

BEST VALUE COMMISSIONERS

Finance Board Meeting - Birmingham City Council

15th April 2024 – 14:00 – 15:00

Council House, Victoria Square

Board Members

Chris Tambini, Commissioner & Chair
Elizabeth Thomas, DLUHC Chief of Staff
Mohammed Sajid, Head of Financial Strategy
Mollie Sheehy, BSC, Commissioners Support Unit
Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance & S151 Officer
John Quinn, Chief Operation Officer
Simon Field, Head of Business Improvement and Support
Councillor John Cotton, Leader
Councillor Paul Tilsley, Lib Dem Finance Lead
Councillor Meirion Jenkins, Conservatives

Apologies

Max Caller, Lead Commissioner
Jackie Belton, Commissioner
Pam Parkes, Commissioner
John Biggs, Political Adviser
Tom Smith, DLUHC Chief of Staff
Graeme Betts, Interim Chief Executive
Tim Bell, Consultant in Finance
Councillor Roger Harmer, Leader of Lib Dems
Peter Sebastian, Head of Financial Strategy

1 Welcome & Introductions

1.1 Chris Tambini welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Previous Minutes

2.1 Actions in the last meeting covered and minutes of last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

3 Savings Delivery (John Quinn)

3.1 John Quinn joined the meeting online and shared slides. The purpose of this update was to track and identify any problems as they arise that will impact delivering on the agreed savings. Savings are being RAG rated to highlight those at risk and monitoring these will allow the Council to mitigate the risk of delivery.

The Commissioners:

Max Caller CBE, John Coughlan CBE, Chris Tambini, Pam Parkes FCIPD, Jackie Belton, Myron Hrycyk, Lord John Hutton, John Biggs.

4 Budget Timeline and Progress (Fiona Greenway)

- 4.1 Fiona Greenway reported to the Board the current savings that are at risk from not being achieved. Out of the 139 current projected savings for 2024/25, 12 are medium risk and 1 is high risk of not being achieved. As example, the £12million work with Highways PFI is a medium risk and so they are putting extra efforts into this work as they were able to identify the risk early. 122 of the savings are currently low risk and some have already been achieved. The finance team are working closely with John Quinn's team to monitor these risks and will report on this directly to Commissioners. It was emphasised that culture change is needed throughout the Council to achieve such massive savings and directorates will be holding each other to account. Officers will be encouraged to now challenge colleagues.
- 4.2 It was challenged whether the 122 low risk projects are giving a false sense of security. Fiona Greenway responds that they will be "crude" with categorising savings according to their risk levels. It is likely that a lot of those low-risk assignments will become at risk as they start to solidify. Issues such as resourcing will become apparent as projects are put into motion. As evidence materialises, people will be able to approach these savings realistically and be honest about the risk.

5 Update on Budget Gap (Fiona Greenway)

- 5.1 Commissioners would like there to be a 4-year medium-term financial plan and directorates will be asked to fill out delivery plans with a focus on 25/26 and 26/27. Finance are meeting with the Leader weekly to ensure that this is being carried out and a report will go to Cabinet in May 2024 setting out the process for roll out of the plan. The approach will be target operated with a focus on engaging the directorates and utilising the business partner approach.

6 AOB

- 6.1 There was no other business.

7 Date of Next Meeting

- 7.1 The next meeting will be on Wednesday 29th May 2024.