

One City Economy Board COVID-19

Agenda – 1st December 2020



	Date/time	Tues 1 st December 2020 1500-1630	Venue	Zoom call
	Co-chairs	Nina Skubala (Business West) James Durie and Councillor Craig Cheney were unavailable		
Time	Agenda			
		<p>Welcome and Introductions (Nina Skubala) Nina advised the Economy Board has been going for a year and how tough that year has been.</p>		
		<p>Public Health and testing update (Sally Hogg)</p> <p>A lot has happened in the last couple weeks. Gone from both rising and falling Bristol rates, to nearing the end of the lockdown to preparing for Tier 3. Since March there have been 14,853 positive cases and we have seen 973 in the last 7 days, where we have seen a difference from the previous week seeing 2021. Sally highlighted that the lockdown even though is not everyone’s favoured way of spending their time it has ultimately reduced Bristol’s R rates per 100,000 dramatically. The current rate is at 210 per 100,000, at it’s highest it was 500 per 100,000. However in September it was only at 20 per 100,000 so we still have a long way to go. To put into context these rates; North Somerset is at 185, South Gloucestershire at 173, Bath and North East Somerset is at 89 and England is a whole is at 168. On the other end of the scale, Medway’s rates are at 479, Stoke on Trent at 365 and Dudley at 339 per 100,000. The only way to get through this is to work together, the tiering systems are proving confusing but by Christmas we will be in a much better place than we would be without this system.</p> <p>In last week we have tested 10,000 people where only 8% tested positive. The ages of people with positive results now spans all ages, originally it was the under 30’s where the figures were the highest, however 40-49, 50+s and 70+s has shown the most positive results recently which obviously is very daunting especially with the typical winter illnesses and viruses out there. To comment, Sally update that we have been offered to undertake mass testing, however we would need to apply for this at a national level which can prove complicated but will aid us in keeping our cases lower. At the moment there are lateral flow tests (two tests) taking place to test for anyone showing as asymptomatic. This test is meant to give almost immediate results, Universities, schools and the NHS all have their own single bodies which will oversee the function of this. Tests have taken place in Universities as of the 30th November, the reasoning for this is to get them tested in time to go home for the Christmas period.</p> <p>Sally updated that Ashton Gate has now been secured as a mass vaccination centre. We are yet to have a vaccine ready to go but when it is ready NHS staff, care home staff and</p>		

	<p>residents and the highly vulnerable will be the ones who will get vaccinated first. John Hurst enquired about the process of how the residents of the care homes will get vaccinated and if they will be taken to Ashton Gate for this. Sally responded saying categorically that residents will not be taken out of the home and exposed and that there is a standing operating procedure that will be done by GP practice squads going into care homes.</p> <p>So how can we help? Christmas cheer will be dampened this year and we are in the midst and will face a very difficult time and fears are that when everyone comes home in January that we will have another wave. Therefore, we need to ensure that people are following the procedures set out, take the time to educate yourselves and others if you see them not acting appropriately, do not mix indoors with anybody else outside of your household. Positively and confusingly we will be able to mix with others indoors in a Christmas bubble over the festive season, so we must ensure a constant flow of ventilation and cleanliness, have a window open, go out for walks, wash your hands and use antibacterial gel even inside. Remember hands, space, face. Covid can live indoors for 24+ hours! Safety is key as non-priority parties will not be getting vaccinated until spring time (rough estimate).</p> <p>Sue Cohen contrasted our procedures to those of Liverpool and Plymouth where they have brought the army in to test and trace which has proven very successful and whether Bristol will bring in similar forces to test and trace. Sally commented that this is too long and too complex of an answer but rest assured there are plans both locally and nationally including working with the army. Variety of different methodologies in place to address this.</p>
	<p>Thrive Mental Health programme (Sally Hogg)</p> <p>This month we have had apologies from Lynn Stanley so Sally will be commenting. First of all by highlighting the following link - https://wearegrowth.co.uk/covid-19/thrive-at-work-west-of-england/</p> <p>Sally then follows on to update the extensive work that has been going on about mental health and work going on with both WECA and Thrive mental health. The first Fox Pops will be concluded shortly lasting 40-60 seconds each and will be talking about the mental health principles and how they have helped benefit work place organisations and how discussions are being had on moving forward with the City Office, James Durie and others in respect of this work and raising awareness. Following on from this now the first series have been done there will be further ones completed, as other companies have been showing a keen interest in getting involved. Sally apologised for the brief update, but reiterated that Lynn will be more equipped to provide further info. Sue Cohen enquired that when this presentation took place, it didn't seem to include charities or the voluntary sector because it came through WECA but high incidence of staff. Sally commented that yes a training scheme will be set up by her colleague and talking to Sandra meadows how to include VCSE.</p>
	<p>Christmas Lighting (Keith Rundle)</p> <p>Keith Rundle spoke very positively of the Christmas lighting project and that they are already on spreading the joy of Christmas that we have been so lacking in. The project</p>

	<p>will include the lighting displays over 24 of Bristol’s well known buildings, lit with projecting well known songs or lyrics from Christmas carols and songs. No times or schedule of when the lights will be on have been released in order to keep footfall to a minimum. The first venue is being lit today at 4pm and will continue through till Christmas eve. Similar to Bristol together (hearts) we are trying to promote positivity in what is a very unsettling time for some normally and during this crisis. The Council, Cabot Circus, Broadmead and the SWX lighting company, amongst many others are providing assistance with this project and to plaster creative. The goal is to encourage the bring back of people back to the city centre and provide positivity, confidence and even a small token of normality by being able to go and enjoy the centre for the lights, the food and Christmas shopping. Positive that this is going ahead especially with the news of Arcadia and Debenhams closing down. Covid risks taken into account. Lights are static so people will keep moving through, in areas where footfall flows quickly. BBC and ITV media will be there, alongside with a lot of media interest.</p> <p>The links for the Bristol Adventure images and activity – https://www.instagram.com/bristolbid/?hl=en</p> <p>Also will be on various parts on = visitbristol.co.uk</p>
	<p>Planned One City Refresh – (Allan Macleod)</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> <p>Allan is working with a sub group from the Economy Board to draft a timeline week of 14th so the board can have a look, there will then be further dates and updates during the month. Allan is closely working with Aneesa and her team to pull in these sub themes and will update when the first cut of timeline completed, there will be plenty of time for comments to be received.</p> <p>The plan for the release of the refresh is provisionally the end of January. We will be using the One City Recovery Strategy to guide how we focus on the refresh and on the One City Plan. The first draft will be sent on 18th December which is also City Gathering day (so very tight and close time restraints) so due to this we may not have an oversight from the whole board, however a meeting will be scheduled in January to review and approve. Everyone echoes the hard work that is going into this.</p>
	<p>Grants Update - (Guilliana Castle)</p> <p>Guilliana updates that over that past few weeks in lockdown they have been running a Business Rates Grant, LSRG grant and an ARG grant which is a discretionary grant for those who don’t pay rates. Tier 3 plans; LSRG will tick over into the next stages and is awarded on a fortnightly basis, any business who applied for this grant will get automatic payment, businesses only need to apply once. Figures show that there are 5000</p>

	<p>businesses eligible with only 2000 applications, so promoting and advertising through our networks would be beneficial. The ASG grant ended on Friday 27th November, therefore the teams are currently reviewing amongst looking into what has been awarded and if any money left and what they can do with it anything left in the pot. The LSRG grant is open for businesses who have been able to open during lockdown but where they have been severely impacted. Alongside this, they are awaiting eligibility elements from the central government on both the policy and the application process, all funds should be backdates from 2nd November but currently just awaiting further details. The LSGR sector have targeted places that haven't been able to open at all, such as nightclubs, the team will contact them directly. Currently the Government are looking into at further hospitality grants for businesses that can't serve meals, but awaiting further info. There is a constant conversation on how Covid has impacted trade and ongoing concerns for businesses that have been able to trade and how they are going to be and have been affected.</p> <p>Further information on the grants are found here - https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business-rates/lrsg-and-arg</p>
	<p>Board member updates (all) –</p> <p>Nick Sturge: no particular update from IOD perspective, one thing to flag that work is being done with the university. Bristol colleagues and wealth bring settlement, ex Barton Hill on a social justice project and exploring how to interconnect hyper local and community activity to this level of discussion, work in progress.</p> <p>Diana Finch: following on from earlier work there will be a group getting together to build a wealth bring settlement, University of Bath project nearly completed to complete an SDG alliance tool to self-audit and can be done by any business, small to big business. To create a city level data set and to measure to what extent to t business are implementing policy changes that we need them to implement if we can shift the downstream features of the one city plan. This will be a target over the next few years.</p> <p>Marti Burgess: the night time economy is not flourishing in a time it normally would be. However this time we can feel that people are more prepared to endure a lockdown, for example people and businesses that are able to do and have deliveries. However there are lots of operators missing out on busiest time of the year, if we don't gain more government assistance there will be lots of business failures. This time of year normally helps them out for the next lull in businesses in January and February.</p> <p>Thorne from the council has been getting info out so they apply for the live grants and it has been evidenced that people have been applying, but landlord relief would be helpful, people lobbying the government for this, a meeting taken place with government this week. With the loss of the November and Christmas trade, will be tough going.</p> <p>Sam Holliday FSB: echoes was Marti mentioned that there does not same to be the same sense of panic in the second lockdown. Quiet despair but not panic, thanks were given to Guillianiana, impressed with the grants are out, as he also covers Gloucestershire and they have only just gotten/launched their grants out. Not so many people have taken grants as they thought around the country, which could be symptomatic that some businesses they want to help are no longer there, we need to encourage more business to apply. Campaign started this week to support smaller and local businesses. Especially with the news of Debenhams and Arcadia closing, as this will have a detrimental effect on smaller</p>

businesses as it is one less incentive for people to go into the centre accessing larger department stores and surrounding smaller businesses and shop.

Guy Orpen: provided student departures update. The University of the West of England, and surrounding universities have been monitoring and managing outbreaks and have relayed that there has been a rapid fall away of Covid positive cases, which has been reported on public facing websites. 800 students were tested and no new positive results! The slot for students to go home is between 3-9th December which allows students to continue with face to face tuition at various points in this window and then can commence travelling home. It is expected that more than the normal amount of students will stay on in Bristol which could help economy but uncertain because of being in tier 3, will see what happens when the tiering is reviewed on the 16th December. There will be certain means to keep the students happy and sustained for the period that follows. The University sector updated that we read with interest the spending review of the last week and commented that the word searches of chancellors statement, have shown that *University* and *Higher Education* were not mentioned, however research and innovation funding was signalled and the increase in the searches of this subject of one year and further years has been. Money to be invested in the innovation capacity as a region and University of Bristol will be an active player in this domain, partnership with city and wider region to get sorted and will be having further significant discussions.

John Hurst: In comparison to the aforementioned word count of the Chancellors statement; Debenhams and Arcadia have been searched a lot. John updated us that there is unfortunately not a lot of good news to report, except that tomorrow we will be seeing retail stores reopen and can for see that it will be busy, the government have even said to businesses they can open 24/7 which will help boost sales but unsure how they are going to manage their staffing and the restrictions on themselves and even if this will happen. Update that as a team they have been in contact with the chairs of the Hotelier association who have said it has been an utter nightmare and said they cannot function with no real facts from the government. However with local support we can relish, a great conversation has been had with Thangaham Debonnaire in recent weeks and she fully understands all the frustrations, but equally so much frustration from the hospitality industry that they can't get going. There will be a lot of victims in the early new year because we have not being able to operate normally. There is the constant feeling of trying to be optimistic during this unexpected and detrimental time, therefore the initiative from Keith Rundle will be a wonderful, great and unique event for Bristol, bringing the city together during these unstable times and it will invite people who may have been too afraid to leave their homes revisit the area. It will get international recognition and after Covid, the hope is that events like this will keep people coming to Bristol, unite Bristolians and to ultimately continue to make a massive difference to lives.

John Chaplin: updates that business is as usual, they continue to import and export cargo and are supporting the construction of the EDF nuclear power station in West Somerset. Everyone working at home where they can.

Commented on the free port proposal that came out in the spending review; this is being picked up by WECA and continual analysis of the free port proposal. They will be addressing the opportunity in the greater Bristol region with Bristol port providing the import and export facility which will support a number of free port zones which will have all the benefits cited by government in relation to free ports, this is the model we are pursuing in this area and WECA and the Western Gateway and other Local Authorities are very enthusiastic on this.

Nigel TUC : echoing earlier comments re Debenhams and Arcadia, but alarmed about the easy offer to shops opening 24/7 as it adds to the current pressures on staff. There has been a release this morning about the food processing sector and am deeply worried about it, they are trying their best but they are having to ramp up the amount of temp staff to cover this and fear this could be a Covid feeding ground, which has been seen in Cornwall. Sally Hogg comments that work is being done around this.

Ben Shorrocks: Bristol TechSpark festival ran in the last week of November, during that week the team put together 53 events for over 5000 attendees which reached 2 million on social media, it was all free and all the videos are up and live. Positive news – start and scale up sector, announcement between funds run by Newable venture and Bristol private equity club. The start-up sector have always faced issues with gaining local funding, always have to go to London for funds! This announcement updated us that £10 million of funds will be utilised, matching has been done through the private equity club, this was announced in last few days and more information coming out in due course. This is truly a positive sign, in investment in start-ups and scale ups in next year. Ben also commented that this sector seems slightly easier to cope with than other sectors.

Sue Cohen: commented that childcare was also not mentioned in the current spending review! However, the Women’s commission battle is on, they have already developed a template and have done a lot of work around the caring economy reflecting work already done by the women’s budget group and have devised a template to send out to contact businesses. This is about a mix of topics including adult social care, child care, employee health and wellbeing, self-employed and future labour market and we hope to send out to all businesses/contact on the recovery board. Sue also echoes the concerns regarding Arcadia and Debenhams and mentions that a high proportion of retail workers are in fact women. There needs to be a signpost to WECA that social care is a growing sector, app group reported back in October that training and wages should be increased to assistant health workers, looking to WECA to support an initiative on this.

Jane Taylor: The Kickstart is underway and the first 30 jobs from Bristol Kickstart scheme that have been put forward to the BWP for consideration. This is the first 30 for them, other gateways that are pulling these jobs together for young people, this is a pilot for them and have pulled 30 really important jobs and will give us an update with how it’s going. Good news – city council exploring how it might target 3000 recycled laptops because the council are replacing all digital devices soon and they are looking how they can get them cleansed and sent out to other allocated priority groups in city alongside data.

Ben Wright : Ben working with digi locals, and Laptops for Bristol where they put the call out for donations and have had 250 laptops donated, but the aim for 600. However with the information from Jane, a way to work together in regards to donations would be beneficial. Jane and ben will talk outside of this meeting.

We also have this virtual event next week that may be of interest-

<https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/bristol24-7-presents-building-back-greener-fairer-stronger/>

<https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/features/laptops-for-bristol-donate-your-old-laptops/>

	<p>James Durie update from business west: The months until Brexit are whittling down so advised that the Trading through Brexit portal is there offering training and advice. They are responding to the clean air zone consultations, but have private concerns which have been raised that we need a clear congestion zone as the fear is that businesses won't have time to adjust to this especially those with HGV drivers and fleets. Feeding it back privately but also encouraging members to respond to this consultation. In other news the economic survey has been completed and will be shared after this meeting, alongside an update on the urgency of the climate crisis and need for us to respond to it, the environment board has offered us a Bristol Water member to join our board which will then allow us to have an insight from that sector, a major employer and big part of our economy.</p>
	<p>AOB:</p> <p>Apologies from Barry Norris, see below his email update:</p> <p>#BristolGivesThanks this Christmas We are planning a short #BristolGivesThanks campaign in the run up to Christmas which would celebrate the positive things that the city is grateful for after was has been a very challenging year. We will be asking local people to tell us what they are most thankful for by short 10 sec video message... and using the hashtag #BristolGivesThanks.</p> <p>It would be great to have City Office support and One City Partners contributing to this too. Weeks of activity are likely to be 14 Dec and 21 Dec. All are welcome to take part.</p> <p>Date for next meeting: 12th January with Craig or James chairing.</p>