

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CORPORATE & FINANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 28 JUNE 2024 AT 10:30 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA
SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair to advise/meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite ([please click this link](#)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members are reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting.

If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If other registerable interests are declared a Member may speak on the matter only if members of the public are allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless they have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', Members do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that they have an interest.

Information on the Local Government Association's Model Councillor Code of Conduct is set out via <http://bit.ly/3WtGQnN>. This includes, at Appendix 1, an interests flowchart which provides a simple guide to declaring interests at meetings.

4 **MEMBERSHIP OF CORPORATE AND FINANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To note the resolution of the City Council meeting appointing the Committee, Chair and Members to serve on the Committee to the period ending with the Annual Meeting of City Council 2025, as follows:

Labour (8):

Cllr Sir Albert Bore (Chair), Cllr Fred Grindrod, Cllr Katherine Iroh, Cllr Jamie Tennant, Cllr Shabrana Hussain, Cllr Kerry Jenkins and Cllr Lee Marsham

Conservative (3):

Cllr Ewan Mackey, Cllr Deirdre Alden and Cllr Alex Yip.

Liberal Democrats (1):

Cllr Paul Tilsley

5 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR**

To elect a Deputy Chair, for the purposes of substitution for the Chair, if absent, for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2025.

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6 **CORPORATE AND FINANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

To note the Terms of Reference for the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and review the work programme.

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7 **MINUTES – CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To confirm the public minutes from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 May 2024.

To confirm the public minutes of the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 May 2024

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8 **CORPORATE AND FINANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

To review and note the actions from previous Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

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

To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).

10 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chair are matters of urgency.

11 **SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES FOR COMMITTEE MEETING AND SCRUTINY WORK**

To note the scheduled dates for 2024/25:

<u>2024</u>	<u>2025</u>
26 July	24 January
27 September	28 February
25 October	28 March
22 November	02 May
20 December	

12 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting will take place on 26 July 2024

ITEM TITLE

To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).

Birmingham City Council.
**Report to Corporate and Finance Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

28 June 2024



Title:	CORPORATE AND FINANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME
Lead Cabinet Portfolio:	Not Applicable
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
Report Author:	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager Legal and Governance Phone Number 07395884487 Email fiona.bottrill@birmingham.gov.uk
Authorised by:	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services Legal and Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private? Not Applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification: Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the development of the 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes and enable the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee to agree key issues to be considered by the Committee during 2024/25 and the scrutiny methods that will be used to undertake this work.
- 1.2 A key aspect of the work of all Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will be the continued focus on the delivery of savings agreed in the 24/25 Council budget and the relevant programmes within the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan where the Committee can add value.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 Scrutiny of Finance is a very important element of the financial control environment of any organisation. The work programme is a key element with many areas of required scrutiny being self-selecting. Commissioners would like to see a clear work programme which sets out the items that will be considered at each meeting. The key areas of scrutiny we would expect are;
- 2.2 Budget setting, financial monitoring and outturn. In addition, we would expect that Scrutiny will focus on the more significant financial issues such as Oracle and Equal Pay.
- 2.3 In terms of budget setting there are many elements including savings, pressures and assumptions. Budget scrutiny can be undertaken in various ways and we would like to see a detailed plan as to how this will be completed including any role for the service scrutiny committees. This is an area of Scrutiny which has not worked effectively historically with previous budgets being based on unrealistic assumptions.
- 2.4 It would be useful to review the proposed work programme and approach to budget Scrutiny by the end of July.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 3.1 Notes the Committees Terms of Reference as set out in Section 4.4
- 3.2 Notes the development of the Scrutiny Committee work programmes as set out in 4.6 – 4.12
- 3.3 Agrees the issues to be considered at a July Task and Finish Group meeting or subsequent meetings on the impact and implications of savings as set out in paragraphs 4.17 – 4.21.
- 3.4 Agrees the work programme outlined in Appendix A

- 3.5 Notes the continued work of the Task and Finish Group outlined in Section 4.12 that will enable members to have the information to further develop the work programme during 2024/25.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 The Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121212/Overview_and_scrutiny_statutory_guidance_for_councils_combined_authorities_and_combined_county_authorities_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf) was updated in April 2024 and re-affirms the role of overview and scrutiny in holding an authority's decision-makers to account remains fundamentally important to the functioning of local democracy.

- 4.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:

- provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge
- amplify the voices and concerns of the public
- be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services and strategic decision-making

- 4.3 The Council's Constitution Part B 11 sets out the procedures and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

[Constitution Part B roles functions and rules of procedure June 2024 A F \(1\).pdf](#)

- 4.4 The terms of reference for the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

To plan and co-ordinate the work of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees. To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning governance, finance, corporate and legal services, human resources, transformation and efficiency, contract management policy and procurement management, early intervention and prevention, risk, customer services, relationship with stakeholders and WMCA, support to Mayor, member development, use of data, refugees and City of Sanctuary, emergency planning. This includes:

- Council Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan/Budget
- Support to the Lord Mayor and other holders of civic office
- Communications, internal and external stakeholder engagement
- Council's strategic approach to the use of financial resources and budget
- Public policy development at local to international levels
- Representation of the Council on WMCA Board
- Relationships with stakeholders

- Levelling-up, devolution and WMCA
- Cost-of-living
- Oversight of Council's IT strategy, information and governance & GDPR
- Open data
- Data protection, cyber security, digital inclusion
- Customer services
- Overall financial direction within the Financial Strategy developed by the Leader, including Best Value and appropriate financial, accounting and audit controls and procedures.
- Business Charter for Social Responsibility
- Commercial opportunities available to the Council
- Revenues and Benefits service
- Procurement management
- Contract management policy.
- Management of all internal trading operations
- Commissioning approach that supports the Council's wider social objectives
- Oversight of consultants and interims
- Emergency planning
- Refugees, modern slavery and trafficking, City of Sanctuary
- Structure and governance of the Council.
- Efficiency and improvement of Council services
- Human Resources: An effective organisational development function for shaping the future workforce of the Council Development of effective change/transformational programmes deployed corporately Member development programmes Processes and procedures to support good staff performance development and equality objectives Staffing structures at JNC level and personnel procedures that comply with good practice and natural justice.
- Member-Officer protocol
- Business change programmes
- Development and implementation of early intervention and prevention service
- Good governance on outside bodies, Council-owned companies and externalised services
- Risk management, internal audit
- External scrutiny of the Council and Local Government Ombudsman
- Whistleblowing and complaints
- Legal services
- Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) oversight and delivery

These also functions include:

- Giving such guidance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in any cases of uncertainty as to work which they should or should not be

undertaking, as may be necessary to achieve such co-ordination, including the allocation of “call-in” to the appropriate Committee

- Determining, in any cases of uncertainty, the allocation of responsibility for specific tasks between the Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Ensuring (by means, for example, of issuing appropriate guidance and/or instructions) that the Overview & Scrutiny Committees pay proper attention in their work to the consideration of key cross cutting issues, in particular equalities, transparency and improvement
- Overseeing the development and delivery of a balanced work programme of Scrutiny Committees using a range of scrutiny methodologies and reporting regularly to City Council
- Considering Overview & Scrutiny development, working practices and constitutional arrangements.

4.5 The work programme of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees will align to the priorities within the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Development of the 2024/25 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

4.6 The Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan was approved at City Council on 4 April 2024 [BCC Improvement and Recovery Plan \(IRP\) \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) which sets out the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider key programmes and projects in the IRP, provide assurance to members and citizens on progress, consider unplanned consequences and negative impacts of the changes the Council is making.

4.7 The IRP Governance Principles sets out that members are integrated into the model and have clear oversight via forums including Overview and Scrutiny. The IRP also highlights that scrutiny and decision making is timely and informed and there is proactive management of risks, actions, issues and dependencies. The reporting process shows that formal reporting will take place to Cabinet, Audit and O&S Committees after the Improvement and Recovery Board.

4.8 During February and March 2024, the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny held workshops with members of Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and met with officers. The aim of this work was to develop a Scrutiny Blueprint setting out the principles and key objectives for the coming year to enable a more focussed and targeted approach to improvement at the authority.

4.9 While Commissioners agreed with the overall direction of this work, it was considered that more work was needed across the organisations in order to ensure it is deliverable. In response to this it was agreed by the former Co-ordinating OSC that work would progress on how information held by the Council is shared with members to inform the development of Scrutiny Committee work programmes going forward. Further information on this is provided in paragraph 4.12 below.

- 4.10 Following engagement on the principles of the Blueprint with, amongst others, the Commissioners' Governance Board, Informal Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team, it is proposed that some of these principles will be piloted, and an initial action plan will be developed for consideration by Corporate and Finance OSC. As part of this, consideration will be given to member learning and development needs and how scrutiny can improve its working relationship with Audit Committee. It is anticipated that the piloting of the new approach to Scrutiny will be a transition period until May 2025.
- 4.11 The work that will be undertaken by the 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees during June and July 2024 includes:
- All O&S Committees will hold public committee meetings in June. The work programme report for this meeting will include the high level summary on the 24/25 savings and members will decide the savings they want to consider at Task and Finish meetings during July to focus on the impact of the savings on communities and individuals
 - Corporate and Finance OSC to hold a public Committee meeting to consider the delivery of 24/25 savings
 - Pre-decision scrutiny of asset sales
 - Scrutiny of integration of Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise functions into Birmingham City Council
 - Visit to City of Birmingham School
 - Continued work on the inquiries on Active Travel, Road Safety and Improving Standards of Re-let Properties
- 4.12 The development of the O&S Committee work programme during the rest of the municipal year will also be informed by the work of the Information Task and Finish Group established by Co-ordinating OSC that will continue into 2024/25.

Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

- 4.13 The work programme for 2024/25 will develop during the year and a Task and Finish Group has been established that will consider what information members will need to identify further issues.
- 4.14 An initial outline work programme is attached as Appendix A that includes:
- Programmes from the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan within the Committee's terms of reference
 - Continued work of the Information Task and Finish Group as agreed by Co-ordinating OSC in May 2024
 - Scrutiny of the implications of savings agreed in the Council's budget including equality and equity issues arising from the budget as set out in Paragraph 4.18 below.

- Safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people
 - Monitoring recommendations from previous Scrutiny Inquiries and Task and Finish Group work
 - Critical performance issues emerging by exception (this will be defined through work with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny)
- 4.15 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny is providing support to the Council which includes developing a framework which will enable the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's to add value to the Council's improvement journey.
- 4.16 When considering the issues to be included in the work programme members are also asked to agree the Scrutiny method that will be used. This can include:
- **Committee meeting single item**, or items, on a public committee agenda: this fits more closely the "overview" aspect of the Scrutiny function and has limited opportunity for effective scrutiny.
 - **Committee meeting single theme** at a public committee meeting: This has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
 - **Task and Finish Group in day**: provided that these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics. The work of a Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task and Finish Group meeting is not public. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group will be reported to a public committee meeting.
 - **Multiple Task and Finish Group meetings**: to consider an issue in depth over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.
 - **Site Visit**: Members visit services or organisations to inform the work of the Committee.
 - **Inquiry Evidence Gathering**: Evidence for Scrutiny Inquiries may take place at public committee meetings, Task and Finish Groups or Site Visits
 - **Briefings**: for members to be updated on specific issues.

Scrutiny of the Impact of Savings

- 4.17 The recommendation from the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group that "each OSC receives a report following the approval of the Budget and MTFP on the implications of the budget and savings on the services within their terms of reference" was accepted by the Executive agreed at City Council on 5 March 2024. The Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Governance Principles sets out that members have clear oversight via forums including Overview and Scrutiny and that Scrutiny and decision making is timely and informed and there is proactive management of risks, actions, issues, and dependencies.

4.18 There 39 savings within the terms of reference for Corporate and Finance OSC, some of which are focussed on internal council services and efficiencies. Based on the work previously undertaken through the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group (November 2023 – January 2024) and the Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group (April 2024) and through discussion with the Committee Chair it is recommended that the Committee considers the following issues at a Task and Finish Group meeting in July to focus on the impact of savings on residents and communities:

- The combined impact of savings on vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics, (Cross Cutting Recommendation from Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group)
- Saving 10: That when increasing tax collection the service continues to develop the holistic and preventative approach to collect outstanding council tax and business rates ensuring staff are able to sign post residents and businesses to other sources of support. (Recommendation from Finance and Resources OSC Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group)
- Saving 4: That within the new enforcement staff team recruited to undertake the enforcement work that resource is dedicated to building relationships and communication with the Business Improvement Districts and that this work is linked with other services across the Council that also work with the BIDs. (Recommendation from Finance and Resources OSC Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group)
- Saving 3 Review Benefits Advice Team: That the Council continues to seek alternative funding to provide non-statutory benefits advice.

That while the non-statutory Benefits Advice Team does not function that services across the Council work collaboratively to provide early help and intervention advice including benefits advice. These include the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service and work delivered through the Cost of Living Crisis programme.

That Council communications includes information to signpost residents to places where advice of benefits is available. (Recommendations from Finance and Resources OSC Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group)

- Saving 9 New Homes Bonus: That there is a joined up approach across Council services to maximising the opportunities from bringing empty homes back into use e.g. working with the temporary accommodation to use properties to address the shortage of long term accommodation in the City. (Recommendation from Finance and Resources OSC Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group)
- Saving 221: More efficient use of BCC Operational Estate – Resident Facing Assets

- Savings 217: Customer Contact consolidation
- Savings 6: Cease Local Welfare Provision Scheme
- Saving 103: Voice Automation within Contact Centre Services (Recommendation from Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group)

- 4.19 Cabinet Members and senior directorate officers will attend the July Task and Finish Group meeting.
- 4.20 The Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a report in July 2024 on the financial delivery of savings.
- 4.21 Recommendations and issues from the Savings Implications Task and Finish Group will be reported to the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2024.
- 4.22 The Council’s latest Forward Plan: [June 2024 Forward Plan \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) assist Members in identifying future topics. The following reports are of particular relevance to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

ID Number	Title	Proposed Date of Decision
012798/2024	Q4 Corporate Performance and Delivery report against the Corporate Plan (cmis.uk.com)	25/06/24
012776/2024	Grant Funding from Government - Standing Item	25/06/24
012935/2024	Key Decision Planned Procurement Activities (July 2024 – September 2024) and Quarterly Contract Award Schedule (January 2024 – March 2024)	25/06/24
012002/2023	Resources for Birmingham City Council Priorities - Standing Item	25/06/24
012822/2024	Provisional Financial Outturn	23/07/24

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The Council’s Governance and Stabilisation Plan identified the need to strengthen the working relationships between the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function. This will include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding that will include the respective roles of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Audit in relation to the Council’s management of risk.

6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications from this report as the Committee has been asked to review the implications and impact of the budget savings on the services within the terms of reference, not to challenge or change the financial delivery of the savings themselves. An update report on the performance of the council in delivering the financial savings will instead be taken to the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2024.

Legal

- 6.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report.

Equalities

- 6.3 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 6.4 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

- 6.5 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

- 6.6 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

People Services

- 6.7 There are no staffing implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

- 6.8 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the climate change, nature and Net Zero issues relevant to the work programme items.

Corporate Parenting

- 6.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the corporate parenting responsibilities and opportunities relevant to the work programme.

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix A: Corporate and Finance OSC Work Programme June 24
- 7.2 Appendix B: Summary of Savings within the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Governance Review of Birmingham City Council by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny: Cabinet 12 December 2023 [CMIS > Meetings](#)
- 8.2 Improvement and Recovery Plan: Cabinet 4 April 2024: [CMIS > Meetings](#)

Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

June 2024

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
28 June 24	<p>Committee Terms of Reference and Work Programme</p> <p>Corporate Plan: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget</p> <p>Governance Stabilisation Plan</p> <p>Priority: Priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget</p>	<p>Agree the Committee's work programme including identification of issues to consider at future meetings regarding impact of delivery of savings based on previous scrutiny of budget and savings delivery.</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item committee meeting 28 June 24</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 12 June</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&4</p>	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
28 June 24	<p>Information Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Corporate Priority: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Priorities: Organisational design and culture change</p>	<p>To consider evidence to understand the information that will be made available to members to inform the development of Scrutiny work programmes.</p>	Task and Finish Group	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy. Equalities and Partnerships Ade Fashade, Interim Scrutiny Officer		

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Culture, behaviour change and organisational development					
TBC July 24	Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Corporate Plan: Well Run Council IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget	Savings to be considered at the July meeting will be agreed by the Committee in June.	Task and Finish Group	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
TBC July 24	Information Task and Finish Group	To agree recommendations to report to the September meeting Corporate and Finance OSC on the	Task and Finish Group	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy. Equalities and Partnerships		

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	<p>Corporate Priority: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Priorities: Organisational design and culture change</p> <p>Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Culture, behaviour change and organisational development</p>	information that will be available to inform the development of Scrutiny work programmes.		Ade Fashade, Interim Scrutiny Officer		
26 July	<p>Delivery of 2024/25 Savings</p> <p>Corporate Priority: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget</p> <p>Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget</p>	To consider a report on the delivery of 2024/25 savings and to agree any recommendations to Cabinet	<p>Committee Meeting: Single Item 26 July</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 10 July</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&4</p>			

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
27 Sept	<p>Report of Task and Finish Group meeting on the Implications of 24/25 Savings</p> <p>Corporate Priority: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget</p> <p>Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget</p>	To agree recommendations to be made to Cabinet developed through the work of the Savings Implications Task and Finish Group meetings	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item committee meeting 27 September 24</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 11 September24</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&4</p>	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
27 Sept	<p>Report of the Information Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Corporate Priority: Well Run Council</p> <p>IRP Priorities: Organisational design and culture change</p>	To set out the information that will be available to Scrutiny Members to inform the development of the Scrutiny work programmes	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item committee meeting 27 September 24</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 11 September24</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&4</p>	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy. Equalities and Partnerships Ade Fashade, Interim Scrutiny Officer		

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Culture, behaviour change and organisational development					
27 Sept	Action Plan setting out the principles and objectives for Scrutiny 2024/25 Corporate Priority: Well Run Council IRP Priorities: Organisational design and culture change Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Culture, behaviour change and organisational development		Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item committee meeting 27 September 24 Deadline for reports: 11 September24 Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&4	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
Sept – October	Task and Finish Group on development of 25/26 Budget Corporate Plan: Well Run Council	To consider the budget proposals and contribute to the development of the 2025/26 budget	Task and Finish Group			

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	<p>IRP Programme: Deliver Savings and Balance the Budget</p> <p>Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Governance Stabilisation Plan Priority: Priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget</p>					

*Outcome: This will be fully populated once the item/topic has been completed. It will identify the added value and impact.

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues. This is a live work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business	To consider an update / monitor the implementation of actions in relation to Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business	TBC	Issue carried over from Co-ordinating OSC work programme
End of Year Outturn	To inform the Committee of the end of year outturn and Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting – single item	Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
Financial Monitoring	To inform the Committee of the financial monitoring and the Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting – single item	Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
Oracle	To update members on progress, to include risks, finance and timescales.	Committee meeting – single item	
Job Evaluation and Equal Pay	To receive an update on activities and timescales to meet the April 2025 deadline for the implementation of the Pay Equity System.	Committee meeting – single item	
Monitoring recommendations of the Procurement Governance Scrutiny Report	To receive an update on the new Procurement and Contract Governance rules	Committee meeting - single item	Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard	Role for O&S in looking at specific aspects of the data and monitoring progress including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work force planning in relation to age profile of staff. 	TBC	Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme Possible key questions: How do we acquire new talent? How do we ensure we're attractive to potential new

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability disclosure and reasonable adjustments <p>Governance of Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business (EBEB) and what impact this has made.</p>		employees? Are we open, accessible, inclusive and do our job descriptions and requirements reflect the needs of the business, but also the reality of life and experience of work for applicants? When is it appropriate to use consultants and how are these decisions made?
Working from Home	To understand the impact on productivity and workforce costs.	TBC	<p>Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme</p> <p>This may be looked at flexibly. Important to note that this item isn't about stopping working from home, but looking at where it is appropriate and whether it works for the needs of the council and its residents.</p>
Visits to inform the work of the Committee			Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
Treasury Management	Scrutiny of the Council's Treasury Management		Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
Strategic Risk Register	To understand the management of risk across the organisation.	Committee meeting single item	<p>Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register, Budget Risks and Savings Risks were previously considered at Committee in September 23.</p> <p>CfGS Governance Stabilisation Action Plan: Review and revise arrangements for member support, and information sharing with Overview and Scrutiny and Audit.</p>

External auditors' review, CfGS wider governance review and management review	To be briefed on the findings and recommendations of the various reviews being undertaken.	TBC	Issue carried over from Finance and Resources OSC work programme
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Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group

Inquiry Evidence Gathering

Site Visit

Corporate Priorities, Performance and Outcomes

Corporate Priorities 2022 – 26:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Support inclusive economic growth | 11 Increase affordable, safe, green housing |
| 2 Tackle unemployment | 12 Tackle homelessness |
| 3 Attract inward investment and infrastructure | 13 Tackle health inequalities |
| 4 Maximise the benefits of the Commonwealth Games | 14 Encourage and enable physical activity and healthy living |
| 5 Tackle poverty and inequalities | 15 Champion mental health |
| 6 Empower citizens and enable citizen voice | 16 Improve outcomes for adults with disabilities and older people |
| 7 Promote and champion diversity, civic pride and culture | 17 Improve street cleanliness |
| 8 Support and enable all children and young people to thrive | 18 Improve air quality |
| 9 Make the city safer | 19 Continue on the Route to Zero |
| 10 Protect and safeguard vulnerable citizens | 20 Be a City of Nature |
| | 21 A Bold Well Run Council |

Appendix B: Corporate and Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 24/25 Savings Summary

Summary

The Council’s 2024/25 budget was agreed by City Council on 5 March 2024. The budget included 166 specific savings proposals designed to deliver £149.765m during 2024/25 and a further £76.323m in 2025/26.

Below (see Table 2) is the list of savings that fall under the Corporate and Finance OSC. A summary description of each of the savings proposals has also been included below.

There are a total of 39 proposals totalling £19.959 m in 24/25 and a further £33.392 m in 25/26 that fall under this Committee from across Adult Social Care, City Operations, Council Management, Strategy, Equality and Partnerships (SEP) as well as a number of cross cutting savings.

The delivery status of each of these proposals is currently being reviewed and further information on progress will be shared with the Committee at the next savings update session.

As part of the monitoring process each proposal will be risk rated using the RAG approach to indicate the level of confidence we currently have in achieving the full target in year. The RAG definitions and criteria are included below for reference (see Table 1). Savings of high value and those assessed as high risk will be subject to a more detailed monitoring and assurance process that will be overseen by the Council’s Portfolio Management Office and Finance to ensure risks are identified early and appropriate actions are taken swiftly.

Relevant service delivery leads and finance business partners will be available at future meetings to talk through progress on the proposals and the action being taken to ensure successful delivery of the agreed savings targets.

Table 1: Criteria for determining the RAG status of savings

RAG Assessment Guidance				
Assessment Criteria	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Delivered
Savings RAG	Saving / income delivery plan unclear and / or not specified at adequate granular level. - and / or - Inadequate plan / no plan agreed. - and / or - Major risk of not delivering saving / income within agreed timeframe, leading to slippage or non-delivery.	Saving or income delivery plan lacks some clarity and / or not detailed at an adequately granular level but agreed plan in place to resolve and being actively managed. - and / or - Some risk of not delivering full saving within agreed timeframe, leading to slippage.	Saving or income detail documented and robust plan in place to deliver agreed targets, showing when and who is responsible. - and / or - Saving / income will be delivered within agreed timeframes.	Saving or income realised and evidence provided that costs have been reduced or income achieved.
<i>Headcount Example</i>	<i>Headcount saving proposed, but specific post to be deleted or timescales not yet agreed. No work is currently progressing to resolve this.</i>	<i>Budget Manager has confirmed that posts (to agreed value and timing) will be vacated and deleted from budget but this has not happened yet or is delayed.</i>	<i>Timescales and the specific posts to be vacated / deleted have been agreed and on track.</i>	<i>Officer has departed, budget has been reduced and posts have been deleted from the approved establishment.</i>

Table 2: Savings that fall within the Coordinating Committee

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
221	EIP	More efficient use of BCC Operational Estate - Resident Facing Community Assets	This saving proposal aims to bring together all community facing assets, targeting support to core hubs only. Spokes and non statutory assets will be considered for transfer to the community or possibly closed. There will be engagement with communities to discuss whether community groups could sustainability take over the running of these assets.		2.000	N/A	N/A
178	DTS	Digital and Technology Services Redesign	A review of the service structure, prioritisation of core services, and review of vacant positions.	2.200	2.200	N/A	N/A
103	DCS	Voice Automation within Contact Centre Services	Voice Automation technology will offer an additional access channel for customers and release call handlers from low complexity calls	1.490	1.690	The introduction of digitalisation / voice automation should be a priority but not through forced channel shift, with opportunities identified in other directorates to increase savings.	Agreed. This forms part of a key cross-cutting savings proposal.
144	Legal Services	Restructure and redesign	Proposed reorganisation of structures within Legal and Governance; change delivery of service, efficient ways of working and reduction in headcount.	0.835	1.114	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
100	DTS	Ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services, by removing telephone lines and mobile phones (Analogue, mobile and land lines).	Reducing numbers of mobile phones in the organisation and taking out analogue telephone lines savings on calls costs and line costs.	0.370	0.370	N/A	N/A
177	DTS	DTS staffing and licence savings for smaller organisation	Review of team sizes where lower volumes of calls are expected in a smaller organisation	0.250	0.400	N/A	N/A
101	DTS	Transforms service delivery to reduce costs, via third party contracts and greater utilisation of commercial relationship	Reviewing Technology platforms, consolidating where appropriate, maximising relationships with key suppliers.	0.220	0.220	N/A	N/A
119	Legal Services	Counsel Spend Reduction	Proposal to reduce spend on external counsel	0.118	0.118	N/A	N/A
175	DTS	5G Small Cells and LoRoWAN	Enabling private sector to use council lampposts to host sensors or 5G small cells for a fee.	0.115	0.168	The income from this proposal should be benchmarked against other authorities and work taken forward with the West Midlands Combined Authority to maximise income from 5G.	Agreed. This research informs this saving

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						<p>Assurance is needed that the income includes any costs of testing the structural integrity of the lamp posts.</p> <p>The Cabinet member for Digital, Culture, Heritage, and Tourism should engage Cabinet Member for Transport to ensure that the necessary discussions take place to achieve delivery of savings under 175 (5G small cell and LoRaWan)</p>	Agreed. This has been considered in the delivery approach.
121	Governance	Review of election and committee structure	Proposed to change service delivery; non recruitment to vacant posts and headcount reduction.	0.098	0.130	N/A	N/A
102	DTS	Reduction in agency costs	Improved efficiency in service area, less agency top-up staff required	0.080	0.080	N/A	N/A
118	Legal Services	In-sourcing	Proposal to bring a proportion of legal work back in house from outsource partners to reduce costs.	0.075	0.100	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
145	Legal Services	Governance efficiencies – fewer meetings/clerking	Reduction in Scrutiny Committees and Full Council meetings, resulting in reduction in headcount and reduction in special responsibility allowances.	0.057	0.066	The number of O & S Committees will be reduced from 8 to 7 with an ensuing SRA saving. Regulatory, Executive and Council arrangements and saving proposals will need to be formulated in the Cabinet response to these recommendations.	Agreed. This is being considered by Legal Services.
123	Governance	Transport for Members (Taxi / Rail)	Proposed reduction of costs by changing how this is currently delivered to be more efficient and cost effective.	0.010	0.010	N/A	N/A
120	Legal Services	Review current contracts for best value - subscriptions / case management system.	Review of current subscriptions/ICT provision to maximise efficiency of service delivery and reduce costs.	0.006	0.006	N/A	N/A
215	DCS	Business Improvement & Support Consolidation	Consolidate administrative activity, where appropriate, across the Council into the existing Business Support function	0.000	0.300	Consideration should be given to bringing some of these savings forward to 2024/25 and ensuring the workload for staff is deliverable.	Agreed. Saving Proposal #105 in 2024/25 is already included in plans to re-design the business support function.

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
104	DCS	Contact Centre SLA reduction from 90% to 85%	Proposal to reduce the call handing service level within the contact centre which will enable a saving to be achieved through the removal of agency posts		0.050	N/A	N/A
217	DCS	Customer contact consolidation	Where appropriate, consolidate customer service contact across the Council into the existing Customer Service Contact Centre		0.219	N/A	N/A
190	Cross Cutting	Automation of Manual Processes	Using technology to complete repetitive manual tasks, and release savings in service areas	0.000	0.200	N/A	N/A
191	Cross Cutting	Greater use of digital tools	Using our digital tools more creatively to reduce administrative effort, processing errors and improve customer service.	0.000	0.200	N/A	N/A
142	Across various SEP services	Review of spans and layers and reorganisation of services within the directorate	A reduction in staff expenditure through a review of spans and layers and reorganisation of services within the directorate.	1.780	1.930	N/A	N/A
143	Across various SEP services	Return non-pay inflation and other budget efficiencies	A reduction in expenditure on non-staff budgets across services within the directorate.	0.667	0.667	N/A	N/A
10	Revenues and Benefits	Increased tax collection - Additional Recovery Team	Income generation – employ additional staff to deal with outstanding council tax and business rate debts. Includes	3.840	3.840	That in delivering saving 10 Revenues and Benefits continues to develop the holistic and preventative	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
			proactive work to identify financial problems at an earlier stage.			<p>approach to collect outstanding council tax and business rates ensuring staff are able to sign post residents and businesses to other sources of support.</p> <p>That Revenues and Benefits monitors the productivity of the new staff to ensure that working from home arrangements do not restrict the sharing of good practice within the team and information sharing.</p>	
1	Finance	Traded Services surrender of pay and price increases subsidy (Group & Capital Finance)	Traded services operate on cost recovery, past budget allocations for inflationary pressures will be returned to the corporate centre.	1.500	1.500	N/A	N/A
4	Revenues and Benefits	Insource Enforcement work	Income generation - Commence bringing some of the external enforcement agent work 'in house' for council tax, business rates and Business improvement district (BIDs) levies.	1.098	1.098	That within the new enforcement staff team recruited to undertake the enforcement work resource is dedicated to building relationships and communication with the Business Improvement	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						Districts and that this work is linked with other services across the Council that also work with the BIDs.	
6	Revenues and Benefits	Cease Local Welfare Provision Scheme	Proposal that the provision of emergency payments (crisis) for food and utilities (gas and electric) cease. Proposal that payments for 'White goods' for provision of (for example) table-top fridges and cookers cease.	0.900	0.900	N/A	N/A
210	People Services	Workforce People Services savings	Review of people services structure and vacant posts	0.849	0.908	N/A	N/A
7	Revenues and Benefits	Review Council Tax Single Person Discounts	Income generation – to review all existing SPDs to ensure the 25% discount is only applied where residents are entitled. This is in addition to existing activity to ensure correct entitlement is awarded.	0.800	0.800	N/A	N/A
2	Finance	Reduction in traded services performance subsidy (Group & Capital Finance)	Improved performance within traded services and obligation to recharge at full market cost hence the subsidy will not be called upon for under-recovery.	0.799	0.799	N/A	N/A
209	Finance	Service review and rationalisation of vacant posts	Review of finance service structure and vacant posts	0.360	0.360	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
12	Procurement	Corporate Procurement Service – Mini restructure and refining recharging of services delivered to “non-general fund” budget areas.	Undertaking a mini restructure and refining recharging of services delivered to “non-general fund” budget areas.	0.240	0.240	N/A	N/A
3	Revenues and Benefits	Review Benefits Advice Team	Review of non-statutory provision of the Benefits Advice Team within the Benefit Service	0.122	0.162	<p>That the Council continues to seek alternative funding to provide non-statutory benefits advice.</p> <p>That while the non-statutory Benefits Advice Team does not function, services across the Council work collaboratively to provide early help and intervention advice including benefits advice. These include the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service and work delivered through the Cost of Living Crisis programme.</p>	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						That Council communications include information to signpost residents to places where advice of benefits is available.	
113	People Services	Annual Staff Survey review	Replacement of externally run staff survey with in-house options	0.050	0.050	N/A	N/A
112	People Services	Recruitment Portal review	External recruitment portal non-renewal	0.030	0.030	N/A	N/A
105	DCS	Business Support Re-design	A reconfiguration and reduction of the existing business support administrative activity and posts to release savings		2.660	That work should continue at pace on delivery of saving 105 and where possible delivery should be brought forward to 2024/25.	N/A
9	Revenues and Benefits	New Homes Bonus	Income generation – additional work to use external data to identify empty homes that have been bought-back into use and attract payments from the Government (as well as council tax income).		1.984	That there is a joined up approach across Council services to maximising the opportunities from bringing empty homes back into use e.g. working with the temporary accommodation to use properties to address the shortage of long term accommodation in the City.	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
216	Revenues, Benefits, Rents and Finance	"Debt recovery consolidation	Enable the Council where possible to have a single view of debt by consolidating all debt management, debt recovery activity into a single debt management team where appropriate		1.823	<p>That members are kept informed to monitor progress of the work during 2024/25 to ensure delivery of the saving in 2025/26 including an assessment of the level of risk for the debt types to be recovered.</p> <p>Once the saving starts the delivery should be monitored to ensure financial delivery of the saving and also customer satisfaction.</p> <p>That the Council builds on the learning from this savings to identify areas across the Council where services can be consolidated resulting in a more joined up service, better outcomes for residents and efficiencies that deliver financial savings.</p>	N/A
188		Procurement Contract Savings	To deliver contract management savings from existing third party	1.000	3.000	That the results of the analysis of contracts	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
			spend - with the aim to improve value for money from and reduce spend with third parties through a range of initiatives, including system controls to enhance compliance, reduction of spend through amalgamating spend / contacts and stopping spend.			across the organisation is shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	
228		Fees and Charges - further savings TBC	Anticipated increase in income relating to fees and charges uplifts across all service areas.	0.000	1.000	That City Operations explores the opportunity to charge for damage to pavements as a result of construction work on adjacent properties.	N/A
			TOTAL	19.959	33.392		

**Recommendations from the Budget Task and Finish Group Report to
Monitored by All Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Rec Number	Recommendation	Response
1	All savings must have clear Delivery Plans, with arrangements to hold budget holders across the organisation at different levels accountable to the delivery of savings and with a Cabinet Member assigned against each saving. Key milestones towards the delivery of the savings should be included, along with risk mitigation, and governance measures including consultation requirements, VR / CR requirements and service impact. Measures for monitoring and reporting to O&S Committees must be put in place.	Agreed. Delivery Plans have been created for each saving proposal. These include details of the Senior Accountable Officer, the Key Milestones and Risk Management Plan.
2	The Delivery Plans should also set out clearly where the saving type is identified as efficiency, what systems / processes will be put in place to deliver the efficiencies without reducing the level of services.	Agreed. Delivery Plans have been created for each saving proposal. These include details of the Key Milestones, the Objectives and Deliverables as well as the Dependencies and any potential consequential impacts.
3	The Budget report to Cabinet and City Council will identify the savings proposals that will be subject to statutory consultation and assurance is needed that these will comply with legal requirements. This needs to be reflected in the timescales for delivery of the savings.	Agreed. Delivery Plans include Timescales and Key Milestones that will indicate whether a public consultation is required. Accompanying the Budget Report will be access to the Equality Impact Assessments that have been produced for applicable savings proposals, these also confirm legal requirements.
9	Each OSC receives a report following the approval of the Budget and MTFP on the implications of the budget and savings on the services within their terms of reference. In future years, an impact assessment of proposals should be reported to scrutiny in advance of the approval of the budget.	Agreed. An OSC work programme is being developed to provide updates on the savings relevant to each Scrutiny committee throughout the 2024/25 financial year.

10	Each OSC to receive a report every two months during the 2024/2025 financial year to update the Committee on the delivery of savings and service implications.	Agreed. An OSC work programme is being developed to provide updates on the savings relevant to each Scrutiny committee throughout the 2024/25 financial year to align with updates to Cabinet.
13	A review of contracts and contract management is undertaken to ensure that the council achieves best value from contracts and that contracts are renegotiated where necessary, particularly where several contracts are held across different services / directorates with the same provider. This work needs to ensure a complete, transparent and accurate contract register is produced, including details relating to when re-procurements need to commence and with contract start and end dates. As required by the Local Government Transparency Code, the relevant information should be published.	Agreed. As part of the savings proposals all Directorates have been looking at their contracts to identify savings. There is also a cross-cutting savings proposal for procurement contract savings.
14	A multitude of income generation opportunities should be explored, e.g., dropped kerbs, lane rental, commercial events, Shelforce, debt collection, hotel tax, increase use of direct debits – if residents are already using Direct Debits for some services they are more likely to take up for other services.	Agreed. As part of the savings proposals all Directorates have been looking at their income opportunities to identify savings and where appropriate these have been included. Opportunities are also being looked at for 2025/26.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

COORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Friday 17th May 2024, Committee Rooms 6,

Council House, Victoria Square, B1 1BB

Minutes**Present:**

Councillor Sir Albert Bore (Chair)

Councillors: Mick Brown, Shabrana Hussain, Mohammed Idrees, Katherine Iroh, Kerry Jenkins, Ewan Mackey, Lee Marsham and Alex Yip

Also Present:

Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Richards Brooks, Director of Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships [Online]

Muhamad Sajid, Assistant Director: Financial Strategy

Timothy Bell (Consultant-Corporate Finance) [Online]

Steve Muldoon, Interim Business Partnering Improvement Lead [Online]

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Johane Gandiwa, Scrutiny Officer

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite ([please click this link](#)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

No apologies were given.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllr Jenkins declared that she was employed by Unite. However, she had no direct representations for employees of Birmingham City Council.

4. MINUTES – 19th March 2024

RESOLVED:-

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

The comments by the Commissioners were noted.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (OSC) SAVINGS DELIVERY TASK AND FINISH GROUP MEETINGS

The Chair informed the meeting that the agenda was not complete as had been planned. Notes from the April Task and Finish Group meetings were not published together with the agenda. This followed legal advice from the Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer that the notes contained exempt information that would be prejudicial to the Council and the effective scrutiny of budget proposals if published. In addition, some of the information was legally privileged. Furthermore, the Task and Finish group meetings had been set up as private sessions to encourage free and frank discussions and advice by cabinet members and officers. The Chair advised that a meeting was held with the Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer to explore how best scrutiny could be involved in budget matters.

Members expressed concern that scrutiny was being undermined as it was not being given the support it required. While confidentiality and privileged information were paramount, members expressed views that some matters must be reported in the public domain so that scrutiny can play its proper role. Public meetings were critical in ensuring transparency and accountability. Members emphasised that given the work programme for June and July, there was need to have these matters resolved so that scrutiny of the budget savings was not undermined.

Going forward, the Chair informed members that a meeting would be held with the Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, the Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, as well as the Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services to discuss and raise the concerns by members. Members commended the Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer for being very supportive to scrutiny. In relation to meeting of Task and Finish Groups, members recommended that there was need to develop a framework on CMIS that shows the agenda of such meetings and attendance.

In relation to the Sustainability and Transport, the meeting noted that the biggest saving was the PFI and Highways maintenance contract. However, judicial review had an impact on where that saving would go. There was therefore need for scrutiny to

monitor and keep an eye on that process. It was also agreed that there was need to closely monitor the savings coming out homes to school transport for the 19 years old, particularly in terms of equalities impact. Commissioners had made it clear that there should be no delays in the implementation of savings, and consultations could delay the savings.

The Chair advised the meeting that the months of June and July would be used to provide an overview on the delivery of savings and carry out further work on the recommendations from the April Task and Finish Groups. The Chair set out that Scrutiny committees would consider the impact of the budget recommendations on individuals and communities through the Task and Finish Group process where relevant officers would attend. This would lead to intensive questions on the savings. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would decide at the June committee meeting which savings and implications will be considered at July Task and Finish Group meeting.

The Chair further advised the meeting that in July, the Corporate and Finance OSC would focus on the delivery of 2024-25 saving reported to the Improvement and Recovery Board. Also in July, a Task and Finish Group meeting of Corporate and Finance OSC would look at the budget pressures for the 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 municipal years. The meeting would also cover the Mid Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED:-

That the following recommendations from the April Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group meetings be adopted and relevant Cabinet Members and Directorates respond to the recommendations as set out below:

- i. That the Committee considers the recommendations from the April Task and Finish Group meetings and requests the relevant Cabinet Members and Directorates to respond to the recommendations directly through future work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- ii. That the Cabinet member for Digital, Culture, Heritage, and Tourism should engage Cabinet Member for Transport to ensure that the necessary discussions take place to achieve delivery of savings under 175 (5G small cell and LoRaWan)
- iii. That a robust corporate process be put in place to monitor the use of Public Health funds and ensure compliance with the 7 Memoranda of Understanding, including how risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register (Savings 211,89,96,35,155,156,163) so that the delivery of these savings is adequately tracked, including costs that may be incurred as a result of the processes in delivering the savings.

- iv. That a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Adult Social Care savings on carers be done as this was an issue where the Health and Adult Care OSC could add value during the 2024/25 work programme.
- v. That assurance be provided to the Health and Adult Social Care OSC as part of the 2024/25 work programme that that the delivery of the savings 126 and 130 (Review of Care Centre Model, Review of Day Centre Model) was based on best practice, assessed needs as well as delivery of the financial targets.
- vi. That Adult Social Care identifies best practice from other areas relating to Shared Lives and this informs the implementation of this saving.
- vii. That assurance be provided that the delivery of saving 139 takes account of the drop-out rate for some people recruited as Shared Lives Cares.
- viii. That Leisure Services continue to monitor and update the equalities impact assessment and the members requested copies of The Active Wellbeing Society service specification (saving 56) and to be updated on the development of the systems approach to leisure services funding.
- ix. That in delivering saving 10, Revenues and Benefits continues to develop the holistic and preventative approach to collect outstanding council tax and business rates ensuring staff are able to sign post residents and businesses to other sources of support.
- x. That in also delivering saving 10, Revenues and Benefits would monitor the productivity of the new staff to ensure that working from home arrangements do not restrict the sharing of good practice within the team and information sharing.
- xi. Saving 4: That within the new enforcement staff team recruited to undertake the enforcement work, resource was dedicated to building relationships and communication with the Business Improvement Districts and that this work was linked with other services across the Council that also work with the BIDs.
- xii. Saving 3: That the Council continues to seek alternative funding to provide non-statutory benefits advice.
- xiii. Saving 3 (Review of Benefits Advice Team): That while the non-statutory Benefits Advice Team does not function, services across the Council work collaboratively to provide early help and intervention advice including benefits advice. These included the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service and work delivered through the Cost of Living Crisis programme.

- xiv. Saving 3 (Review of Benefits Advice Team): That Council communications would include information to signpost residents to places where advice of benefits is available.
- xv. Saving 105 (Business Improvement and Support Re-design): That work would continue at pace on delivery of saving 105 and where possible delivery would be brought forward to 2024/25.
- xvi. Saving 9 (Additional income generated through the Government's New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme): That there was a joined-up approach across Council services to maximising the opportunities from bringing empty homes back into use e.g. working with the temporary accommodation to use properties to address the shortage of long term accommodation in the City.
- xvii. Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): That members were kept informed to monitor progress of the work during 2024/25 to ensure delivery of the saving in 2025/26 including an assessment of the level of risk for the debt types to be recovered.
- xviii. Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): Once the saving starts the delivery would be monitored to ensure financial delivery of the saving and also customer satisfaction.
- xix. Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): That the Council builds on the learning from these savings to identify areas across the Council where services can be consolidated resulting in a more joined up service, better outcomes for residents and efficiencies that deliver financial savings.
- xx. Saving 188 (Contract Management Efficiencies): That the results of the analysis of contracts across the organisation was shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- xxi. Saving 228 (Fees and Charges): That City Operations explored the opportunity to charge for damage to pavements as a result of construction work on adjacent properties.
- xxii. Saving 193 (Early Intervention and Prevention – Library and NAIS re-design): That the consultation process should be well managed and executed properly to enable residents and other key stakeholders to contribute meaningfully.
- xxiii. Cross cutting recommendation: That as a principle, where possible, savings identified for 2025/26 should be brought forward to the current financial year to compensate for savings where slippage may occur.

- xxiv. That there should be a robust corporate process to ensure that documentation on the delivery of savings is up to date and shared with Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a timely way. Where actions / risks were not completed, as they were dependent on the outcome of consultation or other processes, this should be clearly explained.
- xxv. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be strengthened to keep a close eye on the impact and tracking of all savings and concentrate on those savings that have high political and financial risk.

7. TASK AND FINISH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE: CURRENT PRACTICES AND FUTURE USE OF INFORMATION TO INFORM WORK OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Chair informed members that a request for names of members to be appointed to the Task and Finish Group had been made at the last meeting of the Coordinating O&S Committee held on 19 May 2024. The Chair updated members that a meeting was held with officers on how to take the work of the Task and Finish Group forward. Revised terms of reference were agreed and circulated to members as an addendum to the agenda. The work would be completed between May – August 2024, with the two task and finish meetings taking place in June and July. The July meeting would bring in the external comments from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:-

- i. That the following members be appointed to the Task and Finish Group: Current Practices and Future Use of Information to Inform Work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
 - a. Labour Group – Cllr Albert Bore
 - b. Labour Group – Cllr Katherine Iroh
 - c. Conservatives Group – Cllr Ewan Mackey
 - d. Lib Dem Group – Cllr Morriam Jan
- ii. That the following Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group be adopted.
 - a. 2.1 Propose the Model for Scrutiny using information in relation to performance, delivery, and risk.
 - b. 2.2 Recommend the sources of information.
 - c. 2.3 Recommend how members would use the information to inform the issues that will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- d. 2.4 Recommend to the Committee the Council's strengths and weaknesses around the use of this information.
 - e. 2.5 Propose the support that Members needed to access and effectively use information.
- iii. That the Task and Finish Group would report to the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2024.

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

There were no requests for Call In for Co-ordinating OSC.

9. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

A training session on Risk Management for the Corporate and Finance OSC was being arranged. Members would be advised of the dates in due course. The Committee expressed its appreciation to all outgoing members of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 10:53am.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC
MEETING**

**1400 hours on Wednesday 15 May 2024, Committee Room 3&4, Council
House
Minutes**

Present:

Councillor Alex Aitken (Deputy Chair)

Councillors Raqeeb Aziz, Meirion Jenkins, Rashad Mahmood, Hendrina Quinnen and Ken Wood

Also Present:

Councillor Sir Albert Bore (Online)

Timothy Bell, Financial Advisor (Online)

Richard Fitzjohn, Equal Pay Programme Lead

Katy Fox, Director of People Service

Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Philip Macpherson, Oracle Programme Lead

Ian O'Donnell, Oracle Finance Business Sponsor

Mohammed Sajid, Assistant Director, Financial Strategy (Deputy Section 151 Officer)

Peter Sebastian, Interim Head of Financial Planning (Online)

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite 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 Councillors Jack Deakin and Paul Tilsley.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting.

No interests were declared.

4. EXEMPT INFORMATION – POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee agreed to move into private session should any matters be raised on the two exempt appendices under item 10 – Oracle Re-implementation.

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation order) 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of those parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 be confirmed as correct and signed by the Chair.

6. ACTION TRACKER

RESOLVED:

That the action tracker be noted.

7. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the Commissioner's comments on the agenda.

8. JOB EVALUATION AND PAY EQUITY UPDATE

Katy Fox, Director of People Services, and Richard Fitzjohn, Equal Pay Programme Lead, were in attendance for this item.

The Director of People Services highlighted the key points in the report and confirmed that the programme remains largely on track and delays experienced in the job information phase were expected while working with Trade Union partners.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

- The Committee requested a revised schedule with key milestones so that progress towards meeting the April 2025 deadline could be monitored.
- With regard to the delay in completing the Job Description/Person Specification and Job Description Questionnaire process, the scale of the budget challenge and the resulting service re-design had not become apparent until after the addendum had been signed in October 2023.
- The engagement with strategic directors and senior managers in the programme had accelerated over the last couple of months and as a result the level of contribution and timeliness of responses had increased significantly. There was also now a process in place for escalating any specific instances where people were not actively participating.
- The Council is in the very early stages of the pay and grading model and what will be done ultimately with regard to pay protection will be a matter for collective agreement with the Trade Unions when the model has been completed.
- It had become apparent through joint working groups with the Trade Union partners the extent to which they believe job descriptions were fixed and cannot be changed. The Council's position was that job descriptions are not part of a contract of employment and can be changed by a manager to reflect the job being done. This was a matter that Commissioners have been asked to give a determination on.
- The outcome of the Equal Pay Governance Board meeting on 29 April 2024 was queried and the Committee was informed that the Commissioner had determined that Trade Union colleagues can observe in the moderation panels.
- In response to a question regarding the achievability of the April 2025 deadline, the Director of People Services confirmed that a programme plan was in place to deliver by 1 April 2025. There were a number of significant dependencies in terms of collective consultation and various changes to make to collective agreements, however if everything worked to time and Trade Union partners continued to participate, the deadline would be met.
- There was a discussion regarding the potential for disputes and the Committee specifically queried the reference to equality clauses in contracts. The Director of People Services explained that, by virtue of the fact that there is an equal pay claim against the Council, if that claim was ultimately successful it would be inferred that the predominantly female workers have had equality clauses inserted into their contracts of employment. If that were the case, those clauses would have to be taken out to remove the ongoing liability to the Council in future for the rates of pay they would seek to have as comparators.

In conclusion, the Chair requested that the revised schedule with key milestones be provided to committee members and confirmed that it would be within the remit of the new Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee to monitor the programme going forward.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. The report be noted.
2. A revised schedule with key milestones be provided to the Committee so that progress towards meeting the April 2025 deadline could be monitored.

9. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2022/23

Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), and Mohammed Sajid, Assistant Director, Financial Strategy (Deputy Section 151 Officer), were in attendance for this item.

The Assistant Director, Financial Strategy highlighted the key messages in the report presented to Cabinet on 14 May 2024. He informed the Committee that finance officers were now working on the 2023/24 outturn position which it was hoped would be reported to Cabinet in July or September.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

- Clarity was sought regarding the steps taken to mitigate overspends. The Assistant Director, Financial Strategy explained that with good monitoring information it was possible to project what the outcome would be towards year-end, allowing managers to take appropriate action. That might be about raising income, or sometimes managing demand.
- Provision had been made in the 2024/25 budget so there would not be overspends every year where it was known there were pressures.
- The financial monitoring reports would provide an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny to focus on mitigations for potential underspends or overspends.
- The position with regard to reserves and the potential Equal Pay liability was discussed. The Assistant Director, Financial Strategy referred to Appendix 3 of the report which included a summary of reserves and explained that some of those reserves were ring-fenced, which meant there would still be a problem even if the Equal Pay liability was reduced to £350m.
- It was queried whether there was an expected date when there would be a more concrete figure for the Equal Pay liability. The Interim Director of Finance explained that the potential Equal Pay liability had to be accounted for in a certain way and the model was with the external auditors for checking. Once the pay and grading structure was agreed, the situation should be resolved.
- Furthermore, the Equal Pay figure did not impact on the setting of the budget and the gap of over £300m for 2024/25 was there without the Equal Pay pressure.
- There was also a redundancy programme to fund and the Exceptional Financial Support from the Government had allowed for a legal budget to be set.
- As the Dedicated School Grant was still to be finalised, it was queried whether it was feasible some schools had not received money they were entitled to. The Committee was assured that all schools should have had money due to them.
- With regard to the shortfall of £1.5m in parking, it was confirmed that had been looked at and a more realistic figure had been included in the 2024/25 budget.
- The purchase of a new bank reconciliation system was discussed. The Committee was informed that a supplier had been appointed and the plan was to implement that with the existing system. There was currently still a team in place doing manual reconciliation, however with less people than this time last year due to efficiencies.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

10. ORACLE RE-IMPLEMENTATION

Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer); Philip Macpherson, Oracle Programme Lead; and Ian O'Donnell, Oracle Finance Business Sponsor, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair referred Members to the comments received from the Commissioner on this item.

The Interim Director of Finance and Oracle Programme Lead updated the Committee on the current position. There had been an Oracle Programme Board meeting earlier that day and a team was now assembled to support delivery of the programme over the next two years.

They key point to note was that the programme was not just about IT implementation but also that significant business change was required. It was explained that “stage gates” would be an integral part of the plan to ensure successful implementation.

During the discussion, and in response to Members’ questions, the main points included:

- The Committee was assured that there was a tighter governance process in place this time and it was confirmed that regular reports would be brought to Overview and Scrutiny.
- The average daily rate for interim staff on the project was queried. The Interim Director of Finance advised that this information was confidential and would need to be provided outside of the meeting.
- The Committee welcomed the fact that permanent staff were also being recruited and noted the importance of this in terms of building knowledge and retaining expertise in the organisation post-implementation.
- The Committee agreed it was important to ensure staff were paid appropriately in line with market rates to ensure retention of staff.

Members confirmed that there were no matters to be raised on the exempt appendices.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. The report be noted.
2. The proposed approach to scrutinising the ERP Programme going forward as set out in paragraph 3.2 was agreed.
3. A confidential note setting out the average daily rate for interim staff on the project be provided to the Committee.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair introduced the report which provided an opportunity for the Committee to reflect on the work done this year and identify potential issues for the new committee’s 2024/25 work programme.

The Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager referred to Recommendation 2.3 in the report, that the Committee “considers the recommendation from Commissioners that

Scrutiny should spend time on identifying, managing and mitigating risk in real time throughout project lifecycles". It was agreed this should be considered as part of the work programme discussions in the new municipal year.

The Committee agreed that to a certain extent the work programme is driven by events and it was important to be mindful of the need to be reactive as a committee and to work with the Cabinet Member and officers to identify potential issues. The importance of having milestones included in reports to enable Overview and Scrutiny to monitor progress on finance-related matters was also stressed.

It was agreed that potential items for the June committee meeting would be followed up with officers after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. The work programme be noted.
2. Potential items for the June meeting to be followed up with officers.
3. The Committee next year considers the Commissioner's comments as set out in Recommendation 2.3 of the report.

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

None.

13. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting ended at 15:19 hours.

CORPORATE AND FINANCE OSC

ACTION TRACKER 2023/24

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Notes
27 January 2023	Cabinet Member Social Justice, Community Safety & Equalities	The Cabinet Member agreed to meet with the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council and will confirm if the letter was sent to the MPs when the definition was adopted and restate the message	<p>IN PROGRESS</p> <p>Cllr Brennan has met with Leader and is now in the process of arranging visits with a number of faith leaders, including Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leaders and will circulate the letter. It is not possible to confirm that a letter was issued to MPs, but Cllr Brennan will circulate a letter following her visit.</p> <p>UPDATE (30 Nov 2023) As a result of the current conflict in the Middle East the actions (see above) have not taken place as previously advised. The Cabinet Member and Officers are in regular discussions with the Jewish Community and the CST and will reconsider actions as a result of the conflict and increases in Antisemitism that have been seen.</p>
16 June 2023	Developing the Co-ordinating OSC Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24	A short briefing note on OFLOG, and its functions and powers, to be produced once more is known about it.	<p>COMPLETED</p> <p>The Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services circulated a briefing from the Centre of Governance and Scrutiny on this (via email) ahead of the January OSC Committee meeting.</p>

15 Sept 2023	Financial Challenges – Scrutiny Contribution	Interim Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) to ensure that information on statutory recommendations is forwarded to members.	IN PROGRESS / ONGOING
15 Sept 2023	Financial Challenges – Scrutiny Contribution	Discussion be held with the Chair of the Audit Committee and OSC Chairs on how to modify work programmes and if such modifications are necessary to ensure that value was added in the context of financial challenges.	IN PROGRESS / ONGOING This is being picked up as part of work to respond to the CfGS Governance Review, especially recommendation 6 (<i>Strengthen working relationships between the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function</i>) and recommendation 7 (<i>Put in place new arrangements for the support of the internal audit function, the audit committee, and the links between audit and scrutiny</i>).
13 Oct 2023	Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and update on Council’s response to Section 114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan.	That a cross-party/cross OSC Task and Finish Group led by Finance and Resources OSC be set up to discuss budgetary issues. This would be Chaired by the Chair of Finances and Resources OSC but involving the other Chairs of OSCs.	COMPLETED Final report considered by Finance and Resources OSC on 24 January ahead of recommendations be considered by Cabinet at the end of February and by Full Council in March.
13 Oct 2023	Scrutiny Work Programme	The Chair highlighted that there would be a need for each of the scrutiny work programmes to refocus on the Council’s recovery, budget and improvement priorities to ensure the best use of Scrutiny resource and the time of officers across the council working with scrutiny.	IN PROGRES / ONGOING Information in relation to indicative priorities/workstreams for the Improvement and Recovery Plan, including proposed themes/outcomes, considered by all OSCs during January and February. Following this, Scrutiny Chairs collectively reviewed all work programmes as part of an informal meeting held on 23 February. Further work in this area will be supported

			by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny who held a workshop with the Committee on 23 February, with a second workshop scheduled for 15 March. This work will help to prioritise both budget and non-budget aspects of the scrutiny work programme and will help identify new ways of doing this work.
19 Mar 2024	Scrutiny Work Programme	The Chair highlighted that there would be a need informal Task and Finish Groups to meet during April 2024 in private sessions to consider delivery plans. The plans contained exempt information. A public Coordination O & S Committee would then be held in May 2024 to receive reports from Scrutiny Committees.	In progress/ Ongoing Each Overview & Scrutiny Committee held an informal (i.e. private) Task & Finish meeting to consider the Delivery Plans of the 2024-25 Budget savings. Some of the Delivery Plans included confidential information- staffing information, legal risks, some commercial elements – and were not published. Cabinet Members and CLT, as appropriate, were invited to attend the Task and Finish Group meetings.
17 May 2024	Scrutiny Work Programme	That a Task and Finish Group: Current Practices and Future Use of Information to Inform Work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees be appointed. That the Task and Finish Group would report to the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2024. The Chair highlighted that in July, the Corporate and Finance OSC would focus on the 2024-25 savings reported to the Improvement and Recovery Board.	In progress/ Ongoing In May, Co-ordinating O&S Committee met and considered feedback report from the Task & Finish Groups. Notes from the Task and Finish Group meetings were not published with the agenda following receiving legal advice that It would be prejudicial to the Council to do so. The Chair would convene a meeting with the Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer, the Interim City Solicitor and

		<p>Also in July, a Task and Finish Group meeting of Corporate and Finance OSC would look at the budget pressures for the 2024-25, 2025-26 and 2026-27 municipal years. The meeting would also cover the Mid Term Financial Plan.</p>	<p>Monitoring Officer, as well as the Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services to discuss and raise the concerns by members regarding the non-publication of notes from the Task and Finish Groups.</p> <p>Between May – July 2025, each O&S Committee would hold meetings, in public, to review the implementation of the savings identified for 2024-25.</p> <p>From July onwards, Corporate & Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee would consider a Scrutiny contribution to the 2025-26 Budget.</p>
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FINANCE AND RESOURCES OSC

ACTION TRACKER 2023/24 – MARCH 2024

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
15-May-24	Job Evaluation and Pay Equity Update	A revised schedule with key milestones to be provided to the Committee so that progress towards meeting the April 2025 deadline could be monitored. <i>[Katy Fox/Richard Fitzjohn]</i>	Requested
	Oracle Re-implementation	A confidential note setting out the average daily rate for interim staff on the project	Requested

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		to be provided to the Committee. <i>[Fiona Greenway/Philip Macpherson)</i>	
14-Dec-23	Section 151 Officer Update on the Financial Position of the Council – December 2023	<p>The Interim Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the parameters set for Slough Borough Council and Croydon Council with regard to Council Tax increases and the analysis done of all councils that had issued notices; <p>A written response from the Assistant Director, Revenues, Benefits and Rents, on the criteria applied for setting the level of Council Tax Support.</p>	Requested
	Oracle Stabilisation Update	A written response to be provided to the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee on the position regarding Council invoices and payments – is the Council invoicing and receiving payments on time, are they being tracked, and what is the impact on the Council’s finances?).	Requested
07-Sep-23	Oracle Stabilisation Update	All reports relating to Oracle (external auditors’ review, CfGS wider governance	Ongoing – to be included in work programme.

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		review and management review) to be shared with Chair of Finance & Resources OSC (this links with the request from the July meeting - see below).	CfGS Governance Review published for Cabinet on 12 December.
	Job Evaluation – Permanent Pay Equity	A request was made for the document prepared by Legal detailing the chronology of how the Equal Pay issue has manifested itself over a period of years, to be shared with Committee members. It was agreed this would be picked up with the Monitoring Officer.	Response received: Chronology may be available by end of January.
27-Jul-23	Action Tracker	List of regalia and artefacts to be provided.	A follow-up request has been made.
	Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Implications of Equal Pay	The timescales for the whistleblowing investigation, management review, Governance Review and the two pieces of work being done by External Audit around value for money on Oracle and Equal Pay to be provided to the Chair and that when they conclude the reports be brought to Committee.	CfGS Governance Review published for Cabinet on 12 December.

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
	Oracle Stabilisation Update	Once the management review is concluded, the report to be brought to Committee.	To be programmed – date to be confirmed.

29-Jun-23	Developing the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2023/24	Discussion on Equal Pay - the following information to be provided: 1. Response from the Leader to the Committee's request to be consulted on the work on Values Framework.	Values Framework still in progress.
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