

# G Governance

This section of our Business Plan focuses on our corporate governance including democracy, finance, human resources, ICT and performance.

## What we want for Bristol

Bristol needs a well-run council which:

- **Is transparent and approachable**
- **Has a firm handle on its finances**
- **Has efficient and well-run ICT to support our services**
- **Has people policies that are both fair and affordable**
- **Performs well, knows where the gaps are and makes sound and lawful decisions.**

To ensure that our services are as effective and efficient as possible we need to ensure that support services (such as Finance, Human Resources and Information & Communications Technology) are fit for purpose and are modelled upon the best examples from the private and public sectors.

Whilst the council as a whole and the support functions will deliver savings, new ways of working with city partners will mean we will need to consider the governance, systems and performance reporting of doing business in this way.

We will also do more to be open, transparent and demystify the role and functions of the council for all.

This annual Business Plan is a part of our five year Corporate Strategy. The strategy looks ahead to 2022, beyond the date of the next mayoral election, in order to provide continuity and future direction for the work programmes of the council and its city partners.

## The challenges we face

- The council faces a number of challenges which significantly increase the gap between what it needs to spend and how much money it has available. This means that we need to think very differently about the ways in which we provide services and work with partners and the citizens of Bristol.
- Rising demand for our services – many more people need council services and this creates significant budget pressures. We need to get better at predicting fluctuations in demand and allocating resources where they are most needed. We are not alone in facing an increased call on our services as this is being felt across the whole public sector. Unfortunately that further compounds the problem for the council, as its partners are in a similar position and having to do more with less.

- People are also expecting more from the council and this doesn't match the resources we have available. We are constrained by limited ways in which we can generate more income so there is a real need for us to do things differently and for public awareness of the situation to be increased so they can support the council going forwards.
- We have to reduce our support services dramatically and quickly whilst also working in a time of great change – looking at value for money measurement, return on investment and keeping pace with the need for new technology to improve the way we work.
- Greater reliance and expectations from ICT to facilitate savings in other service areas at a time when we are challenged to reduce the overall costs of ICT ownership and delivery in a fast changing external environment
- The Brexit decision brings uncertainty and a more complex environment in which to attract investment – it is essential that the council keeps abreast of the impact of leaving the European Union to ensure that the city's economy thrives
- An International Strategy will support the council to maintain and develop Bristol's ability to attract global investment and opportunities; access European finance; and promote Bristol as a centre of creativity and innovation When we make changes we need to be sure we reap the full benefits, for example moving things online whilst keeping other forms of contact can, in some cases, simply increase demand.
- Our ability to plan for the long term is difficult beyond 2020 due to the Government's proposals to change the way in which local government is funded.
- We also want to improve democratic engagement, political literacy and ensure that our younger adults help to shape the future of Bristol as a city.

# We will pay for this by

There are implications for our revenue budget in providing efficient services despite a challenging financial situation.

## Revenue

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Our budget for 2016/17 was:        | £71.7m |
| Our income for 2016/17 was around: | £22.2m |
| So our net cost was around:        | £49.5m |

In this draft plan we cite 2016/17 budgets to help provide context. The final 2017/18 Business Plan will include 2017/18 budgets once they are approved.

To make sure we can deliver our priorities in a world with less money available and a growing population and demand for services, we will be making around £5.5m of savings by:

- Restructuring many of the council's support services to save money whilst providing a strong service to underpin all of the council's work
- Reducing bureaucracy by developing good governance for good managers
- Encouraging far more 'self-service' within the council, helping staff and their managers help themselves with less reliance on professional support services such as ICT, legal and HR.
- Improving governance and challenge this in order to ensure we are spending the 'right amounts on the right things in the right places'.

## Our objectives for the five years:

- We will increase fairness in our employment practices and contracts
- We will work through the Mayor’s Women’s Commission and Manifesto Leadership Group to develop a change programme to eliminate the gender, social deprivation and race pay gap. (Our Economy 2E)
- Ensure that the voice of our workforce and Trades Unions is heard when shaping Council services (Our Bristol 10)
- Improve the council’s governance and efficiency – getting the basics right, building on firm foundations

### 1: Bristol City Council becomes a model employer which sets an example to others in valuing fairness and diversity

| What we are doing to achieve this over the next five years   | What we are doing to achieve this over the next year   | How we will know we are succeeding (where referenced, KPIs = Key Performance Indicators)   |
|--|--|--|
| The council pays its staff the Living Wage and will require contractors to also pay the Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation (Our Economy 2A). |  | Compliance with the Living Wage Foundation recommendations for council employees and confirmation during the procurement processes that our contractors are also compliant.              |
| The Council will apply for Living Wage Foundation Accreditation, having paid the Living Wage since 2014.   | We have achieved this outcome and have and will continue to build this into all of our financial planning.   |  |
| Creation of the Bristol Living Wage Partnership.   | Through the auspices of the City Office we will:<br>Establish a partnership with business that will encourage all Bristol businesses to pay their employees the Living Wage (Our Economy 2B).<br>To encourage organisations in the city not to use zero hours contracts (Our Economy 2C).<br>[Note: The Council does not use zero hours contracts] | Number of businesses that join the Partnership.<br>Number of businesses that commit to paying the Living Wage.<br>Number of businesses that commit to not using any zero hour contracts. |
| Refuse to give work or contracts to companies guilty of blacklisting workers (Our Economy 2D).   | We will test current company and future company practice during our procurement of contracts.  | Regular review of blacklisted companies against our contracts list.  |

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|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Champion Equality &amp; Diversity (Our Bristol 3).</b></p> | <p>The council continues to be committed to equality and diversity and it will:</p> <p>Continue our membership of Stonewall and promote similar links with other groups committed to equality.</p> <p>Address the underlying issues facing Bristol in attracting BME candidates for senior positions within the Council.</p> <p>Develop an Equality Charter which will apply to the City Council and any organisation that we commission, grant aid to or procure services from, to include governance, administration and delivery.</p> | <p>Monitor via reports to the Mayor and Cabinet our progress in achievement of equality and diversity in our workforce.</p> <p>Report back to HR Committee and the Mayor in respect of any recommendations.</p> <p>Publication of the Charter.</p> |

## 2: People are paid equally in real terms, irrespective of gender, social deprivation and race (Our Economy 2E)

| What we are doing to achieve this over the next five years   | What we are doing to achieve this over the next year  | How we will know we are succeeding (where referenced, KPIs = Key Performance Indicators)  |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>We will undertake a gap analysis to ensure that there is an understanding of the current position.</b></p> | <p>To report details of the pay gap working through the Mayors Women’s Commission and Manifesto Leadership Group and develop creative approaches to deliver change.</p> <p>To monitor the effectiveness of council policies and practices in addressing gender, social deprivation and race pay gap without compromising our ability to secure the “best person for the job”.</p> | <p>Publication of the finding of the commission.</p> <p>Publication by the City Office of city partner and council plans to address the findings.</p> <p>Reports to HR committee and the Mayor will address this.</p> |

### 3: The council runs efficient services in which our staff have a real sense of ownership

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|--|--|--|
| <p><b>A Trade Union Joint Consultative Committee and Departmental Joint Consultative Committee process is already in place across the council. We have a good working relationship with the Trade Unions and always consult with them fully in matters of organisation design and change. We recognise that this is an ongoing pledge.</b></p> | <p>Encourage tangible ideas to reshape the role of the council in the delivery of services from staff and Trade Unions, putting them in to action where we can.</p>  | <p>Number of ideas we are able to implement.</p>   |
| <p><b>Undertake reviews and implement changes that ensure our support services are modelled on the best of the public and private sectors.</b></p>   | <p>As reviews of support services are completed, we will implement the outcomes to drive forward economy, efficiency and effectiveness within the council via improvements in systems, processes and skills to ensure that we reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.</p> <p>Provide council-wide developmental opportunities for managers in financial management.</p> <p>Implement more self-service.</p>  | <p>Number of recommended changes implemented.</p> <p>Delivery of savings from support services.</p> <p>Number of managers who have engaged in the developmental opportunities.</p> <p>Delivery of savings from support services.</p> |
| <p><b>Ensure City Hall is open and accessible to the public to sustain participation in decision-making.</b></p>   | <p>Refurbishment of City Hall complete</p> <p>Publicise the availability to rent of the rooms on the first floor of City Hall and make space available to community groups.</p> <p>During Local Democracy Week we will trail opening the building for exhibitions/displays.</p> <p>Work towards an 'open door' policy where and when appropriate, so that Bristol's citizens feel ownership of the building and of their local democratic processes.</p> | <p>Feedback to the Mayor, Cabinet and City Councillors.</p>  |

| What we are doing to achieve this over the next five years   | What we are doing to achieve this over the next year   | How we will know we are succeeding (where referenced, KPIs = Key Performance Indicators)  |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Renew our democracy and help people to avoid losing their right to vote within the rules set by the Electoral Commission.</b></p>  | <p>Electoral Registry has already made a significant push on this priority but it will continue to be an ongoing project. Prioritising BME and voters in economically deprived areas will be central.</p> <p>The Mayoral election was a success in that it had very high turn-out.</p> <p>Continue to support the role of Youth Mayors and seek to make their concerns part of our policy commitments.</p> <p>Highlight the importance of engagement in civic democracy.</p> <p>Review the council’s constitution to identify opportunities for increased public participation in decision-making processes. Clarify the decision-making pathway in relation to democratic engagement.</p> | <p>Increase in number of eligible voters registered.</p> <p>Monitoring of turnout at elections.</p>                                       |
| <p><b>Bring greater clarity and purpose to the constitutional role of city councillors to ensure our elected members are representative of Bristol in all its diversity.</b></p> | <p>Undertake a review of the council’s constitution to include the processes and procedures of council meetings, the role of councillors, and the relationship between decision-making, scrutiny and power.</p> <p>Via the Party Groups, promote the role of the city councillors in engaging our citizens.</p>  | <p>Adoption of the revised constitution by the Full Council.</p>  |
| <p><b>Improve long and medium term planning.</b></p>   | <p>We will refresh our medium and long term financial plans on an annual basis and update the city councillors, citizens and city partners.</p>  | <p>Publication of the Medium Term Financial Plan via Mayor and Cabinet’s annual briefings to Councillors, City Partners and Citizens.</p> |

## Further reading:

### Our plan is based on the following evidence base:

- ▶ Strategic Economic Plan
- ▶ Local Plan
- ▶ Core Strategy
- ▶ Bristol Central Area Plan
- ▶ West of England Joint Spatial Plan
- ▶ Site Allocations and Development Management Policies
- ▶ Resilient Bristol Report
- ▶ Economic Baseline
- ▶ UK Smart Cities Index
- ▶ Our Resilient Future: A Framework for Climate and Energy Security
- ▶ The Economics of Low Carbon Cities: A Mini Stern Review for the City of Bristol
- ▶ Open Data Bristol
- ▶ Bristol Environmental Data Exchange
- ▶ Quality of Life report
- ▶ Bristol Employment and Skills Positioning Statement