

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Commission

20 October 2016 at 9.30 am



Members Present:-

Councillors: Graham Morris (Chair), Stephen Clarke (Vice-Chair), Donald Alexander, Tom Brook, Barry Clark, Helen Godwin, Geoff Gollop, Tim Kent, Afzal Shah and Craig Cheney

Officers in Attendance:-

Anna Klonowski (Interim Strategic Director - Business Change), Richard Billingham (Service Director HR), Shahzia Daya (Interim Service Director - Legal and Democratic Services), Annabel Scholes (Interim Service Director Finance), Johanna Holmes (Policy Advisor - Scrutiny), Sarah Wilson (DLT Support Manager - Business Change), Louise deCordova (Democratic Services Officer), Gavin Beckett (Chief Enterprise Architect), Ian Gale (Service Manager - ICT Service Delivery and Integration), Steven Pendleton (Service Manager - Commissioning and Supplier Relationship Management and Lucy Murray-Brown (Service Director - Integrated Customer Service)

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair led welcome and introductions.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Commission resolved:

- (i) To agree the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record.**

5. Action Sheet



The Commission noted the progress of actions from the previous meeting.

The following points were noted in discussion:

Business Change Structure

- a. It was noted that the current organisational structure for Business Change had been circulated to Members. It was confirmed that these were transitional arrangements and Officers would update Members as and when changes occurred. **Action: Anna Klonowski**

Office 365 licences

- b. Advised that officers were talking to Microsoft to find the most appropriate and cost effective way to provide Office 365 licences for Members. Update to be provided at the next meeting. **Action: Richard Billingham**

Performance Monitoring

- c. Advised that officers were in the process of refining the performance indicators and would bring a revised version to the Commission for comment. **Action: Anna Klonowski**

Finance upgrade project

- d. The Commission received a verbal update on the progress of the finance upgrade project and the status of the current mitigation. Officers confirmed that the vendor's current development programme carried additional risks during the annual software upgrade implementation phase. Officers to go back to supplier to find out whether a biennial upgrade cycle was possible which may carry less risk. Update to be provided in January 2017 **Action: Annabel Scholes/Denise Murray.**

6. Chair's Business

There was no Chair's business.

7. Public Forum

There was none received.

The Chair proposed and it was agreed that the Work Programme item be considered at the end of the meeting.

8. The draft Corporate Strategy 2017-2022, Business Plan 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18 - 2021/22



The Commission considered a report from the Interim Strategic Director - Business Change. The report set out Bristol City Council's draft five-year Corporate Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan. The Commission was asked to comment on the draft Business Plan 2017/18 section for Finance, Governance and Performance, including the draft financial and saving proposals contained within it.

The Strategic Director circulated the Business Change 'Increasing Business Efficiency' savings report.

The following points were raised in discussion:

ICT – stop or substantially reduce colour printing

- a. It had been noted at Corporate Health and Safety meetings that the papers provided did not translate well in black and white. Officers to provide advice to enable the meeting to transition to paperless principles. **Action: Richard Billingham**

Finance - Restructure

- b. The invoice e-scanning project timescales had slipped due to the finance system (Milestone) upgrade due in December.

ICT - legacy system rationalisation

- c. The Strategic Director and Service Director (HR) were committed to develop an effective internal ICT strategy which focused on core systems and addressed how systems would work with each other to improve the necessary compatibility or integration between them. There was evidence of duplication of effort or use of manual systems to compensate where this was not working well. It was recognised that there was a need to consult with existing staff to understand how systems worked in practice to inform next steps. The Strategic Director and Service Director were considering whether external support might be necessary to address these issues as, there was a necessity to look at some of the basics in ICT at present.
- d. In response to Member questions, ICT officers advised that integration with NHS care systems was difficult, in part due to the interpretation of Data Protection legislation. There was an opportunity to look at instances where information security and data protection had caused barriers. It was noted that this could require a risk based approach supported by training of all staff to understand their data protection responsibilities.

HR - Restructure

- e. The HR cost profile was 90% people employed. In 2013 196 employees provided an end to end HR service. At the end of the voluntary severance period the service would employ 89 people. It was noted that this was at the lower quartile than comparable national organisations and the cost per FTE (full time equivalent) was also lower. 26 applications voluntary severance had been accepted. HR management continued to ensure the service's resilience to run payroll and fulfil statutory duties, however it was noted that the future HR service would rely on BCC's managers self-serving much more.



- f. It was understood that there was a need to make sure that managers were equipped to lead and manage people and finance etc effectively. However, the level of available resources for staff learning and development was £780k, lower than other comparable organisations. The majority of the spend related to statutory training for Health and Safety and for social workers and care workers – attain and retain professional level qualifications. The Chair suggested and it was agreed that staff training should be added to the future work programme. **Action: Johanna Holmes**
- g. In responding to voluntary severance applications management in Business Change had taken a holistic approach , and in some cases agreed to a staged approach to voluntary severance in order to provide opportunities for staff progression whilst maintaining resilience. This involved staff being trained by colleagues to ensure that the service retained skills required by the business.

ICT - Restructure

- h. It was noted that the ICT cost profile was 60% people and 40% hardware and software. An in depth review of service provision, strategy and costs was required, recognising that ICT changes across the Council impacted the services and budgets within ICT. The initial savings targets had been devised assuming restructuring the workforce could be managed with medium risk to the council as a whole. This is under review and, the Service Director is working with the ICT management team to determine if there are alternative ways of delivering the savings. At present the officers considered this to be essential given the need to review the manner in which ICT operates and, the considerable channel shift agenda being pursued by the Council. It was recognised that to maximise the effectiveness of ICT there would be a need to work more closely with suppliers through an ICT supplier's forum, reducing the cost of maintenance by rationalising the number of software licences, and exploring the use of virtual file storage.
- i. It was noted that corporately the officers were looking to change and improve the manner in which future savings delivery would be tracked. In the interim, it was agreed that the Business Change 'Increasing Business Efficiency' savings report would include more detail regarding how the savings will be delivered and track the delivery (which will also be reported in the monthly finance report to Cabinet). This will include budget spend and include 16/17 detail. Officers to amend the report. **Action: Anna Klonowski**
- j. It was proposed and agreed that in order to ensure the Commission was looking at the most current publicly available projected spend for the financial year. The Commission meeting dates should be changed to more closely follow the Cabinet meetings. **Action: Johanna Holmes**
- k. Officers confirmed the numbers and status of staff that had applied for voluntary severance across all services. It was noted that the next stage in the process involved a service redesign of structure and roles which would result in competitive processes for remaining posts and compulsory redundancies for deleted posts.



Policy, Strategy and Communications

- l. Work was in progress to develop a future delivery model. There was an opportunity to encourage increased internal take-up of design and marketing services.

Legal and Democratic services

- m. Savings were made up of a reduction in use of agency workers and locum staff. Officers were in progress to develop a permanent staff base, a focus on investment in trainees and increased commercialisation agenda.
- n. It was noted that an officer Savings Working Group had been established been set up and that its terms of reference included working alongside each Directorate leadership team to address income generation. One area of focus already identified related to all catering establishments and private hire venues which included the Lord Mayor's Mansion. The lead officer had implemented a successful commercial strategy at the MShed and was asked to assist all other establishments address the the commercial ethos required to deliver increased levels of income and, assist the organisation in the identification and sharing of the necessary management tools . **Action: Annabel Scholes as chair of the Savings Working Group to report back**

The draft Corporate Strategy 2017-2022-Governance business plan

The following points were raised in the discussion that followed:

- o. Members expressed satisfaction with the common sense approach and layout of the strategy.
- p. Concern was raised that the public forum gallery was empty and that this could be evidence of the Commissions lack of engagement with citizens. It was noted that Members had found it challenging to engage with constituents around the strategic proposals due to the lack of clarity around how they related to individual wards and communities.
- q. A series of budget consultation events had been planned and the dates would be circulated to Members. It was recognised that there was a more complicated task related to the ongoing engagement of citizens with the democratic process and that councillors were the best advocates to support this. Officers to confirm if anything more could be done in the short term to relate the budget consultation more directly to communities or provide the information in a different way such as through video. **Action: Anna Klonowski**
- r. Concern raised over proposed reduction in funding to Neighbourhood Partnerships and the impact this could have, reducing the ability to engage with citizens. It was recognised that there may be opportunities to develop more effective methods of citizen engagement which would need to be explored.



- s. Members emphasised the importance of early engagement with the Voluntary Sector as equal partners in neighbourhoods, in a climate of reduced funding.

9. Up-date Paper - Members ICT Issues

The Commission considered a report from the Acting Service Director Legal and Democratic Services. The report set out the status of current ICT issues and the plans to meet Members future ICT requirements. The Commission was asked to note the report for information.

The following points were raised in the discussion that followed:

- a. Members asked if the implementation of a transition away from landline calls, to calls through a mobile device application, could result in an increased cost to constituents. Officers advised that the pilot and prototype test with a group of councillors planned for December and subsequent business case and due diligence, would address the impact of implementation for all stakeholders.
- b. Members were concerned by the proposal that laptops and Office 365 should be deployed by exception as the functionality of iPads was limited. Officers emphasised that there was a reliance on party infrastructure to collate the views of Councillors through Party Group Leaders in order to reach a consensus view.
- c. Members questioned whether officers had sought an understanding of the challenges faced by other local authorities, prior to implementation of the paperless agenda. Conversation with councillors at a recent South West Councils meeting had suggested Bristol was not alone in the challenges faced and may benefit from shared learning and solution finding with others such as Cotswold District Council and Gloucester City Council. **Action: Richard Billingham**
- d. Members emphasised the benefit of using a customer relationship management to support Councillors casework. Officers confirmed that the use of Salesforce had been previously discussed as a possible application for this. Officers to update on the current position at the next meeting. **Action: Shahzia Daya**
- e. Members asked whether the use of the Safari browser could be revisited due to the ongoing functionality issues faced with Airwatch. Officers advised that this may not be possible due to security concerns but would take a further look at whether these could be overcome. **Action: Ian Gale**

10 Work Programme

The Commission considered the work programme.

The following points were raised in discussion.



- a. It was confirmed that scrutiny of Procurement would move back to the Business Change work programme from February 2017. Members requested a position paper to confirm how the Social Value Act was being implemented in Procurement. Member's suggested that Procurement should support the corporate strategy to achieve savings and desired outcomes. It was agreed that there was a conflict between social value and cost reduction. The Strategic Director suggested that Officers attend the next meeting to provide an update report. **Action: Alison Slade and Netta Meadows**
- b. It was agreed that Reserves and Assets move to a later meeting.
- c. Officers to determine whether other scrutiny commissions had focussed on income generation, in order that Business Change Members could be assured this was being covered elsewhere in the wider scrutiny work programme. **Action: Johanna Holmes**
- d. It was proposed and agreed that a watching brief on plans to improve debt collection and income generation targets be added to the work programme. **Action: Johanna Holmes**
- e. Members requested that the ICT spending pressure be added to the work programme as an standing item. It was important to monitor how in-year spending pressures were being dealt with as these were fundamental to next year's proposed savings plan. It was noted that this was being reported in the monthly financial monitoring report.
- f. Business Change meeting dates to be rescheduled to closely track Cabinet meeting dates to ensure Scrutiny Members had access to the most publicly available budget information. **Action: Johanna Holmes**

Meeting ended at 12.40 pm

CHAIR _____

