

**CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 OCTOBER
2016**

**PRIORITY REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPARENCY, OPENNESS &
EQUALITY**

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR WASEEM ZAFFAR

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report sets out my portfolio priorities for 2016/17.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

I have accountability for:

Smart City	Provide strategic leadership and advising all Cabinet Members of initiatives that need to be taken in relation to the development of world class technological capability and connectivity in Birmingham. In particular extending use of intelligent transport systems and digital technologies for “open access” to support “green and smart” actions.
The services provided to the citizens of Birmingham as the customer	To take a strategic lead in the provision of customer focused City services.
To take a lead on information law and data protection matters	Overall organisation for the Council including Corporate governance arrangements.
To challenge any lack of transparency in all work carried out by the Council	To ensure transparency in all areas of the Council’s work.
Tackling Inequality	Strategic approaches to reduce inequalities including around health, education and employment outcomes; ‘access to services’; and participation in civic life. Neighbourhood advice and information services. Holding to account other relevant Cabinet Members and officers for the delivery of those functions that impact on inequalities and inclusion.
Third Sector Partnership and Engagement	Working with and co-ordination of third sector and partner agencies around equalities, cohesion and inclusivity.

3. PRIORITIES

The Executive remains committed to working together towards the vision of a fair, prosperous and democratic city.

The challenge is to ensure that every Birmingham citizen has access to opportunity across the social and economic life of the city, within a safe city – including in education, employment, housing, health and social care, civil society and political participation – whether these are delivered by the city council itself, partner agencies, or by private or third sector organisations.

My portfolio priorities for this year are to:

Priority	Progress to date
Work with partners, officers and cross party members to take forward the recommendations of the Child Poverty Commission	<p>A cross-party Birmingham Child Poverty Forum is being established to continue the city-wide dialogue and debate, building on the evidence and recommendations of the Child Poverty Commission. The first meeting is planned for October.</p> <p>Considerable work has taken place throughout the summer to draft an implementation plan that will take forward the Commission's recommendations. Positive progress has been made on some of the recommendations including the exemption of care leavers from Council Tax up to the age of 25 which was announced at the City Council meeting in July. It is intended that this will be implemented as part of the Council's 2017/18 budget and will be effective from 1 April 2017.</p>
Work with private and third sector data analysts to look at how we engage with the public through transparency and openness and sharing of data.	<p>The first Open Data Roundtable took place in August with partners to look at the opportunities presented by an open data approach to improve public services, develop more effective policy and give communities a greater say over issues that matter to them. We are seeking advice from national and local experts in this field and about the work already taking place in this city so that future Council activity is focussed on local priorities and complements the existing efforts of partners.</p> <p>The Council responded to the Government consultation on planned changes to the Transparency Code in July and we await the response. We will continue to meet the requirements of the existing transparency code as well as our obligations in respect of information rights legislation. However, in Birmingham we have an ambition to go beyond the current requirements so that the citizens of Birmingham have access to as much data as possible.</p>
Ensure the Council reduces use of private reports and streams all	Most committee meetings are being streamed and we are looking at options to make ward meetings/forums more accessible using available technology. There are some

public meetings	<p>positive examples where this is already being tried, such as Billesley ward meetings.</p> <p>A new process has been put in place for me to provide appropriate challenge for all proposed private reports to Cabinet, to ensure that as much information is available for the public.</p>
Champion paperless meetings	<p>We are embarking on a paperless journey which will help the City Council in reducing paper and printing costs hopefully for all Committee meetings in due course. It will also increase transparency for Members and public to access agenda papers and reports electronically.</p> <p>Details of paperless meetings, as well as approximate savings achieved to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet paperless system started in May 2015, with approximate savings of £56,000 to date. • Planning Committee paperless system started in May 2014, with approximate savings of £57,000 to date. • Audit Committee paperless system started in May 2013, with approximate savings of £19,000 to date. <p>From 1 November the Council Chamber will have improved Wi-Fi with 120 councillors being able to view Council papers electronically.</p>
Develop better interactive data on Council website	<p>Birmingham's Data Factory (data.birmingham.gov.uk) was established over a year ago and currently provides access to 42 datasets. These cover a wide range of areas such as mandatory datasets relating to financial expenditure, datasets requested by city activists, such as housing and cycling data as well as data that the public is interested in such as planning and street cleansing.</p> <p>There are a number of projects currently in delivery that will continue to add further datasets. There is an ambitious target to provide up to 300 datasets by the end of financial year. However, this is very much dependant on the availability of additional resources, both within the Council and partner organisations such as Transport for West Midlands.</p> <p>We are also publishing Council data through data visualisation such as Tableau public (as used by corporate communications to present the 2016 local election results online in an easy to understand way through a colour-coded ward map of the city)</p>
Develop an ICT &	A draft combined ICT and Digital Strategy (2016 – 2021) will

Digital Strategy	<p>be presented to Cabinet on the 18 October. The public consultation on the strategy closed on 16 September.</p> <p>In seeking to define how best to develop a new approach to ICT and Digital, it has been identified that the focus should not just be on technology, but on citizens, communities, partners and business.</p> <p>To facilitate successful delivery of the ICT&D Strategy, a new Council wide 'Strategic Framework' is being introduced; this will ensure alignment of the Business Plan and the ICT and Digital and associated Council strategies.</p>
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4. OTHER KEY PROGRAMMES

In addition to the priorities outlined above, there are a number of other key programmes that will be progressed during 2016/17 which cover a number of cross portfolio activities and support the development of innovative and smart city approaches that are aligned to the ICT and Digital Strategy around the digital facilitation, Insights and Innovation themes.

The following are a few examples of these types of activities:

Digital facilitation

City4Age: aims to capture open and personal data using wearables from elderly people with frailty and use it to support them to remain active and mobile. It also aims to test when data can provide insights about when to intervene earlier to prevent health and care needs arising.

Insights

Project DISC (Data-driven interactive smart city decision support toolkit): aims to create a data-driven, interactive, smart city decision toolkit. This will serve as a platform on which developers will be able to create and test new products and services.

Innovation

Opticities: aims to use data collected by sensors to understand how movement and weather conditions impact on traffic movement, and how traffic lighting flow can be changed to reduce congestion in response.

Birmingham is also a case study city for a Horizon 2020 project 'SETA' led by Sheffield University that is using big data from traffic sensors, passive sensors can see a step change in understanding mobility specifically considering non-motorised movement or active travel.

There are a number of other projects and programmes currently being developed that provides the City with an excellent springboard for delivering its smart city outcomes and support service transformation.

5. KEY BUDGET ISSUES

NAIS/Legal Entitlement

I am responsible as the Cabinet Member, for a net revenue budget of £1.6m in 2016/17 to deliver my services (this represents gross expenditure of £3.2m and is offset by income of £1.6m). These resources are utilised to deliver the Neighbourhood Advice Service and the externally commissioned Legal Advice Services primarily through the Citizens Advice Bureau.

A new partnership approach for delivering integrated advice and information service to citizens is now in place. The plans were drawn up by a group of providers known as Gateway to Birmingham Advice Services (GBAS) – a partnership of 15 organisations providing advice services in the city (including the likes of the CAB, Freshwinds, Birmingham Settlement, Shelter, Age UK etc).

The council played its part in the process but was not the lead agency. The new strategy focusses around the following key areas:

- Integration of advice provision
- Shifting from crisis to prevention advice
- Moving from high cost interventions (face-to-face) to lower cost interventions (phone/webchat)

By taking this partnership approach and maximising the use of all access channels (an increased number of locations) and focussing face to face advice for the more complex cases it has been possible to deliver the required levels of savings.

These services have provided a major contribution to the delivery of the overall Savings Programme of the Council in order to meet the medium term financial challenge that is facing the Council. The savings for these services totalled £0.2m in 2016/17 and at this stage there are no planned further step up savings for future years to 2019/20.

It is possible that there will be a modest overspend for these services in 2016/17 – estimated at £0.3m (this has been effectively managed to this level given the complex restructuring and consultation that was necessary on the future operating model for the Neighbourhood Advice Service and recently reported to Cabinet in March 2016).

Councillor Waseem Zaffar

Cabinet Member for Openness, Transparency and Equality