

# Bristol City Council Minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Commission

24 July 2019 at 2.00 pm



## **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Anthony Negus (Chair), Jo Sergeant (Vice-Chair), Donald Alexander, Graham Morris, Matt Melias, Martin Fodor and Carla Denyer

## **Officers in Attendance:-**

Patsy Mellor, Director of Management of Place; Gemma Dando, Head of Community Services; Richard Fletcher, Parks Services Manager; Ken Lawson, Waste Strategic Client Manager; Thara Raj - Consultant in Public Health, Nick Smith, Strategic Intelligence & Performance Manager; Dan Berlin, Policy & Scrutiny Advisor

## **1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting, and it was explained that Agenda item 5 will be brought forward to the next item so as to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair, and note the Annual Business Report.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Jon Wellington; Estella Tincknell; Barry Clark

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair declared that he is a member of the Bristol Tree Forum, which has provided a statement for the Public Forum.

## **4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the previous meeting (15<sup>th</sup> April 2019) agreed by Commission Members. (Cllr Foder proposed; Cllr Sergeant seconded)

## **5. Annual Business Report**

The Commission Members noted the charring arrangements for the 2019 – 2020 municipal year.



Cllr Anthony Negus was elected as the Chair of the Commission (nominated by Cllr Sergeant and seconded by Cllr Melias).

Cllr Jo Sergeant was elected as the Vice-Chair of the Commission (nominated by Cllr Negus and seconded by Cllr Alexander).

Members noted the Scrutiny Commission's Terms of Reference (ToR).

A Member commented that the ToR relates to a Commission not directly attached to one directorate. It was **RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Advisor will clarify that the terms of reference reflects all topics across the three directorates and circulate to Members.

Members noted the Membership of the Commission; and noted that there is still a Labour vacancy. The meeting dates and times were confirmed.

Members noted the topics on the work programme that were selected as priorities for the Commission at the work programme setting workshop on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

## 6. Chair's Business

The Chair made reference to Member code of conduct, with the expectation all Commission Members adhere to it; and uses the scrutiny function to add value to what the Council does, including helping to enable improvements for Bristol's citizens.

The Chair asked that, at Commission meetings, all Members should leave behind Ward representation and be as objective as possible to enable valuable scrutiny.

The Chair proposed that at the Commission meetings all Members are to be addressed by their first names, and asked if there were any objections for the same with regard to Officers. There were no objections from Officers present, or from Commission Members.

## 7. Public Forum

The following Public Forum was received:

Statement by Mark CD Ashdown - Chair of the Bristol Tree Forum.

The Commission noted the statement.

Chair stated that he felt that the statement has useful content that he hopes officers will take note of for consideration.

## 8. Safer Bristol annual report

- Consultant in Public Health with responsibility for the Council's work within Safer Bristol Partnership introduced the report (details are in the published pack).
- Officer stated that this is the final report of the Safer Bristol Partnership as Community Safety / Crime and Disorder will become part of the new Keeping Bristol Safe arrangements.



- It was confirmed that Commission Members will received a briefing on the new arrangements, and that Keeping Bristol Safe will be brought to the Commission in December, when there will be a joint session with the People Scrutiny Commission.
- Chief Inspector Mark Runacres was also in attendance and spoke to the report on behalf of Superintendent Andy Bennet (Chair of Safer Bristol Partnership).
- Chief Inspector clarified some key themes and areas of focus which are detailed in the report, including the increasing risk to young and vulnerable people being targeted by drug gangs; and that multi agency work is underway and ongoing by the Partnership to combat this issue.
- Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities welcomed the report, and made the following observations:  
Agreed with Chief Inspector, that the rise on recorded hate crime reports demonstrate communities have confidence to report due to the work of the Bristol Hate Crime & Discrimination Services. The new Safer Options Team has been developed after a visit to the Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow - an example of utilising good practice for Bristol. There is a need to report on the work of the counter extremism community development work being undertaken, and asked if future reporting can include this.
  - Officer response: Future reporting will be via the new arrangements within the Keeping Bristol Safe boards. Views from this Scrutiny Commission will be fed in.
- Member stated that co-location (referred to in the Street Intervention Service) is an excellent way of working.
  - Chief Inspector stated that co-location has been a success – Independent Domestic Violence Advisor in hospitals for example.
- Member raised example of Fire Engines displaying information about domestic violence and abuse and associated services. It was agreed that this method of highlighting services and providing information is successful as there is low trust in Police but high trust in Fire and Rescue service – so people may take more notice.
  - Chief Inspector stated that this is a useful suggestion, especially within the context of the Police and Crime Commissioner having responsibility for fire services; and that there is a need to build awareness of domestic violence and abuse and available services.
- There was a discussion about knife crime, and Members asked whether the officers and Police fully support the public health approach.
  - Chief inspector stated that it is clear that traditional enforcement approach to tackle knife crime doesn't work. People taken off the streets can be and are usually easily replaced, and so adopting a more sustainable approach by dealing with behaviours is required, and the Police is committed to this approach.



- Officer stated that Public health approach is an evidence based approach and officers are committed to working with other partners to tackle knife crime.
- Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities stated that this is a joint effort and all partners are on board with a public health approach.
- Discussion around the reduction in burglary (23.5%), which Member commended the Partnership on, and asked if there is a reason for this reduction.
  - Chief Inspector stated that there isn't a clear answer to this, but there are ongoing operations with the aim to further reduce burglary as well as drugs and knife crime.
- A Member asked, within the context of the published substantial reduction in burglary, if there was any intelligence as to how drug users fund their habits.
  - Chief Inspector response: Although no confirmed intelligence about this, it is clear there are more people presenting as street beggars, with a number having homes; and there is partnership-working to help address and manage these behaviours and divert these people to support services, via the Street Intervention Team.
- Chair asked how the Partnership uses a multi-agency approach to tackle drug use and drug-related offending.
  - Chief Inspector responded that drug related deaths in the city is at its highest reported level and is a huge concern. The drugs strategy in place includes enforcement, (targeting and disrupting) and education (including adopting drug testing – example of Loop providing testing and advice to people which reduced risk of drug misuse and deaths).
  - Confirmed that Loop has applied for a licence from the Home Office to provide further testing and education for recreational drug users in Bristol; and that if the licence is granted the Police will work with Loop to deliver more opportunities. This is about providing better education so people can make safer choices.
  - Officer stated that a multiagency substance use strategy is being developed that will include our joint city wide approach to tackling drug misuse and drug relating offending.
- Member commended the report and stated that he hopes Loop's licence application is successful.
- The Chair asked if, in the new arrangements with Keeping Bristol Safe, there will be published targets and measurable outcomes the Commission can scrutinise in the future.
  - Officer responded that the final annual report provides contextualised data, and, going forward, ambitions will be set enabling progress to be measured.
- Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities stated that the new arrangements will include the development of a drugs strategy with measurable outcomes.
- Member referred to the preventing extremism section of the report and asked if there are resources in place to tackle right wing extremism.



- Chief Inspector response: There has been a shift in thinking and there is a focus on identifying extremism in all its forms, including right wing. The framework on how to respond remains the same.
- Officer response: There is a role to expand a community approach to tackling right wing extremism, building community partnerships and coalitions to work together to tackle extremism.
- Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities highlighted the community development work to help tackle extremism.
- The Chair stated that the report shows things are improving, although it does not show people's perceptions of crime, community safety, and anti-social behaviour, which may not reflect the published statistics. Can the report reflect perceptions in future?
  - Officer responded that this can be included, and that future reports of the Community Safety Partnership will reflect the new Keeping Bristol Safe arrangements.
- There was a discussion about whether the information about fly-tipping should be in the report, as although there is a connection with the work of the Partnership, this information is available elsewhere (including BCC's Neighbourhood Enforcement) and so may be duplication; although another view was that the information is important as it is measure of people's views and anxieties about crime, safety and anti-social behaviour in their areas.
- The Chair thanked Officers and the Chief Inspector for the report, stating that it is provocative in some places.

## 9. Parks and green spaces

The Neighbourhoods Management Services Manager delivered a presentation about the Bristol Future Parks Accelerator Fund Project (details are in the published pack).

Officer stated they are keen for a scrutiny role in the project to help inform progress.

- Members raised a need to clarify jargon in the prospectus.
  - It was **RESOLVED** that acronyms and jargon will be reviewed and defined.
- Members asked that there is clarity about whether there are proposals to sell any parks.
  - Officer response: The Prospectus is to enable an understanding of what we have. This is not about selling – it's about protecting and maintaining our green spaces taking into consideration resource. There is a need to work with partners to help maintain parks and green spaces. Individuals and organisations benefit from green spaces. There is a need to understand benefits of green spaces.



- There was a discussion regarding the benefits of parks and green spaces.
  - Officer raised health example and how partnerships can help enable access to green spaces, benefiting health of local people.
- There was a discussion about land that is leased to organisations, and that these spaces are not included in the prospectus. Members asked that the list should include all parks and green spaces, including those areas leased.
  - Officer response: We cannot invite expressions of interest to those leased for long time. The map doesn't have detail as to what is leased.
  - It was **RESOLVED** that Officers will investigate including leased areas on the list and map.
- Members asked who is able to express interest, and how everyone can be represented in the process
  - Officer stated that the process, by going through anchor organisations, can help local groups emerge. One of the outputs is for more people to be involved – using community development approach. An unusual aspect of this project is that someone from national lottery in team sits in the team, and this is able to allocate funds for community development.
- Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Communities (Public Health, Public Transport, Libraries, Parks), Events and Equalities stated that we have ended up doubling the number of friends of libraries groups, and so hopefully, in this case using same strategy, we are looking for more friends of parks groups.
  - Officer said that Members can help feedback information for and about local communities. When opportunities arise for expressions of interest there is a need to ensure everyone understands how to engage.
- A Member asked if there is cross-over with City Leap.
  - Officer stated that there are possibilities in terms of energy.
- There was a discussion about commercialisation and whether parameters are clear enough; including a Member stating that it would be beneficial to have clarity to ensure parks can be kept for, for example, quiet contemplation. Also, questions were asked by Members regarding categories – is it possible for those designated green spaces, including allotments, to be re-designated.
  - Officer response: BCC is not selling land, but we don't want to stifle ideas that come back. The idea is for strategy to emerge, including what the commercialisation approach is, what is a formal and informal category. This goes to what we would like to achieve, and this will be reviewed.
  - We have learnt from City Leap that we receive a variety of quality; and have learnt that when we know what we have we can then establish red lines, which the project board, stakeholders and Members all have input.



- The objective is to achieve sustainable parks and green spaces that benefit community – a test of analysing an idea is that does it enable this?
- There are 40 key sites which will be assessed, drawing on academic research about what people would like in parks, and business opportunities – acknowledging there is not a wish to over commercialise. Officers would like the National Trust to advise on opportunities.
- There was a discussion about what the plan is for land without clear ownership. Members asked if the plan is for Council will take responsibility of these plots of green spaces.
  - Officer response: The ambition is to have green space within 10mins walk of everyone. We can't take on more green space. These spaces do not need to be taken on by the Council – organisations can do this.
  - It was **RESOLVED** that Members will bring to the attention of Members these types of green spaces known about.
- There was a discussion about governance.
  - Officer explained that there will be an Independent Advisory Panel made up of a group of environmental and commercial experts. Members of this Panel will not receive a fee, but will be offered expenses. Partners will be engaged via the Partnership Group, and a Steering Group which will oversee decisions and process will be made up of an internal officer group.
- There was a discussion about play and sports in parks.
  - Officer stated that we still want sports facilities. There will need to be further discussions.

## 10 Waste and recycling

The Neighbourhood Management Service Manager, the Waste Strategic Client Manager, and Environmental Area Manger delivered a presentation about delivered a presentation about the waste minimisation and recycling policy (details are in the published pack).

- Officer asked scrutiny Members for feedback on policy and proposals, including how to approach individuals who consistently do not follow guidance as to how to recycle, and how to improve green waste, including proposals to remove cost of the bin, but increase annual charge.
- The Chair stated that there is a need to change public perception so recycling can be improved. There is a need to explain cost savings if recycling is undertaken properly; and how enforcement can be used should be looked at.
- There was a discussion about how new policies/proposals are implemented including guidance. Members asked that instructions for households can be clearer, and that guidance should include a 'Why wasn't my recycling collected?' section, including what has been done wrong, or explain what a genuine error is.



- There was a discussion about use of language and jargon.
  - Officer stated that key messages are internal and had yet to be reviewed and amended to 'Plain English.'
  - It was **RESOLVED** that Member for Clifton Down will send Officer appropriate guidance for use of environmental appropriate language.
  - It was **RESOLVED** that acronyms and jargon will be reviewed and defined.
- A Member stated there is need for more education. There was a discussion about issues related to Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO), including over-occupation producing more waste, the transient nature of some HMO households, and a Member stated that high turn-over means guidance and education is sometimes rendered pointless.
- There was a discussion about capacity of the bins and recycling containers.
  - Officer stated that it has been a positive step to introduce large capacity boxes fortnightly. The policy is one bin per household (fortnightly), which aids recycling rates. The bins are 45 litres each and bringing in 90 litre sack will increase recycling. There is a need to get quality guidance right, and engage people to recycle correctly.
- Members stated that there will be a minority who will not engage, so there is a need to use enforcement. It would be good to work with Neighbourhood Enforcement and Estates Management to ensure better engagement.
- The Chair stated that most people agree with the ambitions of the report, but there are concerns it won't work as many people feel council tax already covers waste and recycling, and changing minds to ensure everyone recycles correctly is difficult. The key is to bring down volumes of residual waste and recycle more – it would be positive to lobby central government for powers to make this work, for example, charging for filling black bins rather than recycling, as happens in Ireland.
  - Officer stated that the measures will help decrease residual waste and increase recycling. Raised example of Sheffield which has put these measures in place and have increased recycling and decreased residual.
- There was a discussion about the new fleet, with Members asking for clarification of when roll out will occur.
  - Tony Lawless, Bristol Waste, stated that the new fleet will help reduce items spill on to the road and 45 recycling vehicles are planned to roll out within 8 weeks.
- Member asked about community engagement surrounding waste management, and when this will occur.
  - Officer responded that recruitment is ongoing and there are plans for ward focussed community engagement.



## 11 Performance Report

The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Manager introduced the report (details are in the published pack).

- BCP327 Increase the percentage of Corporate FOI requests responded to within 20 days: Members would like to know more information, including reasons for delays, and numbers refused and reasons.
- DRE224 Percentage of telephone calls answered within the CSC: Members would like a further explanation to understand the figures.
- BCP560 Increase the satisfaction of citizens with our services: Member raised that that the target is too low and can this be reviewed.
- There was a discussion about how further detailed information underl the performance indicators and progress can be accessed.
- The Vice-Chair asked if the Communities Scrutiny Commission can have a report which details the areas under the remit of the Communities Scrutiny Commission only.
  - It was **RESOLVED** that officers will investigate and action the Members' queries regarding performance.

Meeting ended at 5pm

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

