

Bristol City Council Minutes of the People Scrutiny Commission

14 December 2020 at 10.00 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Claire Hiscott (Chair), Celia Phipps (Vice-Chair), Eleanor Combley, Carole Johnson, Tim Kent, Gill Kirk, Brenda Massey, Steve Smith and Jon Wellington

Also in Attendance:-

Councillor Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor (Communities, Public, Equalities); Councillor Anna Keen, Cabinet Member (Education and Skills); Judith Brown (Bristol Older People's Forum Ambassador)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Councillor English and Pickersgill sent apologies; Councillor Wellington was substitute for Councillor Pickersgill.

Councillors Godwin and Holland sent their apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kent declared that a member of his family had an Education Health Care Plan.

4. Election of Vice-Chair

Councillor Phipps was nominated by Councillor Massey and seconded by Councillor Kent.

There were no further nominations.



RESOLVED;

That Councillor Celia Phipps be Vice Chair for 2020-21.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020 were agreed as a true record.

6. Action Tracker

The Action Tracker was noted.

7. Chair's Business

- The Chair formally noted the 3 Deputy Cabinet Members on the Commission;

They each confirmed their responsibilities;

- Councillor Carole Johnson, Deputy Cabinet Member to Asher Craig (Communities, Equalities, and Public Health).
- Councillor Brenda Massey, Deputy Cabinet Member to Anna Keen (Education and Skills).
- Councillor Celia Phipps, Deputy Cabinet Member to Helen Holland (Adult Social Care).

It was confirmed that the Deputy Cabinet Member would not take part in a scrutiny session where the item was within the remit of their responsibility.

- The Chair explained that there was a change of order for agenda items 8 and 9 (amended agenda was circulated and published)

8. Public Forum

The following Public Forum submissions were noted;



Questions

Ref	Name	Agenda item
Q1	Jenny Grinsted, BS5 Secondary Forum	10 – Temple Quarter free School Update
Qs 2-6	Hayley Hemming	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations
Q7	Tammi Clark	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations

Statements and Petitions

Ref	Name	Agenda item
S1	Jenny Grinsted, BS5 Secondary Forum	10 – Temple Quarter free School Update
S2	Jen Smith	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations
S3	Hayley Hemming	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations
S4	Tammi Clark	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations
S5	Catherine Vallejo Veiga	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations
S6	Councillor Mhairi Threlfall	13 – Work Programme
S7	Tortie Rye, Doula services & Birth preparation	13 – Work Programme
S8	Kay Galpin	11 – Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations

Written answers to the questions were published, accessed via the link below:

[People Scrutiny Commission 14 December 2020 Agenda](#)

RESOLVED;

- That the Public Forum be noted;
- That the statements about maternity services be referred to the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee;
- That the EHCP complaints and communication process be reviewed.



9. The Disproportionate Impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Communities

The Health Equity Lead introduced the report. Dr Mamluk and Dr Jones from Bristol University also spoke to the report. Also present who spoke to the report were Cllr Craig, Deputy Mayor and Chair of the Bristol Race Equality Covid-19 Steering Group, and Dr Brooks, Sirona Health Care and Vice Chair of the Bristol Race Equality Covid-19 Steering Group.

- The Commission was advised that the report was based on national data and was published before the Public Health England report. There had also been local engagement which informed the report.
- It was agreed that the report was an important step forward; including the provision of mechanisms for understanding wards and local communities.
- The Commission noted that the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities was an important aspect of the findings of the Health Scrutiny Working Group.
- The Commission was advised that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities who were dispersed around the city could be better supported by Covid Marshalls and leaders within communities; that there was a need for positive messages from trusted voices, with an understanding that communities were not homogenous; flexibility and an understanding of difference was needed.
- The Deputy Mayor said that there were communication tools readily available to share with councillors who had access to networks and communities and could help communicate information.
- The report was commended, and it was agreed it required wider dissemination. It was recommended that the report should be shared across the Council including other committees, across the organisation, and in the community via local networks.
- The Commission was advised that the Race Equality Covid-19 Steering Group had a set of policy recommendations with related actions and Councillors could engage with any appropriate actions.
- Members were told that although some aspects were driven by data and so could be easily measured, there were some aspects which were longer term which meant impacts might not be seen for a while. There had been evidence of impacts from local people and schools using qualitative data.
- The Deputy Mayor advised the Commission that there were daily ward figures which had been used to track impact of Covid-19; and that the next stage of work would be about vaccines and how uptake could be improved, including a need to overcome scepticism about it. There would be a piece of work, including communication about the vaccine to diverse communities.
- The Commission heard that although there was national policy on NHS charging, some local people able to access health care were not due to communication issues. The Council would bid for funding to research how national policy on health care charging could be implemented locally; this was an area of important focus to ensure equitable access to health care.



- The Deputy Lord Mayor commended the work of the Health Equity Lead and Drs Brooks, Jones and Mamluk; and stated that Covid had exposed racial disparities; that the report was evidence based; and that although uncomfortable, it should be embraced.
- The Deputy Mayor commended the work of the Community Cohesion and Equalities Officer, who had driven the work of the Race Equality Covid-19 Steering Group.
- The Commission was advised that the challenge now would be to encourage and provide information so people could make informed decisions; particularly for the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities there had been misinformation and mistrust. It was important to build public confidence by the provision of good robust clear information.
- The Chair commended the report; that it was positive to hear about practical actions which tackled issues such as social distancing in lifts and how to deal with laundry areas.
- The Chair stated that the report was important in that it captured early information that could be learnt from and built upon; this was the approach taken by the People Scrutiny Working Group which looked at, early on, the effect of Covid-19 on safeguarding children and young people, and which could be learnt from now. This approach with this rapid review meant that, as we moved to vaccination programme, we now had a great body of evidence to learn and build from.

RESOLVED;

That a copy of the Health Scrutiny Working Group final report be sent to the Health Equity Lead and the Race Equality Covid-19 Steering Group for information.

10. Temple Quarter Free School Update

The Director of Education & Skills introduced the report.

- The Cabinet Member for Education stated the advice had been that this would be a difficult site to bring forward. It was expected that the application may be called in by the Secretary of State, which had now happened.
- The Cabinet Member for Education advised the Commission that she had invited the BS5 Secondary Forum to meet with her last December and had worked with them closely since. There had been a real desire to engage, to keep parents informed and be open and honest throughout.
- The understanding of the Cabinet Member for Education was that Oasis had supported the plans for the school, but had reached a point in January 2020 where they halted the provision of a head teacher as a result of the fact there was no opening date and the post was not funded.
- The Commission was advised that the communication between the Department for Education and the Council had needed improvement.



- The Chair stated only Oasis had pitched for the school; that the plan was ambitious and difficult to manage; that it was important that Oasis provided their view on the status of the project.
- At the time it was thought the Free School route would be quicker. The Chair stated that she had experience as a parent who waited for a school, and that it was time to move forward and deliver for children.
- The Director of Education and Skills clarified that there had not been an opportunity to bring this matter to scrutiny earlier; it was in response to the risk of potential call in raised in August; and after the position was known from the DfE that the school would not open in temporary accommodation a solution had to be found very quickly before December Cabinet.
- The Commission was advised that it was confirmed the Year 7 cohort in 2021 would remain with CLF throughout, and there would not be a separate transition.
- There was still a risk that temporary accommodation would not be ready for Temple Quarter site for 2022, and so a 2 year response had been built in.
- The original plan was to place temporary accommodation on a CLF site. The Council was not responsible for temporary accommodation linked to Free Schools. It had been decided that, rather than use the £4.5M for temporary accommodation, this money should be ring-fenced and put to a longer-term strategic intent for the CLF.
- There was an agreement that MPs should be used more to ensure issues not in control of the local authority were brought to the attention of the DfE.
- The Commission was advised there was a risk and concern that the planning consent would not be given; and so part of the parallel planning was that if the planning consent was not granted or the DfE decided to not proceed, then there was a need for a separate solution. As the Council needed to wait for DfE direction, alternatives had been unclear. The Council could not place additional funding for an alternative solution whilst awaiting decisions from the DfE.
- Talks would need to be resumed with the DfE, and it was confirmed that communication had been positive over the last months. The new Regional Schools Commissioner had kept the Council informed.
- If the Free School solution was not pursued capital funding would need to be identified in order to make permanent expansions within the existing education estate. Any decisions to invest would not be able to take place before it was known the outcome of the considerations about the Silverthorne site.
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills confirmed Bristol MPs had engaged in meetings; and that having a second plan had costs associated, which included feasibility studies.

RESOLVED;

- That the Commission be provided with an update on the work done on alternative sites and related planning considerations;



- That the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills meet with the Director of Education, Chair and Scrutiny Group Leads, to consider the questions and points made in the Public Forum submissions; and review next steps, including communication to Robert Jenrick MP and an appraisal of the Learning City Partnership decisions before minutes were published.

11. Review of SEND Evidence Day Findings and Recommendations

The Director of Education & Skills introduced the report.

- The Commission was advised that the timing of the Evidence Day as good because the recommendations informed review of the actions in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA).
- The Commission was advised that as well as progress reviewed by scrutiny, including today, there was also a 4 monthly formal scrutiny of the Written Statement of Action by the DfE and NHS England.
- The WSoA responded to 5 areas of significant weakness; and so this was wider than the Evidence Day focus on EHCPs.
- Officers were thanked for their hard work and progress to improve the EHCP process.
- It was noted that it was unclear whether reports on the Portal were accessible to all, and Members' view was professional reports should be accessible by parents carers and children. The Director for Education and Skills advised the Commission that the Portal should be accessible for everyone; and that it was not known how wide access to reports would be; and as part of the co-production with families the view of the Commission would be considered.
- The ending of funding of EHCPs via top up was welcomed.
- The Commission was advised that the Council was on track to complete the EHCP 2019 backlog by the end of 2020.
- It was the intention to provide examples of BCC good practice for EHCPs after the Time for Change piece of work had been concluded. It was confirmed that each plan should be individual and not copy and pasted from templates.

RESOLVED;

- That the Commission would be updated on the status of the development of a Bristol Support Plan;
- That access to professional reports be considered as part of the co-production of the Portal;
- That it be confirmed whether there is an automatic communication process at 20 weeks for EHCPs.



12. People Scrutiny Working Group Report (Safeguarding children and young people within context of Covid-19)

RESOLVED;

That the report be noted, and a response to the findings and recommendations to be brought the Commission on the 8th March 2021.

13. Work Programme (for information)

RESOLVED;

That the work programme be noted.

Meeting ended at 1pm

CHAIR _____

