

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



16 November 2021 at 5.00 pm

### Members Present:-

**Councillors:** David Wilcox (Chair), Sarah Classick (Vice-Chair), Jenny Bartle, Tony Dyer, Chris Jackson, Kevin Quartley, Tim Rippington and Richard Eddy

### Also in attendance:

**Councillors:** Martin Fodor, Barry Parsons, Emma Edwards (for item 12 - Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy Update)

## 1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting.

The Chair noted that agenda item 13 – City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal Programme, would commence directly after agenda item 11 – Heat Decarbonisation of the Welsman Building (OED) due to travel arrangements for officers presenting.

## 2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Cllrs Helen Godwin and Mark Weston. Cllr Richard Eddy substituted for Cllr Mark Weston.

Apologies were received from Cllr Amirah Cole, Member of Communities Scrutiny Commission, for item 12 – Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy Update.

## 3 Declarations of Interest

Agenda item 13 – Cllr Dyer declared that he was a Member for the Board of Director's for Bedminster BID which received funding from the High Streets Recovery Fund.

## 4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

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



## 5 Chair's Business

The Chair noted that Members of the Communities Scrutiny Commission were invited to join the meeting for agenda item 12 - Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy Update for a joint discussion.

The Chair also reminded officers that presentations should not exceed 5 minutes, where possible, to allow more time for discussion.

## 6 Public Forum

Public Forum questions were received from Clive Stevens regarding the Housing Delivery Plan which can be found [here](#). Clive was in attendance and asked the following supplementary questions:

Clive noted that out of the administration's commitment to deliver 1000 affordable homes a year in 3 years' time, 550 of those homes will be either HRA or Goram Homes but asked how many years this could continue before breaching financial constraints.

The Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration noted that the Housing Delivery Plan would be brought to Cabinet in February 2022 and all modelling would be based on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which runs until 2025-2026. Beyond 2026, the council will have additional borrowing capabilities.

There was conversation around the South Glos council housing register in comparison with Bristol and it was stated that building on brownfield sites is more expensive than green field which makes it more difficult when trying to deliver affordable homes.

It was noted that a report was not published for item 16, Housing Delivery Plan – Exempt, as the public report was published within item 14, Housing Delivery Plan. It was confirmed that this would be made clearer in future.

Two Public Forum statements were received.

David Redgewell was in attendance and presented a statement regarding the Corporate Strategy & iPoint ticket machines.

Clive Stevens was in attendance and presented a statement regarding the Housing Delivery Plan.

**Resolved; That Public Forum be noted.**

## 7 Annual Business Report

**Resolved; That the Annual Business Report 21/22 for the Growth & Regeneration Scrutiny Commission be noted.**

## 8 Work Programme



The Chair advised that the next meeting would take place in January/February 2022 and noted that the items scheduled were as follows: Temple Quarter/Temple Island, Western Harbour, River Avon Flood Strategy and Bristol Flood Risk Strategy (statutory).

**Resolved; That the Work Programme be noted.**

## 9 Quarter 1 Performance Report

The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor presented the Quarter 1 Performance Report and highlighted key areas.

Members had some questions around the performance reporting process and were unsure as to whether Covid-19 had been reflected in the targets. Members noted that some performance indicators didn't have 'Red Amber Green' (RAG) ratings and it wasn't clear to see the progress from previous years. Also, Members asked for clarification on the purpose of the +/- column.

The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor noted that there is standard reporting across all commissions and confirmed that the impact of Covid-19 was considered in discussions when setting the performance indicators. It was noted that the team were looking at developing the performance framework to possibly make it more interactive.

**ACTION:** The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor advised that clarification on specific indicators; BCP425 - Increase the number of affordable homes delivered in Bristol, BCP419 - Reduce the council's carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (in tonnes), and around the performance matrix would be provided after the meeting.

Some concerns were raised about how it was being reported whether services were behind schedule to meet their delivery targets. Members asked if this data was available and could be shared in future reports. It was confirmed that most data around meeting targets was measured but it was usually done on a case by case basis.

Members also raised some concerns around house building targets. It was stated that these would be more developed in Quarters 3 & 4 Performance Reports and suggested the commission review them again then.

**ACTION:** The Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor advised that the specific figures behind the reported % for BPC434 - Reduce the proportion of deaths attributed to particulate air pollution, were part of Public Health data, but would investigate further to see if further detail could be provided after the meeting.

Members were concerned around lack of figures for some of the annual measures but were advised that these were only reported at the end of the year; Head of Service are asked to provide a summary based on the year end data but are classed as ongoing.

## 10 Quarter 1 Risk Report

The Risk & Insurance Senior Officer presented the Quarter 1 Risk Report and highlighted key areas. It was noted that questions requiring detail on the background of specific risks may have to be re directed to service managers for a response following the meeting.

Members were concerned around risk CRR32 - Failure to deliver enough affordable homes to meet the city's needs and asked what the council is doing to address this. The Head of Housing Delivery noted that



improvement was expected in the next quarter and suggested that further detail around housing risks could be covered within item 14 – Housing Delivery Plan.

Members also asked about business continuity and the Executive Director for Growth & Regeneration advised that this was a corporate challenge that was under constant review. There was an ongoing challenge with recruitment and retention of staff along with sickness absence. It was noted that there was a budget gap that needed to be filled and colleagues were looking at publishing draft budgets soon.

There were concerns around risk CRR12 relating to the failure to deliver suitable emergency planning specifically around the recent fuel shortages that had an impact on key workers. The Executive Director confirmed that plans were in place to address this.

A Member commented on the risks relating to delivering long term major capital projects and suggested that the council's Strategic Partner, Arcadis, come to a future meeting to discuss. The Executive Director agreed to assist in setting this up and suggested that the session covers the wider management of the Capital Programme.

Members expressed some confusion around the multiplication figures in the report. The Risk & Insurance Officer referred members to the scoring matrix on page 10 of the appendix and confirmed that a briefing could be provided on this for further clarification. It was noted that where a risk increases in score, it means the risk has gotten worse.

A Member raised concerns around flood prevention locally as they had previously been advised that the current infrastructure wasn't suitable and the only way to resolve was to redesign the drainage system; They asked if this was covered within the flooding risks and also, if the effects of climate change had been considered. The Executive Director advised that the flooding risks were very broad and noted that local upgrades to infrastructure would depend on the severity of the threat and the funding available. Also, that climate change had been considered within the flooding risks but would welcome any feedback on this.

There was some confusion around risk CRR27 - Transport Capital Programme Delivery and Members asked for a list projects that were considered as risks and the Head of City Transport advised that the information would be sent to members after the meeting.

**ACTION:** Information on the Transport Capital Programme Delivery projects that were considered as risks to be provided to Members after the meeting.

## **11 Heat Decarbonisation of the Welsman Building (OED)**

The Energy Project Manager introduced the report and explained the reason for the Emergency Key Decision.

There were some questions around the cost of the new heating system, but Members were advised that there were supply constraints and price rises could be seen across the board.

**Resolved; That the Heat Decarbonisation of the Welsman Building Officer Executive Decision be endorsed by Members.**

## **12 Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy Update**



The Cabinet Member for Transport introduced the item and advised on a recent change of direction for the administration's approach to Liveable Neighbourhoods in Bristol. The Director of Economy of Place noted that the papers published for the meeting were based on information produced prior to the administration's change of direction for the strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Transport said that the Strategy wasn't fulfilling their ambitions for the City and noted that the approach should be more community focused with strong involvement from councillors. Also, that there was no clarity around funding for the strategy which made it difficult to plan next steps. The Administration would instead like to produce a 'handbook' which outlines roles and responsibilities, and how stakeholders, Members and communities will work together on the vision.

Members asked about timescales and resource available for delivery. Transport officers noted that the strategy was not fully funded which meant there was some uncertainty around what could be delivered. Funding for the project would come from bids submitted to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and Department for Transport (DFT).

It was noted that £150k was allocated to the existing Mini Holland pilot in East Bristol which was due to be delivered by March 2023. Transport colleagues were working on a bid to WECA for further funding to expand the scheme, however, they were not expecting to receive as much as they initially hoped for.

Members asked for clarification around future plans for the strategy and the Cabinet Member for Transport advised that they were hoping to have the handbook ready by March 2022 with the intention to produce a strategy once the outcomes of the East Bristol pilot are clear.

A Member noted that the implementation of Mini Holland areas in London had resulted in an increased wait time for the arrival of emergency vehicles and raised concerns around this for East Bristol, but Transport Officers advised that this was not expected to cause a problem in Bristol.

Members generally endorsed the change in direction for the strategy and agreed that more community involvement was key however, raised strong concerns and frustrations around length of time that Bristol had already spent working on the Strategy and the impact on expectations in the community. There were also concerns from Members around plans for the project in the interim period until outcomes of the pilot scheme are available in 2023. Members were keen to have more involvement in the project and asked that an updated report be provided to the commission on plans for Liveable Neighbourhoods going forwards and timescales for delivery.

**ACTION:** Cllr Alexander to provide Commission Members with a written description regarding the proposed 'handbook' along with timescales for delivery and cost.

**Resolved; That an updated report on Liveable Neighbourhoods be provided in due course.**

### **13 City Centre & High Streets Recovery and Renewal Programme**

The City Centre and High Streets Project Manager introduced the report and shared a presentation on the initial findings from the recent City Centre & High Streets recovery survey which closed on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November:

- Overall, there were 2463 responses to the survey.
- Shopping was the main reason for visiting high streets followed by leisure/social.
- Walking was the main form of travel to high streets.



- Most people visit their local high street 2-3 times a week.
- Most people visit for up to 30 mins.
- Overall dissatisfaction for high streets around appearance, shops & services, and events & cultural activities.
- Vacant Property Grant Scheme has been launched.
- The team will fully analyse, prepare, and share plans for further engagement in December 21/January 22.

A Member expressed concerned around levels of engagement in some areas specifically, Stapleton Road, and asked if the team were engaging with Neighbourhoods and Communities officers. The High Streets Project Manager advised that the Street Team had visited every high street at least twice and that they had received 100 survey responses from Stapleton Road. Also, that they were working with the Neighbourhoods and Communities team to help with the delivery of information and confirmed that all businesses were hand delivered a copy of the survey.

Members asked if data was collected on equalities in the responses to the survey and were advised that this was an initial selection of data as the survey had only recently closed but the full results would be shared when available.

A Member noted that the deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 for applications for the Welcome Back Fund may make it difficult for people to apply and asked if there was any way extending it.

**ACTION:** Officers to look into the possibility of extending the deadline for Welcome Back Fund applications.

There were concerns around the number of business and commercial properties recorded as vacant as it was thought there were more than noted on the list provided for some high streets. Also, around the types of businesses in different high streets; some would require more funding specifically smaller high streets and those that have lots of VCSEs/charity shops. The Head of Economic Development noted that part of the engagement stage was to speak with businesses and communities and account for their needs in that particular area.

Members raised that only a proportion of the funding allocation for the programme was noted in the report (paragraph 2.9) showing the high street breakdown and asked where the rest of the funding was going to be allocated. The City Centre and High Streets Project Manager noted that a more detailed breakdown would be shared with members after the meeting but advised that the remaining funding would go towards supporting the Vacant Commercial Property Grant Scheme, the City Centre and to fund the Arts & Development Officer who is supporting the project.

**ACTION:** Officers to provide a more detailed breakdown of the remaining funding allocation.

Members asked how the project is integrating with Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy and were advised that a colleague from the Transport Team sits on the City Centre & High Streets Recovery Programme Board which oversees the project. Members suggested that representatives from transport groups should be involved in those conversations too.

## **14 Housing Delivery Plan**

The Head of Housing Delivery introduced the report and shared a presentation on Project 1000.





Members acknowledged the issues around capacity but urged that there was a need to improve the delivery process and build more homes, quicker. The Executive Director emphasised the challenges around delivery and noted that the team were working very hard to ensure acceleration of the programme.

It was suggested that the team engage with the communities around the proposed sites, both brownfield and green spaces, and there was a conversation around the consideration of high rise flats and whether residents would accept this.

Members asked what financial risk the council would be taking on whilst trying to reach the targets in line with the Corporate Risk Report and the Executive Director advised that some sites are council assets so the risk would be relatively low.

## **15 Exclusion of Press and Public**

There was no exempt session as no commercially sensitive information was discussed.

## **16 Housing Delivery Plan - Exempt**

This agenda item was not required.

Meeting ended at 19:53

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

