

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

## CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 8 SEPTEMBER 2015

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM

#### PRESENT:-

Councillor Zaffar in the Chair;

Councillors Brew, Bridle, Chatfield, Gregson, Hunt, C Khan, Kooner, Lal, and Sambrook.

#### ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Sir Albert Bore - Leader of the City Council  
Ifor Jones – Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhood  
Jayne Power – Research and Policy Officer, Scrutiny  
Emma Williamson – Head of Scrutiny Services  
Errol Wilson – Committee Manager

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#### NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

- 13 The Chairman advised, and the Committee noted, that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.birminghamnewsroom.com](http://www.birminghamnewsroom.com)) and members of the press/public could record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

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#### APOLOGIES

- 14 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mosquito and Wood.

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#### MINUTES

- 15 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2015, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

With regard to the Member Development Survey, this was followed up with an email to the three Group Secretaries, but only 26 of the 120 Councillors had responded to the Member Development Survey. The Chairman proposed that a further email be sent to all Members concerning the issue.

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### **REPORT OF THE LEADER**

- 16 Councillor Sir Albert Bore, Leader of the City Council introduced the item and, in response to questions concerning the Leader's Policy Statements, the Boundary Commission work and the Combined Authority, the following were amongst the points made:-

(See documents Nos 1 and 2)

#### **The Leader's Policy Statement**

1. In terms of the prosperous City Agenda, there was growth in the economy with more people into work now than previous. There were a growing number of Social Enterprise, Women's Enterprise Hub in Ladypool Road and development around Birmingham Youth Promise across a number of portfolios.
2. The Birmingham Education Partnership was moving a pace with offices set up in Digbeth and taking on the roles and responsibilities for school.
3. The democratic City and Future Council would be addressed later on the agenda. In terms of Sutton Coldfield Town Centre referendum, progress was being made and this would be reported to Full City Council.
4. The City Council was not in a position to influence the Police budget, as they were in the same position faced by local authorities and were also facing further reduction in their budget, which would lead to further reduction in service. The Chief Constable Simms had made it clear that they would not be able to do service as in the past. The City Council was not in a position to influence this.
5. In terms of poverty, the changes seen in the Government's support would worsen the gap in terms of the better/worse off in society. Would not be ... if poverty gets worse and this would be a challenge for this and other cities as the Government turns the screw on benefits.
6. Getting people to work and the living wage was a way they could mitigate whatever else was happening with regards to poverty.
7. In terms of the cleanliness of areas, they were using the same methodology as was being used in previous years.
8. The aim was to make neighbourhoods clean and it was believed that this would be the outcome from the pilot in Brandwood and Harborne

Wards. There was a need to ensure where they could identify actions in terms of fly-tipping and take action.

9. There was a responsibility on the part of residents. A policy was being introduced with regards to the replacing of the black refuse sacks in helping to keep the City clean.
10. There had been no discussion relating to the issue of moving from a weekly collection to a fortnightly collection in the future. This was a policy that was being taken forward and the use of wheelie bins meant that they were collecting more in terms of materials.
11. It was noted that the Fleet and Waste Management crew was not getting through their rota as a result of the amount of waste being collected in Sutton Coldfield which had now resulted in a problem.
12. As they get further into the roll out of the wheelie bins, the problem would be corrected in the north of the City.
13. Concerns were being raised in relation to the attitude and action by some of the London Boroughs with regard to the rehousing of individuals. It was noted that an officer from one of the London Boroughs was located in Birmingham and that there had been no discussion concerning this issue and the number of homeless cases that were being referred to Birmingham.
14. As a consequence of the Government's measure, this had resulted in these London Boroughs taking this action. There was a need for these Boroughs to work close with Birmingham. Representation was made with these Boroughs but no action taken.
15. With regard to a *prosperous City*, there were initiatives outside of the City Centre which was a success. One such example was Longbridge Village which was successful. This ensures that the continued balance between retail and residential properties was maintained and further ensures that employment was one of those outputs and not builds from a retail and residential output. This was the public and private sector working together regarding regeneration.
16. The economic circumstances had changed and if there was a need to look again at the Longbridge Plan, they would do so. The Planning office had looked at the planning retail balance etc. The site on Bristol Road which had not yet started was being held for employment purposes. The Planning office had tried to maintain the balance and was successful in doing so. Employers could not be forced to base themselves in Longbridge. Marks and Spencer's had now joined Sainsbury's in Longbridge.
17. There was a need to speak with Cabinet Members concerning particular issues. A number of emails were received from residents from across the City and the Council was gradually improving on the

hiccups concerning the latest roll out of the wheelie bins. The policy was the right policy.

18. For a number of years they were trying to develop job opportunities by putting in place skills programme for the unskilled to get jobs coming on stream, example, Grand Central and John Lewis store which could be realised by residents across the City. It was not possible to guaranteed jobs for residents from a particular area of the City. The latest of the initiatives was to ensure the worst unemployment figure was in the east of the City.
19. One initiative was to try and extend the Tram to Birmingham International Airport via the communities of East Birmingham so that the residents could access jobs in the City Centre and Birmingham International Airport. This was to try and benefit the residents where there were high levels of unemployment.
20. In terms of a mapping exercise, there was no data concerning the issue. The Leader undertook to investigate this issue.
21. There had been a number of events over the last 6 months where the partners got together to address some of the questions in Sir Bob Kerslake's report. He had attend a number of these events which led to a smaller group of partners who would try to put together how the partnership arrangement in the City would work and bring them to working with the City Council.
22. The City Council had been accused of forcing partnerships on partners in the past as per Sir Bob Kerslake's report. They were required to demonstrate that the changes were taking place and the criticisms from Sir Bob Kerslake were being addressed.
23. The first event was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Birmingham. The Commissioning Group had attended the second event. As with all these arrangements, not everyone attended on each occasion.
24. The way in which the Erdington District had addressed the issue was separate and other Districts could follow suit. It was hoped that the Members across the 10 Districts sees this as an important part and what they had responsibilities for, for the future. The policies and expectations were being set out, but it was for the leadership of the Districts to put the plan into place.
25. Training was being developed for the Chairs of the District Committees to give leadership to the Districts and to take the initiatives forward. It was hoped that they would see the advantage in the Erdington District model and take this forward.
26. There had been some successful thematic partnerships in the City, but they were not given proper recognition over the years such as the

MASH which was very successful in terms of the number of children coming through which was exemplary.

27. In terms of Sir Bob Kerslake, he was looking at a higher level of partnership that was not being driven from the City Council. As they move through the next 2 to 3 years, they would need to turn to other partners for providing some services.
28. The East Birmingham Corridor prospectus which identified employment development sites in order to understand what the opportunities might be. There were discussions with potential investors such as LDV etc., at Washwood Heath, but they were caught up in the HS2 issues.
29. There were discussions with Network Rail on how the site was used and how to upskill young people.
30. The Erdington District had set up a number of thematic groups and employment groups chaired by individuals who were not City Council officers, who were engaged in providing a number of skilled opportunities to people in the area.
31. They introduced a number of upskilling opportunities to young people and provided job opportunities in that area. Erdington District had used their knowledge to purchase job opportunities for the area, which was a good example of where they could drive this initiative locally. The other Districts were being encouraged to look at this model.
32. In relation to Sutton Coldfield Community Governance Group, they had dealt with the setting up of Sutton Town Council body by March 2016. The first election would be held next year for the Parish Council which would be alongside the Local Elections.
33. A new remit for the Political Governance Review Group was being drawn up to learn the lessons from what happened at Sutton Coldfield and to ascertain whether there was demand for a similar arrangement elsewhere in the City. One example that was being looked at was Wyre Forrest. What was being negotiated was the transfer of functions beyond those legislated from a Borough Council to a Town Council – devolution of power from the City Council to Sutton Coldfield Town Council – the Parish Council could be in place by March 2016.
34. In terms of the Community Governance Review Group, there was cross-party arrangement and the interim Parish Council would consist of a number of Members from each of the 4 Wards. There would be a sharing out of responsibilities in the Wards where there was other party other than the Conservatives.
35. With regard to Standing Up for Birmingham, Selly Oak District had been the leader in terms of engagement with the local community. There was a need for learning from best practice from Districts and to learn from best practice other than their own areas.

36. There was a need to get a briefing note on activities around issues as there was a lot of work being undertaken. A motion was taken to City Council in July 2015 with an all-Party agreement. Reference was made to the Motion that was submitted in Councillor Sharon Thompson's and the Leader of the City Council, Sir Albert Bore's names, which sought to take forward the issues of UK Citizens in March 2016.
37. A discussion needed to be had with the Conservatives and the Liberal Democratic regarding the Motion concerning the refugee crisis and how Birmingham could best support the refugees caught up in the crisis.
38. Every aspect as it relates to Sir Bob Kerslake's report had been cross-party led i.e. changes in Sutton Coldfield and on a consensus basis and approach.
39. In terms of governance arrangement as it relates to Sir Bob Kerslake's report, this had been followed through recently. The City Council expressed Fairer Funding Cross-Party Working Group had agreed an approach to fairer funding to local government which had resulted in a letter that was signed off by the 3 Party Leaders. They were now looking at how they would take forward the Future Council 2020. There were discussions with the Leaders on how they take this programme forward.
40. The approach was different to what had been tried before. It was recognised that there was a political and operational view. The Executive Management Team had met this morning to look at the Future Council having a better engagement. An engagement chart was set out to see what the Future Council was going to be by March/April 2016.
41. In 2020 the City Council would not be operating the way it was now. It would be a different Council that they move toward and a lot of this was governed by the £250m which would be taken out of the revenue budget. They could not continue to *Salami slicing* in the same way in which they did over the last few years.
42. The Future Council programme was looking at where the demand was coming from and the measures to be taken to prevent the demand programme, example the Care Budget and how this was spent.
43. The approach to understanding what 2020 was about would be taken forward by Deloitte and not by Members of the City Council. All workshops would be conducted with staff and Deloitte would not involve Members of the City Council.
44. In terms of the timeline on the engagement chart, there was a point where they had to engage cross-party in terms of what that change might be to be set in place for 2020. This was the equivalent of the

Green Paper on the Budget last year. There would be engagement with the public before the Executive then determines what the proposal would be for 2016/17. The engagement process would be different to what had taken place so far.

45. Reference was made to the Independent Group and the interpretation of Sir Bob Kerslake's words. This was what was referred to as a *culture change*. The engagement chart needed to be looked at concerning the issue.
46. The process where the Chief Executive had tried to engage with the Members did not work. There was an attempt to change this agency to try and engage Members in the Future Council 2020.
47. It would be a mistake to think that partnership working was all about budgets. There was a need to change with the times. What the City Council would be responsible for by 2020 would not be what it was responsible for in the past.
48. The Review Group was set up to look at the work the governance might take on. This suggestion was made to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Secretary of State, but they were not interested as this came through Sir Bob Kerslake's report.
49. The question was whether they could now take forward a devolution agenda that builds upon what would happen in Sutton Coldfield. The Council Business Management Committee would agree a new set of Terms of Reference.
50. Demand could be picked up by not doing something right the first time. There was a need to be delivering what was asked for and requested by people and getting this right the first time. Unless the way of delivery was changed, the demand of an individual would not be example, service of the City Council.
51. Demands could be adjusted downwards and they were looking for ways this could be achieved without an adverse or negative impact.

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#### The Boundary Commission Work

- The first submission was made to the Boundary Commission which was done through Cross-Party Working Group. They sought to argue that if Councillor Ratio was looked at, then the evidence from other Councils was that Birmingham need to reduce the number of Councillors to the elector ratio.
- The submission on an all-party basis gave another scenario. It was noted that the Boundary Commission had dismissed this argument. The Boundary Commission was only concerned with the number of Councillors that was needed to ensure governance of the City Council.

The Commission looked at a number of issues in relation to the carrying out of the governance role.

- The Boundary Commission's intention was the delivery and membership size for Birmingham and their view was 100 Councillors. They rejected the first submission by Birmingham City Council and advised that the number needed was no more than 100.
- They had set out to get an all-party agreement to set out a number of scenarios, but they could not come to a cross-party view on the issue. There were two submissions – one from Councillor Sir Albert Bore and the other from the Conservative Group.
- The Executive had no role in the writing of the final submission and had only seen a draft of this.

#### The Combined Authority

- I. They were working to a timetable set by the DCLG and would require Parliamentary process to be in place by April 2016. They were on a timeline for this timetable and a scheme needed to be submitted in October 2015 setting out the construct of the Combined Authority.
- II. Each Council had to agree through their Council the nature of the Combined Authority as per the information set out in the document. The requirement of that legislation was on which the economics would be dealt with as a strategic authority.
- III. The 7 Metropolitan Borough Councils (MBC) were recognised as strategic authorities. The Leaders tried to take forward strategic economic planning and looked at areas as to what was the maximum. They were looking at a percentage of people living within and working in that area i.e.70%. 90% of all people living in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area.
- IV. They were looking at employment sectors – advanced manufacturing. Putting together a lot of argument, try and take this forward where they could get wider Government benefit. Any of these Districts that wanted to be part of the Combined Authority could do so by a date in October 2015. If they did not agree, they would become non-constituent authorities. Under legislation, only people that could vote
- V. Move out of place and set up shadows boards and have Solihull as Leader and Sandwell as Shadow Chair.
- VI. Parallel to this was the Devolution Deal which was separate to the Combined Authority. They had to run with these parallel to taking the agenda through. The Government required a proposal by the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015 regarding the Devolution Deal.
- VII. They need to take account of any Devolution Deal in setting the budget. The City Council's Devolution Deal needed to give the economic



advantage to the 3 wider LEP areas. Discussions were underway concerning this.

- VIII. A Non-Unitary Authority could not participate; it had to be a Unitary Authority. Legislations also allows for local authorities to participate. The 7 MBCs made up the constituent authorities to encourage them in the delivery of the economic agenda.
- IX. Comprehensive set of argument for working together for economic gains. The constituent authorities cannot be out voted by the non-constituent authorities. The 7 MBCs have to have a majority.
- X. Warwickshire County Council had decided not to participate as a member of the Combined Authority. There had been a number of non-unitary authorities that wanted to be a part of the Combined Authority.
- XI. The Combined Authority was focussing on economics and transport matters; jobs and housing. If there was a Devolution Deal, the Leaders of the 7 MBCs views were not to deal like Manchester did regarding health.
- XII. In terms of policing across the 3 LEPS, there were 4 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC). The Devolution Deal in Manchester only dealt with one. The final proposition deal may not be the end. Policing was not part of the Combined Authority arrangement.
- XIII. With regard to skills and employment issues the aim was to get greater economic benefits.
- XIV. There was some discussion with regard to the Metro Mayor – responsible for economic and transport ability i.e. the Government arrangement for Birmingham was two different things.
- XV. If the best deal was not negotiated for the West Midlands, the West midlands would lose out to the other regions of England.

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## **FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

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The savings for the 2015/16 budget was savings ... They did not have a problem with Service Birmingham delivering on what was agreed. The arrangement with Birmingham City Council and Service Birmingham gave Capita a huge advantage. They had to be positive that the working relationship was healthier than previously. Different between publishing contracts ...

No, but they needed to explain that they were setting out a 2020 vision which was the context in which the City Council would move over the next 4-5 years. Any change in administration would reverse the right to set out a policy statement. What was needed was a vision for 2020.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Sir Albert Bore for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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**TRACKING: ARE WARD COMMITTEES FIT FOR PURPOSE**

18 The following report of the Leader of the City Council was submitted:-

(See document No 3)

Ifor Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhood, introduced the item and took Members through the report.

**Recommendation RO1**

Mr Jones advised that training sessions were being held with the Ward Chairs and that there was a need to advice of the importance. The District Committees were to set out the governance statements. Structurally, this specific recommendation would be covered by guidance. It was important for all Members to attend the training. It was noted that the Committees had no opportunity to adopt the Citizen Entitlements.

The recommendation was therefore not agreed.

**Recommendation RO2**

No comment was made concerning this recommendation.

**Recommendation RO3**

Action for resident – they lost the ability to tailor this to the residents needs. All of this went back to the Centre. They would not be able to tweak the service delivery. The Neighbourhood Challenge was something that they needed to take up. The Ward action tracker would allow Councillors to hold partners to account. The lack of support for Ward Committees was of concern. The Neighbourhood Plan was an alternative route for the communities to take control.

Mr Jones advised that they were in transition at present and that two Community Governance Managers were in place.

This recommendation could not be signed off as it was in progress.

**Recommendation RO4**

It was not possible to bring in the same officers for every meeting, but there was a need to get people to officer support for Members. The Ward and District Committee champions would be reviewed and revamped. This issue was to be discussed with the Chief Executive, Mark Rogers. It was noted that there were proposals to also utilise the Place Managers.

Further evidence of support was needed for this recommendation.

**Recommendation RO5**

There had been significant cuts this year and they were faced with further cuts. A detailed modelling of what this might meant was being done. Mr Jones advised that they had agreed to look at a niche piece of work. He undertook to write to the Committee with an alternative approach.

This recommendation was given an assessment of 4.

At this juncture, the Chairman advised that he had to leave the meeting due to a prior engagement. He invited Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner, Deputy Chairperson to Chair the remainder of the meeting.

(Councillor Kooner in the Chair)

**Recommendation RO6**

No comment was made concerning this recommendation.

**TRACKING: DEVOLUTION – MAKING IT REAL**

19 The following report of the Leader of the City Council was submitted:-

(See document No 4)

Ifor Jones, Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhood, introduced the item and took Members through the report.

**Recommendation RO4**

This was a new model which did not sit in with the recommendation. It should be strike out or treated as achieved late.

This recommendation was given an assessment of concluded.

**Recommendation RO9**

The Community Planner will be circulated around the District Teams in a peripatetic role.

This recommendation was given an assessment of concluded.

**Recommendation R10**

Councillor Brew commented that it was disappointing that there were not more lay members. He stated that he would like to see them working in parallel together in the future.

This recommendation was given an assessment of concluded.

**Recommendations R12, R14 and R15**

These recommendations were given an assessment of concluded.

The Deputy Chairperson thanked Ifor Jones for attending the meeting and presenting the information.

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**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16**

The following work programme was submitted:-

(See document No 5)

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services presented the item and drew the Committee's attention to the information in the Work Programme. She advised that it was proposed to swap the sessions for the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

20 **RESOLVED:-**

That the work programme be noted.

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

21 The Chairperson advised that there had been no requests for call in/councillor call for action/petitions received.

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**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

22 No other urgent business was raised.

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**AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

23 **RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 1745 hours.

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CHAIRMAN