

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission



28 September 2023 at 5.30 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: David Wilcox (Chair), Andrew Varney (Vice-Chair), Tim Rippington, Jenny Bartle, Mark Weston, Kevin Quartley and Marley Bennett

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the emergency evacuation procedure.

The Chair explained that one or two agenda items at the beginning of the meeting would be taken in a slightly different order to the agenda published on the meeting webpage.

Please note: the minutes will be written in the order that they were originally published.

2 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

- Councillor Farah Hussain did not attend.

The Chair asked everyone in the room to introduce themselves.

Officers in attendance were:

- John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration
- Alex Hearn, Interim Director: Economy of Place
- Adam Crowther, Head of City Transport
- David Gibson, Director of Infrastructure, WECA
- Malcolm Parsons, Head of Capital Delivery, WECA
- Felicity Williamson, Strategic Intelligence and Performance Advisor
- Jim Cliffe, Planning Obligations Manager
- Clem Teagle, Communications and Engagement Manager, Temple Quarter



- Karen Mercer, Delivery Director, Bristol Temple Quarter (WECA)
- Johanna Holmes, Scrutiny Coordinator

Also in attendance:

- Cllr Don Alexander – Cabinet Member for Transport

Plus;

- Suzanne Audrey- local resident, attending for Public Forum.
- Dan Ackroyd – local resident.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on the 22nd March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

5 Chair's Business

There were no announcements from the Chair on this occasion.

6 Public Forum

Public Forum for this meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Copies of all public forum submissions had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting and published on the Council website alongside the agenda papers.

The Commission noted that Public Forum had been received as follows:

Statements:

- Suzanne Audrey – 2022/23 Housing Completion Figures.

Suzanne referenced her statement and that she did not feel she had received a clear response at Full Council about the total number of new homes that had been completed in 2022/23, and asked if Members could ask the same question during this meeting.

Suzanne stated that she was also very interested in the Temple Quarter item and what was happening with regards to the Grosvenor Hotel and when the bus stops and pavements would be back in use there. She was also interested in the new southern entrance to the train station and curious when reference made to the 'A4 access route' what exactly that meant and what it will be used for.

John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said he would be happy to take the question about '2022/23 housing completion figures' away and provide a reply after the meeting.



The Chair noted that the other points raised by Suzanne would be discussed during the Temple Quarter agenda item.

Action: Officers to provide the figure for the total number of new homes that had been completed in 2022/23 and of which how many are classed as affordable, and how many of those are for social rent?

7 Annual Business Report

The Annual Business Report was introduced by the Scrutiny Coordinator.

The Commission Resolved to:

- Note the Commission's Terms of Reference
- Note the Chair - Cllr Wilcox and Vice-Chair – Cllr Varney, for the 2023-2024 municipal year.
- Note the membership of the Commission for the 2023-2024 municipal year.
- Confirm dates for the two further 2023-2024 meetings;
 - Monday 27th November 2023, 5.30pm
 - Monday 26th February 2024, 5.30pm

8 Regional Joint Working on Transport Schemes

John Smith, Interim Executive Director Growth and Regeneration introduced the item to Members. BCC officers and WECA representatives in attendance then provided some examples of how projects are managed and delivered and then provided some examples of the positive regional transport work that was taking place.

David Gibson said overall this was a billion-pound portfolio and Bristol City Council (BCC) was at the heart of a lot of that delivery. It was emphasised how important it was for BCC and WECA to work closely, so they could Deliver the full scope of all the programmes as they have been bid for and funded, largely by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Malcolm Parsons highlighted some key examples of joint working between BCC and the Combined Authority (CA) such as local Park and Ride projects and railway stations. The current and positive collaboration was the only way to effectively deliver projects such as these and he wanted that to continue.

Adam Crowther, Head of City Transport, took Members through the published slide deck. Some key points from the presentation and discussion were as follows:

- The slides only show some examples of projects and do not reflect all the projects currently being undertaken.
- Officers provided an overview of the complex processes and phases required to establish a Park and Ride service along the M32 such as re-classification which was critical to enable the work to go ahead. Other options were either extremely expensive and/or unachievable.



- The planned M32 Park and Ride will include a mobility hub, require land purchases and a number of planning applications. National Highways have confirmed that to delivering the whole vision will require de-trunking of the M32.
- There is still a need to identify some important areas for bus connections. The wider economic needs of region, such as access to jobs will be considered when decisions are made. Officers emphasised the importance of coordinating the project with WECA and having a 'regional voice', especially when having an influence on National Highways.
- The A4 Portway corridor and hub is a BCC led project and WECA are overseeing it. BCC was currently working on the design of the route into the City. The relationship with WECA on this scheme was one where BCC set out the proposals and WECA perform a consensual assurance role.
- CRSTS – the DfT offered the opportunity of re-baselining the programme, funding and delivery. Officers have gone through the process of revising delivery and other scope changes but it is still subject to DfT approval. It had also been suggested by the DfT that there was scope for over-programming in CRSTS 1.
- The proposals for CRSTS 2 would be submitted next year. Although it was noted that the £8billion CRSTS 2 funding was not confirmed yet or if it would be bidding process or an allocation of funding.

Further Member Questions and discussion points were as follows:

- A Member asked if 'over-programming' was a list of everything that we want to do and was it an 'off the shelf' list? Officers said over programming allows some projects to be brought forward whilst there are delays in others. This allows the programme of work to continue and reduces overall delays.
- The requirement to spend all CRSTS funding by March 2027 was confirmed. If all the funding had not been spent the Council would negotiate for an extension and the intention was to avoid having to pay back any funding.
- Would all of the projects be delivered or were some projects potentially at risk? Officers said they completed a re-programming exercise and it showed all projects are online for 2027 completion. However, the City Centre was the biggest project and the had the most significant amount of match funding attached to it. Inflationary pressures could cause changes but was why there was a programme management office who could make changes if necessary and they would be watching that very closely. David Gibson added that the impact of inflation was part of the reason they had re-baselined and had subjected the entire programme to some very detailed and rigorous examination and were not putting forward something that they did not think they could deliver as a region They were confident that the entire programme would be fully delivered by March 2027.
- Clarification was provided on the difference between the reclassification and de-trunking of the M32. Reclassifying did not mean that National Highways relinquished responsibility. But de-trunking meant the local authority would now take now take responsibility for it.
- The M32 crosses local authority boundaries, had WECA been able to help progress this work or would it have happened now anyway? Officers said they been looking to implement a Park and Ride on the M32 for several years. But the current situation was now different because the relevant local authorities were all pulling in same direction and there's an understanding this was a regional project that they needed to engage with. But WECA had likely helped the process yes.
- Given the high volume of traffic on the M32, had this ever been considered for a route for mass transit? Officers said yes, as this was a very straight road it could potentially be used for trams etc but there was very little housing there to serve until Eastville. That was a possibility in future, but it was currently seen more suited to a bus route that could come right into city centre as well.



The Chair thanked all the officers for their time.

9 Quarter 4 Performance Report

The Quarter 4 Performance Report was introduced by Felicity Williamson, Strategic Intelligence and Performance Advisor. Members asked questions about the following themes in the report:

- BPPM375 - Empty council properties and BPPM374a - Average relet times – were both significantly worse than target. A Member asked how many properties were currently empty? And what was the average relet time i.e. was it days or weeks?
Action: officers said they would report back on the current number of empty properties and the relet times.
- Did the Council have a policy on under occupation of council properties or provide any incentives for people to down-size i.e. one person living in a four bedroom house that could be relet to a family.
Action: officers said they would take this question away and provide a response after the meeting.
- Actions P-HC1.2 (Page 30) Support the delivery of 1,000 low and zero carbon, affordable homes (AH) by 2024 by investing £12m this year and providing development expertise to partners: A Member commented that the explanation in the report was unclear in that it says the Council has not done what it intended to do but it didn't explain and how much of 12m been spent or how many affordable houses had been built. Officers said there were numerous factors causing slippage in the programme across all forms of affordable housing delivery. Page 30 of the report stated that in August there had been 309 AHs built, but they would provide further information about how much of the £12m funding had been spent after the meeting.
Action: Officers to provide further information about how much of £12m funding had been invested after the meeting.
- BPOM476 (QoL) Increase the number of people travelling actively to work by walking and cycling, was shown as 'significantly worse than target'. A Member said the explanation was said to be more people using e-scooters but asked what actual data existed on this?
Action: Officers said they would take this question away and report back in writing after the meeting.
- BPPM477 Increase the number of public electric vehicle charging points; The report stated none had been delivered but there would now be a change in approach. It was not clear if the target will have been met when next reported? The interim Executive Director said that the Council was currently working with the provider colleagues and the funding was coming but they would report back further on this.
Action: Officers to provide an up-date on the number of public electric vehicle charging points being delivered.
- (p 36) Action P-TC4.3; replacing existing streetlights with LED lighting, showing as 'On Track'. A Member asked if it will be possible to request lower lighting in some areas? Where will decisions be made and by whom? **Officers to look into this and provide further information after the meeting.**



- BPPM120 Road Safety: reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic incidents. A Member commented that the explanation was not clear. Officers said this information was provided by the police but due to a new system that had been introduced the data was not currently up to date. It was however suggested that the figure was on a downward trend.
- BPOM434 Reduce the proportion of deaths attributed to particulate air pollution (significantly worse than target). A Member asked for more clarification of the data. The Performance Officer said this was external data reported by Public Health England. It wasn't said to be counting actual deaths but modelled data and was a wider City outcome measure to be aware of, and officers weren't able to go into more detail on.
- A Member raised the previously discussed empty property figures and relet times and commented they were concerned about how the situation was being dealt with. It was suggested this needed to be 'drilled into' about how this was really working as they had little faith that what was being done would actually fix the situation. The Performance Officer said she had realised why the metrics were not included in the report. It was because the information sat with the Communities Scrutiny Commission (CSC) and that was why the themes were included but not the metrics data. It was agreed that this concern would be referred to the CSC.
Action: Scrutiny Coordinator to refer the above concerns about empty property figures and relet times to the Communities Scrutiny Commission.
- It was suggested that the issues raised about the reporting of the metrics needed to be resolved before the new committee system was in place. The Performance Officer said the new dashboard that would be in place for the next Scrutiny Commission meeting would hopefully resolves some of the issues that had been raised.
- BPPM170 - Satisfaction with the condition of road surfaces (National Highways & Transport Satisfaction Survey) - Significantly better than target. A Member commented that although it appeared the quality of local road surfaces was satisfactory and one of the best in the country, but the baseline of target of 35% for satisfaction appeared to be set very low.

The Commission thanked the Strategic Intelligence and Performance Advisor for the information and discussion.

10 Quarter 1 Risk Report

Members noted the Quarter 1 Risk Report.

11 Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Report

Jim Cliffe, Planning Obligations Manager introduced the report for Members and summarised some the key points:

For every pound of CIL collected 80p goes towards strategic infrastructure, 15p goes to the Area Committees to determine what local infrastructure they want to apply it to and 5p goes towards covering the administration costs.



Any infrastructure funded from CIL must support and enable the growth of the City as set out in the Local Plan.

To date the Council has collected approx. £51m of CIL and has allocated approx. £71m. Over-allocation of £20m was not said to be a problem as the money was not all required at the same time and was intended to be drawn down over a period of time as the projects progress.

The future of CIL and all other types of planning obligations and developer contributions were said to be uncertain. The Government has raised the idea of replacing them with a new method of infrastructure levy. This was consulted on earlier in the year but the proposals were said to have been universally rejected by local authorities and housing associations. But it remained to be seen what would happen in the future.

The Council was said to be collecting on average between £7m - £8m each year. For that to continue it would require a regular stream of larger schemes to continue to be delivered as they generate larger amounts of CIL.

The following points were raised and questions asked by Members:

The Chair asked for clarification about scheme that provided high levels of affordable housing (AH) and them not generating the full level of CIL payments. It was replied that if a scheme provided 100% AH it would not generate any CIL payments.

A discussion was had about the relationship between CIL and S106 and whether a scheme that didn't generate CIL could still attract S106. It was said this was quite complicated and national changes were made in 2013. The Governments preferred approach to developer contributions was CIL but it was still possible to generate small amounts S106.

It was clarified that the administration amount was 'up to' 5 pence in every pound but it could be 4 pence, and a penny would then be added to the strategic pot.

A Member asked if the £25m of developer contributions were gaining high interest whilst sat in bank accounts? It was confirmed that S106 is required to be held in an interest paying account but CIL money was not.

It was confirmed that the amount charged per square metre does vary between local authorities.

A Member asked why some schemes, for example 'improvements to parks and green spaces in growth areas across the City' were shown in the report as not started? It was said that this allocation stemmed from a Full Council amendment in March 2022. The amendment required parks officers to identify schemes in areas of growth and then have the approach formally approved at Cabinet, which happened in April 2023. It was anticipated that some of those schemes would begin in the next few months.

It was highlighted some Area Committees had very little CIL because there are so few developments in those areas, which meant there were lengthy backlogs of projects, many of which were local transport schemes to improve road safety. Was there a way to allocate any strategic CIL to some of these areas? The answer was no, due to there being very little or no growth in those areas and the funding had to focus on that. In respect of a specific query relating to the AC2 area it was confirmed that there was a small amount of unspent S106 money from the Cricket Ground Redevelopment that could be used to fund local transport schemes near the cricket Ground.



A discussion was had about how CIL was used across the City and possible forthcoming changes to how it was allocated next year. Some Members voiced concerns that any changes did not make the situation worse and said it needed it to be very carefully thought through.

The Commission thanked the Planning Obligations Manager for the very helpful report and discussion.

12 Temple Quarter Regeneration Programme Update

Officers summarised the published slide deck and highlighted the significant points to Members such what would be delivered and when throughout the two phases of work.

It was said that last year the Government had granted £94.7m to develop the first phase of infrastructure which included the three new train station entrances. Work was about to start on the new Eastern Entrance.

There were some key decisions coming up soon, especially with regards to strategic priorities, the University of Bristol Campus and the Joint Delivery Vehicle (JDV). A paper would be going to Cabinet in November that would include a series of recommendations for approval on the JDV that would drive the programme forward next year. The comprehensive programme of public engagement would continue, and work was ongoing with local communities. Officers said they would also provide member briefings ahead of the November Cabinet Paper.

A Member commented that it didn't say anywhere in the papers that the Joint Venture (JV) was actually a 'company', and that point should have been made clearer in the papers. What risks was the Council taking on by entering into the JV and what risks was it reducing. Officers said an agreement had been made last October and that it had been anticipated that it would be formalised into a company. However, once the Cabinet paper confirmed what the arrangements would be, it would be easier to answer questions on the benefits and risks.

It was suggested there needed to be additional community engagement in Lawrence Hill and this should be carried out by trained community development workers and local organisations. Officers said they were aware and in agreement, and it was already a priority area for engagement. A specific engagement programme was being developed and trained community practitioners would be working in the area. Currently this was mostly awareness raising but if Members were aware of events that they could attend or they thought could be run locally, to please let them know. A Member said there was a danger that much of this would be seen as 'gentrification' but officers seemed to have already understood that which they said was positive.

It was confirmed that the Joint Delivery Vehicle (JTV) would be established and begin in earnest in January 2024. Members asked what the role and scope of Delivery Partner would be. It was said they would work on Phase 1 but they would be going to procurement for this during 2024. The Partner will be required to work fast and deliver a very high-quality public realm.

The timescales for the two phases of work were discussed. It was said that having the transport infrastructure in place before further developing the area was the best way forward. This was a crucial part of the development and was partly why it was so important to appointment a Master Planner as early as possible.

A Member enquired about the reported biodiversity net loss and how planning policy required the developer (the council) to offset this and create a 10% net gain. Was it known yet which parks and/or greenspaces this would be carried out in? Officers said the project was seeking to identify where this would be and has received an extension



to its planning condition to enable sites to be identified within the Bristol area. Officers agreed to report back to the Commission when there is further information.

Action: Officers to report back and confirm which parks and/or greenspaces have been agreed upon to create the 10% biodiversity net gain.

At this point a Member asked officers they could respond to a point raised by Suzanne Audrey during Public Forum earlier in the meeting about the future of the Grosvenor Hotel and the adjacent row of bus stops.

The Executive Director said there had been a court order saying that the building had to be made safe. The schedule to complete that is now out of date and the work has not been carried out. The Council are in ongoing discussions with the owner. Ultimately the council, through its enforcement control function, could carry out the works itself but would rather not do that because obviously it's the responsibility of the owner and there are issues with costs. There was also a survey being conducted to ascertain if there are bats living in the building. The results of that survey were due any day. Any action would depend on the outcome of that survey.

Members enquired about the future of the fruit market. Officers confirmed it was privately owned and that they did want it to be part of the master plan. It was yet to be determined how it fitted in with the wider area. A proactive conversation would be had with the owners about how it's brought forward, so it could deliver in line with what they would what we want to see happen there.

The Chair highlighted the University of Bristol plot at Temple Quarter and that he understood they would be installing a large quantum computer that would therefore generate some considerable heat. Were the City Leap officers looking at the potential opportunities and going to be using it to provide either cooling or heat for the rest of the area? Officers said they were working with both City Leap and the University to maximise all the opportunities. The Director said he thought that was a good idea but wasn't aware of the two things being joined up, but he would look into that.

13 Work Programme 23-24

Members agreed the agenda for the November Commission meeting as listed on the Work Programme.

A brief discussion was had about whether the Local Plan would be added to the February agenda. This was not concluded.

It was agreed that the potential closer of railways ticking offices would be discussed at the next Leads – Planning Meeting.

Resolved: Members noted the Commissions Work Programme.

CHAIR _____



