



DRAFT

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Commercialisation Strategy 2019/2022

Contents

1. Becoming More Business Like.....	3
2. Delivering the Commercialisation Strategy 2018/21	3
3. Key Achievements 2018/19	5
4. New Relationships New Responsibilities and New Roles ..	5
5. Commercialising Bristol Harbour and the City's Historic Assets	5
6. The Council's Commercialisation Strategy 2019/22	6
7. Conclusion	7

BECOMING MORE BUSINESS LIKE

Delivery of our New Commercialisation Strategy only began in earnest on 7 November 2018 - so there has been a lot to do over the past year. All our energy has been focussed on delivering some of the early wins we've highlighted later to help us build trust and confidence in our plans and our effectiveness and efficiency in delivering them.

The former Commercialisation + Citizens Division has also expanded over the last twelve months and been given important new responsibilities and roles. Since December 2018, we have been charged with not only managing some of the City's key historic assets (such as Bristol Harbour), as well as Trading with Schools, Citizen Services, and Facilities Management, but also – since July 2019 - relationships, responsibilities and roles between the Council, Bristol Holding Ltd and four other wholly owned Council Companies.

This increased accountability and remit is a perfect fit with our core vision and values, namely:

“commercialising council services, and optimising council assets, so that Council Directorates achieve efficiency savings and income growth, and meet the Mayor and Council’s economic, social and environmental priorities.”

In making Bristol City Council more business-like, and delivering progress on the determination, development and delivery of Bristol Council's rolling Commercialisation Strategy and Programme 2019/22, we want to go on the record and thank all our Council colleagues, partners and stakeholders for their continuing advice, guidance and support over the last 12 months. This is how - with their help - we've delivered on our Commercialisation Objectives in 2018/19 and how we're taking our Commercialisation Strategy forward as we move towards 2022.

DELIVERING THE COMMERCIALISATION STRATEGY 2018/21

Throughout the past year we've been careful to check that we've been making the progress expected from us by all our stakeholders when reshaping and commercialising council services and that we've taken the steps needed to meet the Mayor's and Council corporate objectives. We've also worked with colleagues across the council to understand how we should reflect the learning from previous experiences in commercialising Council services, particularly colleagues in the Parks service.

So we've noted here some of the feedback we've received and how we've fine-tuned what we've been doing as a result.

Up to Date – Fit for Purpose

So that we were clear that the Council's Commercialisation Strategy and Programme was both up to date and fit for purpose we held our second Commercialisation Summit on 7 August 2019.

When we met, participants (including cross party elected membership as well as officers) agreed that the things we were doing to determine, develop and deliver efficiency savings and income, growth whilst maintaining agreed service standards, were still the right ones, confirming that the Council's Commercialisation Strategy should continue to have:

1. Economic, social and environmental aims, objectives and activities that met the Council's overall Corporate Strategy.
2. Decision-making structures that were business-like and provided opportunities for Directorates with viable commercial projects to be more innovative.
3. A three year Commercialisation Programme with major, medium level and 'micro' commercialisation projects that were properly resourced, professionally supported and used the Council's pivotal role in the local economy to work in partnership with both the private sector and other Core City Councils.
4. Commercialisation projects with SMART objectives so that Council Directorate's commercialisation performance could be monitored and evaluated more effectively.

5. Improved and streamlined business case preparation, evaluation, approval, monitoring and scrutiny through the introduction of a council-wide commercialisation training programme to up-grade officer skills and knowledge when presenting projects for consideration.
6. Include as commercialisation development priorities the following shortlist of proposals:
 - event space – effectively and cohesively utilising our unique spaces as one service;
 - gritting private areas;
 - expanding the cash-in-transit service;
 - translating and interpreting service;
 - examine the potential to expand the telecare service; and,
 - examine the potential to expand services at Exmouth Camp.

Challenge and Change

More generally, participants said that, to tackle the challenge of successfully commercialising its services, the Council should fine-tune it to change the way it:

- used its influence to tackle land ownership issues in both private and public sectors;
- used council-oriented standard procedures because “...the local authority way of thinking takes too much of the time”;
- approached commercialisation - adopting a more flexible approach that was less protective of “established interests”;
- approached commercialisation governance and decision-making structures - simplifying them wherever possible;
- understood, corporately, the drivers that made commercialisation happen and barriers that delayed its delivery; and,
- endorsed and made commercialisation decisions so that this could move forward in a positive way.

Feed back and Fine-Tuning

All the same, the elected members attending wanted the Council’s Commercialisation Strategy in 2019/22 to remain:

- ambitious;
- progressive and agile based on “to get on with it” culture change; and
- flexible enough to accept some risk taking.

Participants touched on, the particular challenges the Council faced in establishing:

- a shared agenda with external stakeholders so that the Council could make best use of external funding for council led projects; and,
- a common approach with internal Council Directorates to achieve best value from corporate commercialisation activities instead of short-term, unplanned, one-off approaches to commercialisation that seemed to offer the Council income growth but that proved unprofitable, or even resulted in a deficit, in the long run.

An example of how the Council needs to fine tune its approach is to increase operational efficiency by digitalising services (for example the electronic processing of payments).

All those attending endorsed a proposal by two elected members present that Directorates should stick to the corporate commercialisation agenda and expected officers to do so when developing projects for consideration.

Finally, it was said elected members would challenge Directorates to demonstrate how their business cases would achieve efficiency savings, create income growth and maintain agreed service delivery standards.

3. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2018/19

We're proud that our key achievements in 2019/20 include:

- the appointment of an effective Commercialisation Development team;
- supported the delivery of efficiencies in a range of services;
- supporting the submission of a multi-million pound partnership grant funding application ; and,
- a clear plan for achieving £250k income generation by March 2020.

4. NEW RELATIONSHIPS, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES, AND NEW ROLES

As we mentioned before, the Director: Commercialisation + Citizens Division has been given important new responsibilities and roles for shareholder liaison with Council's Bristol Holding Ltd. Company and other wholly-owned companies - Bristol Energy, Bristol Waste, Bristol is Open and Goram Homes - a role that had previously been the responsibility of a full-time Shareholder Liaison Director.

This provides a positive platform to not only improve the strategic links between the Council, Bristol Holding Ltd., and other Council wholly owned companies, but also an opportunity to join up their objectives and activities with the Council's wider commercialisation agenda.

However, when the Council decided to halt the development of Bristol Holding Ltd, this allowed the Council to:

- take stock of its wider commercialisation agenda and the place of Council Companies within it;
- review these relationships and integrate them with the Council's commercialisation agenda; and,
- make sure the respective responsibilities and roles of the Council, Bristol Holding Ltd. and its wholly owned Companies focussed on confronting the economic, social and environment challenges facing the City.

What is more, these changes were intended to address the previous 'arm's length' approach of Bristol Holding Ltd. that was out of step with the Council's determination to make sure its resources tackled the increasingly urgent day-to-day needs of all the City's residents.

Given the opportunities to start afresh, the Council also wanted to make sure that Bristol Holding Ltd. and Council wholly owned Companies were clear from the outset about their respective financial and operational performance relationships, responsibilities and roles so there is no doubt about individual and collective accountability from the beginning.

And so in 2019/20 this relationship is being developed to start to create efficiency savings and income growth - subject to mutually beneficial agreement to specified service standards - by critically examining the new relationships, new responsibilities and new roles that must be developed so that Bristol Holding Ltd. and wholly Companies have clarity about the pace at which they could develop their operational activities in the wider economy.

5. COMMERCIALISING BRISTOL HARBOUR AND THE CITY'S HISTORIC ASSETS

Early in July 2019 a Council-wide Workshop took place to kick start a rolling commercial review of all the Council's historic assets - starting with Bristol Harbour. Its overall purpose was how to make best use, for all our residents, of these unique economic aspects of the City, namely:

- What should the Council achieve and why?
- What powers did the Council have and how effectively and efficiently were they exercised?
- What services were delivered?
- How would the Council consult and, communicate with stakeholders and decide how to deliver Review outcomes?

Looking in detail at a Bristol Harbour Review it was agreed the Council's strategy should aim to deliver:

- governance and management arrangements that made best use of existing Council powers, responsibilities and roles;
- City-wide best value service delivery for all the City's residents - both on and off the water;
- effective and efficient use of Council-wide staffing and non-staffing revenue monies, so that the service is at a minimum cost neutral;
- comparable market rate income and capital and revenue expenditure based on case studies with similar UK harbours; and,
- long-term financial sustainability through visitor, leisure, retail and residential income growth and wider economic sector expansion.

Specifically this meant the production of a:

- robust three year Harbour Strategic Plan 2019/22 developing, communicating and consulting these aims;
- clear Business Plan for 2019/20;
- refreshed Harbour Revision Order (last produced in 1998); and,
- using the learning from the Harbour Review as a pilot and applying the lessons to other Historic Assets in the City.

6. THE COUNCIL'S COMMERCIALISATION STRATEGY 2019/22

So, in summary, taking this on board, the Council's the Commercialisation Strategy 2019/22 looks like this:

Major project

Historic Assets Programme Phase 1 (Bristol Harbour Review).

Medium term projects

1. Harbour pontoons.
2. Fleet Services: Maintenance Service expansion and Electric Vehicles.
3. Historic Spaces (subject to service review).
4. Joinery workshop (subject to service review).
5. Diversity training, Know Your Place and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards.

Micro-Project Innovation Programme

7. Range of innovative staff-led annual projects introduced on full cost recovery basis where we'll use the detailed experience, skills and knowledge of entrepreneurship, business innovation and start-ups possessed by officer and members alike to maximise the Council's competitive advantage.

Bristol Harbour Feasibility/Case Study and Consultation/Communication Projects

Before starting the Historic Assets Programme Phase 1 (Bristol Harbour Review) two introductory projects will be put in place. They are a Feasibility/Case Study Project and a Consultation/Communication Project.

- The Feasibility/Case Study Project will be completed before the Consultation/Communication Project starts and will provide market-rate comparators and other key background information for the Consultation/Communication Project
- Both projects will be completed before the Historic Assets Review Programme Phase 1 (Bristol Harbour Review) is rolled out between May and September 2020.

In more detail, the Feasibility/Case Study Project will:

- underpin a future Council Review of the important economic contribution Bristol Harbour makes to the City;

- set out the threats and opportunities to the Harbour's future development and the scope for action that can be taken to not only minimise public safety risks but also maximise economic benefits for all the City's residents;
- identify and map the Bristol Harbour economic, social and environmental linkages with the City's wider economy; and,
- publicise proposals for comparable market-rate based facilities and service standards, income growth and efficiency savings with harbour assets elsewhere in the UK.

And the Consultation/Communication Project will:

- provide a framework to inform stakeholders about Harbour Review aims, objectives and activities;
- compile a stakeholder database for consultation and communication on Harbour Review plans;
- outline opportunities to get involved in Council capital investment plans to ensure the long-term sustainability of this key historic asset for the City;
- establish a Harbour Review Round Table to provide stakeholders with regular meetings, briefing documents and information on progress; and,
- invite stakeholders to contribute to sectoral, infrastructure, customer and employee experience, and information working groups that will be set up to develop later phases of the Harbour Review.

7. CONCLUSION

Although our responsibilities and roles have grown the Directorate: Commercialisation + Citizens and Shareholder Liaison will continue to deliver the Council's Commercialisation Strategy with the same dedication and determination we have shown over the past year.

We'll do this not only so that Council services and assets are optimised but also so that all Council Directorates achieve the efficiency savings and income growth they are capable of and most importantly of all, we'll do this so that we meet the Mayor and council's economic, social and environmental priorities in the years that follow.

Penny Fell

Director: Commercialisation + Citizens and Shareholder Liaison

Bristol City Council

5 November 2019