

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



11 March 2021 at 5.30 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Paula O'Rourke (Chair), Fabian Breckels (Vice-Chair), Mark Bradshaw, Tom Brook, Martin Fodor, Carole Johnson, Kevin Quartley, Mark Weston and Mark Wright

Officers in Attendance:-

- Stephen Peacock, Executive Director - Growth & Regeneration (BCC)
- Nuala Gallagher, Director: Economy of Place (BCC)
- Colin Molton, Interim Project Director, Temple Quarter (WECA)
- David Carter, Director of Infrastructure (WECA)
- James Graven, Real Estate – Planning & Development at Deloitte
- Kate Cole - Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor (BCC)
- Adam Crowther, Head of City Transport (BCC)
- Patrick Goodey, Flood Risk and Data Manager (BCC)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

- Councillor Tim Rippington sent his apologies. Cllr Gill Kirk substituted for him at the meeting.

3. Declarations of Interest

- Councillor Mark Bradshaw stated that he was a Director of Bristol Holding Ltd and Bristol Heat Network Ltd.



4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as true record.

5. Action Tracker

There were two outstanding actions:

- Housing Delivery; this information had now been sent to Members and would be published on the meeting webpage in due course.
- Western Harbour engagement target audiences; this information was not yet available but would be sent to Members and published as soon as it was.

6. Chair's Business

The Chair said there were two items i.e. Temple Quarter and Strategic Transport Plans on the agenda that were policy development scrutiny and proposed organising Members comments and any recommendations made into a short report that would follow the projects through to policy formation so that there was some real purpose and outcomes from the discussion.

7. Public Forum

Three Public Forum Statements were received.

David Redgewell attended the meeting and spoke to his statement highlighting the following points to Members:

- Unresolved issues regarding potential public transport access at the East side of Temple Meads Station due to the Cattle Market Road bridge.
- Concerns at what was perceived as a lack of alignment between Transport Plans for Local Authorities in the West of England e.g. Park and Ride plans between Bristol and South Gloucestershire.
- A new walking and cycling route between Bristol and Bath.
- Support for the Transport Plans that were being presented to Members at the meeting.

Gavin Smith spoke to his statement and highlighted the following points:

- Fully support bus priority but it should focus on more bus lanes not
- Support for more Park and Rides M32 / M4 should be a priority.
- Bus rapid transits using bendy buses aren't real rapid transit and don't work particularly well. Swansea was used as an example.
- An integrated plan with a tram system is the best option such as that in Birmingham. This type of plan could attract large amounts of funding to implement. If Bristol only asks for funding for more buses it won't get very much.



The Chair thanked all those that had submitted statements for their helpful and insightful contributions. A full record of the Public Forum statements can be found here: [G&R Scrutiny Public Forum March 21](#)

8. Performance Report - Quarter 3

The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor provided a summary of the key points in the published report. It was explained that a number of the key performance indicators (KPIs) were reported on annually and were not therefore reported on in the Quarter 3 Report. Also, some individual transport performance indicators had been suspended due to Covid-19 because it was deemed that any comparisons would be meaningless at this point in time.

The Chair asked about BCPB124a 'percentage of major residential planning applications processed within 13 weeks or as otherwise agreed' and why it was reported that 'the service hasn't been able to bring in the level of additional capacity required to deliver to the performance target due to a significant drop in income in 2020-21'. She asked why was the of revenue so dependent on the size of planning team?

The Executive Director - Growth & Regeneration said that this an interesting question that he couldn't give a precise answer to because it was a complex situation. But it was a function of 'national statutory planning policy' that it was carried out in the way it was. Also, there was a Government White Paper coming soon that could have a big impact on the future model.

No further questions were asked by Members. Officers said that Members were welcome to email officers any questions they had after the meeting.

9. Directorate Risk Report - Quarter 3

The Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the report to Members. It was said that a new risk assessment system had been introduced and the Council was therefore in a transitional period about how it captures, records and talks about risk.

The Director provided some context on the three critical risks contained within the report.

The following points were discussed:

A Member commented on the risks related to delivering major capital projects within the internal or external governance structures the Council creates to manage them and the responsibilities and reputational risks they carry. He asked about new major projects coming up such as the heat networks and how they would be managed and in who's interest would they be managed in? In his view this was part of the risk and how problems arise and effect the Council practically and reputationally. The Executive Director agreed that governance and risk were fundamental to those types of projects. He said there were challenges for any public body whilst manging commercial interfaces but that all local authorities now carry challenges of this nature. In his view it was important to continue to shine daylight on these issues within duties of confidentiality and wherever possible engage with scrutiny and or Member groups. He added that there was a lot experience at the Council between Officers and Members and they should work together because they have many shared objectives.



10. Temple Quarter Delivery Capacity

The Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration introduced the item to Members and said this was an enormous project. Officers had earlier referred to a Joint Delivery Team (JDT) for Temple Quarter and it was confirmed that Colin Molton was currently leading the Team on an interim capacity through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). The Delivery Team was made up of representatives from Bristol City Council and Network Rail. This discussion was about what type of delivery structure model the JDT might become and this decision was essential for what would be the duration of a multi-decade regeneration project.

James Graven from Deloitte attended the meeting and took Members through the published paper that summarised some of the JDT's early work and provided insights on various delivery vehicle models that have been adopted across the UK to promote urban regeneration. The case studies fell into five broad areas which were summarised in the published paper.

It was said that there were pros and cons to each individual model, and it was important to get the choice right, however it could take years to set the delivery vehicle up once it had been decided.

Officers confirmed that the work at Temple Meads Station was already underway which included the enabling works to Temple Island, roof works and a number of other extensive areas, however there were still some decisions to be made about the University Campus. A recent Cabinet paper reported that a grant application for the Station entrances had been submitted to central Government.

A Member asked which of the models in the paper would deliver at pace and would be the most efficient at moving things forward. Officers said that the JDT required a model that allows them the powers to get on with the work. But an important factor to consider was how much confidence the private sector would have in the model that's chosen which increased the necessity to select the correct model for Temple Quarter.

The Director added that there were other fundamental issues to consider, such as planning powers but 'red lines' could be established on what is and isn't desirable such as whether the Council want to continue being the landowner.

The Chair commented that this was looking at a lot of different options, levels of flexibility and weighing up the risks and it was therefore quite difficult for Members to get their heads around.

James Graven said it was a difficult challenge providing confidence to the private sector in terms of the ability to take the programme forward with certainty through potentially different political cycles.

Planning powers were an important local matter but there would be no need to give them up.

A Member who said they had previous experience of living within and working with these types of structures said he thought that what had been discussed so far had been useful and demonstrated why there was a process to assess what the different pros and cons were. However, he still didn't think there was enough information being provided even with the previous briefings and the Member visit that had taken place last year. In his view there needs to be more of a process for Members to engage in to agree and determine what they are trying to get out this in terms of the objectives and outcomes. He said a number of key issues were still unclear for example whether there were risks of public land being handed over to private companies or what the appropriate governance structure was or how different perspectives would be brought together or and balanced or accommodated.

The Director said he recognised a lot of what was being said about the impositions of past development vehicles but this was different and was about Bristol wanting to do something. This was the start of the



conversation and the Cabinet report that had been referred to earlier in the meeting included a 'vision document' which explained how the Council is committed to consultation and engagement. Over the next twelve months there would be a series of discussions with communities and businesses which had already started in St Philips Marsh the previous week with a 'round table' discussion with the Cabinet Member. In the meantime, there was no need to rush into deciding which model was the correct one. The same Member said he hoped scrutiny would have a continued and collaborative role but asked to what extent were the four bodies involved sharing or giving up their private interests?

David Carter Director of Infrastructure at WECA was invited to comment on what had been asked. In his view this was more about drawing together and pooling all of the interests of the JDT and having multilateral discussions so they don't have a situation where they are all having to negotiate separately. This was not so much about giving things up but more of centring together to get them completed even more quickly. That was partly the point of having the JDT.

The Chair said she somewhat agreed with what had been said by another Member about there not being enough 'meat on the bones' for Members to comment to any great extent. She said it wasn't that information was being kept from Members but rather it was as had been described still 'ground zero'. She added that it may appear the Council is giving something away but it is easily overlooked what it is getting back in return for that.

Colin Molton confirmed the next stage for the JDT was to go through the different models and do a sift for a short-list of options to investigate further and this would take place in May.

It was agreed by all that when the process of sifting and short-listing had been completed this would be brought back to the Member Working Group in the first instance for further discussion before it comes back to the Commission.

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and contributions.

Resolved:

- That this topic be added to the Commissions work programme in the new municipal year

11. Strategic Transport Plans

The Head of City Transport introduced the item to Members and talked them through the published slides which encompassed information about the West of England (WoE) Joint Local Transport Plan 4, which included the following key points:

- Mass transit corridors; an evolving project which is at the early stages and will be ten to fifteen years before the schemes are delivered. Four key routes which are progressing.
- Future rail developments such as Bristol East Junction which was said to be crucial
- The closer of Bristol Bridge being brought forward was said to have provided officers with a head start on this work and was key to protecting the bus network by freeing-up space for buses to operate more efficiently by reducing traffic congestion. It has also meant that other proposals could now be accelerated earlier than previously expected.

The following points were discussed, and questions asked:

- A Member asked if and why the yellow bus routes on the proposed future bus network would only travel in one anti-clockwise direction? Officers said yes, they would only turn left because it is



always much easier and quicker than turning right and thus meant fewer delays. But they were also looking at adding in some routes that travel in both directions.

- How would the circular yellow route link up with the existing bus interchange Old Market? If it didn't it would probably not provide any improvements to people travelling in from East Bristol. Officers said that this was indeed the most challenging of the all the routes. Some information about local mass transit had been released earlier that day and Members were encouraged to look at this. Officers were looking at including a mass transit stop at Old Market. In the interim there were other options available such as, diverting services via Feeder Road and Avon Street to Temple Meads where they would be given priority access. Also, officers were looking at routes from the end of the M32 to the train station which would be routed through and connect services at Old Market.
- The Belfast Glider buses; were they the best option or was there a better mode of transport for mass transit? Officers said the routes would be highly segregated to enable them to be reliable and very frequent. These particular types of buses felt very different to regular buses and were more like trams. However, there were a number of other options emerging such as the vehicles currently being used in China that are also being used for the Qatar World Cup that can hold up to 300 people at one time. Another example given was the system used in Toulouse in France. There were pros and cons to all the systems but the key aim was to ensure that the mass transit system was completely segregated from other traffic.
- A Member asked about there being no mention of a Henbury Loop in the presentation and asked if that idea now 'shelved' so to speak? Officers said yes that was the current situation as no work was currently taking place on that.
- Another Member asked about the timescales for the new train stations which he said seemed very long and frustrated many people. Officers provided the following information
 - MetroWest Phase 1 – the line to Portishead should be ready by 2024
 - MetroWest Phase 2 - is almost definitely happening and Ashley Down Station should become serviceable in 2023 according to the current pipeline.
- Integrated ticketing; it had been discussed for many years so would this be possible on the different types of transport being discussed in the strategy? Officers agreed it was fundamental, but it was really down to WECA. Resolving the ticketing issue was slow due to the number of different operators in the City but it wasn't possible to make them do what BCC or WECA want. WECA had now signed-off the strategy
- A Member said that there had been some negative speculation about the Liveable Neighbourhoods (LN) Programme and asked if there would now be more information and communication to stop further speculation and help clarify what was or wasn't being discussed? Officers said they were about to embark on a three-stage consultation and engagement process as part of developing the policy. This would go into a lot of detail about what LN are and what they could mean for communities. Officers also highlighted they had also taken the proposition of LN to the recent Bristol Citizens Assembly and asked participants to assess the potential impacts and they received some very positive responses to it.
- Another Member asked about new cycle paths and whether Transport Officers would be joined up working with parks and green spaces officers to ensure they were linked in with other initiatives? Officers said they had been and would doing more in the future for example at Stoke Park and



creating smaller green spaces where new cycle routes were developed. However, there were some restrictions and some people were against having cycle paths in parks.

- The Chair asked about the point raised during Public Forum about the potential Park and Ride on the M32 and if officers were confident it would go ahead? Officers said they work closely with neighbouring authorities and had been working on a vision study with Highways England and South Gloucestershire Council looking at the prospect. It was said to be a complex and challenging project but they were making progress. They were hopeful it would come forward as a viable scheme because a huge volume of traffic travels down the M32 every day and unless a viable alternative was put in place people will continue to do that.
- With regards to Park and Rides, were Officers talking to YTL about potentially unused car parking spaces during the day at the Brabazon Hanger Arena? Officers said it was an option if they weren't being used already. But people would need to see the benefits first so that they were prepared to get out their cars use the buses instead.

The Chair thanked officers for the amount of detail they had provided at the meeting and all the work they were doing.

12. Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The item was introduced by the Flood Risk and Data Manager who took Members through the published presentation slides which consisted of the following areas:

- Key achievements 2020/21
- Sustainable drainage
- Strategy refresh (2021)

Members were reminded that this item was focussed on the City-wide Flood Strategy and not the River Avon Flood Strategy which it had been previously agreed would be returning to scrutiny in due course. Officers confirmed that Cabinet had that week approved a number of recommendations to endorse the preferred approach of 'adaptive raised defences to manage the risk of flooding from the River Avon as set out in the Strategic Outline Case and approved officers to progress to the development of an Outline Business Case, and apply for grant funding to aid its development'.

- The Harbour condition survey of all the harbour assets; this was now complete and was fundamental to understand before further action could be decided and taken forward.
- Following advice from Scrutiny Members in the previous year the Flood Risk Officers had recruited 11 Flood Wardens across the City
- Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area (ASEA) Ecology Mitigation and Flood Defences Project: This project was said to be a partnership between South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council and the Environment Agency that focuses on helping to support the growth of the Avonmouth Severnside Enterprise Area and protecting the existing communities from flooding. This it was said had been in the pipeline for many years but had now started.
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Officers had undertaken the work themselves and helped the Council's Strategic City Planning Team to do the necessary assessments instead of hiring consultants to do the work. Another key output from this work has been the development of an



online mapping tool that shows all the flood risk modelling results on webpages that will go live very soon and will be available as a resource to the public and developers.

- Sustainable Drainage Schemes: use green infrastructure to reduce flooding rather than traditional pipes and officers are looking to install more of them. The scheme is linked to wider initiatives such as the Liveable Neighbourhoods Projects. The Southmead Regeneration SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Scheme) work had now been completed and Phase 2 was now being planned. Officers asked Members to notify them of any new transport schemes or ideas where additional SuDS could potentially be built in.
- The Environment Agency had recently up-dated their Flood Risk Strategy and Officers proposed to up-date the Council's Strategy in line with that. Details of how they will be aligned are contained within the published slide deck.

The following points were then discussed:

The Chair thanked Officers for the up-date and information and said she had been impressed that they had completed the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in-house instead of using consultants. The Chair also remarked how the Team always reported solid progress whenever they come to scrutiny.

Another Member commented that the work was excellent and that he would bare SuDS in mind for future transport works. He also asked what the timetable for the River Avon Flood Strategy was now. Officers said the next steps following Cabinet's endorsement was to complete the business case which would take some time and would be in two phases. Phase 1 would be constructed in the 2020's subject to funding and planning consent. Phase 2 was said to be adaptable depending on climate change but it was likely be in the 2060's.

The Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration said there was still a lot of work to do on the funding strategy which involved bringing money in from a variety of sources including central Government and developer contributions. To get to a point where there was reasonable certainty on the funding strategy was a top priority for the next twelve months.

It was asked to what extent could existing developments be influenced or relied upon to make modifications to improve drainage systems? Officers said one of the things they were keen for the strategy to promote was look at key river corridors and the areas in between them and see what can be done to make them work better for people, nature and reduce flood risk. However, it was difficult to retro-fit SuDS because of constraints but they could happen anywhere and there was no bad place to install them because they always provided benefits. New developments were said to be doing very well at reducing flood risk and all planning applications now leave with some flood risk reduction included.

The Chair thanked all the Officers for their time and added that she had learnt a lot and felt genuinely optimistic about what was happening in Bristol after the Commissions' meetings.

13. Work Programme

The work programme was noted with the Chair adding that that it had been successfully delivered thought the year.



Meeting ended at 8.10 pm

CHAIR _____

