

Bristol Homes Board

Heading: Key Decisions
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Date of meeting: 29 th March 2017
Report for: Discussion

1) Purpose of paper: To discuss issues relating to using the Board as a place in which Bristol City Council makes key decisions effective from March 2017

2) Context

2.0 The Mayor is responsible for Executive, or key decisions, but may choose to delegate these. The Mayor, and Cabinet members, make key decisions within the budget and policy framework set by Full Council, key decision are those:

- resulting in more than £500,000 in spending or savings; or
- that have an impact on more than one ward.

2.1 These decisions are taken publically in Cabinet meetings or a small number of strategic partnership boards (Health and Wellbeing Board or the Learning City Partnership Board). It was recently agreed that key decisions could also be taken, by the Mayor or relevant Cabinet Member, at the Bristol Homes Board, and the Council's constitution has been amended to reflect this. All decision made by the Mayor or Cabinet members decisions must:

- be made in public meetings and unless they are subject to access to information rules (exempt/confidential items are considered in private sessions as appropriate)
- be listed on the Mayor's Forward Plan at least 28 calendar days before the meeting unless there are special circumstances that mean that decisions need to be take urgently
- agenda papers must be published 5 clear working days prior to the meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules
- key decisions can only be made by the Mayor, or Cabinet Members with delegated authority.

2.3 The benefit of taking key decisions in strategic partnership meeting is that decisions are made in a partnership environment, with the decision benefiting from:

- The wealth of knowledge and experience from key partners
- A deeper understanding of impacts on partners and the wider system

3) Impact on Board meetings

3.0 Effective from March 2017 all Homes Board meetings will be public, regardless of whether or not an executive decision will be taken, resulting in increased transparency. The Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) have been updated to reflect:

- The fact that key decisions can be made at the board but that decision is taken by the Mayor or Cabinet Member.
- The function of the Partnership, at meetings where key decisions are to be taken, will be to advise the Mayor, or Cabinet member, in relation to housing functions of the local authority.
- Board members should declare any items under discussion which are of direct personal or professional interest, in particular when commenting on key decisions under consideration.
- For discussion: All members of the Board will be bound by the council's code of conductⁱ for members and will complete the register of interests (forms to be sent to board members with the meeting records).

3.1 Where possible BCC will engage with the Homes Board in the development stages of work that will require an executive decision, as a key stakeholder.

4. Recommendation - that the Board formally approves the revised Terms of Reference

Bristol Homes Board

'Making homes happen'

Terms of reference

Purpose of Bristol Homes Board (the 'Partnership')

The purpose of creating a housing partnership is to support the delivery of three key objectives:

- Increase the number of new homes
- Deliver the best use of existing homes (and improve standards)
- Early intervention, to prevent crisis later

These objectives are taken from 'More Than a Roof: Bristol's Housing Strategy' which is not just a Bristol City Council strategy, but is a strategy for the 'city'. The strategy has been developed in conjunction with all delivery partners and reflects priorities and strategies of other organisations in the city. The housing strategy identifies key housing issues and challenges in Bristol and has three major outcomes (outlined above) it sets out to deliver.

The partnership will help deliver these outcomes by:

- Overseeing the implementation of the city's Housing Strategy; and
- Co-ordinating the alignment of housing related activity to deliver the best possible use of city resources.

Role of partners

To ensure wide representation and a breadth of skills, the Partnership will include influential and inspirational leaders from across the City. In order to meet the partnership aims members roles will be to:

- Provide strategic leadership, vision and co-ordination that drives housing activity across partner organisations to improve outcomes for citizens and the City.
- Support work to address the housing needs of vulnerable and socially excluded groups.
- Communicate with and secure participation of local communities.
- Act as the link to other bodies within their 'sector' to ensure effective input and buy-in across the housing system

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- Lead and/or participate in work that the partnership agrees is necessary to tackle housing challenges and align services.
 - Report to and be accountable to the partnership on progress of tasks.

Outcomes

The Partnership will develop and publish an action plan with clear, achievable actions and outcomes. Progress will be reported at least annually and the action plan will be refreshed annually.

Decision Making and Governance

Key Decisions:

Under the Council's constitution the Mayor may take key decisions, in public, at the Bristol Homes Board or agree that Cabinet Members may do so.

The function of the Partnership, at meetings where key decisions are to be taken, will be to advise the Mayor, or Cabinet member, in relation to housing functions of the local authority.

Partnership decision: Where possible decisions to be made by consensus on all partnership decision including agreement regarding ways of working and priority work to be undertaken.

Sub-groups: The partnership members need to be actively involved in researching and implementing solutions to address housing issues and align work/services to deliver results. As the partnership develops its action plan the group will identify challenge groups responsible for progressing priority work.

The previous strategic housing partnership (Homes4Bristol) had a number of sub-groups (Bristol Housing Partnership, Preventing Homelessness Board, Supporting Housing Forum) run separately from the partnership with responsibility for co-ordinating key areas of housing activity. One of the partnerships early tasks will be to consider how it wishes to work in order to deliver the outcomes, including whether these groups have any formal relationship to Bristol Homes Board.

Membership

The membership of the Partnership shall be as follows:

- At least one elected member nominated by the elected Mayor;
- Senior representatives from a range of stakeholder organisations that can play the most active role in addressing housing issues in the City.
- Homes and Communities Agency representative
- Private rented sector representative
- Private developer representative
- Financial sector representative
- ACORN communities/citizen representative
- ACFA representative

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- Bristol Housing Partnership representative
 - Supported housing representative
 - Community led housing representative

And the board can agree to appoint further members as they deem appropriate

Tenure of Membership

Membership will be reviewed annually as an opportunity to:

- ensure the membership is still effective;
- make any necessary changes to the Terms of Reference
- give partners the choice of committing to a further term of membership or the chance to step down.

Chair/s

The partnership will be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Homes and Communities
The chair will be responsible for agreeing agendas and actively contributing to development of an effective partnership board.

Frequency of Meetings

Partnership board meetings to be held 4 to 6 times per year.

Substitution for Meetings

No Substitutions.

Attendance by Non-Board Members

Invitations may be extended to non-Board members, where their input or advice supports the discussion taking place at the meeting.

Declaration of Interest and Confidentiality

Board members should declare any items under discussion which are of direct personal or professional interest, in particular when commenting on key decisions under consideration.

Code of conduct

All members of the Board will be bound by the council's code of conduct for members and will complete the register of interests

March 2017