

# BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

<b>CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19 JANUARY 2016</b>
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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2016 AT  
1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor Zaffar in the Chair;

Councillors Brew, Bridle, Chatfield, Finnegan, Hunt, Kooner, Lal, Mosquito, Sambrook and Wood.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Councillor J Clancy – Leader of the Council  
Councillor I Ward – Deputy Leader of the Council

Ms K James – Head of Investment Property Management  
Mr P Jones – Director of Property Services  
Mr B Seward – Assistant Head of Services (MASH) and Citywide Services  
Ms J Power – Scrutiny Officer  
Mr J Warlow – Strategic Director, Finance and Legal  
Miss V Williams – Committee Manager  
Miss E Williamson – Head of Scrutiny Services

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**NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

- 49      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**

- 50      Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor C Khan.
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**MINUTES**

The Chairman suggested and the following amendments were agreed:-

Page 33, section 41: 'Councillor Mick Gregson' should read 'Councillor Matthew Gregson'.

Page 35, numbered paragraph 3: 'Marketing Birmingham' should read 'the marketing department'.

Page 37, numbered paragraph 18: the first paragraph should read 'The Birmingham Promise and KPIs should be aligned'.

Ms E Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services, advised that information, including figures relating to the BME engagement and data regarding the Active People Survey, was outstanding (Minute No 43 refers).

The Committee was advised that in response to a question by Councillor Wood at a meeting of the City Council, it had been agreed that Councillors Hunt, Wood and Zaffar should carry out a mini inquiry into the procurement process relating to fleet and waste vehicles, which would include meeting with and speaking to relevant officers. It was hoped that the findings of the inquiry would be reported to the meeting scheduled to take place on 8 March 2016.

- 51 Subject to the aforementioned amendments, the Minutes of the last meeting, having been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed.

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**LEADER'S UPDATE – KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2016**

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

(See document No 1)

Councillor J Clancy, Leader of the Council, highlighted the key priorities and visions as more particularly referred to in the report now submitted. In response to questions, the following were amongst the points made:-

1. It was important to work with people across the city to set a shared vision. He stressed the importance of working together and in partnership with other organisations.
2. There was a need to ensure that the Council identified with as wide a range of partners as possible. In order to find answers, the Council needed to go out and listen to people.
3. With regard to the proposed boundary changes, there needed to be a rethink on the impact they might have on some areas of the city, particularly with regard to the new names for some communities.

However, there was no need to start completely again as some people in some areas were satisfied with the boundary proposals.

4. There was a need to re-establish the role of the councillor as a 'community leader'. It was important to reflect the needs of the ward community and that where boundaries fell there would be coherence and a robust process.
5. He was aware that some areas of the city were wholly reliant on buses to get around with no other means of public transport in place and had raised the matter with the appropriate government officials.
6. He hoped that, with regard to trying to provide free school meals, there was cross party consensus. However, such provision would need to be an incremental process, would be very involved and would cost a considerable amount of money.

It was not something that could be implemented with the present budget but the possibility of setting up a trust was being investigated and it was hoped to have something in place within the next financial year.

7. The Council needed to look at spending and bringing capital into the city rather than just spending revenue.
8. With regard to the possibility of introducing parishes, the Chairman advised that the Committee was due to carry out a review of district and ward arrangements in February 2016. Councillor Clancy welcomed the review.
9. Councillor Clancy considered that the way councillors and residents worked together was most important and, in his view, District Committees did not work.

He considered that there needed to be an 'evolution of devolution' and recognised that areas of the city would approach the matter in different ways. He proposed to appoint four assistant leaders to guide the evolution of devolution in the city.

10. Parliamentary boundaries should not be the basis on which to deliver work. Local devolution should be at neighbourhood and ward level which would require a change to the way in which the Council worked.
11. He referred to the current contracts that were in place to deliver services throughout the city and suggested that the Council needed to look at how they may be taken forward in the future. It was important to get the best deal possible with contractors for the delivery of services and he considered that, in the future, contractors would need to be more flexible and adaptive to survive.

It was important to be open and, in the future, he expected the details of contracts to be published in full.

12. Negotiations were currently taking place regarding the future Service Birmingham contract.
13. The Council had reduced in size and there were still a substantial number of job losses proposed. Services would need to be delivered differently in the future including via third sector partnerships.
14. He welcomed the suggestion that, if possible, all parties could work together on a non-political basis to agree one budget.
15. Housing should be seen as an asset in the city rather than as a problem. There was a need to invest in existing properties. It was important to work with the private sector and he considered that the Council could learn from practices adopted by other local authorities.

He recognised that, if there was a change to directorates, there should be a clear place for housing.

There were insufficient brownfield sites in the city to develop for housing.

16. With regard to culture change, it was important to put out the right message.
17. A large amount of the current Council budget was allocated to 'caring'. However, there were a lot of people in the community who were prepared to assist in caring for neighbours etc. The Council needed to help people and enable them to care better.
18. Councillor Clancy confirmed that, subject to the agreement of the Council Business Management Committee, he would be happy for the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee to carry out a review into the future arrangements for City Council meetings.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Clancy for attending the meeting.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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The Chairman agreed to vary the agenda order and consider the following item at this point.

**DEPUTY LEADER – PERFORMANCE OF PROPERTY PORTFOLIO –  
BIRMINGHAM PROPERTY SERVICES OPERATING MODEL**

The following report of the Director of Property Services was submitted:-

(See document No 2)

Councillor Mosquito wished to thank officers in the Birmingham Property Services Team for assisting a local charity regarding a property matter.

Mr P Jones, Director of Property Services, and Ms K James, Head of Investment Property Management, introduced the report explaining the operating model of the service and, in response to questions, the following were amongst the points made:-

1. It was better to carry out preventative rather than backlog maintenance to properties.
2. Birmingham Property Services (BPS) had been looking at patterns regarding the cost of maintaining buildings. A database helped to identify buildings that were expensive to maintain.
3. It was necessary to identify buildings that were considered surplus to requirements.
4. There were many properties that were owned and maintained by the Council and the information would be too much to fit into an e-mail. However, Mr Jones invited Members to visit the office to have a look at the live database system and undertook to try to identify a suitable way forward for sharing information.
5. Councillor I Ward, Deputy Leader, explained that there was a procedure that needed to be followed regarding the transferring of land to a new owner. The process had to be fair and transparent. The Council had to act in a responsible manner and, therefore, land and property could not just be given freely to another organisation. There would also be a loss of income to the City Council if a community asset transfer occurred.
6. 90% of disposals of properties were done on a competitive basis and most properties were auctioned.
7. There were a reasonable number of competitive sales of development sites.
8. The commercial portfolio had been fairly static and BPS had been trying to identify ways of taking this forward in the future.

9. Some properties sold very well at auction. However, others needed to be handled differently and were unsuitable for auction.

At this point the Chairman invited a member of the public, who represented the Friends of Pype Hayes Park to address the meeting.

A member of the public expressed concern that the lodge located on the Chester Road at the entrance to Pype Hayes Park had not been included in the proposed redevelopment of the hall. Instead, the lodge was due to be auctioned separately in February 2016. She considered that all the buildings should have been kept together under one owner.

Councillor I Ward, Deputy Leader, explained that there had been no 'marriage value' to include the lodge in the auction of the hall. However, the current owner of the hall would not be precluded from bidding at the auction for the lodge.

Mr Jones was pleased that Pype Hayes Hall would finally be brought back into use as a hotel.

He explained that the lodge was distinct from the hall and that, once it had been sold, the gates to the park would be moved back so that access to the lodge would no longer be from Park Road.

Mr Jones advised that there had been a lot of interest in the lodge and pointed out that, as a condition of the sale, the new owner would be required to bring the building back into use as a residential property within 12 months of purchase.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jones and Ms James for attending the meeting.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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The Committee returned to the original agenda order.

**DEPUTY LEADER – CORPORATE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING  
2015/16 MONTHS 7 AND 8 (UP TO 30 NOVEMBER 2015)**

The following report of the Chief Executive, Director of Economy and the Strategic Director, Finance and Legal, was submitted:-

(See document No 3)

Councillor I Ward, Deputy Leader, and Mr J Warlow, Strategic Director, Finance and Legal, introduced the report and, in response to questions, the following were amongst the points made:-

1. Mr Warlow explained the base budget pressure regarding Highbury Hall as more particularly referred to in section 2, paragraph 2.3 of the report.
2. This was the appropriate Committee for scrutinising the corporate revenue budget monitoring report. Audit Committee was a regulatory committee and, as such, performed a very different role.
3. The purchase of new refuse collection vehicles had resulted in a reduction of £1.600m being achieved as more particularly referred to in section 2, paragraph 2.2 of the report.

The Chairman thanked Mr Warlow for attending the meeting.

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**RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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**DEPUTY LEADER – NO RECOURSE TO PUBLIC FUNDING (NRPF)**

The following report of the Assistant Head of Services (MASH) and Citywide Services was submitted:-

(See document No 4)

Councillor I Ward, Deputy Leader, and Mr B Seward, Assistant Head of Services (MASH) and Citywide Services, introduced the report and, in response to questions, the following were amongst the points made:-

1. The NRPF Team dealt with cases relating to children and families.
2. All cases not involving children, such as vulnerable women, were handled by Adult Services. Issues regarding vulnerable adults were dealt with in a different manner.
3. The Council had a responsibility and statutory duty to protect and provide a social work service to all children in need.
4. All action plans had been completed.
5. A new immigration bill was currently progressing through parliament.
6. Mr Seward explained the referral procedure and how cases were brought to the attention of the NRPF Team.

The Chairman thanked Councillor I Ward and Mr Seward for attending the meeting.

55 **RESOLVED:-**

That the report be noted.

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

The following work programme was submitted:-

(See document No 5)

56 **RESOLVED:-**

That the work programme be noted.

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

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

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**OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

58 No other urgent business was raised.

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**AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

59 **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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**DEPUTY LEADER – PERFORMANCE OF PROPERTY PORTFOLIO –  
BIRMINGHAM PROPERTY SERVICES OPERATING MODEL (PRIVATE  
REPORT)**

60 The Chairman advised that, in view of the length of time taken to consider other items on the agenda, he had withdrawn the private report regarding the Performance of Property Portfolio – Birmingham Property Services Operating Model.

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The meeting ended at 1650 hours.

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CHAIRMAN