

Full Council

Supplementary Information



Date: Tuesday, 15 February 2022

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: The Council Chamber - City Hall, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5TR

7. 2022- 2023 Budget Report

(Pages 2 - 26)

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Resources Scrutiny Commission

Comments on 2022/23 Budget Proposals

Introduction

The Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Scrutiny Working Group has met on 9 occasions to receive briefings on the budget and prepare questions for Officers. Subsequently the members convened as the Resources Scrutiny Commission (RSC) to question officers and Cabinet Members on the budget.

All Members welcomed the openness from Cabinet and officers. We wish to specifically thank Mike Jackson and Denise Murray and all the officers who supported our meetings and also Councillor Craig Cheney and his Cabinet colleagues who responded to our questions.

The comments that follow have been agreed by all parties that serve on and attended the RSC budget meeting. They are intended to inform Members when considering the budget but are not intended as any form of criticism of all who have put so much effort into the budget papers. The detailed notes of our meetings are attached if you wish to read more of the background.

Presentation of Information

We recognise the budget is a complex process dealt with in a highly professional way, but backbench Members repeatedly found it difficult to follow figures and a request was made for more detailed cross referencing. Members noted that the requirement for budget amendments require more detail than is sometimes available in the budget document. Members also noted that the provision of headline amalgamated figures means that there is often insufficient detail of the line-by-line budget.

Linked in with this were issues of accessibility and presentation.

The Working Group would be pleased to work with officers and working through how presentation could be improved without creating unrealistic pressures, for example by adopting a more web-based approach.

Staff Pressures

Members recognise there have been many years of savings including staff reductions. There was concern that the partial deletion of vacant posts may contribute to staff pressure. There was serious concern expressed about the capacity of the organisation to cope with new challenges, with further management reductions planned in this budget. This could lead to a significant loss of expertise within the organisation.

Savings

We recognise that the budget gap was quantified later than usual and that the savings have not been prepared as rigorously as in past years. This could lead to significant risks on the delivery of the

budget. Members noted that many of the savings proposals are subject to consultation and in reality are unlikely to make much contribution until 2023/24.

As a specific example of this, Members felt uncomfortable with the saving on Trade Union time, which appeared to be a cut from the corporate budget and departments will be deciding whether to make savings elsewhere to fund trade union time or not. Members recognised the positive role Trade Unions play in the authority. [Appendix B p8 of minutes below]

Members also raised a number of concerns about the 'Review of usage and provision of disabled people's parking spaces and introducing a charge for the service'. Although it was understood this proposal was subject to consultation and a full equalities impact assessment there were questions around what the charges may be, how these would be calculated and impacts this could have on those affected. [Appendix A p6&7 of minutes below]

There was Member support to retain the current 30-minute free parking. Whilst budget pressures were appreciated, it was felt this savings proposal could undermine economic recovery at this time. [Appendix A p7 of minutes below]

Adult Care

Members recognise the massive progress made within this department both in terms of understanding the supply and demand issues and monitoring cost. They also recognise that demand is growing and that current staffing issues are unlikely to ease and therefore fear that there will continue to be spending pressures which may not have been fully reflected in the budget. [Appendix B p2 of minutes below]

Dedicated Schools Grant

Members understand the pressures created by the Higher Needs Block and recognise that it is not sustainable. The continuing growth of the overspend being carried forward is a significant financial risk and the projected amount of the overspend at March 2023 is a serious financial threat, particularly when the Council is still not delivering all the special needs assessments. We feel this area needs serious and immediate attention. [Appendix B p5 of minutes below]

Reserves

There was concern that uncertainty from Government regarding the future of the DSG deficit has led to uncertainty over the reserves policy, and in particular the increase in general reserves to effectively cover the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) deficit. At the current time it is unclear whether the Council is liable, in which case the deficit should be written off, or whether it was not in which case carrying sufficient reserves may be seen as an "offer to pay". [Appendix A p9 of minutes below]

Capital Strategy

Members welcome the capital strategy and the renewed commitment to spend the capital programme in-year. However, Members needed reassuring that we would not have the same level of shortfall in future years. There were also serious concerns expressed about the impact of inflation on the capital programme and whether sufficient allowance had been made. [Appendix A p2 of minutes below]

Housing Revenue Account

The detailed consultation on the HRA was welcomed by Members, as was the proposed investment in New Homes. Members were concerned that the Companies business plans were not being approved before budget Full Council, and Members have not seen those plans so are unable to comment on the viability of Goram Homes involvement in this process. [Appendix A p5 of minutes below]

One City

Members raised concerns about the funding of the One City project and in particular funding of the One City governance review. Members asked what involvement scrutiny would have in reviewing the governance review which the Council appeared to be paying for and having input into the One City plan. [Appendix B p7 of minutes below]

Thematic Budget

We felt there was potentially a missed opportunity to bring clearer themes into the budget and highlight the spending in respect of, Pandemic recovery, Social recovery, and Climate emergency and to link these themes into the Councils Strategic Plan.

Documents Appended:

- Appendix A: Minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Commission - Budget Scrutiny Meeting Part 1, 25th January 2022
- Appendix B: Minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Commission - Budget Scrutiny Meeting Part 2, 1st February 2022
- Appendix C: Further Information Requested by Members

Resources Scrutiny Commission – Budget Scrutiny Meeting Part 1, 25th January 2022**Minutes of the Meeting**

Members present:

- Cllr Geoff Gollop - Chair
- Cllr Heather Mack – Vice Chair
- Cllr Tim Rippington
- Cllr Zoe Goodman
- Cllr Mark Bradshaw
- Cllr Martin Fodor
- Cllr John Goulandris
- Cllr Tony Dyer
- Cllr David Wilcox

Cabinet Members in attendance:

- Cllr Cheney, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance
- Cllr Ellie King, Public Health, Communities and Bristol One City
- Cllr Don Alexander, Transport

Officers in attendance:

- Mike Jackson, Chief Executive
- Denise Murray, Director of Finance
- Stephen Peacock, Executive Director Growth and Regeneration
- Donald Graham, Director: Housing & Landlord Services
- Michael Pilcher, Chief Accountant
- Glen Hammons, Interim Head of Corporate Finance
- Johanna Holmes, Scrutiny Coordinator

Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Gary Hopkins, Scrutiny Commission Member
- Cllr Nicola Beech – Cabinet Member; Climate, Ecology, Waste and Energy

Declarations of Interest

- none

Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- were agreed as a correct record

Chair's Business

The Chair began the meeting by explaining process of the meeting. It was clarified that Members had identified which areas were of most interest and the meeting would be split over two sessions so as to require Cabinet Member and officer attendance at just one of the meetings where possible. Areas identified for discussion at the two sessions were as follows:

1st Session

- Capital Programme
- Housing Revenue Account (Capital funding)
- Growth & Regeneration Directorate
- Reserves

2nd Session / 1st February 3.30pm

- People Directorate
- Adult Social Care
- Direct Schools Grant (DSG)
- Resources Directorate
- Savings

Members had submitted a number of questions to officers ahead of the meeting and the Chair thanked them for the detailed answers they had received and which had been published on the meeting webpage.

Public Forum

Received were:

- 2 Questions
- 2 Statements

Members agreed to note the public forum submissions.

Capital Programme

Members asked the following questions:

- A Member began by asking if in future the budget documentation could be cross referenced to help people navigate the information more easily as it was found to be very difficult. For example, the information about potential savings didn't refer to where the information was in other parts of the reports. It would be helpful if next time it could be more connected.
Councillor Cheney - Deputy Mayor, Finance, Governance and Performance said he understood the comment and agreed that it wasn't as clear as it could have been and that would be taken on board.
- Referring to the decarbonisation pipeline in the reports a Member asked had there been an option to include more projects or were there limiting factors such as the amount of capital the Council was borrowing or was it about the amount of work that could be done in that area?
The Executive Director, Growth and Regeneration replied that he thought the Member was referring to the £19m in the report, the bulk of which would be used to decarbonise the Council's estate, vehicle fleet and other things but that was just one element of the decarbonisation funding. There was a further £80m in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for this but there were also potential future bids. For example, national Government was still looking to contribute funding that the Council would potentially match fund. Also, there was the City Leap project and one of the key points there was that a private sector partner gives the Council an opportunity to match fund with private sector funding. But the £19m was within a constrained capital budget.
- (PL17) Resilience Fund and £1m of the Port sale had a zero next to it but why was it included in the budget proposals if it's zero? Officers said that in the report it stated that there was still £47,000 in that fund for this financial year but for future years there wasn't anything left in that fund because it came to an end this year. The same Member asked what it was used for and it was said that it was a sum of money that had previously been set aside for the local area when the Port was sold. The Member asked if that was same as the Investment Market Infrastructure and Buildings (PL36) that had £387,000 against it this year but had nothing for the next 5 years? The Cabinet Member said that was funding for St Nicks Market but expected it was the same reason yes.
- A Member commented that in terms of the capital pressures and a new way of working to ensure that the capital budget was spent, said that this year it looked as if inflationary costs and pressures will be enormous and have an impact. Would officers potentially prioritise which ones will go ahead if financial pressures suggest there could be an overspend?

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said that it was an evolving and improving situation in terms of the way they were monitoring both the projects and overall programme but yes in the past there had been underspends. He said they were addressing this by bringing in a 'capital strategic partner' to give extra capacity and expertise when needed. The pace was picking up and improving but yes costs were rising and projects are becoming more expensive. There were said to be a number of ways to try and address this and one was to put a lot of focus on contingency that had been put into a project and air on the side of caution at all times and be more consistent about that. He said they were also doing a lot more work on the individual stages such as being vigorous and transparent when moving projects from various stages of a business case though to execution and constantly looking to improve that. But yes there were supply chain issues pretty much everywhere for those wishing to deliver capital projects at the moment.

Follow-up question: what would officers consider would be a successful percentage of spend this year compared to previous years. The Director said he would be looking to next year and that by 2023 /2024 they would be looking for 100% delivery. They were on an improvement journey but was a complex picture because it's not just about numbers it's also about the quality i.e. we may be spending but not necessarily getting good value for money.

- It was suggested that Bristol Beacon must be under significant pressure from rising inflation and therefore the cost of production and labour would be putting that under a lot of pressure. Dis officers have any feel for what might happen with that project?
The Director said it was too early to say, everything was being kept under constant monitoring and it was the subject of a value for money report which Members would hear more about that through the year. He said it was being well managed and monitored but there are always risk particularly on historic buildings. There were pressures everywhere but their job was to manage them and keep the project within the cost envelope.
- A Member commented that some proposals were hard to understand but there was a parks one that stated that the infrastructure levy allocation criteria would be reviewed to release additional funding for parks and green spaces from 2023/24 to save £100k. His question was, is this proposing to take Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from Area Committees (ACs) to put into to parks?
The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance said the idea was replicate a similar process to that of the Bristol Tree Forum, which is to submit bids to ACs CIL funds. This was a proposal and an 'ambition target' not a guaranteed income source.
The Member said he understood that and it did say it was subject to consultation but if the Area Committees hadn't prioritised that funding for Parks? The Cabinet Member said yes it was 'subject to' but not agreed as such.
The Chair followed on from that by saying that some ACs have very little CIL funding but don't want that to affect their local parks as well i.e. if the ACs don't contribute their local parks could miss out on funding opportunities, so there needed to be a way to ensure fair distribution of funding for parks.
- Was £1.64M enough to replace all Windows7 devices with Windows10? Cllr Cheney said yes that is what has been agreed and that's the goal. But we can't commit to all being replaced or updated though as we can't yet migrate some 'Apps' to Windows 10 and also it not been easy to get everybody to return their laptops.
- (PL27) vehicle electric fleet replacement; the report said there wasn't anything scheduled in for the years 2024/2025/2026/2027; was that a commitment to say that that all BCC vehicles would be electric or zero carbon by 2024? The Cabinet Member said no there would still be more to do. Some of the £19m decarbonisation fund would go towards the decarbonising the fleet as well. But there were things they were still struggling to achieve such as replacing some of the bigger vehicles.
Was the Council on track to replace all the vehicles by 2030?
The Chief Executive said he would need to check the detail about what percentage they expected to reach by 2030. He suggested they would be close but not absolutely and this partly reflects the

schedule for replacing the vehicles but also that it didn't necessarily make sense to go for 100% replacement because there were some specialist ones that don't currently exist as electric vehicles.

ACTION: Officers to confirm what percentage of the Councils vehicle fleet would be electric by 2030.

Related follow-up question; electric vehicles will enable reduced revenue costs if replaced. is it not therefore in terms of invest to save revenue costs, more efficient to change all vehicles to electric? The Chief Executive said the biggest issue is that there are not currently the specialist electric vehicles on the market to do the jobs we need them to do. But yes the Members general point was correct.

- Bristol being a harbour City and the infrastructure that comes with that; did Cabinet Members or officers have any idea what percentage of the Council's capital budget was spent on maintaining the harbour compared to other Core Cities?

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said that some initial work had been carried out on the structural deficits but there was a backlog of the improvements needed. Some funding from the Environment Agency would help part fund some of the essential work. That would form some of the early work on the River Avon flood defences but they had some ongoing technical work to address some of the immediate issues. But in terms of an overall cost for completion it would be better to come back with costs as part of the flood protection up-date to scrutiny. The Harbour was an asset but it was one that costs the Council a lot of money to maintain, so it needed to find a way to future proof it as part of the ongoing flood defence work.

Were there sources of funding available for Cities such as Bristol to help maintain waterways?

Officers said they had already submitted a bid to the Environment Agency to start process and also some funding would come from Defra. Officers were currently developing a delivery plan and funding strategy for the Harbour that would also include St Philips Marsh and Netham Lock. This was said to be a key priority for the coming year. However, the Cabinet Member said no there wasn't a specific pot of funding to bid into, the money would need to come from various sources.

- Question of clarity on GR01strategic property; was that Temple Meads or Temple Island? A Member said they were interested to know what the nearly £40m would be spent on.

Officers said it included Temple Island and Station Approach and some of Temple Quarter so it should probably say Temple Quarter in the report. A lot of work was going on and a report on this would be brought to the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission at the end of February.

- A question was asked about the (PL15) Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP), which says it's an ongoing budget over next 4 or 5 years, but it was not clear what that was? Also, listed on the same page under Housing Delivery is Strategic Property (PL34) Community Investment Scheme (EIP)and a one-off payment of £850K in the coming year. Why is this a one off and what's costing £850K? And for the EIP, what was the ongoing project and why was that a one-off? The Director said that (PL34) the EIP was a sum of money available to support enhancements on a scheme-by-scheme basis. This related to a scheme in Lawrence Weston that had been brought to Cabinet for a decision previously.

- DW PL09 Highways Infrastructure Bridge Investment, question for clarity; was this referring to one particular bridge or several bridges? Officers said it referred to Redcliffe and Plimsole Bridges. The Member asked where the funding for Gaol Ferry was? Officers said they would need to come back and confirm that after the meeting. **Action: Officers to confirm where the funding for Gaol Ferry Bridge was in the budget papers.**

- The Chair asked for clarification about his written question about Goram Homes and it not being in profit until 2025. He said he assumed Goram was building homes either for the open market or to sell to the HRA. Was that a fair assumption?

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration clarified the Goram Homes model and said it was effectively a mixed tenure model. The numbers varied but it was up to 50% affordable housing (AH) depending on the market conditions. He didn't want to pre-empt Goram Homes Business Plan but said

it was free to sell homes to whomever it wished to. But in the HRA plan some sites had been identified which were in the pipeline for the HRA to acquire.

The Chair then asked if Goram Homes was building homes on a long-term contract would it not be accounting for the revenue up-lift as it goes and then be generating a profit? The reply was that it typically works in way that it enters into a sale agreement and then a down-payment is made and then payments are ongoing. The down-payment is typically 10%.

The Chair asked for clarification that the profit recognition is as you go and not all at the end? He said he appreciated that officer may need to come back to him after the meeting with an answer. The Director of Finance said that the key point was that the financial model that underpinned the programme works, assumes that any profits from the phased sales will be reinvested so they can reduce the amount of working capital funding they are drawing down. So, profitability comes when no additional working capital draw-down is required for that workstream of projects. This is to reduce the amount of loans being required.

- Question about Bristol Heat Networks. The Chair said he didn't understand why the Council was allocating investment to this when they were part of the City Leap arrangements. Why is capital allocated for Heat Networks for 2022/2023?

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said that due to a grant the Council previously received it needed to have to a plan in place to complete that work and not pre-empt the forthcoming procurement decision. He said once the procurement process was completed officers would revisit the whole programme and the funding arrangements.

- Transport Budget question; what the Council currently spends is revenue we receive from Central Government (not our own money). Could the Council spend more than it receives from Government if it wanted to? The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said the Council spends a small amount of Council funds on transport but some also comes from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). Going forward, the Council will be required to provide around 20% match funding on some Government transport funding, which is a large amount of money. Last year Full Council approved a slight increase for the repairs and maintenance budget because there is a backlog on this work. The same Councillor enquired whether if for example money wasn't being spent on Bristol Beacon, could the Council of spent that on transport? The answer was yes the Council could spend its capital funding on what it wanted.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- Chair said he wanted to look at Housing Revenue Account (HRA) investment programme, mainly because it amounts to the significant figure of £1.3b over 30 years. He said he'd been rather baffled and so was raising this with officers because the HRA proposed capital spend was equal to the HRA financing. There was a detailed table that shows how the £1.3b financing was split between the various headings. In other words, it's coming from grants, capital receipts and developer contributions and borrowing. It seemed this was such a material sum of money that Members ought to have chance to raise questions for clarification. It was noted that the business plan had already been considered by Members but the capital spend in the budget papers had not.
- A Member commented he thought it was great to see the Council may well become one of biggest house builders in country. He said it was his understanding that everything the Council intends to build over the next 7 years is within the 'pipeline' already. Was that correct? Also, was Brislington Meadows development in pipeline or factored in anywhere?

The Cabinet Member said yes the substantive builds were already in the 'pipeline' and referred to officers to confirm about the answer to the second question. Officers said Appendix 3 of the report listed the approved schemes and confirmed that Brislington Meadows was not included in the pipeline.

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration said that officers keep a close eye on all the sites. They had already identified all the sites that are likely to come forward and there is no conversation being had about Brislington Meadows being one of those sites.

- HRA reserves and the current balance of £97.8m; It was understood some of the capital reserves would be used and the report showed they would be reduced down to £21m. Were officers confident about the potential risks involved? Officers said the intention was to have two sets of reserves; one set of £20m and another of £10m which would be enough for one year's operating and a major repairs reserve. Appendix 1 paragraph 7 showed the risks that had been identified with this. The Councillor said he was asking about reducing it from £100m down to £21m, were they entirely confident that was enough?

The Executive Director Growth and Regeneration clarified that the acquisition by the HRA of sites to add to the portfolio was something that the Council doesn't have to make a long-term commitment to. Adding that officers annually review 'headroom' and this would be kept under review. The Director of Finance referred to the capital strategy and how it outlined a number of different metrics that need to be kept within to ensure the HRA remains affordable.

- A Member referred to earlier discussions about how Local Government was now dependent on Central Government offering funds and local authorities then making bids for that; with regards to the social housing decarbonisation fund that currently exists it wasn't known if or how long that will exist in the future, so were there any further proposals for decarbonisation in the future to get houses within the required targets? The Director of Housing and Landlord Services said that within the HRA business plan £80m had been set aside for investment to retro fit homes and make them more energy efficient and reduce the carbon footprint. There was also said to be a pilot for another 25 properties where it's intended to achieve the highest level of energy efficiency. Bristol it was said was making such a significant investment in this area that, subject to further discussions, it could appeal to central Government to go beyond match funding as it is such a big national issue that no local authority could possibly resolve on its own.
- It was asked if the Council had looked into the potential of Green Bonds as there may be people in the City that were interested in doing that?
The Cabinet Member said not specifically in the HRA no, but that was being looked at yes. The Director of Finance said they had done some initial work in terms of the potential costs associated with the potential process for adopting a Green Bond and also working with other core cities about other approaches in terms of financing. But it was not built into the programme at the moment as there was still a lot of work to do before it could be taking the proposition forward. The Cabinet Member confirmed it was an active conversation.
- Appendix A3, sites approved for planning and construction over the next 5 years; A Member said he'd expected to see Dover Court in Lockleaze included on the list and it wasn't. It was apparently going to a Planning Committee that week. The Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration said he would need to come back to the Member and clarify that. **Action: Officers to check why Dover Court wasn't on the list of sites the Member referred to.**

Growth and Regeneration Directorate

- Members referred to the review of parking spaces for disabled people and the Commission was advised that £100K was a recurring saving and that the review would be broader than only parking bays.

The Cabinet Member for Transport explained that any proposed changes would be subject to consultation. An example provided was a charge for painted courtesy parking bays outside people's houses. This was chargeable for some Authorities and a charge would provide a more effective service for people. Members were advised that not every disabled person needed a parking bay or

subsidised provision, as there were many disabled people in the city who had high status jobs and good incomes. Savings enabled prioritised expenditure on things such as pavements which were particularly important to people with disabilities.

There were questions around what the charges may be and how these would be calculated; Members were told that North Somerset charged £133 - £150, although the cost of a disabled bay could be up to £500. It was not proposed a charge would be up to the full cost, this was to illustrate what the expenditure was.

The Cabinet Member explained that there was not a proposed specific charge for disabled parking bays at this point; that this would be agreed after further evidence was provided and a benchmarking exercise was undertaken.

Members heard that details of any further criteria which included ability to pay for parking bays, and all proposed changes as part of the review on disabled parking and wider parking charges would be subject to consultation and a full equalities impact assessment.

Cllr Goulandris stated that he strongly disagreed with proposed charges for disabled parking as set out in the Cabinet papers.

The Commission was advised that all parking costs would be reviewed which adhered to the policy to reduce the attractiveness of car use and that car parking charges had not been raised for a lengthy period, and there was a need for extra revenue so other priorities could be paid for.

- There was a further discussion around proposals to review carparking charges, which included proposals to introduce charges in carparks that were currently free, and to remove the free 30-minute period in parking zones. The Chair requested there was consideration for parking zones in areas of increased demand as an alternative to charges for existing free car parks. The Chair stated that this could provide support for communities who currently felt overwhelmed by commuters who used spaces outside residents' houses, which had put pressure on families and disabled people who found they could no longer park close to their own home.

The Chair requested that proposals be structured in a way that recognised the pressures on families and local independent traders, which included consideration for a keeping the 30-minute free period in parking zones which enabled household visitors and passing trade for shops; if needed, to pay for this by an increased charge of the zone in the remaining period. There was Member support to retain the 30-minute free parking to support independent traders, that, whilst budget pressures were appreciated, it was felt reconfiguration of other charges could find the difference. The Cabinet Member agreed, subject to the ability to create revenue needed to produce a modern transport infrastructure, focused on active travel and public transport.

The Cabinet Member for Transport explained that the parking zones had not been lucrative, that the prices had not increased, and they were not always popular, especially with neighbouring areas, as this moved parking issues from one area to another; and the proposals in the budget adhered to the policy to reduce the attractive of car use.

- Members heard from the Cabinet Member for Transport that he would not welcome a budget amendment for a proposed increased number of parking zones in Bristol, that they would be subject to a consultation process. Members were advised the parking zones were resource intensive and, based on the programme of works and available capacity, increased parking zones would not be a priority.
- Members heard that decisions regarding proposals to introduce charges in the existing free car parks would be subject to discussions with local business as it was recognised that in some areas,

they were an important aspect of the success of already struggling high streets, whereas some were a source of anti-social behaviour. The Cabinet Member stated that it was time to have a considered review of all those car parks and enable revenue where appropriate, which included ensuring local shops were not negatively impacted.

- There was a discussion around the need for a parking strategy which would have to overcome many issues raised at the meeting, and the Commission was advised that a parking strategy was in development, but there was no timescale due to other commitments.
- There was a discussion around Liveable Neighbourhoods and Strategic Corridors, and the Chair stated that Liveable Neighbourhood objectives could be reached by capital spend through different packages channelled to support use by residents rather than only commuters.
- It was noted that Liveable Neighbourhoods would be in areas between the Strategic Corridors (which provided for segregated bus and active travel segregation), and the Chair recommended there was a joined-up policy to ensure a residential area linked to a Strategic Corridor did not experience pressure from extra cars on its roads.
- Members heard the intention of policy was to prevent higher volume of traffic entering residential areas, and that there was a need to not confuse the difference between a residential area with a Liveable Neighbourhood strategy, and a Strategic Corridor; there was disagreement with the analysis and the Chair recommended that the two should be looked at in parallel.
- There was a discussion around libraries, specifically the reduction of non-staffing budgets, which included the purchase of books, GR003, and the Commission was advised that the proposal was the material fund of £560,000 be reduced to £510,000, and books would still be purchased.
- Members heard that a projected rise in energy costs had been factored into the budget and that the Future Energy Supply item GR050 (saving of £150,000) related to energy procurement and was in the previous Cabinet papers. The business case to achieve the savings was to be produced.
- It was noted that item IM27, Bristol City Council energy services committed to making Bristol a carbon neutral city by 2050 should be amended to 2030. **Action: Officers to amend in the date in IM27 of the report to say Bristol would be carbon neutral from 2050 to read 2030.**
- The Commission were advised that the proposed levels of income within the Future Parks Programme was an achievable estimate (reference item GR021), and that there would be more opportunities to come; the business cases were to be developed.
- There was a discussion around the review on carparking in parks, and Members heard from the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Bristol One City that access via public transport and other factors, such as steep roads leading to the park or traffic displacement issues, would be considered when looking at proposals, and that there would be a full public consultation.
- It was noted that the formatting issue would be addressed, and the Commission was advised that Appendix 8 had the full list of detailed savings.

RESOLVED;

That;

- Members be provided with clarification on the proposed cost and/or charge of a disabled parking bays based on saving of £100K/year.

Reserves

- The Commission were advised that the news related to Together Energy did not impact the Council's accounts or finances.
- It was confirmed that there had been an announcement from the Education & Skills Funding Agency for an additional £2.69M Designated Schools Grant funding for Bristol for 22-23 and there would be a full analysis to clarify whether this, and the assumptions for future years, would influence the Council's position on risk, reserves and SEND deficit; Members were advised that a final figure would be available following further analysis.
- Members heard that each Council would take its own decision in terms of how SEND deficits were planned for, that the range of deficits would be different for all; and that Bristol's deficit had moved significantly in one year and there was a need to wait for final positions.
- Members asked about the ability to release £1.7M from Goram Homes and were advised that a detailed review of reserves would be conducted annually, which entailed identifying which could be released, redirected, and returned to the general fund. This exercise had been completed for the budget and, for Goram Homes, £1.7M of the funding identified for pipeline one was not required, and therefore could be released and redirected.
- It was noted that Goram Homes had slightly different funding arrangements in terms of loans and working capital and the Commission was referred to Appendix 9 which had details of loans and long-term arrangement with all the Council's subsidiaries.
- Members were advised that, in terms of considering risks related to subsidiaries holding reserves, the Council would always consider the company, the capital programme and level of contingency and reserves that were needed to support long term investment and potential risk exposure.
- The Commission was advised that, regarding the extra £3M to City Leap reserves, sufficient funding for completion of City Leap procurement process had been identified, a paper had gone to Cabinet with details, and it was recognised a successful outcome provided a need in the budget for some implementation cost, so provision had been made which ensured the budget was not destabilised. There would be a full report to Cabinet, and anything drawn down would be subject to full transparency, business cases, and the figure was indicative to ensure the process could move forward positively.

The Chair thanked Members, Cabinet Members and officers for their contributions.

Resources Scrutiny Commission – Budget Scrutiny Meeting Part 2, 1st February 2022

Minutes of the Meeting

Members present:

- Cllr Geoff Gollop - Chair
- Cllr Heather Mack – Vice Chair
- Cllr Tim Rippington
- Cllr Zoe Goodman
- Cllr Mark Bradshaw
- Cllr Martin Fodor
- Cllr John Goulandris
- Cllr Christine Townsend
- Cllr David Wilcox
- Cllr Tim Kent

Cabinet Members in attendance:

- Cllr Cheney, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member - Finance, Governance and Performance
- Cllr Holland, Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care and Integrated Care System
- Cllr Ellie King, Cabinet Member - Public Health, Communities and Bristol One City
- Cllr Don Alexander, Cabinet Member - Transport
- Cllr Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member - Children Services, Education and Equalities
- Cllr Nicola Beach, Cabinet Member - Climate, Ecology, Waste and Energy

Officers in attendance:

- Mike Jackson, Chief Executive
- Denise Murray, Director of Finance
- Hugh Evans, Executive Director: People
- Christina Gray, Director: Communities and Public Health
- Alison Hurley, Director Education and Skills
- Michael Pilcher, Chief Accountant
- Johanna Holmes, Scrutiny Coordinator

Apologies for Absence

- Cllr Gary Hopkins
- Cllr Mohamed Makawi

Declarations of Interest

- none

The Chair began the meeting by confirming which areas of the budget would be considered during the second part of this reconvened meeting. They were as follows:

- People Directorate
- Adult Social Care
- Children and Young People Social Care

- Direct Schools Grant (DSG)
- Resources Directorate
- Savings

The Chair then asked Members if they had any comments about the notes from the first part of the meeting that had previously been circulated to them. There were none. The Chair asked if the Members were happy with them and for them to be circulated, which they were.

The Chair asked officers for some clarification about the Heat Networks Business Plan that had been withdrawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) meeting agenda on the 9th of February and whether this delay would have an impact on the Council's Capital Programme. The Director of Finance said that the Capital Programme had a programme area aligned to the Heat Networks and it wasn't anticipated that would change.

The Chair asked a further question about the recent press release about Goram Homes and homes being built at Hengrove. Was this reflected in the Capital Programme funding for Goram Homes that Members looked at last week? The Director of Finance said the programme as it currently stands reflects current arrangements and pipeline activity that will encompass the business plan activity for 2022/ 2023. The Capital Programme will also have the details in terms of the Hengrove programme and will be contained within exactly the same financial envelope as was previously set out.

The Chair asked what the last date on which the Council could legally set a budget. The Director of Finance confirmed that due to the work that needed to be carried out after the budget was set and before the council tax demands were sent out, setting the Council's budget 2nd March was last day that would leave enough time.

Adult Social Care

- Member began by stating they were supportive and understood the service was demand-led, and that would therefore lead to overspends. They asked if the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Integrated Care System if they were confident that next year's budget would work? Also, they were aware some changes had been made, for example, more people being cared for in their own homes and asked if they could elaborate on those changes? Councillor Holland, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Integrated Care System thanked the Members for their comments but said she understood that some people were sceptical because not everything that had been planned had materialised because of such huge additional pressures on budgets from Covid. The point about more people being cared for at home was correct yes but they had been trying to shift things in that direction prior to the pandemic. They had also brought in what was then the 'Bristol Rate'. Covid had exacerbated the perception that care homes were not a safe place to live. There were also said to be many workforce shortages. The community and voluntary sectors were making a valuable contribution but it was said they needed financial support to be able to continue providing that. The Community Meals service which also included a 'wellbeing check' was highlighted as a way to support people to continue living in their homes. The extra support provided could mean putting off date that people go into care for another year; that was better for them and the Council she said.

A Member asked about the Community Meals service and the proposed £100k saving on that budget; how did the Cabinet Member see that working? The Cabinet Member spoke highly of the service and those delivering it and said she believed it would work, adding that some neighbouring local authorities were considering sourcing meals from the Bristol Community Meals Service.

The same Member asked for clarification stating it was listed as a budget saving but the plan was still to grow service?

The Chief Executive welcomed the recognition of the pressures ASC was under, but at the same time noted that the Council needed to keep looking at the model of service and where it can make efficiency savings as Bristol remained relatively high cost when benchmarked against similar councils.

The Chair asked if the Cabinet Member felt they had identified where pressures will come from moving forward? It was replied that worker shortages in the sector were the pressure she was most concerned about but there would need to be an improved pay offer before more people would take these types of jobs.

The Executive Director for People said via the Better Lives at Home project they had seen a significant change in delivery with a shift towards domiciliary rather than institutional care. However, during the pandemic they had also seen significant increase in the demand for and cost of the provision of care support for younger adults with high mental health problems and this had led to a cost pressure of around £4m per year. It was also said that the number of older people balanced against the number of younger adults has moved from about a 60/40 split to about a 50/50 split, so the Council is now serving about the same number of younger people with care needs as older people. There was also currently a shortfall in the services available to provide care in Bristol and people were having to access them out of the area, which typically cost more. There were said to be things that could be done that could help mitigate that demand, and some of the things in the budget and the transformation plan were for that purpose.

A Member asked about Adult Social Care savings 2 and increasing the return of unused Direct Payments by £500k; what was the size of the current contingency fund and how many applications did it receive every year? And why wasn't the Council highlighting its availability more instead as opposed to cutting it? The Cabinet Member said they were not cutting it as such and it was being promoted. They were working with WECIL (The West of England Centre for Inclusive Living) on this as well. It was about monitoring the use over a period of a year and only clawing back what is not used.

The Executive Director said that he would come back to Members with figures but stated that any recouping of contingency funds would happen following a review that involved the service user. It would not be against people's will and they would have the relevant conversations first.

- ASC 12: Concord Lodge. A Member asked why the Council was make savings by closing this facility. The Cabinet Member said that the plan was not to close it but rather for another organisation to run it instead. Members said the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) stated the proposal was to close it. The Executive Director said that the text in the EqIA was incorrect then. They were developing the specification to put to the market for specialist providers to support people with very high needs and they wanted to attract the best providers. A report was taken at the recent Cabinet Meeting on the proposed partnership arrangements and would mean that providers cannot play local authorities off against each other.
- ASC6 Rehabilitation Services, closing South Bristol Centre. Members asked what were the actual changes? The Cabinet Member sited the recent previous Cabinet Meeting report again and said there had been much interest in this. The Council had no statutory responsibility for rehabilitation centres. It hadn't been possible to do short-term secondments so they had looked at TUPE staff instead. However, the questions raised couldn't be answered until a decision in principle had been made. It was said there was a very long explanation and was so much more than closing the facility.

A Member asked what would happen to people that would have gone there and it was said they would go to South Bristol Community Hospital.

The funding arrangements with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS were discussed and were said to be very complex as was the whole health and social care system of funding. The Executive

Director offered Members the opportunity further explain the funding arrangements to them in a separate session if it would be helpful to which they agreed. It was suggested this could include GP services as well.

A Member asked about saving S117 and staff assessing service users. They referenced the Equalities Impact Assessment (ASC12 EqIA) for this and specifically Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people's poor mental health. In their view the assessment had not gone far enough or required some further work. The Director said he agreed this was an important issue, they were right to raise it and was very happy to revisit it.

- A Member asked about the time frame and expectations of the review into Home Choice. He said it was known that housing is a massive issue for people with adult care needs and also mental health problems can be triggered by being on waiting lists. He also asked about investing in technology which he pleased to see and wondered if there was scope to support local schools and jobs, as the area has a thriving tech sector

The Cabinet Member said the proposals for this budget had been very very difficult. Colleagues had worked incredibly hard on this to try and meet people's additional needs that weren't currently being met for example with regards to the correct assessments for banding. This had led to some very expensive housing from other providers being used. So, the idea of using the Council's own stock to support residents with adult social care needs was a good one with better outcomes. 40 people would be moved in this year and hopefully another 150 people next year.

With regards to technology to support people care needs in their home the Cabinet Member agreed that there were some fantastic developments being made locally and we needed to be using more of it.

The Chair asked about the technical enabled care and about workers not spending so much of their valuable time travelling back and forth across the city to different service users. The Cabinet Member said she completely agreed but said unfortunately workers were still having to travel back and forth across the city. She said the more home care there is the better. The Council could then work with providers to enable it to become more localised and travel time would be such big issue anymore.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and Executive Director.

Actions:

- A session to be organised for Members to discuss ASC CCG and NHS funding arrangements with officers.
- Officers agreed to revisit the ASC12 EQIA.
- ASC 2 - savings on Direct Payments of £500k: Officers to provide more detailed figures on Direct Payments saving.

Public Health

Members asked for clarification about why Public Health (PH) funding was being passed to the One City Office; what funding was this and how would it be used?

The Director of Public Health said that it was to invest in what were called the 'wider determinants of health'. If Bristol didn't already have a partnership such as the One City partnership it would have had to create one. The board and partnerships enabled all sorts of things to work together. It was said they could have invested in the internal team but as we have this fantastic convening facility supported by many institutions across the City such as universities and other local organisations, it is very good value for money and it was therefore possible to buy greater stake in health and wellbeing of the City.

Direct Schools Grant (DSG)

- There was a discussion about the arrangements relating to the accumulation of the deficit, which included whether the Safety Valve was accessed, and what the arrangements would be to manage the deficit after 2022/23. The Cabinet Member for Children Services, Education and Equalities, advised Members that she and the Mayor had written to Government to bring the growing deficit to their attention.

Members heard that financial support from the Department for Education had been offered to some Authorities to reduce the deficit; and that the Council had already taken steps that the Safety Valve criteria required.

The Director of Education & Skills advised Members that the self-assessment against the Safety Valve criteria was published and went to the previous Schools Forum.

The Cabinet Member stated the deficit was due to the growing need in the city; that the culture needed to change in the City about the way high needs provision for children with special educational needs (SEN) was addressed. Expenditure on mainstream education which enabled children to remain in mainstream was the focus, as was investment in high needs provision locally which was more cost-effective. There was a need to speak with parents, school, academies across the city about SEN provision to enable culture change in the city.

Members were advised that the Council had seen increased applications for Education Health and Care Plans, and that there was just 3.3% uplift in the overall block.

The Commission heard that the Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan and discussions around the deficit and mitigations had been at Schools Forum, and this would be taken back again in March.

The Commission heard that, at this point, there was a level of protection with regard to the deficit, accounted for within the Council budget; this would fall away in 2023, and so there was a need for contingency to cover that which would add pressure to the budget.

The Director of Education and Skills advised the Commission that the Schools Forum had consulted with all schools and settings during the course of the budget setting process; there was the flexibility to allocate money between the blocks annually and this was the last year this could happen. If the national funding formula came in next year (which was the intention) then it would be fixed. This year, which followed previous years, there was additional funds directed to educational needs factors.

- There was a discussion around a shortage of special school places, and whether this meant a higher need for independent school placements, and the Cabinet Member advised members that as part of the Education Transformation Plan, the use of capital funding to invest in additional SEN provision had been considered, and that there were conversations with neighbouring Authorities which enabled a collaborative approach for children who needed independent provision, and that the preference was this was provided locally rather than miles away.

The Cabinet Member said that extra resources and SEN staff enabled an improvement in delivery of EHCPs, although it was recognised there was a lot of pressure across the system which impacted meeting the 20 week target, and that the system was in need of reform.

The Director of Education advised the Commission that in terms of the number of EHCPs in the system, Bristol was low compared to statistical neighbours and nationally and this was due to the lag in response to the 2014 reforms in Bristol, and, positively, as a local authority with access to non-statutory top up funding, an EHCP was not needed in order to have received resources to received support in the mainstream setting. Authorities that had moved away from that saw a significant increase in requests for EHCPs. This showed that there was a balance between a need for funding of earlier, non-statutory intervention, and also resources that ensured effective EHCPs for those young people who required one.

Members were advised that this was a whole system response over a number of areas, and the self-assessment against the Safety Valve recommendations looked at each of those areas and a lack of sufficiency in terms of specialist provision was part of that.

Members heard that the more Bristol's provision could be increased the better value spend was for places that supported those young people. Also, the more that was done to enable mainstream schools to meet a wide diversity of special educational needs and that families felt confident they did not require a special education place, the more effective the end-to-end system would become.

The Cabinet Member stated that with data, local authorities were able to plan ahead, and early intervention and provision of appropriate services could be provided over a number of years. The Commission heard that this was done jointly between local authorities in 2010 although the joint commissioning process returned to individual processes, but it was important to return to joint approach with neighbouring Authorities, and conversations had begun to enable this.

- There was a discussion around the savings in Home to School transport commissioning - £284k savings and it was confirmed this was in relation to third party spend. Members were advised that the policy and efficiency savings around the Homes to School Transport would be revised; that affordability of any proposed contributions would be considered and this would be consulted upon.

Members were advised that the home to school transport was a combination of private hire and buses, and that occupancy of seats could not necessarily be optimised for different reasons, which included a young person's needs.

The Commission was provided with an overview of areas the Council had applied discretion in setting the 22-23 budgets.

- Members were advised that, within the schools funding formula, there were mandatory areas such as minimum per pupil rates; and regarding the national funding formula, at the moment there was a small amount of local discretion in terms of how some of the funding could be allocated.

Members heard that some of the decision-making sat with the Schools Forum and some sat with the Council and the adopted approach was that all schools and the Schools Forum were consulted and Members were advised the Council had supported proposals and recommendations from those mechanisms.

The Commission was told that the discretion would not be available after the move to a hard funding formula; this would have a significant adverse impact on some schools – further details would be made available if this happened.

- There was a discussion around the £6m needed for this September to increase the number of Year 7 places for September 2022; this increased the existing estate and new secondary provision was planned for 2023. The increased specialist provision continued within the existing estate.

- Members heard that at the moment secondary provision was as much a priority as specialist; that there was an awareness of the challenge of excess secondary provision, and the Council was in conversations with school leaders around repurposing the provisions as we moved forward.

Actions:

- The self-assessment against the Safety Valve criteria be circulated to Members.
- Members be provided with what the split of the combination is of private hire and buses for home to school transport, and details of whether the vehicles are optimised for occupancy.

Resources Directorate

- The Chair asked for some further clarification about one the replies to the budget questions he had submitted ahead of the meeting regarding what was the summons and overpayment income that was lost. How did the Council receive an income from issuing court summons? The Director of Finance explained that when a summons is issued a cost is also added for the debt collection activity, which is £79. There was an income line within the budget which was forecast to be at a certain level but there were back-logs on the court's recovery activity due to the due to Covid-19.
- A Member asked about saving R1 - Reduce Customer Service Point Budget. How was the Council going to save £165k from this service? The Cabinet Member said the plan was to move towards being more supportive via various other means such as instant messaging, so resources could be freed up to spend more time supporting those who did need to speak to someone directly or in-person. Members asked assurances that those people who needed that face-to-face support would still receive it. It was confirmed that there would be no changes to accessibility and there would be a range of ways provided for people to access the service.
- A Member asked for confirmation that there were no cuts to the museum service in the budget this year? is that right? The Cabinet Member replied that there were some staffing reductions within the culture team but not the actual services.
- A Member asked for further clarification about 'R29: Seek additional small contribution from the from external partners for running the City Office'. It was noted the report said it was seeking 5% over and above the plans for a 50/50 split between the Council and external partners.

Members were informed that when the City Office was first launched, the intention was it would become co-funded. The current target is for 50% of the City Office budget to come from external contributions and progress this year has taken us close to that target for 22/23. The 5% target was for additional contributions over and above that.

Members highlighted the recent invitation for partners to join the One City boards and asked if it would affect their chances if they didn't have funding to contribute? The reply was no it wouldn't, it was an open invitation it didn't matter if they were financially contributing.

Members then asked about the One City governance review that had been mentioned during the discussion and what role there was for the Councils scrutiny Members to be involved in that?

The Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities and Bristol One City said that One City was never intended to be a Council body and that it was a partnership body. The long-term plan was for the Council to move further away from it and in future other partners would then take more of a lead.

Members said on top of the significant of resources that were put into it, officers were also working to One City policies and there was concern that they weren't scrutinised the way other Council policies were.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Head of the City Office attended scrutiny on an annual basis to talk about the One City Plan, when Members have had the opportunity to consider and comment on the Plan. Members also had the opportunity to scrutinise those actions that are the responsibility of the Council through their review of business plans and service plans which will be coming through the scrutiny process over the next few months.

The Chair stated that OSMB had also previously said that it wanted to be more involved. Also, many Ward Members felt aggrieved that they were excluded from involvement on the boards. He said he welcomed the invitation to attend the board meetings and the governance review and asked who had commissioned it? Members were informed that the One City Office had commissioned the review. The Chair suggested that if the Council was paying for half of the governance review then it should not be unreasonable for scrutiny Members or even the Audit Committee to have the opportunity to scrutinise it. This discussion was he said immaterial to the scope of the budget but very significant in terms of the direction of the City and the role of One City. He looked forward to a constructive discussion on this at a future OSMB meeting.

- A Member asked about R19 and the question she had submitted before the meeting regarding modernising trade union facility time and arrangements and the reduction in the budget from £195k to £50k and asked for confirmation that the remaining budget would only be used as a contingency for national or regional requirements, was that correct?

Officers said that the expectation was that services and departments would absorb the costs and enable the unions activities as agreed in the new modernised facilities agreement. The Member referred to the written response she had received and asked how it was possible to have a facility with no budget and that the response had been slightly misleading. The Cabinet Member agreed the written response had not been worded very well and it was not what had been discussed.

It was then asked if facility time would be permitted for union officers to attend non-BCC meetings such as branch meetings? It was said that would be dealt with as part of a new agreement was on facilities time. The Member said what was being suggested in the response negated to recognise much of what branch officials need to do to fulfil their roles. The Chief Executive confirmed that the status quo would remain in place until a new facilities agreement had been reached.

A Member asked a follow-up question; would that not mean putting even more pressure on departmental budgets and managers to authorise when it's coming from their budget rather than a corporate budget and would this not cause more tension when budgets are already very tight? The Chief Executive confirmed there was a need to work with managers to ensure that it was done in a way that could be accommodated, recognising that the costs would have to be absorbed across the council in order to make a contribution to the challenging £19.5m savings target.

Actions:

- Savings R1: reduce Customer Services budget. Members asked how this was going to be done. It was agreed that further information would be provided to Members.
- R29 One City: seek additional funding from partners over and above 50/50. Members asked what was the current split and was and what were the proportions. Action: Officers said they would need to check that figures and would provide a more detailed answer for Members after the meeting.

The Commission then went on to discuss the format of their comments to Full Council. At this point officers and Cabinet Members were informed they were free to leave the meeting if they wished to as there wouldn't be any further questions. They were thanked for their attendance and in-put into the meeting.

The Chair asked Members to help outline and agree which budget areas of significance and those they had common agreement on which would therefore be highlighted in the statement to Full Council. The areas outlined were summarised as follows:

- One City
- Concerns about Trade Union time
- Schools - High Need Grant
- The amount of savings required on top of previous savings and efficiencies and also at relatively short notice. Although they have been RAG rated there were significant risks before they would be realised.
- Shared concerns about the staff reductions on top of previous reductions and management pressures. Also, the risk of losing high quality officers.
- 20% of vacant posts being deleted.
- Accessibility of the budget information and difficulties in cross referencing.
- Not enough detailed information provided to suggest budget amendments.
- ASC efficiencies not being met is a risk. x
- Quality of work on HRA budget to be included
- Capital Programme Delivery
- Reserves
- DSG

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

The meeting finished at 6.30pm

Resources Scrutiny Commission – Budget Scrutiny Meeting January / February 2022

Actions and requests for further information

25th January 2022 (Part 1)		
	Member Questions / Further information requested	Officer Reply
1	Officers to confirm what percentage of the Councils vehicle fleet would be electric by 2030.	Fleet Services have made good progress in this area, however the council’s fleet is composed of a variety of vehicles and plant, some of which unfortunately at this stage do not have viable EV options. Subject to suitable vehicles and plant being available, EV infrastructure and capital funding in place, it is the ambition of BCC to have a fully electric fleet by 2030. However, it is possible that a suitable EV alternative or infrastructure will not be available in all cases, so our planning assumption is 96%.
2	DW PL09 Highways Infrastructure Bridge Investment, question for clarity; was this referring to one particular bridge or several bridges? Officers said it referred to Redcliffe and Plimsole Bridges. The Member asked where the funding for Gaol Ferry was? Officers said they would need to come back and confirm that after the meeting. Action: Officers to confirm where the funding for Gaol Ferry Bridge was in the budget papers.	Yes, PLO9 relates to Redcliffe and Plimsoll Bridges. We currently have a fund of 500k for New cut bridges which is allocated to progress this work to design and tender. We have now also secured, subject to approvals, £15m via the CRSTS WECA Maintenance Challenge Fund. This is programmed to be used to fund the Goal Ferry Bridge works and repairs to the rest of the New cut bridges over the next 5 years.
3.	Appendix A3, sites approved for planning and construction over the next 5 years; A Member said he’d expected to see Dover Court in Lockleaze included on the list and it wasn’t. It was apparently going to a Planning Committee that week. The Executive Director of Growth and Regeneration said he would need to come back to the Member and clarify that.	<p>The HRA programme is a mix of BCC developments and acquisitions, some of the sites in the acquisition programme are on the Goram pipeline such as Hengrove Park, Romney House, Baltic Wharf, New Fosseway and the Blake Centre. Other sites are third party site where the HRA are acquiring the affordable homes.</p> <p>Dovercourt Depot is a site on the Goram Homes Pipeline. It does not currently feature in the HRA acquisitions programme. It is being prepared for submission to DM next week.</p> <p>At this stage, no discussion had been had as to whether the HRA will be the purchaser of the affordable housing elements in the whole of the Goram Pipeline, however due to the dynamic nature of developing, the HRA pipeline will be under review</p>

		to ensure delivery of affordable homes into the HRA is maximised.
4	It was noted that item IM27, Bristol City Council energy services committed to making Bristol a carbon neutral city by 2050 should be amended to 2030. Action: Officers to amend in the date in IM27 of the report to say Bristol would be carbon neutral from 2050 to read 2030.	This is for information -to amend if the report is re-published

1st February 2022 (Part 2)		
	Member Questions / Further information requested	Officer Reply
1	<p>ASC 2 - savings on Direct Payments of £500k – what is the size of the current contingency. How many applications does it receive every year. Why was it being cut and by how much. Cabinet Member said it wasn't being cut it was about clawing back money that wasn't being used. Officers said they would respond to Members with more details.</p>	<p>A Direct Payments (DPs) is way in which people in need of social care and support can receive payments instead of services and use this money to arrange their own care and support. There is further information here Direct payments for social care - bristol.gov.uk including the Council policy.</p> <p>Whilst Adults, children and carers can take advantage of DPs, here is further information on how Adult Care use DPs.</p> <p>Currently 924 adults (including carers) receive an ongoing DP. Of these 628 employ Personal Assistants. Currently 22.2% of people receiving services in Bristol chose to use a DP and we target an increase to 25%.</p> <p>Adult Care Management teams would assess someone under the Care Act and, if eligible, a 'Personal Budget' is set and the person is supported to set up their DP. They can chose to have ongoing support from two organisations (Wecil and People Plus) or they can chose to do this themselves.</p> <p>The DP recipient should retain a percentage of the funding in a contingency fund to cover ongoing employment costs, HMRC/NI requirements, emergency care cover and other costs if required. The contingency fund held should normally equate to 4 weeks of the total value of the weekly Direct Payment/Personal Budget. If a surplus of funds accumulates above the contingency, taking into account the need for contingency and any other anticipated expenditure, the Council will seek to reclaim the surplus. There is a specialist DP team who</p>

		do this and ensure the recipient is fully informed and can query any request. In the last quarter the team identified approx. £450K of contingency of which £300K was reclaimed.
2	Savings R1: reduce Customer Services budget. Members asked how this was going to be done. It was agreed that further information would be provided to Members.	'Investment in technology will allow those citizens, that can, to self-serve which will mean staff can spend longer with those that require telephone/face to face intervention. The reduction in volume from citizens self-serving will mean that the service can operate more efficiently. Whilst investment in technology is subject to funding for the Digital Transformation programme 2 being agreed, the service will balance this with vacancy management as necessary and release of a budget line which appears no longer needed.'
3	R29 One City: seek additional funding from partners over and above 50/50. Members asked what was the current split and was and what were the proportions. Action: Officers said they would need to check that figures and would provide a more detailed answer for Members.	For the 2022-23 budget the costs of the City Office are £279k. 98% of this is staffing and the remainder internal recharges. The contribution from BCC is £95k in total and therefore the anticipated split will be 34% BCC and 66% City Partner. In 2021-22 the budget split is not yet finalised as we are mid-negotiation with some partners which may alter the split however I can confirm income to the tune of £125k has either already been paid or is in final stages of processing from partners.
4	DSG: The Director of Education & Skills advised Members that the self-assessment against the Safety Valve criteria was published and went to the previous Schools Forum. It was agreed the self-assessment against the Safety Valve criteria be circulated to Members.	Please see the attached document.
5	Savings in Home to School transport commissioning - £284K savings. Members were told that it was a combination of private hire and busses. Members were be provided with what the split of the combination is and if there are details of whether the vehicles were optimised for occupancy.	For comparison, there are 260 children in receipt of a daily bus pass and 988 children with SEND entitlement travelling daily with 274 hired vehicles of various size depending on best use. 1077 SEND children in total with some travelling with school mini-bus through SLAs with our service and others accessing personal travel budgets. We optimise journeys as far as possible taking account of the needs of our SEND cohorts. Some children do need solo travel; some children are travelling out of area for schools to meet their specific needs and they are sometimes in solo or 2-passenger transport.

		<p>We plan a re-commissioning of our transport framework (paper to Cabinet in March) and a review of our policies with more consistent use of independent travel training to support sustainable travel. We will undertake this review with parents and carers.</p>
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