REOLVED; That the Committee for Public Health and Communities:

1. Noted the report for information which sets out the new substance use contract award to Turning Point commencing on the 1st April 2025.

Meeting ended at 1:05pm

CHAIR _____

