

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Commission

23 November 2021 at 5.30 pm



Members Present:-

Councillors: Henry Michallat (Vice-Chair), Martin Fodor (Chair), Alex Hartley, James Scott, Hibaq Jama, Emma Edwards and Ani Stafford-Townsend

Officers in Attendance:-

Amy Rodwell (Scrutiny Advisor), Christina Gray (Service Director, Public Health), Johanna Holmes (Scrutiny Coordinator), Patsy Mellor (Director: Management of Place), Ken Lawson (Waste Strategic Client Manager), Kate Cole (Strategic Intelligence & Performance Advisor), Richard Ennion (Horticultural Service Manager), Jon James (Head of Service Natural & Marine Environment), Jacq Abraham (Senior Sports and Physical Activity Development Officer), Sally Hogg (Consultant in Public Health), Ben Hooper (Risk & Insurance Officer).

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all the attendees to the Commissions' first meeting of the municipal year. As this was a pilot hybrid meeting, all those attending in-person and remotely were asked to introduce themselves.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barry Parsons and Amirah Cole. Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend substituted for Councillor Barry Parsons.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Action Sheet

There were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.

Resolved; That the minutes and action sheet from the previous meeting on 8th February 2021 be approved as an accurate record.



5 Chair's Business

The Chair covered the arrangements for how the hybrid meeting would be conducted. He also briefly described some of the work the Commission Members had undertaken over the past few months such as the Ecological Emergency Action Plan Scrutiny Briefing and starting their inquiry a Trees Working Group.

6 Public Forum

There was no Public Forum.

7 Annual Business Report

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator presented the Annual Business Report 21/22 and highlighted the recommendations outlined in the report.

Resolved; That the Annual Business Report 21/22 for the Communities Scrutiny Commission be noted.

8 Work Programme

Members noted the Work Programme.

9 Q1 Risk Report

The Risk and Insurance Senior Officer presented the Quarter 1 Risk Report and highlighted the key areas. It was noted that risk CRR42 - 'Provision of leisure centres' had been referred to Communities Scrutiny Commission by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board and that it would be discussed in more detail within agenda item 14 – Bristol Leisure Services.

The Chair reminded Members that not all risks covered within the report were relevant to the Communities Scrutiny Commission Terms of Reference.

There were no comments received from Members for this item.

10 Q1 Performance Report

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

The Chair noted that Performance Indicator BCP541 had been referred to Communities Scrutiny Commission by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board and that it would be discussed in more detail within agenda item 13 - Waste Recycling Information Report.

There were no comments received from Members for this item.



11 Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

The Parks Horticultural Service Manager introduced the report and shared a presentation with further information on the strategy.

It was noted that the current strategy was out of date and needed to be updated to reflect environmental changes and in response to the Ecological Emergency Strategy, Climate Strategy and Ecological Emergency Action Plan. The new strategy aims towards ensuring that citizens have a park within a 10 minute walk from their home. A series of engagement workshops had been set up and a steering group established to support the work of the strategy.

Members asked what constitutes as a green space and what is meant by 'accessible' in this context. It was advised they are public assets that facilitate access to nature on both small and large scale as well as access to play for children. Accessible parks and green spaces are good quality, functional spaces within walking distance from someone's home.

A Member asked if the decrease in the number of green spaces is as a result of an increased population. Members were advised that Bristol hadn't lost green space, but the metric is based on meter squared per capita so as the population had increased, it had pulled back the amount available per individual. Bristol has a projected population increase of 70,000 over the next 20 years which will have an impact on provision in the future and is likely to lead to a deficit in the most deprived areas.

A Member asked how the strategy will ensure that everyone has a park or green space within a 10 minute walk from their homes. It was advised that the accessibility standard can be met but not all spaces are good quality; the strategy aims to drive quality predominantly in the most deprived areas of the city. Members noted that some private estates would have parks and green spaces and asked if conversations with those estates were taking place. It was noted that a number of stakeholders will need to be involved in the co design.

Members asked if there are any plans to turn undeveloped land into green spaces and were advised that this would happen as part of the Ecological Emergency response. Regional strategic corridor mapping for green spaces had been done by the West of England Combined Authority to ensure that nature was given the opportunity to thrive.

There was a conversation around food growing in the city and the role of allotments as well as food growing in public spaces, and it was noted that this needed to be addressed in the strategy.

Members noted that there is a difference between adaptation and mitigation of climate change which were both competing priorities, and that this should be explicit in the strategy.

The need for investment to address flooding of parks/waterlogged paths was discussed and Members were advised that funds would need to be found to address this.

A Member noted that there is limited play equipment specifically in central areas of the city, and with Bristol having a large population of under 15 year olds living in those areas, lots living in flats with no outside space, accessibility is difficult. Members asked what is being done to help children access green spaces further out e.g., sufficient public transport options. Officers noted that this was a key theme in the strategy and that they were working with colleagues in the People directorate to develop this. It was noted that not every park has the same level of facilities, and this would need to be prioritised.

Members asked about prioritisation parameters and were advised that there will be engagement with communities but were evaluating by observation at this stage for example is the space clean/welcoming, facilities available, safety and quality.



The Chair highlighted the key topics covered within the discussion and noted that priorities for communities would come following consultation of the strategy.

12 Bristol Future Parks

The Head of Natural Marine & Environment introduced the item and highlighted key points. It was noted that a mistake had been made in the [Future Parks Report](#) within section 1, under sub-heading 'progress to date' where bullet point 17 should read as follows: 'Launch of the expression of interest on 25th October 2021, which is open 31st December 2021.'

Members were advised that as part of the relaunched Bristol Future Parks programme, the team were looking at more sustainable ways to manage and secure income streams for the parks. It was noted that an 'expressions of interest' pilot was taking place looking at 5 sites to secure ideas for income generation which was open for submissions until 31st December 2021.

A Member raised concerns around the lack of communication when submitting expressions of interest which has led people being put off the process. Officers advised that they were trying to respond to everyone and asked for Members to direct specific cases to the team following the meeting. It was confirmed that 12 expressions of interest had been received to date.

A Member asked what would happen with money for the Accelerator Fund given that the project was coming to an end. It was advised that the council did not have to repay any of the grant funding secured. A Member asked how much of the council's reserves had been spent on future parks and were advised that it was just over £200,000. The intention is that in the future the council will generate enough interest to pay back those funds and more.

There was a conversation about balancing the methods of raising revenue for parks and ensuring the health and wellbeing offer is still there. Officers advised that they would like to compliment the parks, for example adding a café; People don't need to use the café if they want to just visit the park, but if they do then it helps to generate income, which will go back into the parks' funds.

Members asked if individuals are allowed to teach and run sessions in parks such as, fitness classes and personal trainers. The Director of Management of Place confirmed that an annual fee would be introduced for the use of Bristol's parks for these types of sessions to ensure the space is maintained and that individuals are qualified. Even if people use the space on a voluntary basis, the council would still need to know, but not necessarily charge.

It was confirmed that parks staff who visit on a regular basis will be in touch with people currently using the spaces. Members noted that information would need to be communicated and suggested that notice boards be displayed in parks and information be published on the council's website; Officers said this is something they would be able to look at.

Cllr Jama arrived 7:28pm.

13 Waste and Recycling Information Report

The Waste Strategic Client Manager introduced the item and highlighted key points mentioned in the report. As a result of lockdown due to Covid-19, more household waste was being generated and



research was taking place to evaluate the impacts of this further. It was noted that a key focus was on waste prevention as well as recycling.

A Members noted that large companies such as Coca Cola are promoting new recyclable packing and asked if there was any change of large business in Bristol supporting the council in reducing waste. It was noted that workshops were taking place with producers to discuss funding for recycling and to encourage behavioural change.

There were concerns around the recycling rates reducing and residual waste rates increasing. The Waste Strategic Client Manager advised that the closure of recycling centres and suspension of services such as garden waste collection during lockdown has impacted the recycling rates. An increase in the number of people working from home, spending more time at home due to Covid-19 have resulted in more waste being produced. Also, it was emphasised that there was a need to address the behavioural change of generating more waste at home as this will impact on BCC reaching its targets in the longer term.

Members asked how Bristol performed in comparison to the Core Cities and were advised that the data on this was not currently available, but the latest figures would come through in early 2022. Nationally, recycling had dropped by 3% in 2020.

A Member asked about the council's overarching plan to tackle street waste specifically for people living in non-standard housing such as flats above shops in central areas where the space isn't available. Also, access to recycling points. The Waste Strategic Client Manager advised that there is a recycling service being rolled out to flats to address this issue but acknowledges that this was not a 'one size fits all' and this may not suit everyone. The team were looking at tidying the streets and getting more convenient ways of recycling for these people but also pushing for behavioural change.

14 Bristol Leisure Services

The Public Health Consultant introduced the report and shared a presentation to update Members on sport and physical activity in the city. Key points were as follows:

- Sport and Physical Activity sits within Communities in Public Health and areas of work include: Sport Strategies, Leisure Management Contracts and Sport & Physical Activity Development.
- Currently developing a system approach to healthy weight and physical activity.
- More deprived areas of the city, specifically South Bristol, had highest levels on inactivity with people doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week.
- A Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was launched in 2020.

The Senior Sports & Physical Activity Development Officer covered Sport Strategies, Leisure Management Contracts, and development projects in more detail. It was noted that the council's main contract, SLM/Everyone Active, was up for re-procurement in 2022.

Members noted the need for accessible SEND swimming lessons for people that could not afford private lessons which was acknowledged by officers. Also, highlighted was the importance of the link between physical activity and mental health. Officers agreed and said was certainly more to be done in that area. A Member asked if there was any engagement with local sports clubs to encourage more young people to get involved and it was advised that the team were working closely with Westport on promoting sport and physical activity but did not work with individual clubs unless there was a specific need for support.



There was a conversation around accessibility to public transport to enable people to travel to facilities and it was noted that work needs to be done and to specifically address the impact on people living in the more deprived areas of the city.

15 Exclusion of Press and Public

That under s.100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Act.

16 Bristol Leisure Services

This part of the meeting was held in a closed - exempt session. The minutes are not publicly available.

Meeting ended at 8.37 pm

CHAIR _____

