



**Bristol One City Homes and Communities Board**

<b>Date/time</b>	14:00 – 16:30, Thursday 10 October 2024	<b>Venue</b>	Wills Hall Conference Centre, Parrys Lane, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, BS9 1AE
<b>Attendees</b>	<p><b>Co-Chairs:</b> Oona Goldsworthy, Brunelcare; Cllr Barry Parsons, Bristol City Council.</p> <p><b>Board Members:</b> Alfie Thomas, Bristol City Council; Anna Klimczak, Brighter Places; Barra Mac Ruairi, University of Bristol; Caroline Bird, University of Bristol; Collin McCloud, ACORN; Dom Wood, 1625 Independent People; Helen Bone, Bristol City Council; Jeremy Sweetland, Bristol Housing Festival; Paul Smith, University of Bristol; Penny Germon, Bristol City Council; Cathy Provenzano, Bristol Association of Letting &amp; Management Agents (BALMA); Rachel Butler, Bristol Community Land Trust; Simone Wilding, Bristol City Council; Temba Mahari, Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI);</p> <p><b>City Office:</b> Karen Blong, City Office; Imogen Oxley, City Office.</p> <p><b>Guests:</b> Darren Perkin, On Site Bristol/Bristol City Council; Jessie Agnew, West of England Combined Authority; Nick Allan, Cushman Wakefield.</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b> Alistair Brooks, University of West of England; Fiona Lester, Director Homes and Landlord Services; Jonathan Bower, Womble Bond Dickinson (UK) LLP; Judith Brown, Older Peoples Forum; Julia Grey, City of Bristol College; Louise Davidson, Homes and Landlord Services; Paul Hassan, ACH; Rachael Sherratt, The Crown Estate; Richard Smith, Unite Students.</p>		
<b>Arrival and networking (15 mins)</b>			
All			
<b>Chair’s welcome and board member introductions (10 min)</b>			
Chair and All			
OG welcomed the board and introduced the agenda then board members took turns introducing themselves.			
<b>Welcome from the host – University of Bristol (5 mins)</b>			
Barra Mac Ruairí, Chief Property Officer			
BMR introduced himself and welcomed the board to the University of Bristol.			
<b>Actions from previous meeting (5 mins)</b>			
All			

The following actions from the last meeting were covered:

- At the previous Homes and Communities Board members agreed that it would be good for Bristol City Council's Director Homes and Landlord Services to be invited to future Home and Communities Board meetings. Fiona Lester was invited to attend the Homes and Communities Board and while she had to send apologies for this meeting she hopes to attend the next meeting in January 2025.
- City Office co-ordinated a Roundtable in August with City partners to consider how board members and city partners can work as One City to bring the city's key priorities for change in housing to central government. Updates on this action are provided later in this meeting.

### **City Office Updates (10 mins)**

Karen Blong, City Office; Alfie Thomas, Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs at Bristol City Council

KB updated the board on the following City Office activities:

- Judith (Jude) Langdon will be starting as Head of City Office at the end of October.
- The City Gathering will be at Wills Memorial Building on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, hosted by Palie Smart, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor for Global Civic Engagement at the University of Bristol. The gathering will be focused on collaboration, community cohesion and will be taking place during COP29 and Youth Work Week. The Race Equality in Housing sub-group will be taking part in a panel discussion where they will articulate the opportunities and barriers, progress made to date, and next steps of the sub-group.
- The board member refresh application process for Culture, Children and Young People's and Economy and Skills Board is underway. City Office received 149 applications for these three One City boards. The Homes and Communities Board is due to be refreshed in January 2025.

AT, Board Support Officer for the Homes and Communities Board, provided the following updates on the board's task and finish groups:

- The Living Rent Commission (LRC) Task and Finish Group last met in February and will be 'Relaunching' on October 17<sup>th</sup> at an online meeting which will cover introductions from Cllr BP, progress made on the 23 LRC recommendations aimed at BCC, collaboration with Policy Bristol, and Terms of Reference. Conversations are ongoing with Policy Bristol about funding opportunities for further research into rent control modelling.

**OFFER:** Board members were encouraged to contact AT if they would like to learn more about the Living Rent Commission Task and Finish Group.

- The Race Equality in Housing Task and Finish Group has met 5 times since setting up in November 2023. The Terms of Reference have been agreed and action plan drafted. There has also been progressing on the joint and collaborative initiative with Social Housing Anti Racism Pledge (SHARP) with a November workshop planned. The Race Equality Leaders Group are looking to develop a joint data product for local housing providers mirroring the Race Equality Leaders Group joint data product.

ACH are leading on improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers with an event planned, The Welcome Party, for the 7<sup>th</sup> of November and are supporting Bristol City Council (BCC) who are conducting a needs assessment leading to a new refugee and asylum-seeker strategy.

**ASK:** The Race Equality in Housing Task and Finish Group need administrative support and funding to support with events, training programmes and to project manage. Board members are asked to contact PH if they can support with this ask.

PH and AR had to send apologies for this meeting, but the board noted the great progress that has been made by the Race Equality in Housing Task and Finish Group.

**ASK:** OG suggested that Race Equality in Housing Task and Finish Group develop clear asks of how the wider board can support and get involved with the group.

- The Damp and Mould Task and Finish Group is being led by AV and had their first meeting at the end of July. A working group are drafting a 'toolkit' of resources for health and care staff to use. Work is being supported by the Bristol Health Partners SHINE HIT (Supporting Healthy Inclusive Neighbourhood Environments Health Integration Team) who are hosting a planning and health event in November.

**OFFER:** Details can be circulated to board members on the Damp and Mould Task and Finish Group and the planning and health event in November.

#### **Planning Policy and Student Housing (60 mins)**

Barra Mac Ruairí, University of Bristol; Paul Smith, University of Bristol; Nick Allan, Cushman Wakefield.

BMR begun by providing a presentation to the board on university growth, forecasted growth in student FTE and their housing need in the city. BMR also shared Bristol's current student to bed ratio in context of other UK core cities, the developer/market ability to meet housing need, and challenges faced by young people in education with a focus on affordability.

In this presentation BMR, PS and NA shared the positive impacts of university growth on society and how universities can add value by delivering knowledge through leading research. Research, however, is costly and requires that the university grows. It was noted that this growth is not unlimited, and the university aims to support the local community and improve access for local students. Widening participation in university was emphasised as key for economic development for the city, including working with alumni to encourage the success of new and potential students from Bristol.

BMR, PS and NA explained the diverse and mixed housing needs of students. The differences in postgraduates and undergraduates' needs were explained and key statistics highlighted. Student numbers and housing needs were suggested as being nuanced and complex.

Bristol student housing prices was also touched on. The cost of operation, land and construction are high which creates challenging dynamics to produce affordable housing for students. While expensive in comparison to other UK cities (excluding London), University owned rooms provide more affordable housing for students, the private sector tends to cost students more and requires students to be in longer contracts.

Board members then discussed alternative models, working with students to provide housing at affordable prices including a model for a housing coop developed with students. Affordability was emphasised as crucial for students and staff and the University of Bristol wants to use purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) to reduce pressure on the private housing sector.

**OFFER:** BMR encouraged board members to reach out to the university housing staff if they know of any issues with purpose-built student accommodation housing stock in Bristol so that they may support.

Board members then discussed the impacts of the tenants' rights act on housing and students. The board also discussed the implications of the building safety act and the steps that are required post planning that can cause delays on building and additional costs.

Competition in housing was discussed throughout this item. It was also explained that a large number of students are using the direct let market or HMO market which affects the wider spectrum of housing available in Bristol. Board members suggested that Bristol doesn't have enough of any kind of housing and that competition increases prices across all kinds of housing. Discussion also covered how student housing can drive up land price and the need to unlock barriers to delivery to reduce costs. It was noted that scarcity in housing which leads to competition can make it difficult to work together.

Discussion also considered the impact of students on local resources and services emphasised the need to understand students as a part of the city rather than placed upon the city as a burden. This moved discussion in the direction of seeing student housing as an opportunity to explore housing models that support community cohesion and bring students and the local community together. Alternative models such as an intergenerational housing scheme were discussed as a way to enable community building and balance housing interests.

**ACTION:** City Office to set up a roundtable to discuss student housing further with interested board members.

The chairs summarised the discussion which noted the boards interest in finding ways to reduce housing competition address the housing crisis and homelessness by considering how to create a mixed and balanced housing ecosystem, integrating people to develop community cohesion in ways that are economically and humanly wise. OG highlighted the success of these discussions and emphasised the strength of One City Boards as being in their wide participation and ability to help members understand new viewpoints.

**ASK:** Board members asked City Office if they could join PD for a meeting or lunch when he visits for the City Gathering.

*Comfort Break*

### **Skills, Retrofitting and Construction (20 mins)**

Co-Chairs; All

Board members were asked to consider how the Board can help ensure that people who experience social and economic disadvantage can benefit from green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction. They were also asked to discuss whether a working group would add value to this topic.

Discussion started by considering the community led housing perspective. RB explained to the board that there is great scope for community led housing to build capacity for green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction and that there is potential to grow benefits for the wider community. RB suggested that there could be benefits to a network or group being facilitated by One City on skills, retrofitting and construction.

DP from On Site Bristol/Bristol City Council discussed their work with Mission Net Zero which focuses on three key projects in across Bristol and aims to enable communities to understand and benefit from green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction.

The board then discussed housing associations interested in skilling up their own people and building networks for retrofitting and construction. The board also considered how larger employers can approach underserved communities and fund apprenticeships in green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction. It was emphasised that there are challenges in getting people into these opportunities. More needs to be done to find ways to point to opportunities to increase take-up while providing opportunities after the training which in turn gives course providers the confidence to continue to put them on.

JA noted that community careers advisors are also being trained in signposting to retrofit and green skill jobs but has found that more needs to be shared about where these jobs are and what training opportunities are available. The role of schools and communities in encouraging these pathways was also emphasised. There is a need in the supply chain for developing these green skills and a need for the market to demonstrate that this is a growing area.

Board members also discussed the opportunities provided by jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction and suggested that there are people that both require retrofitting for their housing and would benefit from the opportunity to be trained to carry out these retrofit jobs themselves for their communities.

The board agreed that a working group could be useful in finding employment opportunities and scope to make the system work more effectively at helping ensure that people who experience social and economic disadvantage can benefit from green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction.

**ASK:** City Office to look into how they could best facilitate a working group for the Homes and Communities Board on green jobs relating to skills, retrofitting and construction.

#### **Homes and Communities Round table – 8 August 2024 (20 mins)**

Cllr Barry Parsons, Bristol City Council; Alfie Thomas, Policy, Strategy and Public Affairs at Bristol City Council

The One City Homes and Communities Roundtable took place on August 8<sup>th</sup> with board members and city partners. The focus of the Roundtable was to consider how board members and city partners can work as One City to bring the city's key priorities for change in housing to central government. Cllr BP shared the council's key lobbying work around housing and central government. This included the work Bristol is doing with other stock owning local authorities and at MP events and shared that following meetings with the housing minister with the leader of the council, they are optimistic around social housing.

AT and relevant board members updated on the following actions that came out of the roundtable:

- **CIPFA guidance on Temp Housing**

BCC has continued to work with the Lloyds Housing Initiative to scope out opportunities to unlock more private investment into social rent housing and to understand the balance sheet implications of the changes to finance lease rules (IFRS16). That work is progressing and will align with govt messaging about 'fiscal accounting'.

- **BCC response to NPPF Consultation**

SW has created a summary of key points from the council's response to the consultation.

**OFFER:** SW's summary of key points on the council's response to the NPPF consultation to be circulated with minutes

- **Joint approach to funding**

JS updated that BCC has continued to work with the Lloyds Housing Initiative to scope out possible allocations of funding (e.g. brownfield land release fund and affordable housing grant) to aggregate and accelerate small sites housing delivery. A strategic outline business case is due to be completed by end October.

- **Density, height and viability of developments**

**OFFER:** LD to provide a verbal update on BCC's work on density, height and viability of developments at future Board meeting.

- **Regional Health and Productivity – developing a good housing narrative**

An animation is being made to highlight the need to accelerate the pace and scale for housing, for health and wellness, productivity and prosperity, by unlocking brownfield small sites within our cities and towns. This animation is in production and will be launched at the 'New homes in new ways' exhibition at the Building Design Centre on the 24th October. The ask will be included in a 'postcard' to Treasury.

- **Working with communities – refugee/asylum seekers**

Progressing joint and collaborative initiative with SHARP and November workshop is planned. Aim is to get multiple housing providers signed up to the Pledge and working together collaboratively to fulfil SHARP which will multiple aims of this group e.g. representation; tenant voice and influence; dealing with hate crime. NHF/ Race Equality Leaders Group are looking to develop a joint data product for local housing providers mirroring the Race Equality Leaders Group joint data product.

Board members added that the West of England Combined Authority is also working to position the West of England better in terms of other regions, OG and LD are involved in work on this. Board members also highlighted housing discussions and community events that are being rolled out across Bristol and celebrated the Easton and Lawrence Hill neighbourhood forum for housing event.

The board then briefly discussed whether there is a view for the council to lobby government to increase the threshold for requiring government approval on licensing that covers 20% or more of privately rented stock that falls within the local authority.

The Chairs concluded discussion by highlighting the benefits of this board in the ability for members to share information and viewpoints and build important relationships.

**Any Other Business**

All

HB confirmed that BCC are progressing an Interim Affordable Housing Delivery Plan to replace Project 1000. This has involved a collaborative process with external partners and internal departments. The plan is progressing through BCC decision pathways with the aim of going to Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION:** City Office to add an update on the Interim Affordable Housing Delivery Plan to the agenda for the next board meeting. HB or LD to be invited to update.

**Action Log**

Date of meeting	Action	Lead	Update
10 10 24	City Office to set up a roundtable to discuss student housing further with interested board members.	City Office	The roundtable will be arranged for early 2025.
10 10 24	Interim Affordable Housing Delivery Plan to be added to the January agenda	City Office	Complete