

One City Economy Board

Agenda – 12th January 2021



	Date/time	Tues 12 th January 2021 1400-1530	Venue	Zoom call
	Co-chairs	Craig Cheney (Deputy Mayor of Bristol) & James Durie (Business West) Apologies from Craig Cheney		
Time	Agenda			
14:00-14:05	1)	<p>Welcome from Chairs – James Durie</p> <p>James commented that a more regular meeting would be helpful due to the current situation. This could be bi weekly or 3 weekly for an hour giving us a chance to reflect the public health and sector updates we have and to pick up key issues and to reflect what work we are doing.</p>		
14:05-14:20	2)	<p>Public Health and Mass Vaccination Programme Update – Sally Hogg, Bristol City Council</p> <p>We are now in lockdown 3 which is very different to lockdown 2 and not so dissimilar to the first lockdown. Schools and Higher Education settings are now all operating online unless you are a keyworker or from a vulnerable family. The key worker status has gone up so we have an estimated 40-50% of our children and young people in schools, which is very interesting and will need to be looked at, especially as there have been a lot of Covid-19 cases in schools into the new term. On a positive note this means nurseries are open which is enabling families to work or be in the work place. To focus on other really good news we are at day 2 of the mass vaccination distribution which started last week and have had a lot of positive feedback from people receiving the vaccine. This is good to hear following what happened mid-December surrounding the Broadmead vaccination centre where an estimated 1000 demonstrators called ‘anti-vaxxers’ marched through the centre promoting an anti-vaccine view point.</p> <p>In other news by 31st December, 18,000 Pfizer vaccinations have been distributed from/in GPs; 15,000 of these being in the over 80’s priority group and the rest to acute hospitals, care homes and community nursing staff. There has been a new government policy created as a result of the joint committee on vaccination and immunisation board (JCBI), who identified the (ever changing) 4 high priority groups who are due to be vaccinated by mid-February. This will only be the first vaccine as it stands and will then be given the second vaccine in the next 3 months (previously the second vaccine was given in the following 3 weeks). This therefore will allow more people to have the first dose of the vaccine from those priority groups; people in care homes, the over 80’s, frontline staff, social care workers and the clinically vulnerable. These groups are always changing due to different factions and constantly trying to get them aligned, therefore in the next meeting these groups may have changed. In conclusion if the mass vaccination of these 4 groups gets done then we will be on an upward trajectory heading into Spring.</p> <p>Following this, at the beginning of last week, the new Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine has been now been distributed into care homes, with GPs coming and administering the vaccine.</p>		

		<p>In other news, yesterday, Ashton Gate became Bristol’s main mass vaccination centre where people over 80 can book an appointment to be vaccinated, alongside this the regionally commissioned pharmacy vaccination centre will be opened in Broadmead, offering the vaccination from the 18th January.</p> <p>The PCR testing which has been running since last year has been successfully up and running and is very well established, this is for anyone who has Covid-19-19 symptoms and appointments are bookable online. There are now various places over Bristol that you can get PCR tested.</p> <p>The Lateral flow device testing is now up and running and this is for people who are showing no symptoms at all/asymptomatic. This has proven really useful especially for for staff in care homes, hospital staff, schools and uni staff as they are now tested twice a week which will allow for monitoring of symptoms/outbreak in frontline settings. In the current press, directed to both the public and to work places specifically the government are saying they will provide Later flow testing to businesses who have over 250 employees; more info surrounding this will be provided. With Lateral flow testing you need to have a series of tests due to the amount of viral load that could be in body at the time of testing, so one test could show as negative all the whilst your body could be brewing or storing the virus, so having frontline workers testing twice weekly is proving very helpful. We are now opening the Bristol Lateral flow testing centre today for high risk groups who have to be out to work such as taxi drivers, appointments will still need to be booked and this group will be committing to having those series of tests, and will therefore make a real difference to us, the city and nationally.</p> <p>The cases in Bristol over the last 7 days cases have almost doubled since the last 7 days, and this is proving the same over country as a whole. Our current rate is at 478 per 100,000 and the country’s average is at 651 per 100,000. John Hurst highlighted that hoteliers are very keen to help and offer venues for testing.</p> <p>As it stands the situation very unpredictable, however will get better with the mass vaccinations but we will need to be patient. Covid-19-19 has always been described as a party virus, therefore we all need to act as if we have Covid-19-19 and act accordingly. The only way to control this virus is by playing our part and as a business community though we are. On the Health and Wellbeing board, vaccinations are in the top 3 priorities for this year as part of the one city approach and we will be working hard with groups who are finding it hard to get vaccinated.</p>
14:20-14:30	3)	<p>National Lockdown: Grants Update – Jane Hadley (manager of business rates and council tax)</p> <p>The recent update from the Chancellor is that it has been agreed by the 5th February that a one off top up grant will be open to be applied for by rateable businesses and these amounts will be either; 4,6 or £9,000. This is designed to help businesses through to Spring and we will share further details on this in due course. We are also expecting a new grant scheme that this fund would top up, like the during the previous lockdown, we are aware that BIS are keen on making one consolidated payment of the two schemes to pay to businesses and we will aim to do this. Alongside this there are additional discretionary funds to be distributed and the BSIE have proposed that this will be rated on the amount per head of population (figures yet to be determined, updates will be distributed accordingly).</p>

We have two pots of discretionary funding which is the ARG and the LSGR grant has commenced and more information can be found here - BCC website:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-support-advice/Covid-19-19-19-information-for-businesses>

We have a policy in place which we opened at the end of November and we are looking at how we can top slice that to meet other demands of other sectors which are not met by our policy, such as small or micro businesses of up to 49 employees with fixed business costs. In relation to where we are in terms of paying the grants we are trying to keep application process simple but so far for these businesses £938,000 has been paid out.

The grants are on a rateable 3 tier value; a business whose earnings are up to £15,000, £15-51,000 and £51,000+ as before businesses who earned over £51,000 were not eligible.

There is definitely confusion with businesses knowing if they are eligible for grants or not, this in summation has meant that a lot of businesses have not applied, therefore please discuss with your networks to get them to apply as the process of applying is a lot more simplified and only includes one application form and we then assess if they would be eligible for any of the grants we hold. Stephen Bashford commented that the size of grant may not be enough for some businesses sadly but we should absolutely continue to push message to businesses that it's available. At the moment only 7% of the ARG grant has been spent over the UK which is disappointing, would expect more to be spent but we have been told it is meant to last for the entire financial year until March 2022. So is very important that we spend it wisely.

Our biggest challenge from the November lockdown is that we have only had 3,500 applications where we estimated that we should be getting 6,000, we will be doing a piece of work for businesses who could be eligible but they aren't aware. Sam Holliday commented that a lot of the councils are experiencing a similar low amount of applications for the grants that are out there and could be because there are now so many grants and some have similar names, so sheer confusion instead of just not applying. A further update that since November, 2,200 grants of an estimated 3.6 million have been paid out and that all grants for the period of 2-18th December have also been paid and are now getting ready for the next tranche as there is still much more to go out. Unfortunately we can't reuse the data we collated from March, April and May as we need to collect the most up to date and new information on the business sector and check that they are not insolvent and have declared all they need to, we are also trying to make the system more automated.

Update: Christmas support payment for wet-led pubs, just starting out, but so far have paid 19 grants of £19,000, pubs have to self-certify evidence that less than 50% of their income from their food sales which will be looked into by looking at their accounts.

Update: Just launched taxi driver scheme and look into other sectors as well.

Business West are looking at and taking a national lead through the British chambers on certain issues.

<https://twitter.com/BristolCouncil/status/1347585152034234370>

		https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOYZATrIE6g
14:30- 14:40	5)	<p>WECA Business Support Update – Stephen Bashford, WECA</p> <p><i>Slides will be shared alongside minutes</i></p> <p>There have been queries with where we pull this info together about funding and support so this is why we have created the Growth Hub at a regional level to have one front door to access the various support that is available. It has been incredibly complicated and more so with Covid-19, with the national measures and how these are delivered nationally, locally and regionally, the growth hub has built capacity to provide 1:1 support for companies including signposting to the various grant schemes that are out there. What we have been aiming to do since Covid-19 is to build a package of support to help support companies with not only emergency support but to pave the way to a sustainable pathway to recovery. Overall we have had 4000 companies accessing the support through the growth hub.</p> <p>Trading better online – have been working with TechSpark closely to be able to provide guidance for companies and businesses and how to improve their digital presence and footprint, it has been incredibly popular and therefore we are looking to extend this and bring more companies on board and build up resilience and work through this pandemic.</p> <p>Likewise with the financial resilience support we have in place which is freely available for companies, we have teamed up with chartered accountants over England and Wales to provide free specialist support. Therefore as well as accessing short term support, we are also looking at what can be the plan for companies on how they can improve and adapt in difficult circumstances.</p> <p>Universal business support – essentially working with the constituent authorities over the west of England to build local capacity to support businesses by providing additional flexible support. This is up and running in Bristol and we are working with YTKO and South Bristol businesses and this support can be accessed via the growth hub or the constituent authorities. We want to provide seamless support.</p> <p>We are working with companies of all shapes and sizes via the Thrive at work support scheme, responding to issues such as mental health and providing support and raising awareness of mental health and how it has heightened during Covid-19.</p> <p>We set up the Business Innovation Fund and are always thinking of the medium to long term future as we want to provide financial support and ultimately stimulate innovation. This has proven very popular and therefore oversubscribed, however we are about to announce the successful businesses and promote their ideas. From the volume of interest and success we are looking to extend this fund.</p> <p>The Workforce for the future was launched on September 2020 and the first phase was the regional skills brokerage service with the aim to bring together a whole mesh of partners e.g. all the colleges, training providers and universities over the region to help with training, planning and skills. We are now gearing up for phase 2 this January to support further projects at a local level and for particular sectors that have been affected</p>

by Covid-19.

The Rapid redundancy response is in place and can be scaled up as it has been very successful, this support will be even more important when things like furlough dissipate when companies are of the mind-set that they no longer need to provide this. At the moment furlough has kept a control on unemployment escalating but we need to be ready for when this inevitably goes. Therefore this support will be available for all companies over all sectors.

Looking to create a talent retention platform which as well will be a more automated service for business to come together and help to exchange and retain talent in the region.

The current live support system we have is Future Bright which is for the individuals affected by issues of unemployment, risk of redundancy and the impact on their income. This is available regionally but also in the local areas with specific individuals to support on a 1:1 basis. We have also been fortunate with the adult education budget to be able to provide further training and support on how to access current vacancies. There are sectors that are generating vacancies so the work of the adult education budget will be on how we can support individuals who have been made unemployed or redundant, and who are at risk of both into those vacancies/opportunities with fairly rapid reskilling.

The Recovery plan was published in October last year which set aside a circa £10m fund to take forward aspects of this plan. We are calling it a catalyse fund because the idea is to use it to generate momentum and to hopefully secure additional investment.

The low carbon challenge fund which is a fund to help support businesses with resource efficiency has now been agreed and we are just mobilising it at the moment.

The Small business resilience grant/programme has been utilised effectively as we have been able to positively exploit a gap in the market to help with adaptation and resilience, this is now going through the final sign off process and will be available to access very soon. For example we have been working very closely high streets and with the unitary development partners to develop this and recognise the impact the lockdown has had on high street business. We aim to put in effective measures and to think strategically around the future of high streets and small businesses on how to prepare them for a post pandemic world.

Comments in regards to the Care sector were highlighted and it has certainly been recognised evidenced in the additional funds coming through the adult education budget which specifically identified care as a sector and have created proposals on how training will be delivered. Also in regards to how women have been and will be affected, again through the adult education budget we have been looking to identify vulnerable groups to ensure any proposals for that funding are reflective of that. Through are skills support we are trying to make it as inclusive as we possibly can and Naomi Logan is looking to link up with this work.

More information will be provided alongside minutes including the access points for the companies to access these funds such as the dashboards.

The government announced that the Free port bid will be open on the 5th February. This

		<p>is to essentially support free core objectives, to support trade and investment and regeneration of jobs and to create innovation hotbeds. They have set up a criteria for what Freeport need to be from a government perspective and have asked areas to come together to form bidding coalitions to put in proposals to government by 5th February. WECA now have an overlaying narrative which is ultimately in short to support economic success, innovation and prosperity all the whilst working to a certain set of parameters set by the government.</p> <p>Links to South Bristol enterprise support and North and east Bristol enterprise support programmes:</p> <p>https://www.sbes.org.uk/</p> <p>https://westofengland.ytko.com/business-support-in-bristol/north-east-bristol-business-support/</p>
14:40-14:45	6)	<p>Digilocal update – John Bradford (Director of this Bristol based charity)</p> <p>We have a crisis as a city - that there a lot of young people, too many, who are not able to access digital forms of schooling. This therefore means they are missing out on education not due to any fault of their own. As a business community collectively we need to take this very seriously. There are some young people who can access learning on their phones but we appreciate that this is not an effective method of learning. Digilocal have been supporting community venues to run coding clubs for their young people, when lockdown happened march last year, we issued out laptops to those 120 people to continue their engagement. This also made them realise the sheer volume of families without access to digital methods of learning and online resources to give an estimated number, it has been identified that in the 10% of the most deprived areas more than 8000 households don't have access to home learning and 12% from the ONS study who don't have access to education digitally.</p> <p>We have been working with councillors Cleo Lake, Avon fire and rescue service, and Bristol waste recycling partners to repurpose those donated laptops for young people. We have repurposed nearly 300 so far since first lockdown, mainly from individuals and a couple of businesses. What we now have is a process where we can collect recycled laptops, data sanitise them, repurpose with modern software and then network them out through schools, council services or other community social groups such as Black South West, Barton Hill resource centre and Babassa. The aim to get laptops in hands of young learners as fast as possible and to provide that supply chain from people who have laptops to those who need them. The opportunity in the corporate/business sector is to work with partners over the longer term to identify laptops that are no longer being used or decommissioned. It was highlighted that Business West have donated 300 laptops and there has also been a business that wants to remain anonymous who donated 80 laptops which were sat in a cupboard not being used/the business was not sure what to do with him in regards to cleansing and recycling and now they are in the hands of young people contributing to their education.</p> <p>The main call to action here is that for one this is a big problem and should've been highlighted a long time ago, however during this time it is our corporate responsibility in</p>

		<p>terms of data and legalities and social responsibility to dramatically change the current situation. There is an opportunity for businesses in Bristol to strategically play a part on the civic side of the city helping those young people who wouldn't have contemplated working or engaging with an architect firm or a law firm or a technological firm, simply because it is not in their sphere or scope, but with a laptop they can access a whole range of things such as Wikipedia, BBC bitesize, coding courses, speak to mentors from industries and see what these professionals look like and hopefully to show them that they can aspire to working in types of businesses they were previously not alive to. We want to transform young people's perception of what is possible for them and in regards to their learning.</p> <p>Please contact Matt Griffiths for further information so to get his message out there of how he can support! john.bradford@digilocal.org.uk https://digilocal.org.uk/laptop-donations/</p>
14:45-15:00	7)	<p>Brexit Update – James Durie/Matt Griffiths (policy director)</p> <p>We are now outside of the EU and working in a different environment and the outcome of the trade deal and the text as we know came out over Christmas and are looking into what it means to businesses. There are clearly a lot of companies who are running into a degree of friction with the variations in the deal and the initial rules of trading, we have had queries of rules of origin and what the means in terms of how to access tariff free trade. The rules of origin are important and we are getting a lot of queries from the food and drinks sector in regards to needing a health certificate for certain trades as a lot of businesses don't have these. Some companies have been struggling with the prospect of paying double duties and there has been a lot of upfront friction, also with the lorries and the fun of those logistics. We are now in the secondary tier of the non-tariffs barriers and issues and it is showing that many companies are trying to grapple with how to provide a service and knowing what that means now. If we know of any sectors struggling Matt is keen to be contacted. The International board is taking place next week where we will be talking about how we start to look at key adaptations. We co-sponsor with Bristol other universities and the Bristol Brussels office and are looking into what the medium term engagement and the technical details will consist of. Sam Holliday from FSB commented that there seems to be difficulty with working with Northern Ireland, supermarkets already looking thin on the ground as British companies not wanting to work with them but apart from that it has been relatively quiet. Happy to at least have a deal. Too early to tell the impact of Brexit. Business West comments – huge number of business just getting on and operating, a lot of activity going on and the port continues to be very busy.</p>
15:00-15:25	8)	<p>Sector Updates -</p> <p>John Hurst Destination Bristol -</p> <p>We are dramatically down against last year which during a pandemic is positive, numbers show we are 76% down on footfall in retail and assuming the 24% will be from essential shops. Therefore we are contributing in our own way and at the moment we are trying to get people interested in Bristol and visiting when is safe to do so. Covid-19 has had a massive impact on us and will stay with us long into. We hope that domestic tourism will rise when is safe to do in the future (2021) but foresee international tourism to not rise until 2022. It is interesting and unbelievable that 2019 was our best year followed by</p>

2020 which has been the worst.

Barra Mac Ruairi University of Bristol -

The message out there is for students to stay at home unless they are in the city and the government issues guidelines on who should be coming onto campus etc, most of the students are staying off campus. We are managing the staff and students who need to come onto campus such as students and staff in the sciences, allied to healthcare; medicine, dentistry, teaching, social work and those that require professional, statutory and regulatory support and who need to come in for practical reasons such as assessments and placements, fortunately this is minimal. Managing and looking after them. We are in the middle of arranging and confirming our commercial position with both of our developers, still a lot of work to go ahead for the new campus, to surmise we are in a place of movement but cannot confirm anything further. In regards to Brexit we are yet to see a positive change yet, to echo Sam Holliday it is too early to tell in regards to the supply chain. We will know more in the next 3-4 weeks. Our students are not returning to campus and we have in turn seen a lot of rent strikes which we are responding to accordingly. In terms of financial pressure to that it is very significant, we remain positive and are pushing forward with those major schemes.

Marti Burgess NTE -

Inevitably the night time economy is not thriving, there are still restaurants providing takeaways so the urge is to buy from local businesses. We have had sign off for a new night time advisor role which will be a person to report into the mayor's office, and deliverable all round mainly advocacy and a piece of research around the NTE and will hopefully come up with a recovery strategy. The cultural recovery fund has reopened so are urging people to apply, hopefully more applications will come round this time.

Alice Floate Junior Chamber Board -

It is interesting how many people in our cohort have actually started new jobs since the start of January, it seems that people were (understandably) hiding the fact they were let go at the end of last year and now suddenly we are seeing a lot of people in their 30's updating their profiles with new jobs, which is good but surprising. I work for an events company and the issues we are finding is that we are not able to deliver anything and are just not getting any enquiries, this sense of unknown is harrowing, we know we are in a lockdown but it is really having a huge impact on us. During this time we normally have people planning events for the summer etc but the issue our industry is seeing is that for one we haven't been able to deliver anything since March and now are nearing that year mark and where people postponed events last year are now postponing again. People are really relying on vaccine but there is no certainty what this will bring and from industry perspective we are seeing a lot of despondency.

Sue Cohen Women's Commission -

The economy task group from the Women's Commission are responding to the refresh of the one city plan which has been very challenging as no one could've ever anticipated Covid-19. Covid-19 has exacerbated the inequality and poverty that was there and under the surface and with people who were not unemployed before and are now in even more precarious positions. Also what we found is that we often feel siloed on how the economy board responds on just a sense of economy, often associated with just businesses, but we take a much broader view on the caring economy, the social infrastructure and the childcare infrastructure, just putting this through for a discussion in the future.

		<p>Diana Finch Bristol Pay – Following on from Sue’s comments that we are doing exactly the same and thinking of economy in a much wider view of economy than just the market economy, thinking about the community economy. We are hoping to have the token schemes live to help boost that and make it more visible. The first tokens we’ll have when we go live in late spring (which has been delayed because of Covid-19) will be around bringing visibility and city wide measurements to businesses of pro social and pro environmental business policy changes around for example transparency in supply chain, paying the real living wage and various other things such as carbon neutrality and other sorts of business policy. Our aim is to try and get an overall picture of how far and how quickly are things changing in business in Bristol. We want to gage and measure on how this is/will change over time as well as celebrating and enabling those sorts of metrics to encourage people to behave differently with their purchasing.</p> <p>Andy Street Feeding Bristol – City funds despite being in a pandemic has had a good year, we have invested significantly (committing nearly £2.5 million) in lots of ventures spanning over the city. We had the Investment Advisory Committee today which will be an interesting project that will further generate employment and stimulate economy particularly in the environment sector. We are always very keen in finding ways of further investing into the city. In regards to food poverty and food insecurity, we’ve learnt a lot since the first lockdown and have seen a huge amount of progress and even greater connectivity across the city. I can confidently say we are in a strong place, with financial support, food clubs and banks and we are really seeing a degree of resilience and we continue to work hard to offer our support. The challenge we face is distributing the means to where it is most needed including inner city communities and recognising cultural acceptable food. There are however now grant programmes in place and going into next year we will have significant government funding support for vulnerable families and children over holiday periods which we have been doing over the last few years without the benefit of a grant, so now we have this grant we will continue to flourish. Huge pressure on economy on almost every area we look at, catering and hospitality sector, what they have contributed over last year has been phenomenal.</p> <p>Ben Wright Bristol 24/7– We deal with all shapes, sizes and types of organisations so see a range of views with some businesses seeing the light at the end of tunnel but others feeling like it’s a final blow. So having that support particularly for smaller organisations is paramount as a lot of people are struggling to access support. From our perspective it has been very difficult as we have had lots of stops and starts on projects, we were meant to be starting certain projects such as the collaborative project we have with the square food foundation and the young chefs programme at the beginning of this month and our print projects and magazines have had to cease so we have made the hard decision to pause pieces of work indefinitely until we see a lift and end to the restrictions which are hoping to be in spring.</p>
15:25-15:30	9)	<p>AOB - James Durie/Craig Cheney</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anesa Kritah will provide an update on the Economic Recovery Strategy @ next meeting • Next meeting 2nd February 2021 (timescales of meeting to be updated accordingly)

