

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Friday 7th February 2020, Committee Rooms 3 & 4

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Carl Rice (Chair)

Councillors: Albert Bore, Debbie Clancy, Liz Clements, Roger Harmer, Ewan Mackey, Rob Pocock, Lou Robson and Kath Scott.

Also Present:

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader

Clive Heaphy, Interim Chief Executive

Ian Macleod, Interim Director of Inclusive Growth

James Hamilton, Project Director

Sajeela Naseer, Head of Licensing and Markets Service (inc. Street Trading)

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.

The Chair asked if any members wished to ask any questions on the exempt appendix; as none did, it was agreed that meeting could remain in public session.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Alden.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER

(See documents No 1 and No 2).

RESOLVED:

The action notes from the meeting held on 10th January 2020 were agreed and the action tracker was noted.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS: CWG ATHLETES VILLAGE (PLOT 7)

(See document No 3).

The Committee agreed to vary the agenda, and consider item 11, Other Urgent Business and the report on the Commonwealth Games Athlete's Village Plot 7.

Cllr Ian Ward introduced the report, primarily to update the members and public on where the council is on progress on the Athlete's village.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- The report is for Cabinet to note, and therefore cannot to be called in as it is not a decision. Members noted that some recent decisions had been exempt from call-in and that should be avoided in the future, to ensure full openness and transparency. The Leader stated that this report had been brought to both Scrutiny and Cabinet in the interests of openness and transparency, and that there had been no legal requirement to do that;
- The promised revised full business case has not materialised. The Leader confirmed that this would be brought to Cabinet in either March or April 2020;
- The report refers to "emerging cost pressures" and it was noted that 93% of the construction costs had been spent on 72% of the required beds. The impact of the proportion of affordable housing was also raised. The Leader reported that the final figures were subject to on-going negotiations;
- Concerns were raised about the contingency level of 8%, and whether this should be 30% to be compliant with Treasury Green Book requirements;
- In response to a question, Ian Macleod confirmed that the bus depot site (which had been the subject of an emergency decision in December) would be used as a logistics facility. The site was required to be in use from 1st January 2022, and a lot of work was needed to make that happen, including potentially six day working on two of the plots;
- The Chair noted that members had the opportunity to attend a presentation on the Commonwealth Games, that had addressed many of the issues under discussion;
- Concerns were raised about the transparency of decision making with regards to the Games. The original business case had been a Cabinet Member decision taken with the Chief Officer, and the procurement process was approved under officer delegations. Whilst the decisions set out in the report were understandable, there was a growing concern that transparency was not a key consideration;
- Timing was also raised as an issue, and it was asked why this issue had not been brought forward at an earlier date, given that the contract had to be signed by 17 February;
- The Leader noted that the City Council has not been good at communicating the financial benefits of the Games to the city, including the amount of money the city has received from both Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority as

well as catalysing other spend such as on transport infrastructure. The Games would leave a legacy of 1,400 new homes, at no additional cost to the City Council, and had brought additional benefits such as the University Station upgrade and more jobs to the region. The Chair stated that it was often the Leader that pushed this positive message and that other Cabinet Members should also speak about the benefits to their portfolios.

- The Leader also agreed that the Council should be able to trace the benefit to the Council in its budget.

During the discussion it was noted that the webcast was not being broadcast (following a similar issue with Full Council on Tuesday) and the Leader agreed that this was not acceptable.

6. LEADER'S UPDATE

The Committee agreed to defer the update to the April meeting.

5. STREET TRADING POLICY

(See document No 4).

Sajeela Naseer, introduced the report and asked Committee members for their views, to feed into the final version post-consultation.

Members made the following key points:

- The Council has declared a climate emergency and this should be recognised in the policy. It was noted that the policy states that units should be powered by electricity in the city centre; diesel can be used outside the city centre only when no other power source is available;
- Enforcement is key and members questioned whether the resources are in place to do that. Sajeela Naseer explained that she had recently recruited two officers and will be looking at integrating enforcement of the policy into other employees' work. The two new recruits have already started to identify potential issues. Enforcement only relates to consented traders; with regards to illegal street traders, the Council will need to take a view as there are no powers to move them on, only to collect evidence for prosecution;
- The design brief appears very restrictive – members were concerned that these would be difficult to enforce and may discourage potential street traders. If flexibility is permitted, the policy needs to be clear about when and in what circumstances. It should be about enablement as well as enforcement;
- This is a well drafted report, and the proposed policy brings Birmingham up to date;
- Some complaints relating to the street scene were about other issues, e.g. amplified music. Members were told that the wider street scene in the city centre is being looked at by regulatory services, including measures to address issues such as noise;
- There should not be an over reliance on the views of the BID managers as they may not be representative of the community, businesses and consumers;

- Consultation through Be Heard is good when it works, but not all people are equipped to access it. Not all members were aware of the consultation;
- The contact centre should have the necessary information to respond to calls on the policy.

Members agreed to consider a new piece of work on enforcement across all council services. A brief will be brought to the next meeting.

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 5)

It was agreed that the inquiry into customer services would go to June Council, as the Education & Children's Social Care O&S Committee was taking a report on Home to School Transport in April.

An informal meeting to discuss recommendations would be held after the meeting in March.

RESOLVED:

The work programme was noted.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be 6 March 2020. The May meeting will be cancelled as it now falls on a bank holiday.

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.

The meeting ended at 1155 hours.