

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Commission

12 March 2020 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Anthony Negus (Chair), Jo Sergeant (Vice-Chair), Jon Wellington, Donald Alexander, Barry Clark, Matt Melias, Martin Fodor and Carla Denyer

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Morris and Tincknell.

3. Declarations of Interest

It was noted that the Chair is a member of Bristol Tree Forum (Item 7, Public Forum).

4. Minutes from previous meeting

The minutes of the CSC meeting dated 27th January 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. Action Tracker

The format of the action tracker was discussed.

Resolved; That the Action Tracker format be amended for future meetings.

The impact of the student population was agreed as a future piece of work for Scrutiny.

Resolved; That Scrutiny work around the impact of student populations be taken forward with Officers once identified.



6. Chair's Business

The Chair provided a statement for item 9. This is addressed under the relevant item.

Waste was proposed as a late addition for the 19/20 year work programme, but it was not possible to include this item for this meeting due to Officer availability.

The Chair proposed that CSC leads agree the issues around Waste that require addressing in order to develop a framework for a future piece of Scrutiny work.

Resolved; That CSC leads to meet to discuss issues around Waste collection and management to input in to future work.

7. Public Forum

Question: Suzanne Audrey (Item 9)

Please can you provide specific examples of the ways in which representatives of the Council have used the outputs from the contract with Social Impact Ltd for the benefit of citizens and communities?

Response From Mayor's Office

This administration uses several sources of information to inform the decision-making process which benefits citizens and communities in Bristol.

Including but not limited to: conversations and correspondence with constituents and stakeholders, engagement and consultation exercises, the annual quality of life survey, scrutiny comments and reports to build on their own experiences. It also includes the public forum contributions at Cabinet meetings where decisions are made. Every Cabinet decision includes legal, finance and other internal corporate advice with Public Relations providing expert advice on how to communicate decisions with people.

Increasingly, people are choosing to contact the council through social media, and also discuss the activities of the local authority online. This also provides important insights which feed into every decision-making process.

Reports provide some insight into what people are talking about, and also provide an opportunity to assess if there are any gaps in public information that can be responded to.

The information is also used to evaluate communication activity to establish the discussion and debates sparked by campaigns and identify any insight into how we can better communicate, particularly with vulnerable communities.



Communication campaigns such as #WeAreBristol and the recent “*I was homeless, I was you*” homelessness campaign used the reports to identify any positive or negative feedback to inform their respective activity and approach.

Supplementary question

This came to public attention through an FOI request. Are social import reports available to councillors and public?

Members did not believe they have been sighted on this issue.

Resolved; That Officers provide a response to the supplementary question.

Question: Cllr Clive Stevens (Item 12)

Q1. In the face of the recently declared climate and ecological emergencies and of the commitment to double tree canopy cover over the next 25 years, how have the increased risks of removing urban trees - causing, for example, loss of pollution mitigation, increased rainfall run-off causing flooding or increased urban heat island effects (all of which will increase the risk of causing additional deaths) - been factored into this Risk Register?

Response From Area Manager

This is not currently considered a high risk item so has not been escalated to the corporate risk register.

Q2. In this Risk Register, what steps has Bristol City Council taken to address the risks of the climate and ecological emergencies through its tree management policies and by enforcing existing planning policies as they relate to trees?

Response From Area Manager

The council’s tree management policies and its enforcement of relevant planning policy are not considered as high risk items in this context.

Members discussed that input from both the managing officer and Risk Report author is needed for a full understanding of how this risk is assessed. It was also noted that the report demonstrates Risk, but its purpose is not to also show the public benefits of trees. Some benefits can be shown under ‘mitigation’, but this is in specific areas. This would not be the report to demonstrate the benefits and therefore the full picture is not seen here.

Statement: Cllr Graham Morris (Item 10)

Cllr Morris gave apologies while the submitted statement on Area Committees was received by the Commission.

Members agreed that this was an excellent statement with a cogently made case. Thanks were given.



Statement: Cllr Stevens (Item 4)

Cllr Morris provided a statement supporting the agreement that the Student impact on Communities be taken forward as a future piece of Scrutiny work, suggesting potential topics and formats that this could take.

Possible partnership working (including through the One City Plan) was discussed.

Resolved; That the Public Forum be noted.

8. Work Programme

The Work Programme was discussed under other items. In summary, proposed topics for the 2020/21 Work Programme include:

- Waste Management
- Student impact on communities.

9. Growing the Power of Communities

The Chair prefaced the item with a prepared statement proposing changes to the submitted report. As this was not representative of the views of the full Commission it was agreed that this statement would not be taken forward.

The Community Development Manager delivered the presentation on Growing the Power of Communities which provided an overview of community development since 1st April 2019 and the direction of travel for the council as a whole. The presentation outlined:

- The change of direction from council led work to collaborative community development, building on existing strengths.
- The role of Councillors to use an allowance to support community events – 30 of 34 wards receive this funding.
- Details of the Community Development team
- A 'Thriving Neighbourhood' graphic covering the community development process and performance indicators. This included a discussion of community assets, such as libraries, as tools to deliver social action.
- Examples, such as the 'People Power Unconference'
- Challenges faced, including how capacity can be grown and systems simplified with existing resources by encouraging community led action through joining up early engagement, etc.

Officers asked Members to consider their priorities for the 2020/21 year.

Members asked why the 4 of the 34 wards are not receiving funding. Some Councillors / wards have separate arrangements and do not require this. The allowance consists of £200 per Councillor. Officers



will shortly send out nomination forms and funding agreements. While not all have been nominated / applied for funding this remains a developing situation.

Members agreed that developing communication channels with Councillors would be welcomed. The Well Aware service is known.

An event is being held the evening of 12th March related to engagement. Discussions related to this event were agreed to take place outside of the meeting.

The resourcing of community led initiatives was discussed. Different areas have different needs, and different existing community groups. A senior Development Committee workplan examines where work is taking place, and where there are opportunities for additional support.

The question of how to define priority areas was raised, and how Officer work is apportioned between priority and non-priority areas. Data from the QOL survey feeds in to this. Workshops with city partners have taken place.

The Public Forum statement noted that different areas have differing asset strengths. It was confirmed that people and staff are also counted as a resource / asset. Making the best use of differing characteristics was supported.

It was clarified that the team did exist prior to 2018, but that the capacity has been developed and the outreach to people who were not previously involved. This supports a move away from a 'transactional' relationship between communities and council, encouraging thinking about how to use existing assets, eg. new uses for existing buildings.

10. Area Committees

In 2019 Area Committees approved £3.3m of CIL and S106 projects. The Community Resources Manager delivered a presentation on the overview of the decision making process.

Area Committees were developed in 2018 to decide the spend of local element of CIL and devolved S106. Improvements to the process have been made in 2019, including allowing more time for community involvement, using public surgeries, and improving online guidance. A graphic of the current arrangement was shown.

As a result of improvements made 2019 saw a significant increase of the number of proposals submitted, projects agreed, and total funds committed. Examples of projects were shown.

The timetable for 2020 demonstrated that the process is currently in stage 1 in which priorities and project ideas are gathered. The deadline for outline proposals is 6th April. BCC surgeries would take place in May and June, with a final list of projects agreed in July. Invited projects complete stage 2 proposals with a deadline of October, and formal AC meetings take place in November to agree funding.



Some Area Committees have chosen to over-commit funds for 2019 and leave 2020 as a 'fallow' year in order to build funds subsequently.

Members asked if micro-grants in neighbourhoods had been considered. The Community Development team have looked in to this.

Members raised a concern over the intention for a 'fallow' year, where it may be possible for one councillor to make a decision in one year that has an impact beyond their term. However, the annual funding decision process was recognised as having the benefit of allowing cases to be developed.

Communication of the S106 funds is also important, and instances where residents have paid out of pocket for projects that would have fallen under S106 are known. The stronger focus on public engagement aims to support this.

Members were encouraged to speak to their Area Committee chairs for more specific detail on their local committee.

Members raised an interest in seeing an assessment of the 2020 process at an appropriate time.

11. Bristol Impact Fund

The Community Resources Manager delivered a presentation on the mid-point report of the Bristol Impact Fund, ie. two years in to a four year programme.

Additional data was requested drilling down into how this has worked, and what it has achieved. Officers confirmed that in depth analysis work is currently taking place.

The different size of grants was discussed. There are 50 organisations running medium to large projects for the full four year term. 20 projects were funded from 2017-2019 through the BIF Small Grants programme, and a second round of small grant projects will run from 2020-21.

Members suggested that varying the size of the grants may be useful.

Information about the criteria was requested. This is set out in the VCS prospectus, which outlines a framework and is available online.

There will be a paper during 2020 on the course of action once the 4 year projects are complete. Any proposal to continue the programme will be a Cabinet decision. The paper will include options and an EQIA.

It was noted that beneficiaries are largely in South Bristol, in areas with greater levels of deprivation.

12. Risk Report



The Q3 Risk Report was reviewed.

- CRR24 (Procurement and contract management compliance) was previously flagged, and a question was taken to Cabinet regarding this. Members expressed concern that this continues to be incorrectly assessed.
- CRR25 (Suitability of LOB systems) relates to legacy systems.
- CRR30 refers to delivery of the BCC wider clean air plan (excluding CAZ). Members queried the assessment of risk against this item, and how the actions taken through the Climate plan interface with the clean air plan.
- Members were concerned that an Officer was not present to speak to this report. Bespoke reports are not available to the Communities Scrutiny Commission as there is no corresponding Directorate, however it would be useful for an officer to be present to speak to this to address some of the concerns outlined.
- Flooding was also noted as risk, but it was recognised this falls outside of the remit of the CSC.

13. Performance Report Q3

- Item BCP357 (Reduce number of households in temporary accommodation) is well below target. Officers noted that there is an action plan to reduce this involving multi-agency work to increase the amount of “move on” accommodation.
- Item BCP540 (Reduce percentage of people who feel that street litter is a problem in their neighbourhood) is based on the perception of litter. Keep Britain Tidy has undertaken some actions, although this item itself is assessed through the Quality of Life Survey. The impact of greater numbers of people staying at home due to Covid-19 may impact future assessments.

