

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023 AT 14:00 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, 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.

3 - 8

4 **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 June 2023.

9 - 10

5 **ACTION TRACKER**

To note the action tracker.

11 - 20

6 **WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

To agree the work programme.

7 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of the next meeting on Thursday 21 September at 1400 hours in Committee Room 6

8 **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).

9 **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.

10 **AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

Chair to move:-

'In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee'.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**HOMES O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING**

1400 hours on Thursday 22 June 2023, Committee Room 6, Council House

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Chair)

Councillors: Ziaul Islam, Saqib Khan, Rinkal Shergill and Penny Wagg

Also Present:

Paul Clarke, AD, Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division (PPI), Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate

Wayne Davies, Director, Asset Management

Marie Dobinson, Acting Improvement and Change Partner

Claire Flowers, AD, Housing Development

Stephen Gabriel, Director, Housing Management

Chris Jordan, AD, Neighbourhoods

Paul Langford, Interim Strategic Director, City Housing

Naomi Morris, Housing Modernisation and Partnership Manager

Stephen Philpott, Director, Housing Solutions and Support Service

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting will 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 are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Lauren Rainbow, Ron Storer and Ken Wood.

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, and none were declared.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Noted the resolution of the City Council meeting appointing the Committee, Chair and Members to serve on the Committee for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2024.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Cllr Lauren Rainbow was elected as 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 2024.

6. HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

(See document No. 1)

The Terms of Reference for the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee were noted.

7. MINUTES

(See document No. 2)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 May 2023 were agreed.

8. ACTION TRACKER

(See document No. 3)

RESOLVED:

That the action tracker was noted.

9. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE AND FLEXIBLE SCRUTINY

(See document No. 4)

The Chair introduced the document which had been developed and agreed by the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that this was about a more flexible way of delivering Scrutiny and other options can be considered as well as formal meetings, focussing on the best way to add value.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee noted the development of a flexible and effective work programme for 2023/24 as developed by members of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the last municipal year 2022/23.

10. DEVELOPING THE HOMES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

(See document No. 5)

Paul Clarke, Assistant Director, Programmes, Performance and Improvement Division (PPI), Strategy, Equality and Partnership Directorate, Wayne Davies, Director, Asset Management, Marie Dobinson, Acting Improvement and Change Partner, Claire Flowers, Assistant Director, Housing Development, Stephen Gabriel, Director, Housing Management, Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods, Paul Langford, Interim Strategic Director, City Housing, Naomi Morris, Housing Modernisation and Partnership Manager, and Stephen Philpott, Director, Housing Solutions and Support Service, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair invited officers to briefly introduce themselves and following this a request was made for a structure chart, including names, titles and areas of responsibility, to be shared with members of the Committee. Paul Langford undertook to provide this.

Members were informed that Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the work programme report had been provided to assist with identifying priorities for 2023/24 and there had also been an informal meeting where some ideas had been put forward for consideration.

During the discussion, the following areas of work were identified:

Voids – Improving Standards

- This piece of work had been started by Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year, with a presentation from City Housing in March, and it was confirmed that the Terms of Reference could be updated for the Committee to take forward with a Task and Finish approach.
- It was agreed that the Committee would pick up this piece of work first, with scope and timescale to be confirmed.

Decent Homes Standard

- Aims and objectives and method of scrutiny to be discussed and agreed.

Tenant Engagement

- Aims and objectives and method of scrutiny to be discussed and agreed.

Affordable Housing Plan

- Aims and objectives and method of scrutiny to be discussed and agreed.

Performance Monitoring

- The Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been receiving quarterly performance monitoring reports.
- Future reporting to be discussed and agreed.

Exempt Accommodation

- The Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be picking up the tracking of the outstanding recommendations from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee inquiry on Exempt Accommodation and this will be programmed in.

CWG Legacy

- Every Overview and Scrutiny Committee has this in their remit and consideration will need to be given to how it fits into the Homes remit and whether there is anything to be taken forward on that.

Domestic Abuse

- This relates to a Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolution asking Scrutiny Chairs to discuss how Domestic Abuse is relevant to their own committees and how they can have an involvement.

The Chair confirmed that officers would be consulted on the development of the work programme and that there would be a more thorough Member discussion at the July meeting.

RESOLVED:

- That the Committee:
 - Noted the information set out in Appendices 1 – 3 and identified a menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.
 - Confirmed the issues that the Committee will consider during September – October 2023, including the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny, will be discussed in more detail and agreed in July.
 - Noted that a draft work programme will be presented to the Committee meeting in July for consideration and approval.
 - Noted, subject to a further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.
- That Committee members will be provided with a structure chart, including names, titles and areas of responsibility.

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

None.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

13. SCHEDULE OF MEETING DATES FOR COMMITTEE MEETING AND SCRUTINY WORK

RESOLVED:

That the proposed schedule of meeting dates was noted.

14. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1433 hours.

**HOMES O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023/24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Notes
22 June 2023	Developing the Homes O&S Committee's Work Programme 2023/24	City Housing management structure chart and responsibilities to be shared with Members.	Emailed to Members on 27 th June.

Birmingham City Council
Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 20 July 2023



Subject: Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

Report of: Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services

Report author: Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
amelia.wiltshire@birmingham.gov.uk
 07825 979253

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24, based on the Committee's meeting in June 2023. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 The report also refers to other topics, which the Committee has identified, for future consideration, and this will be continuously updated during the year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
 - Notes the information set out in Appendix 1 and identifies if any further topics need to be added to the menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.
 - Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider during September – October 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
 - Identifies, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider in November 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
 - Agrees the membership and chairing of a Task & Finish group on Voids – Improving Standards.
 - Notes, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Co-

ordinating O&S to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

3 Background

3.1 The [statutory guidance for local government overview and scrutiny](#) sets out the role it can play in holding an authority's decision makers to account. This makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.

3.2 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 improvements in public services.

3.3 The role and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are outlined in [The City Council's Constitution | Birmingham City Council](#) They will:

- Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, the Executive and/or other organisations in connection with the discharge of the functions specified in their terms of reference.
- Consider any matter covered in their terms of reference that may affect or be likely to have an effect on the citizens of Birmingham; relevant to the Council's strategic objectives; relevant to major issues faced by officers in managing a function of the Council; and likely to make contribution to moving the Council forward and achieving key performance targets.

3.4 Effective scrutiny needs to add value. A well planned and timely work programme enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be involved at the right time and in the right way, and ensure their involvement is meaningful and can influence the outcome.

3.5 Members often have a number of topics suggested to them and are therefore required to **prioritise** matters for consideration. The Scrutiny Framework sets out the following factors to be considered:

- Public interest: concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen.
- Ability to change: priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence.
- Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well.
- Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the city.
- Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication.

Looking Ahead

- 3.6 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will identify a 'menu' of issues (including policy development, policy review, issues of accountability and statutory functions) at the start of the year. Each Committee should then regularly review their 'menu' and decide which issues need to be examined further, and how that work would be undertaken. Scrutiny activities should be thorough and undertaken in a timely manner.

Scrutiny Methods

- 3.7 There are a range of ways to undertake scrutiny. The approach for 2023-24 enables flexible scrutiny and outlines a shift from monthly formal meetings to a combination of approaches. The Committee will choose the most effective scrutiny method to achieve the desired aims and objectives for each topic.
- 3.8 Based on Statutory Guidance published in 2019, different scrutiny methods include (but are not limited to):
- A single item, or items, on a committee agenda – this method fits more closely with the “overview” aspect of the Scrutiny function and provides limited opportunity for effective scrutiny. It is most appropriate for specific issues where the committee wants to maintain a watching brief.
 - A single item meeting, either as the committee or a more limited number of Members. It has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
 - A task and finish day - provided that these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics.
 - A task and finish review – this is an enhancement of the previous option being held over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.

Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee's Terms of Reference is to fulfil its functions as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:

- Council Housing management services, repairs and maintenance programmes.
- Best use of housing stock across all housing providers.
- Neighbourhood management initiatives and the housing growth agenda (Birmingham Social Housing Partnership).
- Private rented sector, licensing and regulation.
- Tenancy engagement in the management and development of social housing and Housing Liaison Boards.

- Exempt accommodation.
- Housing Options for vulnerable adults, children, young people and offenders.
- Temporary accommodation provision.
- Homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Supply of homes to meet housing need.

3.9 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Mohammed Idrees, and its membership comprises Cllrs Ziaul Islam, Saqib Khan, Lauren Rainbow, Rinkal Shergill, Ron Storer, Penny Wagg and Ken Wood.

4 Work Programme 2023-24

- 4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the topics the Committee will consider over the next few months, and also outlines future items for consideration.
- 4.2 The Committee may decide to add further items to the work programme during the course of the year. When considering this, the Committee is advised to consider where it can best add value through scrutiny, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in 3.5.
- 4.3 The Council's latest [Forward Plan](#) may 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
009213/2021	Development of Housing at Dawberry Fields Road	25 Apr 23
010625/2023	Bromford Housing Development, Open Space Improvement, Procurement Strategy and revised FBC	10 Oct 23
010770/2023	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	10 Oct 23
010840/2023	Asset Management Strategy	10 Oct 23
011085/2023	Three Cities Whole House Retrofit Pilot – Interim Progress	27 Jun 23
011222/2023	City Housing Investment Proposal to Supply Accommodation for Homeless Families	27 Jun 23
011285/2023	Development of Housing at Yardley Brook – Scheme Update and revised Full Business Case (FBC)	27 Jun 23
011496/2023	Procurement Routes for Affordable Housing Delivery	05 Sep 23
011498/2023	Securing Emergency Temporary Accommodation	05 Sep 23
011746/2023	Local Authority Housing Fund - Round 2	10 Oct 23

- 4.4 Overview and Scrutiny Chairs are advised to maintain regular engagement with Cabinet Members to enable flexibility to be built into the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, so as to respond to the Council's policy priorities in a timely way.

5 Any Finance Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

6 Any Legal Implications

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

7 Any Equalities Implications

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 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; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 7.4 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.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Work Programme 2023-24 – July

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)

Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Voids – Improving Standards	To be confirmed by Task and Finish Group	Task and Finish Group meetings	Director, Housing Management – Stephen Gabriel		<p>The Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee in 2022-23 agreed to review Voids – Improving Standards. A Terms of Reference was approved in February 2023, and the Council's City Housing service presented in March 2023. Committee members also took part in visits to City Housing void properties. The intention had been to continue into 2023-24.</p> <p>As there is now a dedicated Homes O&S Committee for 2023-24, the scope of these Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the first Task and Finish Group meeting.</p>
September	Social Housing Regulation Bill	<p>Provide information on what the Social Housing Regulation Bill means for the Council's City Housing service</p> <p>Understand how City Housing will achieve compliance with the Social Housing Regulation Bill, and preparation for inspection from the Regulator for Social Housing in April 2024</p>	<p>Committee meeting - single item: 21 Sep 2023, 2pm.</p> <p>Venue: Room 6, Council House</p> <p>Deadline for Papers: 12 September 2023</p>	Head of Service, Strategic Enabling – Naomi Morris		<p>This Bill intends to deliver the reforms outlined in the Social Housing White Paper and address the concerns following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. It will introduce a stronger and more proactive regulatory regime to improve standards and accountability for landlords for the services they provide.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		Consider how Overview and Scrutiny can support the drive towards achieving compliance for the Regulator				
September	Housing Ombudsman – Paragraph 49	Provide information on the progress made towards delivering on the recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman, Paragraph 49 report	Committee meeting - single item: 21 Sep 2023, 2pm. Venue: Room 6, Council House Deadline for Papers: 12 September 2023	Head of Service, Strategic Enabling – Naomi Morris		In January, the Housing Ombudsman published a special report on Birmingham City Council. The report made recommendations relating to repair handling; complaint handling; record keeping and compensation policy.
October	Exempt Accommodation	Provide update on progress of outstanding recommendations from Exempt Accommodation inquiry Consider the impact of the recommendations from the Inquiry	Committee meeting - single item: 19 Oct 2023, 2pm. Venue: Room 6, Council House Deadline for Papers: 10 October 2023	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, Cllr Jayne Francis Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling – Guy Chaundy		Exempt Accommodation Inquiry , 2021 Latest update to Co-ordinating O&S Committee (March 2023)

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

Menu of Options for Future 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 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
Affordable Housing	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee
Customer Services – Housing Repairs	To be confirmed following July's Co-ordinating O&S Committee. Currently: Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme	To be confirmed	Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Housing Repairs. A final Task and Finish group took place on 14 June 2023, and a report will be presented to Co-ordinating O&S in July. Following this, it is intended that Homes O&S Committee takes forward this work for Housing Repairs in the future and will discuss how to do this at its July Committee.
Decent Homes	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee and in particular, the Task and Finish Group for Voids – Improving Standards.	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee and in particular, the Task and Finish Group for Voids – Improving Standards.
Performance	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Tenant Engagement	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee	This will be confirmed following further discussions by the O&S Committee

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

