

Key Considerations and Risks (from 2017 Scrutiny Hothouse)

Whilst significant progress was made during the Hothouse event and a direction of travel beginning to be shaped, there are still a number of issues that need to be addressed before a final structure can be agreed. They include:-

Communication;

- A. How to establish better lines of communication between the Executive and Scrutiny i.e. should more structured interaction be adopted?
- B. How to maintain formal reporting from the Executive Members to Scrutiny, particularly in view of the Constitution Working Group's intention to reinstate six monthly formal updates.

The Work Programme;

- C. The need to implement a robust selection process for topics for the Scrutiny Work Programme to ensure that activity aligns with the Mayor's priorities, and also the issues that are important to the residents of Bristol
- D. How to avoid duplicating Scrutiny activities with other Mayoral policy development work streams e.g. the Congestion Charging Working Group
- E. The importance of ensuring that an appropriate amount of time is dedicated to statutory matters (such as some services relating to health)

Resources;

- F. Helping Members to understand that the resources available to Scrutiny have reduced and therefore choices need to be made about priorities
- G. The need to identify a fair way to remunerate Members for the responsibilities associated with Chairing, including any 'Task and Finish' Group

Governance

- H. Finding the balance between enabling Scrutiny to operate in a transparent way versus needing to be nimble and responsive
- I. Further consideration of the role of call-in in the decision making process
- J. The sequencing of Scrutiny meetings in relation to Cabinet and the role of 'Call In' i.e. if a Scrutiny meeting took place within 5 days of every Cabinet meeting to review Key Decisions and potentially call them in, could pre-decision scrutiny reports be largely dispensed with
- K. The external Review of the 2016/17 Forecast Budget Deficit which highlighted several areas of concern in relation to Scrutiny, most notably;
 - The information flow between officers and Members
 - The frequency and quality of reports to Members, including scrutiny
 - The need for robust governance arrangements, particularly around finance

- L. Whether all Scrutiny bodies, including task and finish, need to be politically proportionate. OSMB Members were of the view that proportionality should be suspended for task and finish groups although it was acknowledged that the decision was a matter for the Whips.
- M. The timetable for agreeing Scrutiny changes. If no agreement can be reached prior to annual Council should the existing Commissions continue into 17/18 or should OSMB pick up all Scrutiny activity until arrangements can be agreed?