

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Friday 18th September 2020, On-line meeting

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Carl Rice (Chair)

Councillors: Deidre Alden, Albert Bore, Debbie Clancy, Liz Clements, Roger Harmer, Penny Holbrook, Ewan Mackey, Rob Pocock and Kath Scott.

Also Present:

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 Cllr Lou Robson.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See document No 1).

RESOLVED:

The action notes from the meeting held on 24th July 2020 were agreed.

5. SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK, REMITS AND CALL-IN

(See documents No 2).

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services, introduced the report. Members then made a series of points as set out below:

- The Chair made it clear that he wants consensus on the way forward for Scrutiny, and the conversations that are had to be more in tune with residents.
- Views on the best approach to examining committee remits was mixed: one view was that the Executive should decide how many Scrutiny Committees there should be and what their remits are, as it relates to resources. Another view was that scrutiny should lead on this and put their views to the Executive.
- There was clear agreement that how Scrutiny works, and how call in operates, is a matter for Scrutiny.
- The framework should make reference to the role of officers, and the fact that officers work for the council, including scrutiny, not just the Executive. It is alluded to in some parts of the report but should be stated more openly.
- Communication between the Executive and Scrutiny is key, but it is important that Scrutiny is independent and that there is mutual respect.
- The input of the Executive and officers into the Framework is needed to ensure a full view from different parts of the council.
- There needs to be a clear statement at the start of the framework that this is about strengthening Scrutiny
- The outcomes of the Home to School Transport inquiry, and the lessons learned, should be picked up as part of the Framework.
- The appendix setting out the links between Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet portfolios and directorates was useful but did not give a full picture, as it did not give the right impression of the number of topics covered (e.g. with regards to Sustainability and Transport), so more work is needed on this.
- It would be helpful to have more of a match between Committees and Cabinet portfolios – and that the names are similar so people can see and understand what is covered in which portfolio and by what committee.
- More thought needs to be given to cross-cutting issues – one of the challenges this Summer has been around waste disposal which spans different committees.
- Past examples of task and finish committees have worked well.
- With regards to call in, there was support for having additional information on the form as to why the call-in is being requested, as it would assist all, including committee members, in hearing the request. There should also be an amendment to one of the criteria to include failures of governance.
- If Scrutiny were at the forefront when making decisions, some call-ins' would not have arisen. The box ticked is less important than flagging when something has gone wrong and needs to go back to Cabinet.
- There were different perceptions of call-ins' based on experience. Although all agreed it is a really important democratic mechanism, to challenge on policy issues. However, there have been examples of members who were not satisfied with a decision made previously using call in to challenge that through another decision. Call in should work efficiently so members can challenge on issues that really matter.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the proposed way forward as set out in the report is agreed;

- b. That a working group of Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Members and senior officers to lead on this work, reporting back to this Committee will be set up (nominations will be sought outside the meeting);
- c. That a survey will be sent to members ensuring that as many as possible have the opportunity to contribute;
- d. Indicate key areas for the framework to focus on and for further discussion at the workshop on 24 September 2020.
- e. That a cross-party group of scrutiny members with a representative from Cabinet will be set up to put forward proposals for scrutiny committee structures.

6. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair proposed that the committee undertake some work on exempt accommodation, following the completion of the customer services inquiry. Members agreed to take this forward at a future meeting.

It was also proposed to bring performance monitoring back to committee following the informal meeting next week and members will put forward proposals for the Leader to address when he attends the committee in October.

7. DATES FOR 2020/21

To note that the Co-ordinating and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates for 2020/2021 are as follows:

2020	2021
9 October	8 January
13 November	5 February
11 December	12 March
	16 April

All meetings will be held at 1000 hours.

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

None.

9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

10. 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 1110 hours.