

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
Resources Scrutiny Commission

21st June 2013

Report of the Service Manager, Democratic Services

Resources Scrutiny Commission 2013/14

Officer presenting report: Steve Chapman, Scrutiny Officer
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RECOMMENDATION

To consider and agree the Commission's Work Programme for 2013/14 (Paragraphs 1 – 7 and Appendix 1) including items for in-depth scrutiny and the vehicle for undertaking those reviews (e.g. Working Group, Inquiry Day)

Policy

Full Council meeting on the 21st May confirmed the scrutiny structure for 2013/14. Responsibility for setting the work programme lies with members of the Resources Scrutiny Commission but this will need to be endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to ensure co-ordination across the scrutiny function.

Consultation

As part of their Annual Review outgoing Scrutiny Commissions were asked to suggest items for the 2013/14 work programme. Members, co-optees, Equalities Forums and Strategic Directors have also been consulted on the programme.

Scrutiny operating arrangements 2013–14

1. In September 2012 an inquiry was held under the auspices of the former Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee (OSM) exploring the role of overview and scrutiny in a mayoral authority. The inquiry reiterated a desire to build on the current strengths of overview and scrutiny in Bristol with a particular focus on the following :
 - Policy development and in–depth reviews
 - Involvement of the public and diverse stakeholders/partners
 - Accountability
 - Independence
 - Consensus and cross party working
 - External /Place based scrutiny
 - Flexibility to fit approaches to the subject in the context of in–depth reviews
2. The findings of this Inquiry were the starting point for developing proposals for the delivery of overview and scrutiny from May 2013.
3. Following Full Council on the 16th November, a working group of party leaders, whips and OSM leads was established to develop and agree a structure for overview and scrutiny to be presented to Council for adoption. This work was duly reported at the Council’s AGM on 21st May.
4. The Working Group’s proposals re–focus the overview and scrutiny function to reflect the findings of the inquiry, with a particular emphasis on early engagement in pre–decision scrutiny, policy development, public accountability and improving outcomes for the people of Bristol.
5. The structure provides for greater flexibility and use of task and finish scrutiny for policy/service review and development. There will also be an opportunity for dialogue with and constructive challenge to the Executive through a ‘Mayor and Cabinet Question Time’ hosted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and described elsewhere on the current agenda. The Mayor has agreed to attend on a quarterly basis and other Cabinet members will be invited throughout the municipal year (so there will be a question time at each ordinary Board meeting).
6. To reflect these revisions and the changed way of working, full Council also agreed to adjustments to the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules in the Constitution which now provide that :

- The Board has the authority to determine the frequency with which formal meetings of scrutiny take place, (OSR4) and
- The Board will perform an enhanced management function in relation to the conduct of scrutiny. The change emphasises that scrutiny commissions will be accountable to the Board for the setting and delivery of their work programmes, and will take account of the Board's requirements when so doing. The amendment also requires that commissions have regard to the Council's strategic priorities and policies and their impact on service delivery and outcomes for the people of Bristol, when formulating work programmes. Also, and that they pay particular attention to the work programme of the executive and the content of the Mayor's Forward Plan. (OSR7)

Proposal

7. Appendix 1 contains an initial first draft for discussion and agreeing the work programme. It has been compiled based on the overall role and responsibilities of the Commission as defined by the terms of reference and the guidance from OSMB. It is a rolling programme of work that will be amended throughout the period. Items can be addressed as and when they arise or come to the attention of the Commission.

The basic elements of the draft programme are:

- A. Standard items** which are concerned with the Commissions ongoing role of monitoring the capital and revenue budgets and the performance of individual Directorates. These are linked to the cycle of Cabinet and Executive reporting and have been programmed in to reflect this where these dates are known. The draft work programme also lists those standard items for which we currently haven't got specific dates at the moment.
- B. Items suggested by the outgoing RSC 2012/13.** These were identified as areas where there are significant strategic, policy or service implications in the coming year. In order to assist the planning process and where possible, officers have identified which meeting these items could be made available. Items for which it is not yet possible to determine a target date are listed at the end of the work programme.
- C. Items from the Mayor's Forward Plan** (apart from the standard monitoring items mentioned above) which come within the RSC's remit. The plan is monitored on a monthly basis by the scrutiny function and the Commission will be advised in good time of any relevant items so that the appropriate action can be planned.

D. Items associated with the budget setting process for 2014/15 – scheduling of these is dependent on the Council's overall budget timetable and is likely to be in November/December.

E. 3 meetings in January 2014 reserved for detailed scrutiny of proposed directorate budgets, the Capital Programme and the Housing Revenue Account.

An updated Work Programme be presented at each subsequent meeting. This will allow the Commission, officers and others to know well in advance the topics that will be addressed throughout the year; schedule items into the work programme accordingly and track the progress of issues.

Other Options Considered

Not applicable

Risk Assessment

Overview and Scrutiny is a key vehicle for delivering local accountability and contributing to improved services and quality of life in the city. It is therefore essential to ensure there are effective overview and scrutiny arrangements in Bristol which can contribute positively to good governance and potentially increase public confidence and involvement in the democratic process.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The overview and scrutiny function has a key role to play in assisting the Council in meeting its public sector equality duties and to ensure that the views of different communities and members of the public are taken into account in the development and delivery of services. Task and Finish Groups such as Inquiry Days, Select Committees and Working Groups need to ensure assessment of equalities impact forms an integral part of their work both in relation to scoping topics, gathering evidence and formulating recommendations.

Legal and Resource Implications

Section 21 Local Government Act 2000 requires that the council's executive arrangements include one or more scrutiny committees with the power to:

- review or scrutinize decisions made, or other action taken, in relation to the discharge of any council function (including executive and non-executive functions)

- make reports or recommendations to the council in relation to any council function or other matters which affect the authority's area or inhabitants of that area
- review and scrutinize matters relating to the health service in its area including matters referred to it by a local involvement in health network
- consider matters referred to it by a councillor under the council's "councillor call for action" process.

The arrangements must meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012

Legal comment provided by Shahzia Daya, Service Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Draft Work Programme 2013/14

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985:

Background Papers– None



Bristol Scrutiny

Resources Scrutiny Commission 2013/14 Draft Framework for Work Programme (as at June 11th)

Meeting Date/Time	Agenda Items	Comment/Outcome
21 st June 2013 at 9:30am	Annual Business Report 2013/14	To agree the Annual Business Report
	Work Programme Setting Session	To agree the work programme
	Residents Parking Schemes – Financial Model Peter Mann, Service Director, Transport	Pre-decision Scrutiny (27 th June Cabinet)
	Bus Rapid Transport System – Financial Implications of changes Alun Owen, Service Director Major Projects	
	ELENA programme - Establishment of an energy and technology company Bill Edrich, Commercial Energy Director	Pre-decision Scrutiny (27 th June Cabinet)
	Bristol Region City Deal Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	Pre-decision Scrutiny (27 th June Cabinet)
	Bristol Workplace Paul Taylor – Head of Executive Office	
	Update on 2014/15 Budget Scrutiny Process Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	Resources will be looking for early engagement with the process
19 th July 2013 at 9:30 am	Treasury Management Annual Report for 2012/13 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Combined Revenue Outturn and Outcome Performance Reports – 2012/13 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Revenue Budget Monitoring – 1st Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Capital Programme Monitoring – 1st Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	

Meeting Date/Time	Agenda Items	Comment/Outcome
	Council Tax Reduction scheme – review and options for 2014/15 Julia James – Service Director Integrated Customer Services	Cabinet are reviewing options at their September 5 th meeting. Recommended scheme to be agreed by Cabinet on 28 th November for approval by Full Council.
	Public Convenience (toilets) Service – acceptance of tender for 15 year contract	Pre–decision Scrutiny (25 th July Cabinet)
20 th September 2013 at 9:30 am	Outcome Performance Reports – 1st Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Welfare Reform – Financial Impact Julia James – Service Director Integrated Customer Services	
	Financial pressures associated with Deregulated Tenancies	Awaiting the results of appeals and benchmarking exercise with other local authorities
	Changing Bristol Portfolio Update – 6 monthly Paul Arrigoni – Service Director, ICT	
18 th October 2013 at 9:30 am	Revenue Budget Monitoring – 2nd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Capital Programme Monitoring – 2nd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Business Plan for Bristol Arena	
	Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy	Pre–decision Scrutiny (31 st October Cabinet)
13 th December 2013 at 9:30am	Outcome Performance Reports – 2nd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
6 th January 2014 at 6:00 pm	2014/15 Budget Scrutiny Meeting 1	Cabinet Budget meeting is on 23 rd January 2014 Full Council Budget

Meeting Date/Time	Agenda Items	Comment/Outcome
8th January 2014 at 6:00pm	2014/15 Budget Scrutiny Meeting 1	Meeting is 18 th February 2014
13th January 2014 at 6:00pm	2014/15 Budget Scrutiny Meeting 3	
24 th January 2014 at 9:30am		
28 th February 2014 at 9:30am	Revenue Budget Monitoring – 3rd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Capital Programme Monitoring – 3rd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	
	Changing Bristol Portfolio Update – 6 monthly Paul Arrigoni – Service Director, ICT	
21 st March 2014 at 9:30am		
11 th April 2014 at 9:30am	Annual Review of Work Programme	Evaluation of the completed Work Programme and scrutiny arrangements and proposals for 14/15
	Outcome Performance Reports – 3rd Quarter 2013/14 Peter Robinson – Service Director Finance	

Potential Areas for scrutiny for 2013/14

Area	Timescales	Comments
Review of costing and funding options for the South Bristol Home Waste Recycling Centre Tracey Morgan, Service Director, Environmental Leisure Services	Sep/Oct	
Bristol East Pool Tracey Morgan, Service Director,	Sep/Oct	

Area	Timescales	Comments
Environmental Leisure Services		
Update on Schools Capital Programme Craig Bolt - Service Director, Resource, Planning & Performance, CYPS	When available	
Personalisation of adult social care funding - financial implications		Carried forward from last year
The impact of actual and predicted population growth on financial resources and service planning		Carried forward from last year
The importance of external funding for job and wealth creation		Carried forward from last year