

### Summary of any engagement with scrutiny

#### Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission, 13/02/20

Officers delivered a presentation - Bristol City Centre - Core Retail and Leisure, see <https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/documents/s46153/Bristol%20City%20Centre%20Slides%20Feb%202020.pdf>

The Director of Economy of Place introduced the item and said that things had moved on a lot from the draft plans produced in 2018. The presentation highlighted the changes and next steps and officers were very keen for scrutiny to have a role in shaping it.

The Senior Project Manager for the City Centre Development took Members through the published slides and added the following comments:

- Bristol City Centre is relatively resilient compared to some other centres across the country.
- Bristol is ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the national rankings for retail. It was 27<sup>th</sup> before Cabot Circus opened.
- How people move around the city centre and use areas such as to shop, live and spend their leisure time has and will likely continue to change.
- People want an 'experience' now which calls for more than just shops.
- Access to Castle Park will be improved as part of the Plan.
- The proposed area (for a Plan) with blue lines (on the slide) is emerging and still draft.
- This is a potential opportunity to increase pedestrianised areas such the 'old city'.
- Officers said they would welcome bringing the Framework (future Development & Delivery Plan) back to scrutiny before any decisions were made.

#### Members Questions and Comments:

- Members were interested in potentially making the 'Old city' pedestrians only. It was said that mixed use (cars and shoppers sharing the same space) shopping areas don't really work. It was suggested that Broadmead could also be included. It was asked if there were any timescales for this. Officers said that nothing firm had been decided yet and discussions were on-going with shop owners and landowners about the proposals.

- A Member said that in his view the Haymarket and St James Barton Roundabout created a “massive barrier” across the middle of the city centre and asked if officers were looking at how that could be addressed i.e. traffic is just going through and not stopping. Officers said their intention was to improve the public realm but some of it was not going to be easy. The Castle Park changes were an opportunity to re-look at things there. Some would be short, medium and long-term changes but there will always need to be some access for some traffic.
- Another Member said they agreed with the earlier point about semi-pedestrianised areas not working and said people needed to feel safe or they wouldn't use them.
- It was asked what the unique selling points of the changes to the city centre were? For example, how do you get people that don't use it to start coming in; what will draw them in? Officers said the plan as it stands doesn't yet do that and agreed they need to get that right at the first stage and create a gravitational pull. Castle Park would become a leisure destination / experience going forward and it can then be used as a tool to draw more people in.
- The Chair asked if the policy of 'mixed uses' in the city centre would be maintained to bring more people to live in the city centre. It was said there would likely be another 11,500 new homes in the Centre by 2030 but that they were also still 'sense checking' what market is saying.
- Officers said they would respect the character of areas when making decision about changes. This was a great opportunity but there are also many issues to consider.
- It was requested that officers didn't neglect the smaller areas and those on the edge of the city centre. Also because as it was suggested that developers 'want to pinch bits'. It was asked how new and small businesses were going to be nurtured when areas such as Cabot Circus was mainly all large units and national chain stores. Officers said they expected things to change over time.
- It was said this was an opportunity for BCC to be bold. Yes many units were too big or too old and what was required was a master planning exercise. It was important to understand where secondary and tertiary properties were and where the scope was to bring people in. Broadmead was said to be very low density but had good potential for changes to be made, but the market wouldn't wait. Was it possible that Cabot Circus was giving an artificial ranking when there was in really some slippage backwards?
- Officers said yes it was potentially City Centre living that was protecting the night time economy.
- Members suggested looking at some more good international examples such as those in Germany as well as Cardiff.
- Officers said they would return to the Commission when the Plans were more developed to ensure Members agreed and could feed into the process again. But in the meantime they would welcome hearing from the Commission Members about any further ideas they had.

The Commission thanked officers for their time and hard work.