

Bristol City Council Minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Commission

27 January 2020 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

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

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed the Communities Scrutiny Commission and People Scrutiny Commission, who were in attendance for the joint item on the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership.

It was noted that Cllr Tim Rippington will be replacing Cllr Harriet Bradley on the Communities Scrutiny Commission for future meetings.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for the Communities Scrutiny Commission were received from Cllr Jon Wellington (represented by Cllr Celia Phipps), and Cllr Graham Morris for late attendance.

Apologies for the People Scrutiny Commission were received from Cllr Gill Kirk, Cllr Carole Johnson, Cllr Jude English, and Cllr Tim Kent.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The previous minutes state that under Declarations of interest Cllr Denyer was noted as a member of the Bristol Libraries Forum. This should be a member of the Friends of Redland Libraries group. Cllr Sergeant should have been noted as a former librarian.



The minutes were otherwise agreed as an accurate record.

RESOLVED: Minutes from 10th October 2019 to be updated to reflect identified errors.

5. Action Tracker

Action Agenda item 9: Libraries. The action to bring a Libraries item to OSMB was not possible due to a full agenda but a separate Scrutiny event is planned.

The main issue to take forward is ensuring that there is a strong library service as standard, and that the public will be made aware of decisions being made in this regard. The timing of appropriate Scrutiny is difficult as grants are not evaluated until the end of the year. It was confirmed that the strategy document is going to Cabinet as a key decision. A press release will be delivered later in the week.

Action: CSC leads to consider format for future Libraries scrutiny event.

The format of the action tracker was discussed. It was **RESOLVED that a date column for the progress update received should be added to the action tracker.**

6. Chair's Business

A supplemental item under Chair's Business is in relation to item 11: Impact of student population on Bristol communities.

7. Public Forum

A public forum statement was received from Cllr Stevens in relation to item 11. This was presented by Cllr Denyer in the absence of Cllr Stevens.

8. Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership governance arrangements

This item is a joint Scrutiny item falling within both the People and Communities Scrutiny Commission.

The Service Director - Children and Families, and Service Director – Public Health, spoke to the circulated papers and presentation.

The Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP) is a newly formed partnership that fulfils the statutory functions of four previously existing partnership boards: Bristol Safeguarding Children Board; Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board; Children and Families Partnership; and Safer Bristol Community Safety Partnership. It is a multi-agency partnership with core partners comprising Bristol City Council, NHS BNSSG Clinical Commissioning Group, and Avon and Somerset Police.



The structure of the KBSP will consist of three business delivery groups, Keeping Children Safe, Keeping Adults Safe, and Keeping Communities Safe. Task and finish groups will also address extant pieces of work.

An Independent Chair has been appointed to oversee the arrangements.

The partnership arrangements and Constitution have been accepted by Cabinet.

It is intended for the new arrangements to provide a leaner structure enabling the constituent partners to address the multiple cross cutting issues that sit within Adult Safeguarding, Child Safeguarding, and Community Safety. Joined up working will be an ongoing task.

The Keeping Communities Safe business delivery group will cover the remit of Safer Bristol, including Domestic Abuse and the Prevent Agenda.

It was clarified that the partnership arrangements are strategic and do not provide an immediate safeguarding response. Officers will ensure this is clear on the KBSP website.

Examples of how the new arrangements will impact stakeholders can already be seen within the Domestic Abuse strand of work as the statutory Domestic Homicide Reviews are now managed by the same support unit that facilitates SCR/CSPR and SAR processes, enabling lessons to be seen by the whole rather than in part. The new arrangements should impact both the commissioning of learning reviews and delivery of improvements.

Performance dashboards will be reported on regularly and used to evidence decision making and priorities.

The Bijhan Ibrahim case can be seen as an example of how silo working has an impact.

The Service Director – Children and Families has led on work addressing safeguarding Children in Education. Exclusions have been a challenge as it is clear that children are not safer outside of schools. Work on an inclusion agenda has been undertaken and reviewed by survey with positive feedback received.

Processes around safeguarding notifications were discussed, with an example of good practice given around work with schools.

Members noted that adults, including parents, with mental health and complex needs are often represented in the community safety agenda, recognising the opportunities for cross working. The KBSP should see evidence of where problematic areas are identified.

Members recommended speaking to Bristol Youth Council to consider youth priorities and as part of engagement and consultation work. The BYC has already undertaken some work around youth knife crime.



Officers are confident that receptors are sharp, with acknowledgement that continuous work is needed to ensure work does not take place in silo.

9. Performance Report (Q2)

The Strategic Intelligence and Performance Advisor presented the Q2 Communities Performance report. This report is based on relevant indicators from Growth and Regeneration, Resources, and Public Health.

Members raised that indicators related to FOIs were present. This is related to Resources rather than Communities and can be removed from future reports.

RESOLVED: FOI indicators to be removed from future Community Performance reports.

Members raised that indicator GR375 relating to reducing the number of empty council properties is of concern. Officers present were able to comment that they work to balance the importance of taking time to improve properties against letting them quickly. Turnaround is recognised as an issue. A dedicated team is now in place and it is hoped that turnaround time will improve. The lack of progress with this indicator can also be attributed to difficulties with contractors.

It was noted that around 40% of KPIs are currently below target status. Members noted their concern at this. Officers stated that context is not always available in this report format. In Housing, action plans are made whenever there is a red indicator.

10 Housing Lettings review

Director of Homes & Landlord Services presented the item on the Review of lettings scheme for social housing.

A briefing for Members is being held next week.

This work is currently in an early engagement phase. This was slightly delayed due to the pre-election period. Options have not yet been drafted as this is a consultation and information gathering phase. All options are being considered.

This approach was last reviewed in 2013/14, with changes implemented in 2015. It is good practice to continue review.

The current scheme does not lend itself to balanced communities with high levels of need in particular areas. Feedback on this has been seen in case work. 13k households are on the housing register, with a significant proportion who are unlikely ever to be housed. Work in managing expectations as well as prioritisation is needed.



An increase in demand has also been seen, and there is a backlog in applications. This is hoped to be cleared by April.

Community events are being held to support consultation.

There are two main ways of allocation; choice based or allocation based. There are currently few alternatives, and a new model could be an option.

Some new builds have been built with social housing for families in mind. Moving a family home is a particular difficulty. There is a 300 home community led development in Southmead.

Work is being conducted on a range of inter-care needs housing.

Members raised that it would be useful to understand the demographic of Band 4 applicants who are unlikely to be housed to ensure their needs are being met.

A high volume of need is recognised.

The project in Lawrence Weston was discussed.

Difficulties with anti social behaviour in social housing was discussed. Housing have worked with Police around sub letting and cuckooing, and with whistle blowing reports from neighbours. They are on target to identify 40-50 affected properties this year.

Action: Officer to provide feedback on impact within individual wards.

11 Impact of University Student Population on Communities

A public forum statement was received from Cllr Stevens in relation to this item. This was presented by Cllr Denyer in the absence of Cllr Stevens.

The issue of the impact of student populations of Bristol communities was raised in a previous Communities Scrutiny Commission as an area of interest and agreed to be added to the agenda for this meeting. The papers circulated consist of available relevant information but due to the cross cutting nature of the item it is not led by a single department or directorate.

The Chair submitted a statement under Chair's business to summarise the issue and identify potential gaps.

The Chair proposed that the members of the CSC support the Chair's statement and agree to it being sent to the appropriate Director and the Mayor, with a request to produce an assessment of the scale of this issue and how it can be managed going forward with updates to any actions taken since the Motion to Mitigate against university expansion was agreed in July 2017.



The submitted public forum statement agreed in principle that the issues identified are of import, but felt it would not be appropriate to support as it stands. It also noted that an anticipated HMO SPD is expected in February, so this topic may be more meaningfully addressed at a later point (ie following Mayoral elections).

Members broadly agreed to the position of the public forum statement, and with the Chair's assertion that this issue is broad and would benefit from joined up working. It was also noted that the impact on housing in particular is a national / global issue. Concerns around HMOs do not only relate to students.

Encouraging work across different departments and organisations is a particular aim; disputes involving landlords are often redirected to Bristol City Council.

It was AGREED that:

Impact of Student Population will be added to the 20/21 work programme.

A progress report on the actions agreed as part of the motion in 2017 will be requested.

A working group previously met on this issue. Members can explore re instigating this following an update on progress.

12 Work Programme

The Work programme was accepted by the CSC.

