

# One City Economy Board COVID-19 response call

Agenda – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020



	<b>Date/time</b>	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> November 1400-1500	<b>Venue</b>	Zoom call
	<b>Co-chairs</b>	Craig Cheney (Deputy Mayor of Bristol) & James Durie (Business West)		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda</b>			
14.00-14.05	1)	<b>Welcome and Introductions (James Durie)</b> Given English lockdown measure, brought forward discussion		
14.05-14.10	2)	<b>Public Health and testing update (Sally Hogg)</b> A lot has happened in the last couple weeks. Gone from rising Bristol rates, to tier 1+, to a lockdown. Government are very clear that lockdown will end on 3 <sup>rd</sup> December, but we do not know what will happen next will look like. Bristol has had 8,921 case since march. In the last 7 day we've had 1,957 and 1,857 the week before. That means, in the last two and a half weeks we've had nearly half of the case of the case in Bristol since March. The average number of new cases a day 280 and we have an R rate of 1.2-1.4 for the southwest. In the last week there have been 14,000 test with 13.7% are positive. Current rates are 422 per 100,000 South Gloucestershire 318, England 240, Oldham 744, Blackburn 719. Most cases are still in the younger population, under 30s but we're seeing an increase in other age groups. Week ending 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 187 people in covid bed, 4 deaths. We will start to see the effect of half term over the next few weeks. A lot of younger people are asymptomatic which is difficult because if they don't know they have it they continue to spread it. During the next four weeks, can really help get behind the message that we've got to break the chain of covid transmission. Its hard, as people don't want to stick to lockdown but it is now back to a very serious situation. Have to take it seriously. Got to remember hands, face and space. The knock on effect is that mental health is a real issue. Many are finding it very difficult to work, at home with families, although schools have made a difference to that. Need to remember kindness and support as we move through the next few weeks. Two bits of good news – 8 street Marshalls are supporting businesses locally. Pfizer are very close to having a vaccine ready to go and the prediction is that this will be available before Christmas. They wouldn't have announced what they announced yesterday unless they were well on the way. Plan is that they will start with the very vulnerable and the very elderly and then go up in 5 year blocks. If tiers exist after December 2 <sup>nd</sup> we will likely re-join in tier 1+ or 2 but we might see rates drop, but there will be restrictions because we are not through this. Hope to have more information on rapid testing by the next time we meet. Testing facilities are working reasonably well, but has faced difficulties throughout. We will have enhanced testing which will mean the people we are unable to reach by test and trace. Thank you for working with us and we really value your support.		

14.10-14.20	3)	<p><b>Thrive Mental Health programme (Lynn Stanley)</b></p> <p>Thank you for inviting me back now the programme has been launched in September. It is a regional wide mental health programme working with businesses, unions and FSB to support with resources and enable interventions. Aimed to bring advice and best practice. This is an emerging problem worldwide. Business in the community report found 69% of managers said that mental health protection was a core skill but only 13% said they had training. Thrive has provided equipping for managers. Over 140 have taken training since launch. WECA purchased 10,000 licences over a two year period. Keen to use as many licences in Bristol as possible. Mental health training is about embedding positive attitudes and behaviours at work but we need to ensure businesses take ownership. We encourage businesses to sign the mental health at work commitment and to use resources made available. E-learning has been funded for SMEs in the region.</p> <p>Offer: Best practices locally and nationally.</p> <p>Ask: Sign mental health at work commitment, utilise the programme, take zero suicide training. Utilise best practice.</p> <p>JD: Board to encourage organisations registration to the health at work commitments.</p> <p>SM: Is the E-learning and training available for VCSEs and SMEs organisations?</p> <p>LS: Target is for SMEs because it came through WECA growth hub funding but there is a lot of other information on the website for the organisations in the region.</p> <p>SM: it is universal in terms of mental health but we want to ensure we are working to provide frontline workers.</p> <p>LS: Is everyone aware of the 'our frontline' service. There is a national text and call service 24/7 provision for frontline workers.</p> <p>JD: A number of employers are trying to shift work culture so that employees have time away from desks and consider mental wellbeing more.</p>
14.20-14.50	4)	<p><b>Government provision and Sector Updates (all)</b></p> <p><u>City Funds – Andy Street</u></p> <p>AS: Work is positive and we hope to be bringing further investment into the city. There is ongoing work on food insecurity during this lockdown. We will connect with others on the call if that changes but recognising that it will get more difficult as we get deeper into winter as more face unemployment but as a city there to provide support as able.</p> <p><u>Government Provision and grant scheme – Guilliana Castle</u></p> <p>GC: Five grants available, local restricted support grant, a few regional authorities, will send out the link to everyone now. Sending out a press release today. It is for business with rateable values, they are for four weeks and there are three levels of rateable grants. Going live this week. Hopefully within 10 days response with money to follow soon after. 2<sup>nd</sup> is the additional restricted grant, discretionary grants, there or thereabouts on policy sign off. Working with other UAs and WECAs, going loop in BW. Want to get grants live next Monday, providing for people who can't benefit from rateable grants, and people who haven't been able to work because of secondary business. Three other grants, depending on the tier Bristol comes out into and those who haven't been able to reopen.</p> <p>MG: Discretionary grant, we are lucky that west of England local authorities have moved very fast on this and that we have the experience from last time. Main thing is that we get the grants out quickly and we are mindful of the work load to get this completed. Well done to the authorities for progressing quickly.</p> <p>GC: Local restricted and the ARG will available but there is a question of threshold but as long as you aren't over the previous threshold for support (about 200,000) then others will be allowed. <a href="https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/lrsg-and-arg">https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/lrsg-and-arg</a></p> <p><u>Matt Griffiths – Business West</u></p> <p>MG: A few businesses had a only a few days to move from JSS to job redundancy</p>

schemes. Currently undertaking the Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) to assess how businesses are feeling and what the pressure points are (link below). Businesses that complete will receive feedback on completion. The excluded remain excluded, some of the smaller limited companies will be under a lot of pressure. Our local authorities are responding quickly. Civil repayments VATs postponed till march and evictions and rents postponed till march. As lockdown and covid continues over winter.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/G5KKHB/>

**All board members encouraged to share with their members**

Sam Holliday - FSB

Relatively quiet now there is an expectancy of support. Lot of annoyance with retailers as many have been forced to closed while larger shops are allowed to be open and sell the same goods elsewhere. Lack of panic is a positive.

Ben Wright – Bristol 24/7

A lot more uncertainty at the moment, lots of people confused about how to plan for that. Hosting an event in about a month's time and getting some involvement from the SDG Alliance, about how businesses are responding and how businesses can build back fairer greener and stronger. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bristol247-presents-building-back-fairer-greener-stronger-tickets-126993054645?aff=ebdssbeac>

Ben Shorrock – TechSpark

Quick one but relatively positive. Bristol tech festival has gone ahead, virtual event with 53 different events going ahead. Including events from universities and colleges talking about how people get involved in the sector and raise money etc. Very glad its been able to happen. <https://bristoltechfest.org/>

Ameeta Virk – DIT

Tech for good, almost 50 applicants, taking 20 to each market, US, India and Singapore. Launch event December 2<sup>nd</sup>. A lot of applicants and positivity. Lots in the start-up phase but very positive.

Zara Nanu – Gapsquare

Had a great meeting about the kickstart campaign, taking longer than we thought but also not enough opportunities in Bristol for young people. Also we need to set a data framework to ensure we are monitoring the plan and recovery strategy.

**JT: Can kickstart ambition be included as a future Economy board discussion topic**

Guy Orpen – University of Bristol

Thank you to Sally from PHE for all their support. Working with core cities UK to make sure that the universities sectors in the 11 core cities use universities to make sure that that recovery is strong. Makes the point that if we're going to grow back a fairer greener more successful sustainable economy then universities will be key in that (<https://www.corecities.com/cities/agenda/economy/core-cities-uk-and-24-universities-pledge-work-together-unleash-innovation>). UKRI are doing a lot on place based innovation. Enormous amount going into understanding what levelling up across the country looks like. Bringing evidence from across One City approach to UKRI as leading best practice from across the country.

For University of Bristol covid stats see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/coronavirus/statistics/> and for UWE see <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/news/coronavirus/covid-19-cases> (on different bases) government plans for students return home over Christmas have been announced today - details yet to be clarified

Sue Cohen – Bristol Women's Commission

City Listening Project was launched last week, funded by gender equality office. Interviewed over 500 women in disadvantage areas, pre-covid but updated during covid. Economy taskforce also found lack of choice that women have around housing education, professional development how they get round the city, compounded by

		<p>disability and BAME or not. Enormous amount to consider especially around covid. Involved in the city plan refresh and bringing along some of the women from those areas to express themselves at the city gathering. Positive thing was just how important charity and voluntary sector are to those women. WECA isn't taking on childcare infrastructure. SMEs, childcare sector and voluntary sector within not within that arena. Important to equality and economy and discrimination generally.</p> <p><u>Sandra Meadows – VOSCUR</u></p> <p>SM: VCSE update; working to leverage additional (revenue) to support sector recovery, locally and regionally. Concern re potential level of redundancies and consequent impact on our ability to 'hold' the response system. Moving ahead with plans to support development of enterprise/trading in sector through our Local Access Programme - set to launch early 2021.</p> <p>JD: Lots of Activity under the radar, but investors finding it difficult physically to come here, but there is a huge amount going on in terms of physical construction going on, even if we are seeing the challenges all the time.</p>
14.50-14.55	5)	<p><b>Economy board Plan refresh (all)</b></p> <p>Working to refresh the timelines for the One City Plan themes. Every board is taking slightly different approaches but given a lot of work has already gone into the Economic Recovery strategy it would make sense that we work mostly from that. Need a small group of people who are willing to put a little bit of support into that. Zoe Billingham, Ben Wright happy to be involved.</p>
14.55-15.00	7)	<p><b>Board member AOB (Craig Cheney)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BID Christmas Proposal</li> </ul> <p>The Business improvement District are pulling together an exciting project to increase footfall in the city centre in the build up to christmas, which is a big positive. Can't share full details but will soon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees and Childcare</li> </ul> <p>The Women's Commission wanted to know whether a series of letters to business leaders highlighting the challenges faced by employees when children are sent home from school because of positive COVID-19 tests. The board felt that pointers to some solutions would be more helpful.</p> <p><b>Allan James and Craig to pick up discussion offline.</b></p> <p>Next meeting 1<sup>st</sup> of December back to 3 weekly schedule.</p>