

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD – COMMENTS TO CABINET RE BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL 18-19 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Summary

Members have conducted scrutiny of the Bristol City Council's 18-19 budget proposals over the following sessions;

1. July 17 to December 17 – the Scrutiny Medium Term Financial Plan Task and Finish Group have been looking at the MTFP and the 18-19 Budget Proposals.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board conducted scrutiny of the budget at meetings on 18th and 22nd January 2018.

Key Findings

- This two-step process was newly introduced for 17/18 and Members and officers have universally welcomed the approach and concurred that it has led to much more robust scrutiny than in previous years. In particular Members welcomed the opportunity to work closely with officers in an informal and confidential forum to shape the budget proposals and thank officers and the Executive for their support in enabling this to occur.
- Members view that the budget reports complexity makes engagement by Members and specifically the public difficult. It is suggested that thought be given to next year's budget as to how to make the documentation more accessible noting the large amount of information that must be published. Similarly methods for increasing wider Member engagement in the process should be explored as it was noted that all members have a responsibility regarding the budget.
- Members request that the timing of the budget meeting and the publication of reports be reviewed in order to provide the maximum amount of time possible for the public to engage with the proposals and also to better support officers in the production of the reports.
- Members noted that recent budget consultation exercises had resulted in low response rates and there were concerns that the content could be viewed as misleading. It is recommended that work be undertaken by officers with Members to try and address these issues and improve future consultation.
- The need for a much strengthened asset management and property strategy should continue to be a high priority for the authority, and the work of the Assets Task and Finish Group should continue to support this. Members highlighted that failure of a robust strategy means the organisation is:
 - a) failing to commercially capitalise on assets (via rental income and/or disposal where appropriate) at a time when the organisation is having to make service reductions and cuts to staffing .
 - b) failing to drive forward social value and protect assets that are vital to communities.
- Work should be undertaken across 18-19 to address the significant challenges facing the HRA 30 Year Business Plan which will cease to have capital funding by year 7/8 of the programme and is projected to be in deficit by year 16. Given the complexity of this area it was agreed that a series

of member briefings would be run to provide members with the necessary background information.

Thanks

Members of OSMB wished to formally express thanks to all officers involved in the budget process and in budget scrutiny, specifically the Section 151 Officer, Head of Finance and Finance Business Partner for their hard work in the production of the budget reports.

Thanks is also extended to Councillor Craig Cheney for supporting the budget scrutiny process throughout as well as his Cabinet colleagues for their contributions to the relevant scrutiny meetings.

EXTRACT MINUTE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 18TH JANUARY 2018;

The following matters were discussed;

- BE6 - Plans were in place to make savings by freezing incremental pay rises for senior managers.
- BE43 – The Council was owed a substantial sum from outstanding debts, mainly in relation to Adult Social Care. The payments would be recovered sensitively and more cohesive systems would be introduced going forward.
- FP01 – The proposal to save £4.4m from the Neighbourhood’s budget by introducing efficiencies would be delivered by reducing support to some external organisations (as approved 3 years ago), and seeking better value for money from contracts. The savings for 18/19 had already been identified. Bristol Waste Company had agreed to make £5m of savings next year and any surplus from would be reviewed towards the end of the period.
- FP14 – The proposal to establish an in-house debt collection service would aim to make the process more ethical and reduce stress for families, whilst also reducing costs by seeking solutions and requiring fewer house visits.
- FP32 – The budget to assist families with ‘no recourse to public funds’ was being reduced, however, the intention was that more money would be reclaimed from the Home Office so the level of service provision would not be affected. A policy for the future was being prepared and would be circulated to Members for comment.
- FP33/37 – It was right to look at ways to enable people to stay in their own homes whilst reducing costs, but not if there were knock on effects on other services such as the NHS. Within the last 6 months there were 60 fewer users in residential care.
- RS02 – The road maintenance budget included provision for tree pollarding and reduction of epicormic growth during 18/19, after which the longer term plan for trees would be agreed.
- RS14 – The closure of all Citizen Service Points bar that at Temple Street may inconvenience some residents although the Customer Service Call Centre could assist in most instances.
- RS15 – The outcomes around the consultation re the proposal to remove discretionary rate relief on business rates for charities, voluntary groups and not for profit organisations would be available in late January 18. The suggestion was that rate relief be withdrawn for organisations with turnover of £100k or more, but a Cabinet paper setting out the details of the policy would be prepared in due course.
- IN25 – The plans to increase the admission fees at Red Lodge and the Georgian House Museum had led to concerns being raised that visitor numbers would reduce, which would be counterproductive. The lead Cabinet Member was confident that the savings could be delivered.
- IN30 – The Bristol Platform to increase use of volunteers across the city was in the early stages but it could potentially bring in significant income (e.g. York were raising £90k a year for a similar scheme).
- PE02 – The additional funding identified to support the Special Educational Needs programme was not due to commence until 19/20.

Risk Matrix

- BR9/10 – Work was underway to assess the steps that needed to be taken to better protect the city from flooding and funds had been set aside for any necessary works. This would include improvements to the Chocolate Path. It was suggested that Flood Risk could be the focus of a potential Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.
- BR14 – The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations was being managed to minimise the risk to the organisation.
- BR19 – the Council had in the past experienced issues with delivery of major projects on time and within budget so now a more cautious position would be adopted based on the assumption that additional investment would be required. ‘Health checks’ would also be conducted during large scale schemes so that issues could be spotted earlier.
- BR20 – Joint working was taking place with the Core Cities to improve understanding of the impact of Brexit. A report to summarise the findings would be available in due course.
- BR21/22 – The Council was planning to increase its investment in ‘spend to save’ initiatives.

EXTRACT MINUTE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 18TH JANUARY 2018;

Consultation Report Overview and Corporate Strategy

The following summarises the discussion;

- The responses received as part of the consultation were relatively low compared to the population (with around 600 respondents). Concerns were raised that the results of the consultation were therefore not representative, which could be partly due to fatigue, although it was noted that with sample sizes of 500 and over the data was more reliable.
- Increasing public engagement remained a priority although there were some challenges around resources and timing. Furthermore, caution should be exercised when targeting particular groups to participate which could skew the findings. One solution would be to improve engagement when ideas were in the formative stages.
- Plans were in place to co-ordinate all of the consultation/engagement that was taking place city wide in order to better share data and learning.
- Many of the procedures relating to recent City Council consultation exercises have been queried by Members. A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group could be established to enable Member to shape the process and improve engagement.

Capital programme (Appendix A2 to the Budget Report)

The following key points were raised by OSMB and discussed with the Executive and relevant officers

- Funding for Temple Meads Masterplan - it was noted that funding appears to reduce over the five years programme. Officers confirmed that this is due to the expectation that further into the programme external funding sources should come forward. The total is £2m (with WECA) with the levering in of £1.5m Network Rail funding to undertake the Masterplan for the station and surround. It was noted that this work will be extensive requiring this level of budget envelope.
- Members were pleased to see capital investment in the People Directorate. The focus of this was confirmed as extra care (enabling independent living) as opposed to residential care. It was noted that Bristol has an over reliance on residential care and that this needs to be addressed alongside the city's affordable homes and under-occupation strategies. It was noted that a Business Plan is not yet written for this work and that further work is required to engage with service users and providers to develop this.
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – it was clarified that the HRA is still facing significant challenges. From 2020 councils will have the ability to increase rents but this is offset by the reducing housing stock due to Right to Buy. The current assumptions indicate that capital will run out by year 7/8 of the business plan and that the HRA will be in deficit in 16 years' time. Significantly more work is required to address the future HRA business plan position in 2018/19. A series of Member Briefings on the HRA are to be organised to focus on the debt cap, borrowing assumptions and the reserves required to support the HRA. It was noted that this budget position will begin to impact upon provision of service (e.g. reduced letting standards and provision of planned programme) in the future. It was noted that the Housing Company may be

able to contribute to tackling the issue of social housing and members requested that details be provided on this at an appropriate point in the development.

- Members requested a break-down of what is included within the £14m corporate expenditure and it was agreed that this would be circulated by finance officers.
- Capital Programme – it was noted that there is not a significant amount of change in the budget envelope from 17/18 to 18/19. Members questioned as to why most capital expenditure is front-loaded in the programme. It was noted that this is standard practice regarding capital projects and the programme budget sets the overarching budget and borrowing envelope and that more projects/programmes are likely to be put forward/developed in coming years. It was noted that a contingency fund is always available to manage project time delays/over-spends and other emerging pressures including the Council's liabilities. The MTFP principles are to ensure that these are contained within the borrowing and budget envelope set. Any draw down from the contingency budget will require a key decision and cabinet approval and thus be available for scrutiny.

Place Directorate Budget Proposals

- BE57 - The Property division had repeatedly had issues with its budget although there were plans in place to increase efficiencies by reorganising the team; reviewing the asset management policy; and improving IT systems.
 - The Council's property strategy had last been reviewed in 2011/12 and was now due to be significantly revised following a full stock take of assets (including categorising facilities into type eg housing/investment portfolio/community asset etc); a rent review; rationalisation of the estate; and adopting more commercial approach. Steps were being taken to bring in the right expertise and the project was expected to be completed within 18 months although early findings would be available in June 18.
 - Particular care should be given around the community asset aspects of any property disposal and discussions were underway with the relevant organisations.
 - Concerns were raised regarding the significant delays to this piece of work, and also that the Council Assets Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had been established to assist with this project but to date had been underutilised.
- IN22 – the £1M of savings identified would come from a combination of inflation but also rebasing fees and charges.
- IN07 – The decision to reintroduce Sunday parking charges was not expected to result in a significant decline in visitors because the fees were relatively modest.
- RS02 – Plans were in place to improve the quality of road maintenance works in order to increase their longevity as well as to work more effectively by targeting works to where they were most needed.
- PL10a – The City Council was working in conjunction with the West of England Combined Authority to make savings around transport which had led to a £900k reduction per annum from supported bus services. WECA were developing a Bus Strategy which would set out the plan for the region and help to develop a more efficient bus network.

- IN24 – The Planning service was currently running without revenue support and income would be raised in the future by offering a deluxe service but that could only be rolled out if sufficient staff were in place.
- BE43 – A series of work streams were planned to improve debt management arrangements such as reviewing single persons Council Tax discounts.

Neighbourhoods

The following key points were raised by OSMB and discussed with the Executive and relevant officers

- FP01 - It was confirmed that savings for third party payments were documented in each directorate budget schedule, not just in Neighbourhoods. Members were advised that there is a council wide 10% savings target on all external contracts when they are up for renewal.
- BE55 – concerns were raised about the ending of the Neighbourhood Partnerships and reduction in community focused officers and specifically how information on networks and community resources etc. will be available to residents and groups going forward. It was advised that work is underway regarding VOSCUR's role within this. It was also confirmed that a new structure for this area is still in development and will be shared with members at an appropriate stage.
- FP40 – it was clarified that this saving relates to bringing together programmes such as smoking and weight-loss into one service thereby making savings on contract spend. It was noted that there is a double-edged sword when making such savings in terms of the impact on BCC staffing vs impact on employment in the city and that changes should not be done in isolation.
- RS04- it was confirmed that the library savings are year two of a total of £1.5million of two years.
- FP02 – it was noted that there are two figures for parks savings. It was confirmed this is due to savings in support functions to the parks service. It was agreed that a breakdown would be produced.
- BW02 – it was noted that the Bristol Waste Company is one area where the budget appears to have increased. Officers advised that the Waste Company is looking to expand its commercial income in the future whereas currently the majority of income is from council services and so at this stage there is limited income and this is not shown within the budget savings.

Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix A4 to the Budget Report)

The following key points were raised by OSMB and discussed with the Executive and relevant officer

- Members questioned what assumptions and what stress testing had been done on potential changes to interest rates. Officers confirmed that external advice from a range of sources is used to inform their assumptions and they are in line with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) assumptions. Sensitivity tests are carried out and scenarios consider an approximate 3% increase.

Scrutiny MTFP Task and Finish Group made the following observations;

CONSULTATION ON THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN;

Approach

- The annual cycle needs to clearly articulate Scrutiny, Audit Committee, all Councillors and Public engagement

Financial Outlook

- Be clear around assumptions of growth in Council Tax rates
- Impact of Students on Council Tax / Business rates should be transparent
- We are asset-rich and cash-poor. How do we turn this around; dispose of assets and utilise the capital receipt, reduce the costs of security / maintenance or use them and create an income?

Resourcing Principles

- Decision taken should show the golden thread from the corporate priorities to the action being proposed.
- We should remove any reference to “stopping services” or be clear that is an absolute last resort.
- How do we link to Invest in Bristol and Bath; Regional Capital / Social Enterprise?
- Demonstrable link to the themes being explored to Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is currently being consulted upon.
- Create a specific resource principle for Asset utilisation. All of our assets to demonstrate value generation, e.g. no idle assets. Include the ability to utilise our assets for leverage and borrowing.
- Improved performance on roads / footway repairs and penalise for repeat visits. Tell us once and effective feedback loop once dealt with e.g. fix my street
- Commercialisation has developed a negative perception; consider an alternative name for this theme.

Other

- If we are going to do this let's do it well; additional capacity / support will be required as staff currently have little or no capacity?
- Ensure all viable options that create a sustainable asset should be considered as part of the wider engagement.
- Consider the uniqueness of an area and recognise in our options development that one size does not fit all.
- How do we continue to engage those who use fewer and fewer of our services and are making optimum contributions?

BUDGET CONSULTATION;

- Public budget consultation – concerns over consultation fatigue and how to make the exercise more meaningful for citizens
- Partnerships and Collaboration –earlier exploration of options for partnership and collaboration before resorting to budget cuts
- Cost Shunting – the need to stay alert to unplanned cost shunting and unexpected consequences through whole system approach
- Project Management - project management processes must be in place to challenge project overspend and performance
- Budget Assumptions – confirming that underlying assumptions for budget pressures are correct

- Assets – a deeper dive into asset groups would be helpful
 - WOE – enterprise zone projections should be looked at
 - WECA – funding available in current/next financial year should be reviewed
 - Reserves - easing current pressures versus planning for future need
 - Public consultation and Communication Plan – ensuring meaningful and legal process
 - Council Tax Proposals – balancing potential receipts versus costs to deliver
 - Adult Social Care – investing in appropriate monitoring to ensure right care, at the right time for the right duration of time
 - Consultation outcomes – e.g. clarity around neighbourhood legacy budget
 - Council owned chapel – heritage issues significant. Sound business case required to support any proposals
 - Commercial and Community Assets – requiring greater detail/understanding of proposals and properties concerned
 - Bristol Music Trust – concerned lack of awareness amongst councillors of impact. Capital investment to commercialise must stack up.
 - Public Consultation – clarifying process and timeline
 - Adult Social Care – Gatekeeping issues. Tighten and control monitoring process to tailor under and over provision. Managing Demand and understanding costs in relation to other cities. Many factors make Bristol unique and difficult to benchmark
 - Arena – concerns revenue costs as well capital costs not accounted for within MTFP. Need for understanding of implications of project being shelved. Understanding funding from LEP and WECA.
 - Adult Social Care – concern over lack of capital investment
 - Capital Programme – importance of governance and transparency and capacity to deliver. Importance of robust business case and cost benefit analysis prior to authorisation. Establish best practice and implement across the board.
 - ICT investment – need for coherent strategy that is interrelated and aligns across the board. ICT project delivery without coherent strategy has not served the authority
 - Commercialisation – concern struggled to cope with companies and capacity to deliver any further income generation opportunities. Not very good at responding quickly to deliver savings which will impact ability to make innovation / commercialisation work.
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- Income generating activity - Credibility of assumptions and evidence to support
 - Capital investment – to maintain and expand cemeteries and crematoria services to meet future demand
 - Parking charges – equalities impact assessments
 - Moving to other entities – CIC, trusts, mutualisation
 - Events market – various delivery models
 - Productivity and processes – risk of double counting
 - Arena – Capital financing and capital budget assumptions and borrowing costs
 - Contract renewal register – inflation pressures, category management approach
 - Adult Social Care – spatial planning, appropriate housing stock e.g. sheltered housing, care village models
 - Care Sector – national minimum wage impact
 - Children Social care – demand management, smarter commissioning, holistic programme approach
 - PFI – contract management, property dilapidation arrangements and budgetary impact
 - HRA – impact of borrowing cap
 - Grenfell – cost of safety implications
 - Right to Buy – right to acquire, HCA grants and local authority business model
 - Funding for major projects – use of ringfencing and reserves

- Capital programme –new borrowing to generate future income, invest to save, company business plans, asset management and property strategy
- Voids turnaround – new KPI for OSMB to monitor



BRISTOL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Summary Review of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget Task and Finish Group

January 2018

BRISTOL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)/Budget Working Group

- a. The MTFP was selected by members as one of the top priorities for 2017/18 at an OSMB 'hothouse' on 26th June 2017.
- b. The Group was then established by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) (formally agreed at its meeting on 25 July 2017) as the method OSMB used to ensure that Members were fully informed and engaged in the Council's financial management and planning arrangements which encompassed the MTFP and the Budget.
- c. However, prior to this, a time critical piece of work (Phase 1) was required to consult on the MTFP before Cabinet on 27 July. Three members of OSMB were therefore selected to progress the work.
- d. The Group had two key work phases. Phase 1 (July 2017): Consultation on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Phase 2. (September to December 2017): Budget Consultation.

Phase 1: Consultation on the Medium Term Financial Plan

- a. Due to the nature of the work, Phase 1 commenced with a core membership of three lead members of OSMB. These Members met with finance officers during July for a series of three briefings and in-depth discussions to scope high level proposals during the development of the MTFP approach and principles. (A summary of the key points that arose from these sessions is provided at Appendix A.)
- b. This included consideration of the following:
 - a five-year rolling forecast from 2017/18 to 2021/22
 - budgetary issues
 - the national and local economic outlook
 - resourcing principles that shaped the council's budget
 - locally-raised taxation from business rates and council tax
- c. The process allowed officers to present the evidence gathered and formulate proposals in an iterative manner, and allowed input from members of the group in shaping the MTFP prior to the report going to OSMB (25/7/17) for comment and to Cabinet (27/7/17) for endorsement.
- d. The MTFP is a key part of the Council's Policy and Budget Framework, intended to set out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provide a framework within which delivery of the Council's priorities will be progressed.

- e. It was agreed at OSMB that for Phase 2: Budget Consultation, that membership of the group be expanded to include full political representation.

Phase 2: Budget Consultation.

- f. Phase 2 commenced with six members representing all political groups. A series of eight informal budget sessions were convened on a wide range of topics, (See summary document at Appendix B) and enabled a degree of scrutiny of the budget process and emerging thinking.
- g. In addition, the group was involved as a sounding board in the development of arrangements for the annual budget consultation and recommended to OSMB an approach to public scrutiny sessions as follows:

- **Proposal for Scrutiny Activity on 18-19 Budget:**

OSM – Thurs 7th Dec 2017

Corporate strategy, review of which items are being consulted upon (as in whether others should be brought forward) and over-arching review by OSM of the cross-cutting savings within the budget proposals

January 2018

Focused budget sessions held in public. Sessions to include:

Engagement from relevant portfolio holders (supported by directors) setting out

- Outline of the overarching directorate budget position and budget gap
- Biggest challenge over 2017-18 and their view of the biggest challenges (The top three savings/risk areas they feel need to be highlighted) over 2018-19 and beyond. Scrutiny members to then respond and then highlight other areas of concerns / make recommendations
- Formation of Scrutiny's referral to Jan 23rd Cabinet and Full Council

Pathway for the Conclusions of the Group

- h. The meetings allowed for Members' detailed feedback on each topic, to be shared with officers at an early stage, to enable these to be taken into account in the development of proposals.
- i. Progress updates were provided to the monthly OSMB meetings, published on the Scrutiny webpages and included in a regular e-briefing to all members.

Feedback from Members

The new model was considered to be effective by members with the meetings considered productive, allowing for genuine scrutiny with improved transparency. Members were able to drill down into the detail and ask challenging questions. The interactions with knowledgeable officers added value to the scrutiny and developed the understanding for members of the budget forecasts, proposals and the underlying assumptions used.

- j. Members considered that the group was less a task and finish model and more a finance sub group or working group required for tracking the MTFP and budget, which were cyclical and ongoing.
- k. Members considered that annual review of the MTFP remains essential to ensuring the Council's medium term financial sustainability and are committed to raising the profile of the MTFP. Members believed that critical to this will be a commitment to monitoring the performance of the Executive through KPIs that are linked to the MTFP.
- l. It was agreed that further engagement and feedback at key stages of the budget cycle should continue to take place throughout the year with a view to gain clear oversight of the Council's financial governance processes and budgets.

Membership and Working Arrangements

Cllr Graham Morris (chair)*	Conservative
Cllr Donald Alexander*	Labour
Cllr Geoff Gollop *	Conservative
Cllr Tim Kent	Liberal Democrat
Cllr Clive Stevens	Green
Cllr Mark Weston	Conservative

*Membership for Phase 1 met in July. The wider membership For Phase 2, involving all political groups was finalised in September.

Meetings/Sessions

- m. Meetings were informal and did not have formally published papers or minutes. All papers were circulated electronically.

Lead Officer(s) and Relevant Executive Member

- n. The departmental lead officers were Denise Murray, Chris Holmes and Michael Pilcher and the Executive Member for this service area, Cllr Craig Cheney. Relevant departmental officers were required to attend meetings depending on the topic and context.
- o. Meetings were convened by Scrutiny Advisors, Johanna Holmes (Phase 1), and Louise deCordova (Phase 2).

Phase 1: Consultation on the Medium Term Financial Plan (Summary of topics/key discussion points) Appendix A

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| • Wednesday, 5 Jul 2017 | • Monday, 17 Jul 2017 |
| • Monday, 10 Jul 2017 | • |

Phase 2: Budget Consultation (Summary of topics/key discussion points) Appendix B

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| • Thursday, 21 Sep 2017 | • Wednesday, 8 Nov 2017 |
| • Thursday, 28 Sep 2017 | • Thursday, 16 Nov 2017 |
| • Tuesday, 17 Oct 2017 | • Tuesday, 28 Nov 2017 |
| • Tuesday, 31 Oct 2017 | • Wednesday, 13 Dec 2017 |

Table: Phase 1: MTFP/Budget Working Group: Topics Covered and Summary of Key Discussion (July 2017)

Date	Topics Covered	Summary of key areas of feedback
5 Jul 2017	- Medium Term Financial Plan Introduction and Approach - Financial Outlook - Resourcing Principles	Approach - The annual cycle needs to clearly articulate Scrutiny, Audit Committee, all Councillors and Public engagement Financial Outlook - Be clear around assumptions of growth in Council Tax rates - Impact of Students on Council Tax / Business rates should be transparent - We are asset-rich and cash-poor. How do we turn this around; dispose of assets and utilise the capital receipt, reduce the costs of security / maintenance or use them and create an income? Resourcing Principles - Decision taken should show the golden thread from the corporate priorities to the action being proposed. - We should remove any reference to “stopping services” or be clear that is an absolute last resort. - How do we link to Invest in Bristol and Bath; Regional Capital / Social Enterprise? - Demonstrable link to the themes being explored to Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is currently being consulted upon. - Create a specific resource principle for Asset utilisation. All of our assets to demonstrate value generation, e.g. no idle assets. Include the ability to utilise our assets for leverage and borrowing. - Improved performance on roads / footway repairs and penalise for repeat visits. Tell us once and effective feedback loop once dealt with e.g. fix my street - Commercialisation has developed a negative perception; consider an alternative name for this theme.
10 Jul 2017		

17 Jul 2017		Other • If we are going to do this let's do it well; additional capacity / support will be required as staff currently have little or no capacity? • Ensure all viable options that create a sustainable asset should be considered as part of the wider engagement. • Consider the uniqueness of an area and recognise in our options development that one size does not fit all. • How do we continue to engage those who use fewer and fewer of our services and are making optimum contributions?
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Table: Phase 2: MTFP/Budget Working Group: Topics Covered and Summary of Key Discussion (September to December 2017)

Date	Topics Covered	Summary of key discussion points
21 Sep 2017	- Context - Alignment of budget to outcomes - Capital Programme	Public budget consultation – concerns over consultation fatigue and how to make the exercise more meaningful for citizens Partnerships and Collaboration –earlier exploration of options for partnership and collaboration before resorting to budget cuts Cost Shunting – the need to stay alert to unplanned cost shunting and unexpected consequences through whole system approach Project Management – concerns that project management processes in place to challenge project overspend and performance
28 Sep 2017	- Review of pressures and funding position - Themed Approach to savings and some early proposals	Budget Assumptions – confirming that underlying assumptions for budget pressures are correct Assets – deeper dive into asset groups WOE – enterprise zone projections WECA – funding available in current/next financial year
17 Oct 2017	- Update on financial position - Directorate approach to savings proposals	Reserves - easing current pressures versus planning for future need Public consultation and Communication Plan – ensuring meaningful and legal process Council Tax Proposals – balancing potential receipts versus costs to deliver Adult Social Care – investing in appropriate monitoring to ensure right care, at the right time for the right duration of time Consultation outcomes – e.g. clarity around neighbourhood legacy budget Council owned chapel – heritage issues significant. Sound business care required to support any proposals Commercial and Community Assets – requiring greater detail/understanding of proposals and properties concerned Bristol Music Trust – concerned lack of awareness amongst councillors of impact. Capital investment to commercialise must stack up.
31 Oct 2017	- Consultation Approach and Proposals - Adult Social Care	Public Consultation – clarifying process and timeline Adult Social Care – Gatekeeping issues. Tighten and control monitoring process to tailor under and over provision. Managing Demand and understanding costs in relation to other cities. Many factors make

	Programme	Bristol unique and difficult to benchmark
8 Nov 2017	Forward Planning and Timeline	Arena – concerns revenue costs as well capital costs not accounted for within MTFP. Need for understanding of implications of project being shelved. Understanding funding from LEP and WECA. Adult Social Care – concern over lack of capital investment Capital Programme – importance of governance and transparency and capacity to deliver. Importance of robust business case and cost benefit analysis prior to authorisation. Establish best practice and implement across the board. ICT investment – need for coherent strategy that is interrelated and aligns across the board. ICT project delivery without coherent strategy has not served the authority Commercialisation – concern struggled to cope with companies and capacity to deliver any further income generation opportunities. Not very good at responding quickly to deliver savings which will impact ability to make innovation / commercialisation work.
16 Nov 2017	Parks	Income generating activity - Credibility of assumptions and evidence to support Capital investment – to maintain and expand cemeteries and crematoria services to meet future demand Parking charges – equalities impact assessments Moving to other entities – CIC, trusts, mutualisation Events market – various delivery models Productivity and processes – risk of double counting Arena – Capital financing and capital budget assumptions and borrowing costs Contract renewal register – inflation pressures, category management approach Adult Social Care – spatial planning, appropriate housing stock e.g. sheltered housing, care village models
28 Nov 2017	- Children’s Social Care programme - Chancellors Budget - Core Revenue Funding	Care Sector – national minimum wage impact Children Social care – demand management, smarter commissioning, holistic programme approach
13 Dec 2017	- Overview of the Schools Finance/DSG - HRA - Capital	PFI – contract management, property dilapidation arrangements and budgetary impact HRA – impact of borrowing cap Grenfell – cost of safety implications Right to Buy – right to acquire, HCA grants and local authority business model

		• Funding for major projects – use of ringfencing and reserves • Capital programme –new borrowing to generate future income, invest to save, company business plans, asset management and property strategy • Voids turnaround – new KPI for OSMB to monitor
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