

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **CO-ORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – INFORMAL MEETING**

**1000 hours on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021, On-line meeting**

### **Action Notes**

#### **Present:**

Councillor Carl Rice (Chair)

Councillors: Mohammed Aikhlq, Deirdre Alden, Debbie Clancy, Liz Clements, Roger Harmer, Shabrana Hussain, Mariam Khan, Narinder Kaur Kooner, Ewan Mackey and Rob Pocock.

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader

Graeme Betts, Director, Adult Social Care

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

#### **1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised that this although this meeting is informal, it will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site ([www.civico.net/birmingham](http://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**

None received.

#### **3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None declared.

#### **4. LEADER'S UPDATE**

(See document No 1)

The Leader started with an outline of the new structure, the position with regard to recruiting to new posts and vacant posts, in reference to the previously circulated the current position with Director and Assistant Director posts.

He confirmed that the Council is still working to the document Investing in our future agreed by Cabinet, to ensure council fit for purpose; to shift the focus from crisis to prevention; and finally, to increase pace and scale of growth across the city.

The posts in the structure chart that were in that report are being recruited to and he gave an update on some of the posts, some of which are awaiting enhanced business cases.

There was also a report to Cabinet about equalities in the city, where Cabinet agreed to ensure appointment panels are diverse. Between September 2020 and June 2021, the Panel shortlisted six senior candidates from a minority ethnic background and four were appointed.

In response to questions, the Leader commented:

- The “supply” of candidates to appointment panels has to be good enough to appoint and the Leader has made it clear to recruitment companies that they expect to see a diverse range of candidates. The market at the moment, particularly for local government chief executives, is not what it has been. It is necessary to be very strong to agree not to appoint if there is no one suitable as the pressure is always to appoint having gone through the process.
- A breakdown of gender and ethnicity of JNC appointments was not to hand but out of 11 posts appointed (September to June), 4 BAME candidates were successful. Graeme Betts added that 3 of these were women. The Leader clarified the use of the “Rooney rule” in Birmingham and that the Council makes every effort to ensure panels are diverse.
- A number of members expressed concerns about staffing in the enforcement part of the council (noting the vacancy in the AD Regulations and Enforcement role), including waste and HMOs, and whether these were sufficiently resourced. The Leader will look at why recruitment to the private rented sector team is delayed.
- In terms of why undertaking interim recruitments in some cases, the Leader explained there can be a number of reasons for this – in the case of the Assistant Director for Procurement, it is for speed, to secure the use of an interim and then advertise for a permanent post.
- Funding for public health posts is grant funded to the end of September, out of the test and trace funding. The Council is talking to the Government about continuing funding, particularly as Birmingham is now subject to enhanced measures.
- Casework from residents is generated by service failure, and it was reported by some members that the new council complaints system is not working. It was confirmed that members are not required to use the on-line form. The Leader confirmed that the change was about ensuring the council has the data to see where main problems are and to then improve the service across the city. It does have to evolve and respond to hitches, and must serve the Members and MPs, not officers.
- The Leader noted that in response to an increase in fly-tipping, there would be additional investment (an increase of almost 10% of street cleansing budget). That work includes working with people of Birmingham across the city to keep the city clean.

- In relation to waste and route to zero work, the need for strategic capacity is still there and some creative thinking is needed to staff those areas. The Leader noted that the City has offered to be part of the COP26 meeting in November.
- A new structure to replace districts is not yet in place despite a strong commitment to localisation. The Leader stated that progress had been made, including support for more parish councils, but wards have not come forward with ideas for taking this forward. The Cabinet Member has recently established a star chamber for localisation which met for the first time this week and reported that there is more going on than has been reported. Graeme Betts noted the changes that had happened in the Adult Services directorate. It was suggested the mix of one and two member wards was a barrier here, and ward boundaries should be reviewed.
- In response to questions about the Commonwealth Games in relation to Edgbaston Station and the impact of Covid-19, the Leader confirmed that whilst the work on Edgbaston Station will not be complete, the station will be open during the Games. Work is going on to see if the work can be completed on time for the Games. More generally, the plan is still for the Games to be delivered with full stadia. There is still 12 months to go and it is difficult to predict what will happen. The Organising Committee will meet to assess the situation in September and to look at contingency measures, including for public transport.

## **5. WORK PROGRAMME**

Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services, introduced the work programme as set out and updated members on current and forthcoming inquiries:

- Exempt accommodation – evidence has been collated and will be shared with members. An informal meeting may be held to review that evidence and prepare for a round table discussion with Cabinet members and officers;
- A draft report on broadband issues will also be brought for discussion to an informal meeting;
- A future inquiry on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic will be commenced later in the year, with a terms of reference to be discussed in September. Members discussed how to approach this and, on balance, it was agreed that individual O&S Committees could undertake some
- Localisation was discussed and it was noted that Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee was focusing on this area.

## **6. DATES OF MEETING**

It was agreed that the Co-ordinating O&S Committee would meet on the following dates at 1000 hours:

**2021**

09 July 2021

10 September 2021

15 October 2021

12 November 2021

10 December 2021

**2022**

21 January 2022

18 February 2022

11 March 2022

08 April 2022

**7. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

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The meeting ended at 1145 hours.