

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



4 December 2023 at 1.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Mark Bradshaw (Vice-Chair), Brenda Massey, David Wilcox, Martin Fodor, Steve Smith, Christine Townsend and Tim Rippington

1 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

Cllr Tony Dyer sent apologies as Chair, and the meeting was chaired by Cllr Mark Bradshaw as Vice-Chair. Health and safety information was provided.

2 Apologies for absence.

Cllr Dyer and Cllr Gollop sent apologies.

3 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting.

The Minutes from the OSMB meeting held on 2nd November 2023 were reviewed.

RESOLVED; That the minutes be approved.

5 Chair's Business

No business was declared.

6 Public Forum



The Public Forum was published and can be found [here](#).

Jen Smith submitted a statement regarding SEND and the Our Families Transformation Programme. She challenged the Board around additional Public Forum questions which were also submitted; those questions were redirected to the People Scrutiny Commission that was being held on 6 December 2023. It was agreed that Jen Smith would be contacted to clarify the circumstances.

David Redgewell submitted a statement regarding the legal obligation of public transport provision. The Chair stated that he would draw this issue to the attention of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED; That the Public Forum be noted.

7 Transformation Programme - Overview of Portfolio

The Chief Executive and the Director for Workforce and Change delivered a presentation on the Transformation Portfolio and updates against the 'Top 4' Programmes within the portfolio, namely Adult Social Care, Children & Education, Temporary Accommodation, and the Property Programme, which account for 62% of the £37m 2023-24 General Fund savings. It was noted that individual programmes would also have been discussed within relevant individual Scrutiny Commissions.

The Director for Adults and Communities presented an overview of the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration presented an overview of the Temporary Accommodation and Property Programmes. The Chief Executive emphasised the benefit of addressing silo working and noted that PWC had been engaged as a third party to evaluate the 'Top 4' Transformation Programmes, and that their report was anticipated. It was confirmed that this could be shared with OSMB Members once available.

A Member queried whether a breakdown of the budget savings for the 2023-24 year could be provided. It was confirmed that that level of detail was available across all programmes and would form part of the budget discussions planned for 2024.

A Member noted the involvement of Peopletoo as an engaged third party with the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and queried whether their assessment had provided new information, or if it had highlighted previously known concerns. It was agreed that while there was little 'new' information, significant insight had been provided into details of working and compiling evidence for aspects that had been suspected. The Peopletoo involvement had also provided expertise and capacity; teams were embedded alongside staff to work together in finding solution for a longer term piece of work.

A Member noted that all savings within the Property Programme were attached to the 2023-24 year, and queried how much of the portfolio would be left following this. The Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration stated that the estate would remain significant. The amount that had been intended to be



disposed of had been adjusted during the 2023-24 year as a flexible response to external factors. It was clarified that Temple Island was an ongoing programme and not part of the Transformation Programme. Ongoing capital revenue targets would be achieved through pipeline projects.

A Member noted the intransigence of the issue of silo departmental working, and had seen that performance frequently fell following restructuring due to the need to maintain statutory services while bringing in widescale structural change. The Chief Executive acknowledged this and considered that this applied to most Local Authorities. He highlighted the context of 10% of Local Authorities in the position of potentially issuing a 114 Notice and the significant financial challenges, emphasising the necessity of a new approach. It was felt that the approach had contributed to greater interdepartmental and cross-cutting work than previously seen. The Executive Director for Adults and Communities agreed with this and noted the improvement seen through cross cutting work such as with supported housing and long-term accommodation. A 'whole council' approach was being taken.

A Member queried the level of confidence in budget forecasting in order to be assured around how the impact of the savings initiatives were being measured. The Chief Executive highlighted that work had taken place in 2023 around identifying cost avoidance, cashable savings, and unavoidable pressures. Improvements in reporting had given some confidence that savings had been made (as opposed to errors in demand forecasting).

A Member queried how the disposal of Bristol City Council assets outside of its boundaries was being managed. It was confirmed that the same criteria for disposal was being used to assess all assets. The use of the owned property was questioned, with a view to understanding the benefit of those assets. Ensuring that the retained assets be maximised was suggested as a consideration for future Scrutiny.

It was confirmed that the Temporary Accommodation subsidy set by the government had been frozen for a number of years. The subsidy loss was the gap between the amount received as part of the subsidy and the cost where policy had not kept pace with the market.

It was clarified that the total savings target included some savings expected in the 2024-25 year. The Property Programme was expected to conclude with the 2023-24 year. Where savings were not realised in the 2023-24 year they were expected to roll over, although this would create a shortfall. Should, as anticipated, 80% of the savings be realised this would leave a shortfall of £4million.

The Chair of the People Scrutiny Commission noted that the Our Families and Adult Social Care Transformation Programmes had been set as standing items at Commission meetings allowing for monitoring, and recommended this model for other scrutiny areas, particularly in preparation for the move to Committee System governance in May 2024.

It was noted that an update on the Capital Programme was anticipated at a future meeting of the Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission. The process around identifying uses for property assets was discussed.

The Chair thanked the Officers and Chief Executive for the report.



RESOLVED; That the Transformation Programme Portfolio update be noted, and; that the PWC report on the Transformation Portfolio be shared with OSMB Members once available.

8 Mayor's Forward Plan - Standing Item

The Mayor's Forward Plan as published on 6th November 2023 was considered. A Member noted that the substance of the Forward Plan was limited, as previously acknowledged. It was confirmed that the Administration was fulfilling its constitutional obligations by providing at least 28 days' notice of items to be considered.

Under the Committee System due to come into effect in 2024 it was planned for two programme setting workshops to take place annually.

A Member noted that a number of items were anticipated, if not formally noted and scheduled on the Forward Plan and enquired whether informal notice of those items could be shared. The Chief Executive noted this suggestion.

Chair Cllr Bradshaw agreed to discuss future work programming and Forward Plan development under the Committee System with Cllr Dyer.

9 Work Programme

The Scrutiny Work Programme was noted. Scrutiny Members were reminded of a refresher briefing on Companies Governance scheduled for 13 December 2023.

RESOLVED; That the Scrutiny Work Programme be noted.

