

# Bristol City Council

## Minutes of the Resources Scrutiny Commission (formerly Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission)

23 March 2017 at 9.30 am



### **Members Present:-**

**Councillors:** Graham Morris (Chair), Donald Alexander, Charlie Bolton, Tom Brook, Barry Clark, Helen Godwin, Geoff Gollop, Tim Kent and Afzal Shah

### **Officers in Attendance:-**

Denise Murray (Service Director - Finance & Section 151 Officer), Andrea Dell (Service Manager Democratic Engagement), Tara Dillon (Service Manager, Programme Management Office), Merlin Jones (Project Manager), Johanna Holmes (Policy Advisor - Scrutiny), Tracy Mathews (Performance Improvement Advisor) and Louise deCordova (Democratic and Scrutiny Manager)

## **1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information**

The Chair led welcome and introductions.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Stephen Clarke. Cllr Charlie Bolton attended in substitute.

## **3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **4. Chair's Business**

The Chair advised that Item 13, the Resources Directorate Risk Register had been rescheduled for April's meeting.

The Service Director, Finance confirmed that the April report would include an in depth work schedule and deliverability plan.

## **5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**



**The Commission Resolved:**

**To agree the minutes of the last meeting as a correct record.**

**6. Action Sheet**

Members considered the update on actions from the previous meeting.

In respect of the Commission's referral to Cabinet, to express continued support for the Social Value Policy, the Chair confirmed that the Social Value Policy objectives had been endorsed by the Mayor.

**7. Public Forum**

There had been no public forum received.

**8. Work Programme**

Members to continue to flag any issues for a future Scrutiny Work Programme, however, it was noted that Scrutiny was not expected to continue in its current format.

The Service Manager, Democratic Engagement outlined ongoing discussions by Councillors to explore the future structure of Scrutiny, with support from officers and the LGA, which had commenced with a 'hothouse' workshop and would continue with a further session on 5 April.

**9. Capturing Commercialisation**

The Commission considered a report of the Service Director, Finance, which described the vision for a process to funnel, explore, assess and deliver commercial ideas. Members were asked to consider and comment on the proposed Commercialisation Greenhouse Process.

In discussion and in response to Members questions, the following points were raised:

- a. A commercial ethos and need for a commercial return should be balanced with a need for social value outcomes. The Council may benefit from being uniquely placed to maximise social value over profit concerns.
- b. Exposure to risk should be minimised through understanding of the acceptable parameters
- c. Communication and messaging should demonstrate that ideas will be respected, seriously considered and assessed. However, it was important to be clear and manage expectations
- d. There should be a focus on quick wins to prove the concept works.



- e. The submissions process should be agile and flexible and where possible, not stifle innovation, embrace new technologies as well as the imagination of the proposers, a mixed approach including Dragon's Den styled sales pitches
- f. Each submission could contain as little or as much detail as available and not necessarily constrained by templates. It was recognised that some proposers may wish to submit an idea and move on, whilst others may wish to be fully involved or take a lead in developing an idea.
- g. There was a need to process ideas at pace, and evaluate against established parameters working with a member panel, supported by a group of internal volunteers and university partners to provide research and benchmarking.
- h. Feedback would be an important part of the process, when ideas were discounted it was important to tell people why.
- i. Existing income generation work carried out in a business as usual context was currently out of the scope of this process and potentially a different piece of work. However, it was recognised that there may be opportunities within departments to expand and maximise their work and may benefit from a greater understanding of departmental income and cost.
- j. Consideration could be given to reward and incentives for ideas that progressed to fruition
- k. Organisations such as Set Squared, Natwest or the Engine Shed could be invited to share their expertise for how ideas are cultivated to act as a catalyst for the Council's own scheme. **Action :**  
**Denise Murray**

#### **The Commission Resolved:**

**To note the report, comments and actions arising.**

(Cllr Godwin and Cllr Shah joined the meeting)

### **10 Change Governance and Support**

The Commission considered the report of the Interim Service Director, HR, Change and Communications. Members were asked to consider and comment on the Change Governance and Lifecycle presentation.

In response to Members questions, the following points were raised:

- a. It was noted that the new Change Governance principles were more robust, with increased focus on regular monitoring of key milestones, the recognition of and work to address issues before



they go 'red', and the regular input of professional views from officers from Change, Finance and HR.

- b. It was planned that best practice training would be delivered to officers to support the new governance principles.
- c. Scrutiny involvement was critical and the mechanism for Members to raise questions in the public domain needed to be a fundamental part of the governance structure to ensure transparency and accountability. A question was raised whether a member of OSM should sit on the Delivery Working Group. **Action: Craig Cheney/Denise Murray**

**The Commission Resolved:**

**To note the report, comments and actions arising.**

**11 Resources Finance Information : Period 9**

The Commission considered a report from the Service Director, Finance. The report detailed the relevant Resources extracts taken from the Period 9 Finance Report.

In response to Members questions the following points were raised:

- a. A root and branch review of ICT Licences would continue to identify savings and ensure ownership was transferred to departmental budgets, although central oversight would remain.
- b. Concern was raised that departmental litigation costs were met by Legal Services budgets in all cases. The Legal Services Business Model was still to be fully defined to understand the internal and external cost nuances. A Member suggested that there may be more that Councillors could do to understand the financial litigation consequences of Committee decision making. It was confirmed that there were plans for Member Development supported by the LGA and HR Learning and Development, which could involve a refresh of Members' role, remit and responsibilities.

**The Commission Resolved:**

**To note the report and comments arising.**

**12 Resources Performance Report : Quarter 3**

The Commission considered the Resources Performance Report for Quarter 3 of 2016/17, presented by the Performance Improvement Advisor. All indicators aimed to show the progress made to support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2014/17.

In response to Members questions, in respect of performance measures that were '*well below target*' (red) the following points were raised:



*Finance: BU355 Percentage of invoices paid on time (BCC)*

- a. Members raised concern that delayed payment of SMEs could result in a reputational risk for the Council, discourage SMEs from working with the Council and posed a risk to the livelihood of SME suppliers. It was noted that most SMEs were paid within 30 days of the invoice date. Officers to provide data of where payments exceeded 60 days to understand the impact of this measure on SME suppliers and where improvements should be targeted. **Action: Tracy Mathews**

*HR/Change: BU208 Percentage of employees with a completed 'My Performance' 15/16 review form (BCC)*

- b. Members raised concern that almost half of employees had not completed a review. It was deemed to be an important target that needed to be monitored however the performance to date suggested a lack of will within the management structure. It was noted that there had been significant change for staff across the organisation and this may have contributed to the number. Officers to provide more narrative to support reasons for this result. **Action: Tracy Mathews**
- c. It was noted the Commission should also have a focus on the 'below target' (amber) measures in an effort to take action to prevent them becoming 'well below target' (red).
- d. It was noted that the organisations performance monitoring and reporting would be refreshed in the new financial year, which would see performance targets which were aligned to the Mayors vision and related to Mayoral and Chief Executive priorities. These would then inform departmental business plans and performance targets.

**The Commission Resolved:**

**To note the report, comments and actions arising.**

Meeting ended at 12.00 pm

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

