

# Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission

26 September 2019



**Report of:** Director: Commercialisation + Citizens and Shareholder Liaison

**Title:** Update Report on Bristol City Council Harbour Review

**Officer Presenting Report:** Penelope Fell

**Contact Telephone Number:** 0117 922 2287

## Recommendation

That the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission (GRSC) note:

1. Progress on the development and implementation of the Council's proposed Harbour Review.

## The Report addresses the following significant issues:

1. It updates the GRSC on progress towards establishing the Harbour Review.
2. Provides brief background to the proposal to establish a Harbour Review.
3. Outlines consideration of the above by cross-party attendees at a Commercialisation and Innovation Working Group (CIWG) Away Day held on 7 August 2019, and sets out the recommended actions arising from that meeting.
4. Highlights the need to treat the Harbour as one of the City's principal Historic Assets:
  - ensuring its sustainability for future generations;
  - securing efficiency savings and income growth;
  - maintaining agreed service delivery standards; and,
  - ensuring effective joining up across all areas of proposed City Council activity around the Harbour.
5. Provides detail on the proposed timeline for the Review.
6. In conclusion, the Report notes the next steps to be taken to establish the Harbour Review.



**1. SUMMARY**

This Report sets out progress made towards establishing the Harbour Review.

**2. BACKGROUND**

The GRSC will recall discussion at their meeting on 29 November 2018 when the then Head of Community Services reported on her plans to conduct a “Bristol City Docks Review”. The then Head of Community Services had planned for the Review to commence early in January 2019, with the results to go to Cabinet in June/July 2019.

However, following a full review of the documentation relating to the Review in early 2019, and conducting initial discussions with key officers, and after holding a Workshop for BCC officers from all relevant services on 3 July 2019, a proper understanding of the full range of issues relating to a full Review would demand a far longer period to be applied to the Harbour Review. The Director: Commercialisation + Citizens and Shareholder Liaison therefore determined that, in order to achieve the implementation of an effective and robust Review of all matters relating to the BCC Harbour, and to produce a comprehensive Strategy, at least 15 months from the end of November 2019 to the Summer of 2020 should be devoted to consideration of the relevant issues.

**3. COMMERCIALISATION AND INNOVATION WORKING GROUP (CIWG) AWAY DAY - 7 AUGUST 2019**

A successful cross party facilitated CIWG Away Day was held on 7 August 2019 that approved overall Commercialisation progress made in 2018/19 and endorsed the Aims of the rolling Strategic Plan 2019/22 and the Business Plan Objectives 2019-20. In particular, the Group endorsed the commencement of a comprehensive Historic Asset Review Programme, commencing with Bristol Harbour, and then Market and Docks Estate; and a Commercialisation Programme 2019-20, including the renovation of some Harbour facilities. Members and officers who were able to attend received the comprehensive Note of the Day, as did those elected members and officers who were invited, but unable, to attend the Away Day.

The elected members attending wanted BCC’s commercialisation principles in 2019/22 to be:

- ambitious;
- progressive and agile, based on “ get on with it” culture change; and,
- flexible enough to accept some risk taking.

In response, BCC officers present set out the particular challenges that face BCC in establishing:

- a shared agenda with external stakeholders, so that the Council could make best use of external funding for Council led projects; and,
- a common approach with internal Council Directorates to achieve best value from corporate commercialisation activities instead of short-term, unplanned, one-off approaches to commercialisation that seemed to offer the Council income growth but that proved unprofitable, or even resulted in a deficit, in the long run.

In conclusion, participants endorsed a proposal, made by two elected members present, that the respective BCC Scrutiny bodies should be used to make Directorates stick to the corporate commercialisation agenda, and would help by expecting officers to do so when developing projects for consideration. Finally, it was said BCC Scrutiny bodies should ask questions that challenged each Directorate to demonstrate how their business cases would achieve efficiency savings, create income growth, and maintain agreed service delivery standards.

#### 4. MANAGING AND COMMERCIALISING BCC HISTORIC ASSETS

Away Day participants were split into groups and asked for feedback on how to approach the management and commercialisation of BCC's historic assets, and, in more detail:

- **first**, how the principles endorsed for the Commercialisation Strategy 2018/21 could be amended to address the action needed to improve the City's historic assets; and,
- **second**, to discuss and confirm the actions needed as a result of the Historic Asset Review.

Participants' comments were:

- **Access to the public realm, access to the Harbour**

In summary the issues were:

- the potential benefits for BCC, stakeholders and the wider public;
- BCC was doing all it could to provide safe open access but members of the public had personal responsibility when entering the water on their own initiative;
- the need to review Land Registry records to understand which properties controlled what areas of land;
- where access included not being able to moor; and,
- BCC should use CPO powers to secure access to maintain Harbour walls.

**ACTION** – elected members present endorsed “push CPO”.

- **Business Rate Income**

In summary the issues were whether:

- Harbour business rate income should be ‘ring fenced’ for the harbour with (invest to save) business rate reductions; or,
- use it for other parts of the City.

**ACTION** – elected members present endorsed “support and promote business rates to incentivise other parts of the City”.

#### 5. THE HARBOUR: ONE OF BRISTOL'S PRINCIPAL HISTORIC ASSETS

To meet the long term needs of Bristol for all its citizens, and make the Harbour sustainable for the future, BCC needs to review its management of Bristol Harbour to establish the best strategy and operating model going forward.

Bristol Harbour has always been an important historic economic asset for the City. But today, key features like the 250-year-old Floating Harbour have become an integral part of the City's increasing popularity and a significant attraction at the heart of the city. However, Bristol Harbour's physical infrastructure is declining. And BCC currently operate (what should be) a premium commercial asset at a loss. So the Harbour now requires significant improvement, not only to bring it in line with the facilities that all Harbour users and stakeholders – including boaters - can readily find in other locations, but also to create sustainable income growth for the future.

Functioning as a commercial dock until the mid-1970s, Bristol Harbour is not only a major tourist attraction with museums, restaurants, bars and nightclubs, but also preserves a working shipyard – Albion Dockyard - in the Floating Harbour. And the Harbour Festival, held annually, is one of the highlights in BCC's internationally renowned cultural programme, and is one of the country's largest free festivals. Over a 4-day period the Harbour Festival attracts over 300,000 visitors and celebrates the maritime heritage of our City, and the continuing importance of the docks and harbour to Bristol's economic sectors.

However, significant capital investment - that cannot be generated just from BCC revenue maintenance and repair budgets - is needed to update ageing facilities, and fund vital improvements, both on the Bristol Harbour quayside and on the water.

The planned comprehensive Harbour Review will involve internal and external stakeholders, including residents, boat owners, and commercial businesses both on and off the water, as well as City Council colleagues and services. The Terms of Reference for the Harbour Review will reflect this, in order to ensure effective joining up across all areas of proposed City Council activity around the Harbour.

The Review will therefore include:

- setting comparable market rate fees and charges for mooring licences;
- providing effective repair and maintenance within future revenue budgets;
- increasing income growth from leisure sector activities; and,
- showing how the City, citizens and stakeholders will benefit from the growing importance of this sector of Bristol's economy.

## **6. PROPOSED HARBOUR REVIEW TIMELINE**

It is expected that the Business Case with costings for the public consultation element of the Harbour Review will be presented to the Resources Executive Director's Meeting in early October, and then to Cabinet on 3 December 2019. The Public Consultation programme will then launch in December 2019, continuing until July 2020, and including task and finish groups dedicated to specific issues. Cabinet Approval is planned for September 2020 for the outcomes of the Harbour Review, so that a comprehensive Harbour Strategy is developed, and a new Harbour Revision Order can be applied for and issued, with the associated updated policies and by-laws, by April 2021. It is then expected that the Bristol Harbour Strategy will be launched to run in parallel to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Harbour Festival in July 2021.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission are asked to note the next steps that will be taken to establish the Harbour Review:

1. Major Historic Asset Programme development, as appropriate, as commercialisation development project priorities.
2. Business Case with costings for the public consultation element of the Review to Resources EDM in October 2019 and then to Cabinet on 3 December 2019.
3. Public Consultation programme commences December 2019 and continues until July 2020.
4. Full Harbour Review outcomes, including a comprehensive Harbour Strategy, to Cabinet in September 2020.
5. A new Harbour Revision Order, with the associated updated policies and by-laws, by April 2021.
6. Results of the Bristol Harbour Review launched to run in parallel to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Harbour Festival in July 2021.

## 8. Consultation

### a) Internal

Elected members including CIWG members, BCC Head of Paid Service, BCC s151 Officer, Resources EDM.

### b) External

Not applicable

## 9. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 9a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
  - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
    - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
    - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
    - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
  - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
    - tackle prejudice; and
    - promote understanding.

### Appendices:

None

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

#### Background Papers:

None