

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Friday 15th March 2019, Committee Rooms 3 & 4

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Josh Jones (Chair)

Councillors Tahir Ali, Deirdre Alden, Debbie Clancy, Liz Clements, Roger Harmer, Charlotte Hodivala, and Rob Pocock

Also Present:

Councillor Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader

Paula Buckley, Acting Director Digital & Customer Services

Michael Enderby, Head of Resilience & Services

Varun Sitaram, Head of Business Improvement and Change

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mohammed Aikhlaq, Sir Albert Bore and Penny Holbrook.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

4. ACTION NOTES/ISSUES ARISING

(See document No 1)

The action notes from the meeting held on 15th February 2019 were agreed.

Cllr Clancy asked that in future the items on the agenda set out clearly the dates referred to in the performance reports.

It was also noted that, following the call-in, this Committee should undertake a review of what happened with regards to the waste management. This was picked up again under the Work Programme item.

5. DEPUTY LEADER UPDATE

(See documents No 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

a) Performance Framework

Councillor Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader, Paula Buckley, Acting Director Digital & Customer Services and Varun Sitaram, Head of Business Improvement and Change attended for this item.

Cllr Brigid Jones introduced the item and asked for members' feedback on the framework. Changes include setting targets against national targets, which has some areas of poor performance. What is measured is aligned with the Council Plan, and the commentary has been revised to be less defensive and more about how the Council will address areas of poor performance. The intention is also that the measures are more rounded, for example encompassing quality as well as volumes.

Members have the Quarter 2 measures from 2017/18 and 2018/19 to allow a comparison to be made.

Varun Sitaram explained that work had been done to identify what work is needed to do to improve in areas, and what the priorities should be.

In discussion, and in response to members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Concern that previous analysis was done by District Committees and some issues are at that level, and now that is not being done, and there is nowhere in council structures to allow that to happen. There is a need for a localised perspective to give a richer understanding and get local solutions. The Deputy Leader will take that away for further consideration.
- It was proposed that once Cabinet has considered the performance reports, these then should go to the relevant Scrutiny committee. Work is needed in the individual committees to shape the framework, for example the transport measures do not capture the ambitions for the city.
- Members welcomed the benchmarking against other local authorities, and the experience officers from other local authorities have brought to this area.

- The measure on recycling is not consistent with national standards and should be revised. It was explained that it was a previous national standard, now abolished and is now measured differently in different places and currently does include bottom ash, but will be re-considered.
- Using the Citizens' Panel to get residents' view on performance would further inform views on performance of the City Council.
- Why is the private rented sector target below the level of last year? – this is being picked up in the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee – but the wider issue is that we should not be looking at lower targets when we have additional resources in this area. This should be flagged up much earlier.

b) Customer Services and Brum Account

Councillor Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader and Paula Buckley, Acting Director Digital & Customer Services attended for this item.

Councillor Brigid Jones introduced the item on customer services and changes to how satisfaction is measured, consolidation of services and improvements to the website. The BRUM account replaces the previous BCC on-line account; and has been brought in to support changes and encourage more people to use the internet, though there will always be a need for a telephone line. Take-up has been good and will now be more pro-actively promoted.

The members' portal is an on-line casework system that aligns with customer services. Work has been going on to simplify and streamline to encourage more usage. It works well in other councils, but cannot be all things to all people.

In discussion, and in response to members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- Clarity is needed on when we need the views of users and when the Citizen's Panel would be appropriate.
- A future report should show data over time to see the improvements made. We do not have the data on percentage of households that use the contact centre.
- There have been some cases of repeated problems in accessing the new system, and whilst there will always be teething problems, we need to be very quick at resolving glitches.
- The contact centre does not seem to react quickly e.g. where there are issues with waste collection or retain information given, work is on-going with the depots on this.
- Emails from the members' portal need to be capable of personalisation so members can add their own messages. This exemplifies some of the differences, as some members want a quick acknowledgement sent out.

- Are translators to be brought back in house? This is a proposal for the next municipal year. There will be some languages that will still require external support.
- Issues of serious and immediate concern (e.g. child safety) should be dealt with quickly and there should be a process for this. There is an option to escalate calls but this did not happen in one case and officers will investigate.
- Officers are not deployed on a local basis, though many do live in the city and have local knowledge.

7. EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE

(See document No 7)

Michael Enderby, Head of Resilience & Services attended for this item.

Michael Enderby gave an overview of the service and reminded members about the training session that has been offered. Changes to the approach mean a more embedded approach to ensure core arrangements meet the needs of the city.

In discussion, and in response to members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- What are the contingencies for disturbances that could happen at short notice? This is largely a police matter, but they know how to contact for support (e.g. barriers and road closures).
- When should members contact emergency planning or emergency services? Thresholds and triggers will be picked up in the member training. The City Council and partners have a scale for response, there is not a hard line on this but they are keen to ensure that they respond to more usual incidents as well as the more serious.
- Work with Prevent is led elsewhere, and Michael Enderby leads on Protect and Prepare, all part of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy.
- When a World War 2 bomb was found in Aston, residents were evacuated into overnight accommodation that was not adequate. Processes have been reviewed since then, evacuation will always be challenging but will assess needs. No two incidents are the same.
- The inquiry into the May 2018 flooding raised issues of member support, and also contacting Amey at the weekend is very difficult.
- Information for members who do not attend the training was outlined for members:
 - There is a 24/7 duty officer who will prioritise actions.
 - If emergency arrangements kick in, all members are contacted (depending on scale of incident).
- What are the safety measures for the Council House? The approach to security has been tested and there is an action plan.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No 8)

The need for a piece of work on reviewing governance following the waste dispute was reiterated, so there will be a discussion at the next meeting, and then another meeting will be held to look at this in detail. The governance points about times of reports and late reports, and delegations are generic and outside the scope of the waste review.

The Chair will take advice on any issues relating to Standards Committee inquiries. There may also be a special Council meeting on this matter.

It was requested that Easter holidays are avoided for additional meetings.

The Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee have agreed to meet in May to discuss issues around the Commonwealth Games. A note on the work of all O&S Committees on the Commonwealth Games will be circulated.

RESOLVED:

The work programme was noted.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chairman jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee

12. EXCLUSIONS OF THE PUBLIC

That in view of the nature of the business to be transacted which includes exempt information of the category indicated the public be now excluded from the meeting:-

Exempt Paragraph 3

The Committee agreed the resolution.

P R I V A T E A G E N D A

13. ACTION NOTES

(See document No 8).

The action notes for the private part of the meeting held on the 15th February 2019 were agreed.

14. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS (EXEMPT INFORMATION)

None.

The meeting ended at 1200 hours.