



Resources Scrutiny Commission Action Tracker 2016/2017

Agenda Item	Title of Report/ Description	Action required and deadline	Responsible officer	Action taken and date completed
BC&RSC Actions 24 November 2016				
	Action Sheet	Officers to provide an update on income generation work progressed in the cross council working group.	Annabel Scholes / Sian Houdmont	<p>The Savings Working Group (SWG) requested that Directors consider potential income opportunities as part of their work to identify savings. Two key reports were shared with Directors for review and comment:</p> <p>A) KPMG report – DLTs to provide an update on the status of delivery of KPMG’s recommendations, or justification for why the proposed idea isn’t being progressed (Report originally shared with Change Board attendees Feb 2016)</p> <p>B) CIPFA – charging review – DLTs were asked to review the report and identify if there are any additional things listed in the CPIFA report that BCC could charge for, and is not currently. (Report sent to DLTs in Sep 2016)</p> <p>Due to timescale of submissions from Directorates the SWG did not have the opportunity to review the quality/completeness of responses – however all Directorates did submit a response. Viable opportunities were added to the savings list as ‘new concepts’ and incorporated into the budget setting process.</p> <p>The SWG therefore considers the review of KPMG and CIPFA responses as closed, and no further value from continuing any dedicated action relating to these reports.</p>

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10	In-depth Review : Bristol Workplace Programme (presentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Park View</i> Officers to provide a revised business case to Cabinet to reflect the changes. • <i>Property Disposals</i> Officers to provide an update on the disposal of properties, identifying where capital receipts had equalled or exceeded those outlined in the business case for BWP 	Robert Orrett	<p>Members to be notified when this has happened.</p> <p>Officers provided the following verbal update on the value of the receipts from properties that had been released for sale at the December meeting :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avonvale Road - est - £670,000 actual - £750,000 - Beam St - est £145,000 actual - £200,000 - York Court - est £485,000 actual - £600,000 - Park View – information to be provided <p>Note: the current financial forecasts are being up-dated reflect the above figures</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Contract Renewal Timescales</i> Officers to provide Councillors with a list of contracts up for renewal each quarter. <i>Care Contract : Out of Hours liability</i> Offline discussion with Cllr Barry Clark <i>SME Local Spend</i> Officers to provide a breakdown on a top level basis within a month. How many SME's are based locally? (Understanding of 'locally' still to be defined. Cllr Clarke requested that Officers please use their discretion on definition of 'locally' to provide the response). 	<p>Netta Meadows</p> <p>Netta Meadows</p> <p>Alison Slade</p>	<p>In the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016 36.95% of our external spend was with SMEs and of that 15.02 % was with SMEs within BS1 to BS 16 Detail as shown here:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1400 336 1939 560"> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">£24.4M</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15.02%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">£35.6M</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21.93%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">£60.0M</td> <td style="text-align: right;">36.95%</td> </tr> </table>	£24.4M	15.02%	£35.6M	21.93%	£60.0M	36.95%
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BC&RSC Actions 19th December 2016

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Agenda Item	Title of Report/ Description	Action required and deadline	Responsible officer	Action taken and date completed
	Action Sheet Procurement Up-date (from above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers to provide additional detail including the value of each SME contract and the length of contract terms. <p>Members requested to know if the 15.02% figure had been tracked over time. If so, has it gone up or down? If not, can it now be?</p> <p>Members requested to know how much of the 36.95% figure comes from the regions SMEs?</p> <p>Members asked how the 15.02% for local SME's compared with other local authorities figures for this and asked if the information is available, if Bristol's could be benchmarked against other local authorities.</p> <p>Members requested routine</p>	<p>Netta Meadows</p> <p>Alison Slade</p> <p>Alison Slade</p> <p>Alison Slade</p> <p>Alison Slade, Netta Meadows</p>	<p>This data is not accessible at this time as we are not currently capturing it in our contract database in a way it can be extracted.</p> <p>The 15.02% of SME spend within BS1 to BS 16 has not been tracked previously. Going forward this can be done.</p> <p>We are pursuing this but currently we don't record the information in this way on our contracts register, as per our answer above. We are currently in the process of restructuring the Procurement service and once this new structure is in place this is something that we can look at changing in order to be able to report on this more frequently.</p> <p>We have been unable to find any published benchmarking data and therefore cannot offer any analysis of how we compare at this stage. We are currently considering a one off benchmarking exercise with other members of the South West Procurement Group, if they are also agreeable to undertaking it.</p> <p>Members and Officers to agree at the February meeting when and how this will take place.</p>

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		reporting of the above points at scrutiny meetings.	& Johanna Holmes	
	Debt Collection	<p>(1) Housing benefits overpayments: is there anything that could be done to reduce the benefits overpayments outstanding? Could resource be deployed to address this? Officers to look into this and provide a response.</p> <p>(2) Members asked for additional detail within the council tax domestic rate and non-domestic rate annual debts to confirm the proportion covered by direct debit payments.</p> <p>(3) Officers gave a summary of the debt collection process which was laid out in regulation for local taxation. It was noted that the cost of collection was added to the original debt. Officers also confirmed that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) FERIS (Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive) scheme funding to local authorities has enabled the</p>	<p>Martin Smith</p> <p>Martin Smith</p> <p>Martin Smith</p>	<p>Please see the information below for Officer responses</p> <p>As above</p> <p>As above</p>

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Agenda Item	Title of Report/ Description	Action required and deadline	Responsible officer	Action taken and date completed
		<p>Council to identify housing benefit overpayments at an earlier date. Officers to provide more information.</p> <p>(4) Officers to circulate a draft copy of the Fair Debt policy to Members.</p> <p>(5) Officers to provide an indication of the sources which make up the Sundry debtors £122M figure as it would be helpful to understand how much included social care costs, how much was normal trading debtors and how much was one-off or exceptional items.</p> <p>(6) Officers to report to Scrutiny when next steps are known, after the business case has been presented to the mayor.</p>	<p>Martin Smith</p> <p>Martin Smith /Finance officers</p> <p>Martin Smith</p>	<p>Please see the attached document</p> <p>Please see the information below for Officer responses</p> <p>As above</p>
	Resources Period 6 Finance	Agency Spend: 12 agency staff in Resources Directorate. For the period 8 report officers to review within each of the teams how many are covering interim roles and how many contingent roles.	Nicki Beardmore	There were 65.9 FTE agency staff/consultants working in Resource Directorate for Period 8, though of these, the total includes 17 agency sourced ABS staff, undertaking assignments outside of Resource Directorate. 5 of the 65.9 FTE are recorded as being contractors or consultants. ABS have recently been added to the Resources structure.

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		<p>Property Portfolio: Members asked whether the strategy for managing the Council's £200m property portfolio and analysis of the opportunities to maximise potential yield, should be a subject of interest for Resources Scrutiny. It was agreed that this would be raised at the next Scrutiny Chairs Meeting.</p> <p>Income Generation: Members to feed further ideas and suggestions through OSM or direct to the</p>	<p>Johanna Holmes/Chair/ Vice Chair</p> <p>Members</p>	<p>Agency / Contractor / Consultants for Period 8</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1397 213 2143 807"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="1397 213 2058 256">Area</th> <th data-bbox="2058 213 2143 256">FTE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 256 2058 300">ABS</td> <td data-bbox="2058 256 2143 300">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 300 2058 343">Finance</td> <td data-bbox="2058 300 2143 343">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 343 2058 386">Human Resources</td> <td data-bbox="2058 343 2143 386">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 386 2058 429">ICT: Commissioning & Information</td> <td data-bbox="2058 386 2143 429">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 429 2058 472">ICT: Delivery</td> <td data-bbox="2058 429 2143 472">21</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 472 2058 515">ICT: Digital Transformation</td> <td data-bbox="2058 472 2143 515">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 515 2058 558">Internal Communications</td> <td data-bbox="2058 515 2143 558">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 558 2058 601">Legal</td> <td data-bbox="2058 558 2143 601">10.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 601 2058 644">Overall Total</td> <td data-bbox="2058 601 2143 644">65.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 644 2058 687">Overall Total (Excluding non Resource ABS Placements)</td> <td data-bbox="2058 644 2143 687">48.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 724 2058 767">Agency</td> <td data-bbox="2058 724 2143 767">60.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="1397 767 2058 807">Consultant / Contractor</td> <td data-bbox="2058 767 2143 807">5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Scrutiny Officer has discussed this with the Chair of Place Scrutiny, who will now speak to the Chair of Resources Scrutiny. This was also discussed at the 30 /01/17 Planning Meeting. Members have agreed to discuss this amongst themselves and report back on how they wish to proceed with this.</p> <p>For Members to note</p>	Area	FTE	ABS	20	Finance	6	Human Resources	3	ICT: Commissioning & Information	0	ICT: Delivery	21	ICT: Digital Transformation	3	Internal Communications	2	Legal	10.9	Overall Total	65.9	Overall Total (Excluding non Resource ABS Placements)	48.9	Agency	60.9	Consultant / Contractor	5
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		<p>Service Director Finance or the Interim Strategic Director Resources.</p> <p>Members IT: it was noted that Members should return any ICT equipment that was not being used as these may have licence fees attached.</p>	Members	For Members to note
	Quarter 2 Performance Report for Resources Directorate	Officers to provide a chart of all income for ease of comparison and some analysis of key indicators which identified chargeable and non-chargeable hours and how these were being used efficiently to generate income.	Shahzia Daya / Nancy Rowlandson	This information will be provided to Members when included in the Q3 Performance Report due in March

Debt Collection - Responses

Action 1

Housing benefits overpayments: is there anything that could be done to reduce the benefits overpayments outstanding.

Could resource be deployed to address this? Officers to look into this and provide a response.

Collection of housing benefit overpayments (HBOP) is split between the benefits and revenues services, with the revenues service collecting HBOP where the citizen is no longer in receipt of housing benefit. The recovery environment is challenging with small arrangements over extended periods being the norm.

Recent FERIS (Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme) funding from the DWP has allowed additional resource to be allocated to both HBOP identification and also recovery and a new (temporary) member of staff will be joining on 30 Jan. Guidance from the DWP following a visit from the Performance Delivery Team suggested an increase in the minimum payment levels (to £11.10 per week) for HBOP debts from the previous minimum level

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(£3.70 per week). This increase is being implemented with effect from the end of January for both deductions from ongoing entitlement and arrangements. The increasing use of direct earnings attachments will also lead to an increase in the level of HBOP recovery.

If additional trained resource was available this could bring about better targeted interventions on live HB cases potentially reducing the amount of overpayments, plus further checking could also increase validation and possible reduction overpayments create / recovered.

Action 2
Members asked for additional detail within the council tax domestic rate and non-domestic rate annual debts to confirm the proportion covered by direct debit payments.

Council Tax

The collectible debit for 2016/17 after discounts and exemption was £212m. As at 4 December 2016 £175m had been paid of which £132m was collected by direct debit and a further £43m collected via payments made online / bank transfer / cash.

The number of domestic properties at annual billing was 197,420. Of these, 105,000 (53.2%) council tax payers pay monthly instalments by direct debit and that value for 2016/17 is anticipated to be £152m.

Recovery documents issued between 1 April 2016 and 4 December 2016 were:

Reminder:	37,000 - value £14.3m (current year and previous years)
Second Reminder:	6,000 - value £1.4m (current year and previous years)
Final Notice:	1,500 - value £800k (current year and previous years)
Summons:	12,321 - value £11.4m (current year and previous years)

At 4 December 2016 there remained £5.97m current year summonsed debt outstanding.

Business Rates

The collectible debit for 2016/17 after reliefs and exemptions was £221m. As at 4 December £192m had been paid; £104m collected by direct debit and a further £88m collected by BACS / cash / online.

The number of commercial properties at annual billing was 15,500. Of these 6,400 (41.3%) business rates accounts pay monthly instalments by direct debit and that value for 2016/17 is anticipated to be £120.8m.

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Recovery documents issued 1 April 2016 to 4 December 2016 were:

Reminder: 6,025 - value £13m (current year and previous years)

Summons: 2,153 - value £15m (current year and previous years)

At 4 December there remained £2.25m current year summonsed debt outstanding.

Action 3

Officers gave a summary of the debt collection process which was laid out in regulation for local taxation. It was noted that the cost of collection was added to the original debt. Officers also confirmed that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) FERIS (Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive) scheme funding to local authorities has enabled the Council to identify housing benefit overpayments at an earlier date. Officers to provide more information.

FERIS (Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive)

The DWP FERIS initiative which began in April 2015, allows an authority to bid for monies on an annual basis (up to a ceiling amount) and if then successful use these monies to set up initiatives to look at tackling further tackle Fraud and Error in their Housing Benefit (HB) caseload.

The DWP will then look to further financially reward local authorities who further tackle Fraud and Error by reducing HB expenditure, via a Performance Improvement Fund (PIF) where it can be demonstrated that HB expenditure has been reduced based on certain baselines and further percentage reductions. For Bristol these successful bids have been used to pay for additional resource to look at risk based reviews and campaigns of existing claimants plus additional overpayment recovery staff (c£100k).

The potential rewards of the scheme mean an authority can receive an additional of up 2.5% of its administrative grant each quarter (i.e.c£270k per year), but despite annual reviews of the scheme the targets are very stretching meaning Bristol has only received one quarterly reward of £18,918

Overpayments and Subsidy

The amount of Housing Benefit that authorities can claims back via the subsidy regime from the Department for Works and Pension (DWP) depends on mainly on the cause of the overpayment, i.e. claimant or local authority error and the total amounts created in these respective areas.

For those HB overpayments that are 'claimant error' then there is a flat rate of the authority receiving 40% of any HB expenditure paid out. Therefore if the authority further collects 60% of the total created debt it will 'break even' and if it collects over 60% then gains additional revenue.

For local authority error the subsidy calculations are more complex meaning that authority may receive 0%, 40% or 100% dependent on the total amount of overpayments raised in this area against the total amount of HB expenditure. For most years Bristol City Council has managed to claim the 100% amount, although for 2014/15 following a DWP qualification it received 0%.

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Action 4

Officers to circulate a draft copy of the Fair Debt policy to Members.

Please see the attached document.

Action 5

Officers to provide an indication of the sources which make up the Sundry debtors £122m figure as it would be helpful to understand how much included social care costs, how much was normal trading debtors and how much was one-off or exceptional items.

The Finance Operations Manager has provided a breakdown of the annual charges raised via ABW as sundry debts as follows:

Social Care costs	£ 40,791,075
One-off / Exceptions	£ 4,839,548
Normal Trading	£ 76,697,548
Total	£122,328,148

Action 6

Officers to report to Scrutiny when next steps are known, after the business case has been presented to the mayor.

The business case for both the in house enforcement proposal and collective debt are yet to be presented to the Mayor. In House Enforcement has been worked up with colleagues in Finance to show the anticipated potential net income stream and will be considered by DLT. The first step of the collective debt proposal is with colleagues in Finance to implement and will result in the transfer of some work to the debt management team within Revenues with a view to increasing collection.

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