# Bristol Student Community Partnership (BSCP) Minutes 9 October 2023

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| **University of Bristol (UoB)**  Steve Smith (SS): Community Liaison Officer (Chair) Hannah Quinn (HQ): Chief of Staff to the Vice-Chancellor Steve Hall (SH): Director of Student Experience and Deputy Director of Education and Student Success. Phaedra Karaoli (PK): Community Liaison Coordinator Ben Pilling (BP): Chief Executive, Bristol SU Izzy Russell (IR) : Student rep, Bristol SU John McWilliams (JMW): Director Civic Engagement  **University of the West of England (UWE)** Emma Dent (ED): Business Support Team Leader  **Bristol City Council (BCC)** Cllr Guy Poultney (GP): Councillor, Cotham Ward (Chair) Cllr Tom Hathway (TH): Councillor, Clifton Down Ward Cllr Mohamed Makawi (MM): Councillor, Cotham ward Cllr Paula O’Rouke (POR): Councillor, Clifton Ward, Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Katy Grant (KG): Councillor, Clifton Ward  Chris Swinscoe (CS): Neighbourhood Enforcement Team Becky Gale (BG): Private Housing Service  | **Residents Groups** Fiona McVey (FM) Anthony Negus (AN) Dr. Jill White (JW)  **Bristol Waste Company (BWC)** Nerys Neath (NN) **Landlords/Letting Agents** Pippa Barry (PB): Private Landlord  **Avon & Somerset Police** Sian Harris (Ofc SH): University Police Officer    |
| **Apologies:** Apologies were received from Liam O’Shea, Harriett Bradley, Nerys Neath, Jak Boydon, Insp Jon Scott  |
| **Actions summary:** **Action 1** - HQ to report back to BSCP on 22/1/2024.**Action 2** - HB to report back prior to next BSCP.**Action 3** – CS to ensure NN reports back at next BSCP. **Action 4** – SS/SH to discuss whether Op Beech phone can be updated and report back at next BSCP. |

**Action 5** – CS to report back for next BSCP regarding the ongoing investigation re professional house parties.

**Action 6** – GP/SS to ensure SOTM enforcement on next agenda.

**Action 7** – UoB to arrange residents meeting this term.

**Action 8** – GP to facilitate the appropriate multi-agency meeting.

**Action 9** – ED to supply copy of report when validated prior to next BSCP for circulation. **Action 10** – BSCP to be consulted on the review and any further changes to SDR.

**Item 1: Chair’s Welcome & Introductions**

1.1 SS introduced Steve Hall Director of Student Experience and Deputy Director of

Education and Student Success and Hannah Quinn - Chief of Staff, UoB Senior Executive Team

# Item 2: Approval of last minutes 24/06/2023

2.1 Fiona McVey updated to show she was an observer rather than attendee.

2.2 Amendment required to item 6 (page 7) - Street name should have been Kensington Road not Station Road.

2.3 APPROVED minutes, subject to above amendments

# Item 3: Updates on Actions on last minutes

3.1 **Updates on Item 3:** Behavioural References - Hannah Quinn to have more substantive information to provide, in readiness for next BSCP in January 2024. PB suggested that without reference information she, and other landlords, will be unable to take on 2nd year student tenants, as the HMO licence requires that information.

**Action 1 - HQ to report back to BSCP on 22/1/2024.**

3.2 **Updates on Item 4:** Op Beech phone - SH explained that when Op beech is not working during holiday periods the phone is monitored by CLO office and CLO will respond when they are back in office – There is no answer machine facility on the phone.

3.3 **Updates on Item 6:** CS explained that bins on street and statutory functions on fly tipping remain enforceable. GP explains that after May, there may be committee working groups with councillors in different areas, to set priorities for Enforcement teams. Bins on street could become a higher priority. SS on behalf of HB – HB has not been to clean streets forum and will report back on findings after the next clean streets forum in Jan 2024.

**Action 2 - HB to report back prior to next BSCP.**

3.4 There was discussion of the pilot scheme around St Stephens Street and the possibility of extending the pilot to other areas. However, with only 2 BWC engagement officers for whole city this could prove difficult. CS was not able to give any further information. Cllr PO’R understood that the outcome of the pilot would be reported to BCC and would factor in Council plans. There was also discussion of seagull sacks in the Chandos Rd area. CS confirmed that the decision not to enforce bins on the street was made in 2017 by BCC.

**Action 3 – CS to ensure NN reports back at next BSCP.**

# Item 4: Op BEECH update

4.1 SH updated on the resumption of Operation Beech on 22nd September, and the number of calls received. She noted that during October and November and specifically on Halloween and Bonfire weekends, the shifts for Beech would increase to either side of the weekends, since noise and party incidents seem to increase during festive periods. From the 8th of Nov onwards, it would go back to standard weekly operations (Wed, Fri/Sat. until the 23rd December). Although Beech was not operational during certain holidays the phone was still monitored by SH and the CLO office.

4.2 There was discussion of clarity of information online and cover for the phone line. It was confirmed that all complaints were dealt with either reported through Beech or via email to the CLO.

4.3 It was confirmed that changes to the Operation Beech schedule were based on intelligence on student behaviour, and data from previous years, to target key times and that this was the best way to use the budget to our advantage and cover the busy period.

**Action 4 – SS/SH to discuss whether Op Beech phone can be updated and report back at next BSCP.**

# Item 5: NET updates

5.1 CS reported that Fixed Penalty Enforcement Notices for fly tipping within areas of Marks Lane / Colston Ave / Byron Place have been issued. CS also mentioned that they are currently making an effort to target professional student house parties in conjunction with UOB student investigations and referral.

**Action 5 – CS to report back for next BSCP in regard to the ongoing investigation re professional house parties.**

# Item 6: Students on the Move

6.1 CS listed the following in regard to the SOTM campaign.

* 55 x incidents of fly tipping had been investigated.
* 24 x student warnings
* 8 x Student Fixed penalty notices of £400
* 8 x Landlords were under investigation.
* 31 incidents related to non-student addresses.

Nothing at this time to revise and put on next agenda.

**Action 6 – GP/SS to ensure this is on next agenda.**

# Item 7: Private Housing Sector Updates

7.1 BG reported on a consultation process for two proposed selective licensing schemes which was open until 7th November 2023. These were focussed on areas with a high concentration of private rented accommodation which were not under the HMO licensing scheme. The link was shared with members.

7.2 AN asked if the cost of licence fee would be going up, since last time they understood that the fee was not sufficient to run an effective licencing scheme. It was confirmed that the licensing scheme would be self-funded.

7.3 PB asked whether there would be staff capacity to match the proposals. She explained that the process was currently taking up to 18 months. Staff levels needed to be increased to meet demand. BG confirmed they had recently recruited 4 additional housing staff and additional environmental officers and that the Council had up to 2 years to issue the appropriate licence.

# Item 8: Student communications, engagement, and enforcement update

8.1 SS provided an update on how Student Discipline was dealt with, following the principles of Engage, Explain and Educate. Where appropriate, he would complete an investigation, collecting evidence and writing a report. He would then refer the investigation via the SRS to an independent decision maker who would make decisions on student guilt and sanctions to be imposed. There is no change to the immediate response to community.

8.2 SH addressed the meeting and confirmed that process changes this year are not in any way about lower our expectations of student behaviour, but to ensure our procedures are robust, fair, and transparent. SH explained that it was necessary for the CLO procedures to be reviewed to ensure that they were in line with current student disciplinary process, and with the recommendations of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. It was essential for all that the process was fair and transparent for all parties involved.

8.3 SH confirmed that the investigation process conducted by SS and his team would include the opportunity for the student to respond to the allegations and ensure that there was sufficient evidence in the case to ensure an informed decision could be made.

8.4 GP mentioned that the residents were concerned over the speed at which the decision-making process would take as CLO’s approach of nipping in the bud has been very efficient last year. HQ stated that there was a pool of decision makers, not just one, who could make decisions on the evidence presented quickly. It was also confirmed that the changes make it less likely for decisions to be overturned on appeal, which would prevent any undermining the effective work of the CLO team.

8.5 FM raised concerns about the number of cases overturned last year on appeal. SH explained that the decision maker had not been able to uphold the sanctions imposed for a range of reasons - procedural constraints, lack of evidence, and the principle of natural justice. The changes made are aimed to reduce the number of cases overturned on appeal.

8.6 FM questioned the issue of anonymity for residents. While the CLO will engage, explain, and educate without disclosing witness information, should the complaint move to investigation stage it is a matter of natural justice to provide details of the accusation and accuser.

8.7 SS confirmed that we will be monitoring the new process to ensure it is working well and to appropriate timescales. There had only been one case escalated to decision makers so far. We are all committed to this working and aim to reduce complaints from the community. SS will continue to feed back to complainants and complete quarterly and annual reports for community liaison issues.

8.8 HQ confirmed that the changes to process were about supporting the CLO and setting him up for success, with a robust procedure with outcomes that will stick. The changes were designed to strengthen the process, whilst being fair and consistent. It would also allow SS to focus on the areas where he had most impact – engaging with residents and students in the community. HQ agreed to hold a meeting with residents’ groups to explain more on this matter if that would help them to understand more of the processes now in place.

**ACTION 7: UoB to arrange residents meeting this term.**

8.9 Members felt that they should have been better communicated with before the changes, and that their views should be taken into account. HQ confirmed referred the members to information provided to the BSCP in January 2022. Some members were pleased with the joint VC welcome letter to students. Other members felt their views had not been considered. Agreed a meeting would be constructive.

8.10 AN raised a question in relation to the decision makers, and who these might be. It was confirmed that they are senior staff members with experience of student disciplinary processes. He noted thatAndrew Waller was stepping away from his coordination duties but would continue with the Noise pages. Harriet Bradley will now act as group representative for all the RA groups.

8.11 AN raised concerns about the redrafting of the rules around waste and the use of the anti-social behaviour in its place. It was confirmed that the University’s approach to waste has not changed – SS would still be supported to intervene, it is just the drafting of a formal document which has changed. He also suggested the student disciplinary regulations had not changed in 15 years, when in fact they are reviewed and updated annually.

8.12 PB confirmed that SS had made the most fantastic change to community engagement and was glad to hear support for him and his team. She asked for a review of the new process.

8.13 PB also emphasised the role of landlords in managing anti-social behaviour and student parties at 3am, as this is part of their HMO Licencing conditions. It would help if there were BCC enforcement on landlords who do not comply. SS agreed – this has to be a joint approach and landlords must take responsibility.

8.14 GP raised concerns about the lack of enforcement around waste and anti-social behaviour from BCC and suggested more comprehensive discussions at a multi-agency meeting before reconvening at the next BSCP.

**Action 8 – GP to facilitate the appropriate multi-agency meeting.**

8.15 FM asked UoB to consider mandatory training for students, linked to educational sanctions if not completed. While it would not be possible for the University to enforce this for students signing rental contracts, she felt there should be mandatory training on “key social issues” as soon as they reach 1st year halls and from May /June each year.

# Item 9: UWE end of year report

9.1 The end of year report was complete but not validated or available.

**Action 9 – ED to supply copy of report when validated prior to next BSCP for circulation.**

9.2 ED explained the UWE disciplinary process which was very similar to the UoB process. The main difference was in relation to waste where they are able to work jointly with South Gloucestershire Council in a way that UoB were not able to work with BCC. South Glos took a different position to waste than BCC, and they were able to work with South Glos council on enforcement. This was an impact of the different Council approaches.

9.3 It was requested that the word waste be reinstated in the Student Disciplinary Regulations. It was again confirmed that UoB’s approach to waste has not changed. The wording in the regulations of anti-social behaviour is wider and covers more behaviours. However, it would be considered in the review for next year.

9.4 GP suggested BSCP should continue to be consulted and involved in the review process.

**Action 10 – BSCP to be consulted on the review and any further changes to SDR.**

# Item 10: A.O.B

10.1 Noted a vote of thanks to Andrew Waller for all the work he had done.

10.2 SS invited all residents to the CLO Christmas event on 02/12/2023, more details to follow.

# Next meeting

14.00 – 15.30 - 22nd January 2024