

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee



16 September 2024 at 2.00 pm

### Members present:

**Councillors:** Tony Dyer (Chair), John Goulandris, Ellie King, Heather Mack, Abdul Malik, Tom Renhard, Tim Rippington, Ani Stafford-Townsend and Sarah Classick (substitute for Caroline Gooch)

### 30 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

### 31 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that apologies had been received from Cllr Gooch (Cllr Classick was in attendance as a substitute).

### 32 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Renhard declared an interest in this item as follows: He was a member of Bristol Energy Cooperative, who had invested in the solar array at the Bottle Yard studios. Councillor Renhard advised that he would leave the meeting and so would not be present for the Committee's consideration of agenda item 12: The future of the Bottle Yard studios.

Also in relation to agenda item 12, Cllr Stafford-Townsend advised that as her professional background was in stage and screen, she sometimes worked with organisations based at the Bottle Yard studios; she did not, however, have any financial interest in relation to this item of business.



### 33 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Mack, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

**- To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee held on 12 August 2024 as a correct record, to be signed by the Chair.**

### 34 Chair's Announcements

The Chair advised that as the reports included at agenda item 12 (The future of the Bottle Yard studios) and agenda item 13 (Cyber Security Maturity Assessment and procurement of a managed service) contained exempt appendices, he was proposing that these items be taken at the end of the agenda as the Committee may need to move into exempt session as part of the discussion of these items.

### 35 Public Forum

It was noted that 6 public forum questions had been submitted to this meeting as follows:

- Q1. Joanna Booth: The future of the Bottle Yard studios
- Q2. Joanna Booth: The future of the Bottle Yard studios
- Q3. Dan Ackroyd: Data retention policy
- Q4. Dan Ackroyd: ICO enforcement notice
- Q5. Joanna Booth: Our Families Transformation Programme
- Q6. Jen Smith: Our Families Transformation Programme

It was noted that written responses to these questions had been published in advance of the meeting.

In relation to Q4, Dan Ackroyd asked two supplementary questions as follows:

1. When is it expected that Bristol City Council will know the result of its appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office?
2. Why are we not being told why Bristol City Council is spending our money to prevent us getting information that we should have access to, through the Freedom of Information Act?

The Chair advised that he would arrange for written responses to be provided to these supplementary questions.



## 36 Transformation Programme Quarterly Update

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 7) providing an update on the 'Top 4' Council Transformation programmes: Adult Social Care, Our Families (Children and Education), Property and Tackling Homelessness.

It was noted that there were no decisions to be taken on this report which was for information.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

### **Adult Social Care transformation programme:**

1. Cllr Malik raised the following points:

a. In relation to the Adult Social Care commissioning framework, it would be useful to be provided with further information on how the Council was ensuring equity in supplier enrolment; there was a large volume of potential providers and it would be helpful to understand how opportunities would be available for all in an equal way.

It was noted that a written response would be provided on this point.

[Note: the following response was sent subsequently to Cllr Malik:

*'The Single Commissioning Framework is an open tender opportunity for suppliers, including social care providers and VCSE orgs, to work with Bristol City Council (BCC) Adult Social Care (ASC) to deliver care and support to our citizens. Any supplier is able to submit a tender to join the framework, giving them access to further tender opportunities. All suppliers are assessed on their suitability based on standard procurement criteria and the core quality requirements detailed in our service specification. The Single Framework tender documentation describes how all work will be awarded under the various lots – in line with principles around fairness and transparency. BCC ASC continues to have open and ongoing dialogue with new and existing providers to support and improve commercial awareness including pre-tender and onboarding meetings for new providers that have not worked with BCC before. We know that this additional support helps our local SMEs and VCSE organisations to more successfully participate and succeed in our tender processes.'*]

b. It would be useful to provide detail on the target outcomes and associated success measures associated with the Adult Social Care Technology Enabled Care Project.

It was noted that a written response would be provided on this point.

[Note: the following response was sent subsequently to Cllr Malik:

*'Installation of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) products are used as a preventative tool for health and social care and is used to help sustain clients living at home and retaining independent living in the community. TEC can be used to reduce the likelihood of falls and alert carers and emergency services if someone has fallen. This should lead to reduced or result in shorter hospital admissions. TEC products should provide reassurance to family and carers by enabling users to call for assistance and provide contact in an emergency. The range of TEC products has been expanding rapidly over the last few years*



*and up to 40 different products can be installed depending on the needs of the customer. The TEC hub have a Corporate Plan target based on the number of installations completed each year and are also monitored annually against targets for Cost Avoidance (the number of care hours TEC has prevented). In 23/24 the outcomes delivered by the TEC Hub were:*

- Installations: Target – 1050. Total installations 23/24 – 1075*
- Cost Avoidance: Target £1.5M. Total cost avoidance 23/24 - £2.4M*

*The TEC hub continue to identify and test new TEC to the market and are working closely with health to increase the availability of TEC at hospital discharge.']*

c. It was noted that the Adult Social Care Policy Committee would also receive detailed update reports on this transformation programme.

#### **Property transformation programme:**

1. In response to questions, an update was given on the lease of part of the Council owned building at 100 Temple Street to Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board and NHS South West. It was noted that the fit-out was progressing well and would deliver approx. £1m for the Council in additional income and savings in the current financial year.

2. In response to a question, it was noted that the report contained a drafting error at para. 4.3.11 where it was incorrectly stated that the Bottle Yard studios review report was on the decision pathway for the August meeting of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee rather than the September meeting.

#### **Tackling Homelessness programme:**

1. In response to a question from Cllr Renhard, it was noted that the Executive Director: Growth and Regeneration would provide an update on the timeline for progressing the establishment of a second Council owned housing company which would become a registered housing provider.

2. Cllr Renhard requested that a joint briefing be arranged for members of the Strategy and Resources, and Homes and Housing Delivery policy committees on progress on the housing acquisitions programme. The Chair advised that he would discuss this request with the Chair of the Homes and Housing Delivery Policy Committee.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

**To note the background update report on the 'Top 4' Transformation Programmes.**

### **37 Property Transformation Programme Update – September 2024**

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 8) providing an update on the scope and progress of the Property Transformation Programme.

It was noted that there were no decisions to be taken on this report which was for information.



Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. In response to a question, it was noted that officers were confident that the rationalisation of office space and flexible working space at City Hall over the last few years had generally produced positive impacts for staff. Engagement with staff was ongoing in terms of determining the longer-term locality office solution.
2. It was suggested that in the context of the proposal to establish a Property Working Group (to be considered later at this meeting), it would be useful for details of Council assets in the current 'pipeline' of disposals to be shared with members of this committee. It was noted that this information would need to be shared on a confidential basis given commercial sensitivity considerations.
3. It was noted that in line with the 2024/25 budget, the programme was required to deliver £1.2m of recurring savings and £0.7m of one-off savings; the position on the delivery of these savings was being monitored.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note that the report states that the Property Programme's financial objectives include £1.248m of recurring revenue savings, £749k of one-off savings, and £21.6m of capital receipts in 2024/25.**
- 2. To note that the report states that as per baselining at CLB on 14 May 2024, the Property Programme budget is £4.781m (plus £517k contingency held by CLB).**
- 3. To note that the report states that as per baselining at CLB on 14 May 2024, no funding has been approved for 2025/26. The budget request for 2025/26 is subject to change and will be requested via CLB.**

### **38 Property Working Group - Property assets review: surplus asset and disposal process**

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 9) seeking approval of the purpose, objectives and terms of reference of the proposed Property working group.

It was noted that the report proposed a non-key decision.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was suggested that as part of their work, this working group should also review/examine how social value was contributed to through the asset disposal process and consider links/overlap with the community asset transfer process.
2. An issue was raised about the potential workload/time impact on members linked to the establishment of task and finish/working groups across the policy committees. It was noted that under the constitution, working groups were required to be politically proportionate and it was suggested



that it may be appropriate to consider allowing an element of flexibility to enable a more agile approach (e.g. to permit a group to waive its proportionality entitlement). It was noted that this matter could be considered later this year by the Committee Model Working Group when it reviewed the current committee governance arrangements.

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Classick, the Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):  
**To note the report and further details supplied in Appendix A and to approve the recommended approach and Terms of Reference for the group.**

### **39 Establishment of Culture Working Group**

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 10) seeking agreement to establish a working group to provide scrutiny, support and strategic direction to matters relating to Culture and the Creative Industries.

It was noted that the report proposed a non-key decision.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. It was noted that it would be important to ensure effective and ongoing alignment and communication between the Culture working group and the Bristol One City Culture and Creativity Board, and to avoid duplication of roles. It was felt that the group would need to discuss its terms of reference in this context.
2. In terms of the membership of the working group, it was noted that this would be determined through the party group whips but would not be restricted to members of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.

Following further discussion, on the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Classick, the Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

**To note the report and officer recommendations and to proceed to establish a working group for Culture, and to adopt the terms of reference subject to further discussions amongst the working group itself.**

### **40 Arts Council England MEND 1 (Museum Estate Development Fund) funding**

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 11) advising members of an officer decision taken to approve an additional £150,000 to complete Museum Estate and Development Fund MEND Round 1 building works at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

It was noted that there were no decisions to be taken on this report which was for information.



Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. In response to a question, it was noted that the repairs had been identified as a high priority through a condition survey in 2021. The tender figures received had been higher than expected; this was attributable to significant price rises since the pandemic.
2. In response to further questions, it was noted that a team of officers from the museum and corporate landlord services were now monitoring the whole project. Contractors were on site and the ongoing progress monitoring included a review of the costs involved. An additional application had also been submitted for Arts Council money for further repairs.
3. It was noted that as a key learning point, future applications made by the Council for Arts Council resources would be set up so that if bids ultimately saw increased costs, the bids would be structured in such a way that the Council would not have to bear the risks of those additional costs. Work was also taking place to engage with the Arts Council with a view to maintaining an ongoing effective working relationship.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the officer decision taken on 12 August 2024 on additional expenditure of £150,000 to complete MEND Round 1 building works as outlined in the report.

#### **41 The future of the Bottle Yard Studios**

***Note: this item was taken as the last item of business at the meeting.***

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 12) reviewing the current operation and business model of The Bottle Yard Studios and proposals for its future.

It was noted that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision had a significant impact on 2 or more wards. It was also noted that the report included exempt appendices.

As per his declaration of interest earlier at the meeting (at agenda item 3), Cllr Renhard left the meeting and did not participate in this item of business.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. Cllrs King and Rippington stated that they had not been able to attend briefings on this matter; they also indicated that, in their view, they did not have sufficient information available to them at this meeting to take a decision.
2. It was noted that the report at this stage proposed to identify a purchaser of the long leasehold interest. It was also proposed that this transaction would only be confirmed if, after careful consideration and due diligence, it was confirmed that such changes would improve the potential of The Bottle Yard Studios' continued success as a film and TV production facility.



3. It was noted that the report had been prepared in accordance with the Council's decision pathway process and procedures, and that a number of briefings had previously been offered and given to councillors.

Following discussion, the Chair moved recommendation 1 as set out in the report. This was seconded by Cllr Classick.

The Committee then **RESOLVED** (5 members voting in favour, and 3 against):

**To approve the proposal to identify a purchaser of the long leasehold interest of The Bottle Yard Studios.**

It was noted that the report included a second recommendation as follows:

Recommendation 2: That the Committee authorises the Executive Director for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Leader, Director of Finance and the Director of Legal Services, to settle the terms of disposal and negotiate (as necessary) the final terms of contract, subject to any condition or requirements set by the Committee.

A decision on recommendation 2 was not reached/taken at the meeting.

It was agreed instead that the meeting should be adjourned on the basis that the committee could then potentially reconvene to consider this matter further. In the meantime, officers would arrange additional briefings for members.

[Note: the meeting was adjourned at 4.42 pm, this item having been taken as the last item of business]

## **42 Cyber Security Maturity Assessment and procurement of a managed service**

***Note: this item was taken as the penultimate item of business at the meeting.***

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 13) detailing the outcomes of an independent Cyber Security Maturity Assessment and seeking approval to procure and award a contract for a Managed Extended Defence and Response service.

It was noted that this was a key decision report, as the proposed decision involved spend of over £500k. It was also noted that the report included exempt appendices.

Members generally indicated their support for this proposal, noting the significant costs incurred by other authorities as a result of cyber attacks.

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by Cllr Classick, the Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

**1. To authorise the Director: Policy, Strategy and Digital in consultation with the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, Director of Finance (S151 officer) and Director of Legal & Democratic**





**Services to procure and award a Managed Extended Defence and Response contract, in-line with the maximum budget envelopes outlined in the report, subject to identification of funding within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the setting of the council's budget for 2025/26.**

**2. To authorise the Director: Policy, Strategy and Digital to invoke any subsequent extensions or variations specifically defined in the contract(s) being awarded, up to the maximum budget envelope outlined in the report.**

### **43 Financial Debt and Arrears across the Council**

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 14) providing an overview of the debt position across revenues and benefits, parking services, housing revenue account (current and former tenant rent arrears and leasehold and temporary accommodation) and sundry debt (including adult social care) and details of the steps being taken to improve collection across a number of service areas. The report also provided details of those sums written off in line with the corporate debt management policy and scheme of delegations during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

It was noted that there were no decisions to be taken on this report which was for information. It was also noted that the report included an exempt appendix.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. The Chair commented that the report needed to be viewed in the context of the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis, recognising that many residents faced financial difficulties. It was important to note that the Council was applying its ethical debt collection policy in relation to its legal responsibility to collect council tax arrears.
2. In relation to the headline data included in the report on debt, it was noted that it was important to keep a focus on the figures relating to money owed beyond the due date. It was noted that debt outstanding between 90 to 365 days, and over one year, on 31 March 2024 had reduced compared to the position at the last year end. It was suggested that it would be useful to try to assess the impact of the additional reminder letter that was now being sent to residents as soon as a council tax instalment was missed.
3. In response to questions, officers agreed to provide clarification in relation to the figure of £32,178,783 shown as outstanding debt in relation to the Clean Air Zone arrears.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note the report.



## 44 Period 4 Finance Outturn Report

The Committee considered a report (agenda item 15) presenting information and analysis on the Council's financial performance against the 2024/25 approved budget and its forecast use of resources for the current financial year. The report also provided an update on the in-year delivery of planned savings.

It was noted that there were no decisions to be taken on this report which was for information.

Summary of main points raised/noted in discussion of this item:

1. In terms of the General Fund revenue budget, it was noted that there was no change since the Period 3 report. The original revenue budget for 2024/25 as agreed by Full Council was £533.7 million; the Period 4 total forecast service variation from that original budget was £38.5 million. It was expected that this could be partially offset by £16.2 million of forecast contingent budget for inflation and optimism bias currently held corporately so that the total net forecast revenue overspend at Period 4 remained at £22.3 m (4.2% of the original approved budget). Work continued to identify ways to mitigate this overspend in full before the end of this financial year.
2. It was noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) gross expenditure budget of £151m was reporting a net outturn overspend of £12.5 m (8.3%). This represented a deterioration of £3.2 m since Period 3. In relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget, the forecast outturn position was an overspend or deficit of £13.0m (2.6%) in-year. This represented a deterioration of £2.2m since Period 3.
3. It was noted that the Finance Sub-Committee had been briefed in detail on the actions being taken to mitigate the General Fund overspend, including progress on the delivery of required savings.
4. It was noted that following a request at the previous meeting that information should be shared on previous Cabinet decisions with a potential financial impact which were not currently being implemented, a list being compiled in relation to the Growth and Regeneration directorate would be available shortly.
5. In relation to the DSG, it was noted that, as yet, the new government had not announced any changes in relation to the safety valve arrangements. The Children and Education directorate was though engaged in ongoing discussion with the Department for Education in relation to the Safety Valve monitoring returns and the impact of in-year service demand issues.
6. It was noted that there continued to be significant budgetary pressure due to the ongoing costs of 'out of area' children home placements and tackling homelessness. It was noted that action was being taken to increase local children home placement provision; it was also important to continue to target more effective early intervention and preventative work with families to reduce the overall number of children being taken into care.
7. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board to resolve issues around the costs currently being picked up by the Council in terms



of Section 117 (mental health) aftercare. It was noted that it was hoped that this issue could be resolved by 31 December.

The Committee **RESOLVED:**

To note:

1. The council's unchanged General Fund forecast outturn revenue overspend of £22.3 million at P4 2024/25 against the council approved budget of £533.7 million.
2. The unchanged performance on delivery of savings (Appendix A1, Section 3, Tables 2a and 2b).
3. The unchanged additional weighted net risk of £10.5 million per the risks and opportunities register (Appendix A1, Section 4, Tables 3a and 3b).
4. The council's outturn position of £12.5 million overspend within the Housing Revenue Account to be transferred to the HRA general reserve at the year end (Appendix A1, Section 5.2).
5. The council's outturn position of a net £13.0 million overspend in the Dedicated Schools Grant following the application of the DfE's 24/25 Safety Valve combined with contribution from the General Fund and that a total £50.1 million is forecast to be carried forward at the year end in the DSG deficit reserve (Appendix A1, Section 5.3).
6. The unchanged breakeven position on Public Health services (Appendix A1, Section 5.4).
7. The unchanged breakeven position on the Bristol Harbour Fund. (Appendix A1, Section 5.5).
8. The council's unchanged forecast underspend of £6.4 million against the Capital Programme revised budget 2024/25, comprised of £7.0 million underspend on the General Fund and £0.6 million overspend on the HRA. (Appendix A1, Section 6).

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

