

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



22 March 2023 at 5.00 pm

Members present:

Cllr David Wilcox, Chair, Cllr Andrew Varney, Vice-Chair, Cllr Marley Bennett, Cllr Emma Edwards, Cllr Steve Pearce, Cllr Kevin Quartley, Cllr Tim Rippington, Cllr Graham Morris (substitute for Cllr Mark Weston), Cllr Patrick McAllister (substitute for Cllr Jenny Bartle)

Cabinet members in attendance:

Cllr Don Alexander, Cabinet member for Transport
Cllr Kye Dudd, Cabinet member for Climate, Ecology, Waste and Energy
Cllr Tom Renhard, Cabinet member for Housing Delivery and Homes

Officers in attendance:

John Smith, Director: Economy of Place
Matthew Sugden, Principal Flood Risk Officer
Philip Davies, Strategic Highways Maintenance and Street Lighting Team Manager
Pete Woodhouse, Transport Strategy Manager
Ian Hird, Scrutiny Advisor

15 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

16 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Jenny Bartle and Cllr Mark Weston. It was further noted that Cllr Patrick McAllister was attending the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Bartle and Cllr Graham Morris was attending as a substitute for Cllr Weston.

17 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Morris advised that he was a trustee of South Bristol Sports Centre.



18 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Commission **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 25 January 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

19 Action Tracker

The latest action tracker was noted.

Points raised/noted:

1. Corporate risk register - CRR41 - Capital portfolio delivery: Whilst noting that a link to the Council's capital programme had been circulated, Cllr Rippington suggested that it would be useful for a more detailed list to be produced, setting out the full list of capital projects included within the programme, together with a status update against each project. The Director: Economy of Place undertook to establish if this would be possible (see also the minute below relating to the work programme).

2. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - request to check the position in terms of whether the Temple Quarter regeneration project would in time see improved cycle links from there to the Feeder Road/St Anne's area: It was noted that the Temple Quarter development framework, which was now being consulted on, included provision of an enhanced cycling route along the Feeder route to St Anne's. This was a very high-level document so proposals would need significant further development through subsequent masterplanning and business case development. A link to the consultation document had been circulated.

20 Chair's Business

None.

21 Public Forum

Public questions:

It was noted that the following public questions had been received (written replies had been circulated and published in advance of the meeting):

Q1-5. Tom Swithinbank - topic: Strategic transport & City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).



Q6-7. Totterdown Residents Environmental and Social Action (TRESA) - topic: Strategic Transport & CRSTS.

In response to supplementary oral questions, officers confirmed:

- that whilst the importance of the walking and cycling route from the Three Lamps junction, over Bath Road bridge towards Temple Meads was recognised, there was insufficient funding within the CRSTS programme to enable improvements for this specific route.
- that a report seeking approval of a revised approach to the delivery of the A37/A4018 corridor scheme was due to be submitted to the 2 May Cabinet; this would include full details of the consultation that had taken place.

Q8-9. David Redgewell/Gordon Richardson - topic: Strategic transport and CRSTS.

A supplementary oral question was asked about whether, as part of its governance arrangements, the West of England Combined Authority could ensure that a system was in place to keep ward councillors across its constituent authorities informed about changes in bus services. In response, it was noted that this was a matter that would need to be directed to the Combined Authority for a response; from an officer perspective, any such action from the Combined Authority would be welcomed.

In response to a further supplementary oral question, it was noted that the Combined Authority was responsible for implementing the new WESTlink on-demand minibus service that would be operational from April, including the service that would serve certain schools and colleges after the Easter holiday period.

Q10. Suzanne Audrey - topic: Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

In response to a supplementary oral question, officers advised that work was ongoing in terms of liaising with the Environment Agency in building confidence in the Council's flood strategy and related flood funding strategy. In line with this, in October 2022, the Cabinet had approved an Initial Collaborative Agreement between the Council and the Environment Agency, noting that a Memorandum of Agreement was in place setting out the partnership relationship between the two organisations. The aim of the Council was to increase housing availability in the city and also protect the city from flood risk.

Q11. Suzanne Audrey - topic: Western Harbour update.

In response to a supplementary oral question, it was noted that the intention, subject to funding being secured from the West of England Combined Authority, was to undertake masterplanning work. This work would be informed by a range of relevant factors including environmental and heritage considerations.

Q12. Joe Banks - topic: Western Harbour update.

Q13-17. Martin Rands - topic: Western Harbour update.

Q18. Dan Ackroyd - topic: Western Harbour update.

Public statements:

It was noted that the following public statements had been received:



1. Suzanne Audrey - topic: Flood risk management strategy.
 2. Martin Rands - topic: Western Harbour update.
 3. David Redgewell & Ian Beckey - topic: Strategic transport/CRSTS.
 4. Brendon Taylor - topic: Strategic transport/CRSTS.
 5. Sue Sage - topic: Strategic transport / CRSTS.
 6. Cllr Graham Morris - topic: Strategic transport / CRSTS.
- Individuals in attendance presented their statements to the committee.

22 Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Commission was updated on and discussed the Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, as updated in February 2023.

Summary of main points raised:

1. Members received a presentation on the strategy from Matthew Sugden, Principal Flood Risk Officer. Key points highlighted in the presentation included:
 - a. The Council had a statutory duty to maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
 - b. The strategy provided an overview of all of the flood risk management work undertaken between key partners in the city and focused on sources of local flood risk, including rainfall, groundwater and ordinary watercourses for which Council had particular duties and powers.
 - c. The Avonmouth Severnside Ecology Mitigation and Flood Defence project was a key area of ongoing work, involving the construction of new wetland habitats and flood defences that better protected existing properties and supported sustainable development in the area for the future.
 - d. Over £6m of funding had been secured for the Resilient Frome project to support innovative resilience measures in the River Frome catchment area. This project sought to deliver sustainable solutions to land and water management through six discrete work streams, in partnership with Wessex Water, South Gloucestershire Council and the Environment Agency.
 - e. A detailed action plan was included within the strategy document, with actions mapped against key local objectives.
2. Re: page 10 of the strategy document (references to flood relief works across the city): Cllr Rippington referred to the repair of the Brislington Brook retaining wall and construction of a new flood defence retaining wall, and asked how many properties had been protected through this action. It was noted that this information would be supplied separately.
3. In response to questions about how drainage was assessed in relation to large, new developments ahead of planning approval/construction, it was noted that details of drainage should be included as part of development proposals/planning applications, together with any appropriate mitigation against flood risk, e.g. that might be caused through surface water run-off. It was also noted that all new developments should use sustainable drainage systems where possible. An action had been completed to



formalise the process for reviewing planning applications in line with development management standards.

4. In response to a question, officers confirmed that they were happy to meet with local councillors to discuss community flood plans.

5. In response to questions around funding, it was noted that it was anticipated that innovative finance opportunities and funding from private beneficiaries and/or partners would become increasingly important elements in funding the Council's flood strategy as the process for securing such funds developed. All opportunities would also continue to be explored to secure funding via the West of England Combined Authority.

6. There was a discussion about the ongoing issue of flooding problems in subways and underpasses across the city following heavy rainfall. Cllr Edwards commented that there were important issues around how this restricted individuals' mobility for prolonged periods and impacted on active travel (pedestrians, cyclists, e-scooters) if routes, e.g. at the Lawrence Hill roundabout, were blocked by significant subway/underpass flooding. It was noted that Council contractors would be mapping out drains across the city's 40 pedestrian subways as part of the Council's ongoing work to fix these perennial flooding issues; a new project would use CCTV cameras to assess the condition of drains, which would inform decisions about prioritising repair work based on finances available.

7. Re: page 15 of the strategy document (references to ground water flooding): In response to a question, it was noted that the risk of groundwater flooding in Bristol was not as well understood as other risks at this time but was considered to be relatively low in comparison to the risk of flooding from other sources, and tended to be very localised when it did occur.

8. Whilst welcoming the references within the strategy to important issues around habitat improvement/protection and active travel, Cllr Pearce commented that it was important to recognise that the primary focus of the strategy was on flood prevention and minimising the impact of flooding on residents and businesses when it did occur. It was noted that in some cases, applications for external funding could be enhanced by also incorporating related benefits such as habitat and active travel benefits.

9. The Chair referred to the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on sea level rise and suggested there would be an urgent need to assess the implications of this in relation to the flood management strategy.

10. In response to questions, it was noted that in relation to the central city area, a report was being brought through for Cabinet approval in relation to the docks sluices at Underfall Yard, which were not operating correctly and needed investment to repair and prevent potential flooding.

The Commission **RESOLVED:**

- To note the updated Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and the above comments and information.



23 Strategic Transport & City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)

The Commission received an update on Strategic Transport & City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) projects.

Summary of main points raised:

1. Pete Woodhouse, Transport Strategy Manager, gave a presentation to the Commission. The key areas covered by the presentation were:

- a. an update on CRSTS projects, including: A4 Portway; A4 Bath Rd; A4018, A37/A4018; City centre; A38 south; East Bristol liveable neighbourhood; Old city; Point closures.
- b. an update on other projects, specifically in terms of arena mitigations and the zero emissions transport city project.

It was noted that a key overall aim was that buses would be given more priority over cars along four main routes into Bristol city centre. This would see interventions on the four key routes to make buses more punctual and journey times quicker. This was likely to include new bus lanes affecting the Portway, A4 Bath Road, A38, and the A37 and A4018 and include upgrades to assist pedestrians and cyclists.

2. In relation to the A4 Bath Road project, a question was raised about the opportunities for local ward councillors to input into discussions about options. It was noted that this was a regional project co-ordinated by the West of England Combined Authority with input from Bristol City Council and Bath and North East Somerset Council. The Combined Authority was currently examining option assessments for bus priority and walking/cycling improvements, and it was understood that consultation was likely to take place on a number of options in summer 2023. From the Bristol perspective, officers were keen to ensure that local councillors were kept fully informed about the potential options, and their related benefits/impacts. It was noted that the A4 scheme was aiming to achieve a new standard for bus punctuality along that corridor.

3. Also in relation to the A4 Bath Road project, Cllr Varney queried whether there was any possibility of developing an option around a flexible bi-directional bus lane solution along the lines of the road arrangement in place in Cardiff, i.e. a bus lane/road signalling arrangement that could be used flexibly perhaps as a three lane system so that two lanes of traffic could be opened for 'incoming to Bristol traffic' during the morning traffic peak flow period (with one lane available for outbound traffic), with the reverse applying during the late afternoon/early evening peak flow period. Cllr Varney requested that he be sent a written response on this point.

4. Cllr Rippington expressed general concern at the length of time that had been taken by the Combined Authority in assessing and bringing forward options for the A4 corridor. Whilst recognising the complexities involved, he expressed the hope that the new options/ solutions being brought through for consultation would be comprehensive and holistic, and aimed at achieving long term benefits.



5. Cllr Bennett referred to the proposed changes at the Victoria Street/Bristol Bridge junction. Whilst acknowledging that the congestion around this junction had improved since the closure of Bristol Bridge for general motor traffic, he queried whether some aspects of the new changes might bring pedestrians and cyclists into potential conflict. In response, officers acknowledged that this location represented a challenge due to convergence of pedestrians and cyclists; however, very careful consideration was being given to the design of the changes, taking all relevant factors into account; the aim was to 'lock in' the benefits brought through the changes already made at Bristol Bridge. Officers also undertook to send members the latest update of the design proposals.

6. Cllr Varney welcomed the fact that bus access improvements at the Portway Park and Ride site were being accelerated, with a Full Business Case planned for submission in summer 2023 with a view to build completion by the end of 2024. It was noted that from April, the Portway and Brislington Park and Ride services would be merged into one cross-city route running between the two Park and Ride sites via the city centre.

7. Cllr Morris referred to the public forum statement he had submitted, in which he had flagged the lack of visibility of the feedback to consultation from local residents in Stockwood. He referred in particular to the proposed changes to the West Town Lane and Sturminster Road junction in Stockwood, as shown in the presentation, which were planned to include segregated cycle lanes and relocated bus stops. He advised that following engagement with the local community, he and Cllr Jonathan Hucker had produced a drawing, using maps supplied by a Council officer, showing where they felt there should be new pedestrian crossings. He pointed out the context whereby Stockwood as an area was 'criss-crossed' by a few very long and quite fast roads which currently had no road crossings at all. The councillors' crossing point suggestions for Stockwood had been handed back to the officer, who gave them to another officer, who had subsequently left the authority; he had heard nothing further from the Council and was concerned that this input from local councillors had not therefore been appropriately taken into account.

In response, officers advised that the slide included in the presentation was from the consultation so was not necessarily the final scheme that would be proposed; the detail of this would be checked and an update provided to Cllr Morris. Officers also advised that they would investigate with the project team and report back to Cllr Morris on the position regarding local councillors' new pedestrian crossing suggestions in Stockwood.

8. Cllr Edwards drew attention to the A38 route in the north of the city, with particular reference to the Cheltenham Road and Gloucester Road area. In terms of arena mitigations, while some works were planned to improve walking and cycling routes near the new arena in Filton, nothing major was planned for buses on the Gloucester Road, this being the key route from the city centre to the arena. Cllr Edwards added that there was a lot of local concern in those residential areas either side of the Gloucester Road about current and future traffic congestion. In discussion, it was noted that whilst there were no A38 interventions within the projects outlined, the corridor was part of the mass transit aspirations. Cllr Alexander pointed out that a key issue impacting on the ability to make interventions on the Gloucester Road was lack of space rather than funding.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:



- To note the above update and information.

24 Western Harbour - Update

The Commission received and discussed a report providing an update on the Western Harbour regeneration project.

Summary of main points raised:

1. The report was presented by John Smith, Director: Economy of Place. It was noted that:
 - a. the Western Harbour vision agreed by the Cabinet in July 2022 set 24 commitments for the future of the area, recognising the area's location as a gateway to the city, its tradition of innovation, and environmental and nature considerations.
 - b. in January 2023, the Council submitted a funding application to West of England Combined Authority to secure up to £5.6m to deliver the next stage of the project which included:
 - taking forward a masterplan, setting out the parameters for future development.
 - developing an Outline Business Case for an Infrastructure Delivery Plan that would support the renewal and or replacement of the ageing local road network.
 - developing a consultation and engagement strategy.
2. In response to questions from Cllr McAllister, it was noted that finding the right traffic solution for the area would be a key consideration as part of the masterplanning; the impact of the introduction of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) would form part of this assessment. It was anticipated that, in relation to community space in the area, implementation of the CAZ would bring sustained improvements in local air quality. Officers confirmed they were happy to engage directly with Cllr McAllister in his capacity as local ward councillor for Hotwells and Harbourside.
3. In response to questions from Cllr Edwards, it was noted that the area was at risk of flooding, but the Council was also planning to build new flood defences nearby. These could later be raised further as necessary from 2060 in line with the long-term view taken through the Bristol Avon Flood Strategy as it was recognised that the risk of flooding was likely to increase due to climate change and rising sea levels.
4. In response to a question from Cllr Varney, officers advised that in taking forward the proposals, full consideration could be given to securing an agreement to permit communities to continue to scatter ashes of relatives on the river water at this location.
5. In response to a question from the Chair, it was noted that the authority would be open to discussions with Homes England on housing options in the context of the masterplanning to come. It was confirmed that there would be an opportunity for public input as part of the masterplanning process.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the update report and the above information.



25 Work Programme

The Commission noted the latest work programme update.

In discussion, members suggested that the following be flagged at this point as possible items that could be put forward for inclusion in the Growth and Regeneration scrutiny 2023/24 work programme:

- City parking strategy.
- Transport capital projects (detailed overview of current projects/update on relevant work undertaken with Arcadis, the Council's strategic partner for infrastructure delivery).
- Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - issue around how strategic CIL can be used more equitably across the city.
- Liveable neighbourhoods – next steps 'deep dive' (noting that this would likely be a matter for the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board to consider)

It was also suggested that, for 2023/24, it may be more appropriate for meetings of the Growth and Regeneration Commission to be held in an appropriately sized committee room at City Hall rather than in the Council Chamber.

The Chair asked that following this meeting, members give thought to any other suggested topics that could potentially be included in discussions to come about the 2023/24 work programme.

Meeting ended at 7.50 pm

CHAIR _____

