

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 06 MARCH 2024 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.

- 5 - 10**
- 4 **MINUTES**
- To confirm the minutes for the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 6 December 2023.
- 11 - 20**
- 5 **ACTION TRACKER**
- To note the action tracker.
- 6 **COMMISSIONERS REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**
- To note that comments have been received from the Commissioner and are attached under item 8 - Customer Services Programme: Bereavement Services.
- 21 - 26**
- 7 **DELAYS IN BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATIONS**
- Sajeela Naseer, Director, Regulation and Enforcement and Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services in attendance.
- 27 - 36**
- 8 **CUSTOMER SERVICES PROGRAMME: BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**
- Sajeela Naseer, Director, Regulation and Enforcement and Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services in attendance.
- 37 - 48**
- 9 **WORK PROGRAMME**
- Members to agree the work programme.
- 10 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- To note that the date of the next meeting is moved from 10 April, 2024 to 17 April, 2024 at 1400 hours in Committee Room 6.
- 11 **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).
- 12 **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.
- 13 **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**

**NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Wednesday, 6 December 2023,**

**Committee Room 6, Council House**

**Minutes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Shabrana Hussain - Chair

Councillors: Marcus Bernasconi, Marje Bridle, and Izzy Knowles

**Also Present:**

Cllr Nicky Brennan, Chair, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) and Cabinet Member, Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities

Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Environment

Waqar Ahmed, AD, Community Safety and Resilience

Chief Inspector Sara Beech on behalf of Chief Superintendent Richard North, Vice Chair, BCSP

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Pamela Powis, Senior Service Manager, Safer Places

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Les Williams, Principal Operations Manager, Street Scene

**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 on behalf of Cllrs Gurdial Singh Atwal, Ray Goodwin, and Darius Sandhu.

**3. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBER**

The Chair thanked Cllr Deirdre Alden for serving on the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

That the appointment of Councillor Darius Sandhu in place of Councillor Deidre Alden for the period ending with the Annual General Meeting of the City Council in 2024 be noted.

#### **4. 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.

#### **5. MINUTES**

(See document No. 1)

##### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **6. ACTION TRACKER**

(See document No. 2)

The Chair proposed the outstanding actions relating to fly tipping, draft litter prevention strategy, cleaner streets issues and the two recommendations the committee prepared after its July meeting were all picked up in a workshop on 10 January 2024 instead of the scheduled committee meeting, and this was agreed.

The Chair advised the audit trail into the signoff of the four non-deliverable savings had been passed to the Director for Operations and the S151 Officer and confirmed she raised this with the Budget Task & Finish Group who will pick this up. A request was made for clarity on what was going to be picked up and the timescales for this in light of the Governance report, which referenced lack of effective member oversight and a tendency to minimise bad news.

##### **RESOLVED:**

That:

- The action tracker was noted.
- Agreed a workshop takes place on 10 January 2024 instead of the scheduled committee meeting.
- Clarity to be provided from the Budget Task & Finish Group on what was going to be picked up and the timescales in relation to the audit trail of the four non-deliverable savings.

#### **7. COMMISSIONERS REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**

##### **RESOLVED:**

That no comments had been received from the Commissioner on this agenda was noted.

#### **8. BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP'S ANNUAL REPORT**

(See document No. 3)

Cllr Nicky Brennan, Chair, BCSP and Cabinet Member, Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities, Chief Inspector Sara Beech on behalf of Chief Superintendent Richard North, Vice Chair, BCSP, Waqar Ahmed, AD, Community Safety and Resilience, and Pamela Powis, Senior Service Manager, Safer Places, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair, BCSP gave an overview of the annual report which was about how they work in partnership to achieve better outcomes for communities and their priorities: violence reduction, building safer neighbourhoods, protecting people from harm, and reducing offending.

Officers provided an overview and key challenges for last year, which included the BCSP's governance review to ensure they were responding to statutory responsibilities and identified resident's needs, the resetting of the thematic groups, the review and repurposing of the six Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) in light of the changes within the Council and the new policing model, and new relationships have been developed, such as with network rail to assist with street intervention.

Also, the new policing model provided challenges and opportunities, such as addressing some cross border issues, and improved information sharing within the LCSPs. The Chief Inspector highlighted there was focus within the LCSPs around people and place, and their approach moving forward will be more cojoined.

In addition, future work included a focus on the changes to the Criminal Justice Bill which will bring new powers and responsibilities and the Government's review of BCSP's remit and expanding responsibilities.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

#### **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

The Committee discussed the legislation and procedures for how they deal with begging with key partners which included the new data sharing protocol, strengthening the partnership tasking group, and referrals being made to assist beggars who needed help.

In response to the Committee's concern regarding the rise in ASB incidents, officers commented they recognised the scale of ASB in Birmingham and lack of street intervention officers. Officers were working on an integrated approach to ASB - cuckooing was a part of this, and the ASB pilot could lead to a more robust co-ordinated approach with the Police. An update on the integrated approach to ASB and a progress report on the pilot to be provided when they have meaningful data and information.

#### **Locality Working and LCSPs**

The meeting was informed that membership invitations for the LCSPs will be sent out shortly and LCSPs will make the decisions as to where officers were deployed. Locality-based Community Safety Intervention Officers have only been in place since August 2023. An impact report on the additional value and progress of the Locality-based Community Safety Intervention Officers in 12 months was requested.

The Committee valued the work of neighbourhood policing and was informed West Midlands Police focus was responding to 999 calls and they were in a transition period whilst staff were being upskilled as investigators.

#### **Re-deployable CCTV Cameras**

Officers detailed the guidance that governed when and where cameras could be placed, acknowledged activity could increase when the CCTV camera was removed, and were exploring whether they can use the same technology as the new fly-tipping CCTV cameras. It was suggested future reports could include more data on the use of the re-deployable CCTV cameras.

## **Operation Hercules**

Further information was provided on operation Hercules and officers were awaiting the court decision regarding whether the interim injunction will go to a permanent injunction.

## **Funding**

In response to concerns regarding possible reductions in funding, including external grant funding, the Committee was informed the BCSP would still need to be funded due to its statutory responsibilities, which would still be the case if policing responsibilities came within the responsibility of the West Midlands Mayor. Officers gave examples whereby they sought opportunities to optimise funding and undertook to provide a briefing paper on the breakdown of the sources of funding and funding amounts, and to report back to the Committee if there were risks to the grant funding.

## **RESOLVED:**

That:

- The 2022/23 annual report of the BCSP was noted approved.
- The BCSP to provide the following:
  - A progress report on the ASB pilot when they have meaningful data and information.
  - An update on the ASB integrated approach to include cuckooing.
  - The future BCSP's annual report to include more data on the use of re-deployable CCTV cameras.
  - An impact report on the additional value and progress of the Locality-based Community Safety Intervention Officers in 12 months (August 2024)
  - A briefing paper on the breakdown of the sources of funding and funding amounts.
  - To report back to the Committee if any risks to the grant funding were identified.

## **9. IMPACT OF S114 SPEND CONTROL ON THE LEVEL OF MISSED WASTE COLLECTIONS**

(See document No. 4)

The Chair welcomed Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member, Environment, and Les Williams, Principal Operations Manager, Street Scene to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member made a point of clarification, in that the data contained within appendices A and B were for individual citizen reports rather than dropped rounds.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

The Cabinet Member highlighted there were two types of data: individual citizen's reporting a missed collection, and a daily report on missed roads and the reasons for these. There was to be a transformation plan that included Members being notified of



the missed collections and reasons for these in their ward, and the Chair commented this would be discussed further at the Committee's workshop in January.

Members gave examples of missed garden waste collections, to which the Cabinet Member, Environment, apologised and highlighted this was not a reflection of the 74,000 green waste subscribers and the Council maintaining the number of subscribers even though subscription costs had increased. Also, they have a garden waste co-ordinator who deals with the complaints, and Members could contact the Cabinet Member if they had individual cases they wanted investigated.

The Committee was informed the new Interim Director for Street Scene will start on 18 December 2023 and the appointment of an Interim Director for Parks was subject to agreement from the spend control board. The Committee requested the new Interim Director for Street Scene was invited to their workshop on 10th January 2024.

In response to the request for Members to have officers contact details regarding specific services, the Cabinet Member stated there has been a lot of staff movement, and he will be having discussions with the new Interim Director for Street Scene regarding the best way to deliver the services.

The meeting discussed the separate services for picking up fly-tipping on housing land, which was paid for by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and other council owned land. The Cabinet Member, Environment, commented he would be having discussions with the new Interim Director for Street Scene and the Committee agreed this provided ideal transformation and efficiency opportunities. The Cabinet Member suggested the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also want to look at this issue.

The Cabinet Member, Environment highlighted the Christmas and new year waste collection dates had been circulated to all Members and requested they shared these with their networks and within their wards. He explained the rescheduled dates took into account no additional funding for overtime and the Tyseley transfer station operational days. The Committee was informed sickness absence and bad weather could have a negative impact on collections and there were a number of measures to minimise the impact on residents including the retainment of the green waste crews so they could provide contingency cover.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- The Committee noted the report.
- The Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee may want to look at the potential of amalgamating the current separate services for fly tipping on housing land funded by the Housing Revenue Account, and on other Council owned land.

**10. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No. 5)

The Chair informed Members it was important for all committees to reflect on the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review and how the work programmes aligned with the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.

Also, the Budget Task & Finish Group was meeting in December and January to examine the 2024/25 budget savings and the Committee agreed to hold a meeting on Teams in

January to discuss the budget savings in relation to the Committee's remit, and further discussions will be programmed as required.

The Committee discussed the work programme and agreed:

The 10 January 2024 waste workshop will include:

- The new Interim Director for Street Scene to be in attendance to inform the fly-tipping prevention discussion.
- A demonstration of 'slab in the cab.'
- Ward level information from the Land Audit Management System (LAMS) and as much information available to answer the Committee's recommendation 1 (pages 57 and 58 in the agenda pack).
- Accurate data and analysis of missed collections.

The 7 February 2023 committee meeting items will be delays in births and deaths registrations, and bereavement customer services.

The Committee discussed future agenda items and agreed the workshop in January will be extended by 30 minutes to allow the Committee to discuss their work programme in light of the Governance review.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme was agreed and subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

**11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

The next formal meeting to be held on 7 February 2024 at 1400 hours.

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

None.

**13. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**14. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

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

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The meeting ended at 15.57 hours.

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                                          | Outstanding Action                                                                                                                                       | Notes / Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 Jun 23 | Developing the Neighbourhoods O&S Committee's Work Programme 2023/24 | Officers to report back on how the Council can measure how localisation is having an impact and is making improvement to services.                       | Awaiting information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 5 Jul 23 | Fly Tipping Enforcement                                              | The key points from the discussion will be developed into recommendations by Fiona Bottrill and agreed by the Committee following the committee meeting. | <p>The key points from the discussion have been made into two recommendations which have been shared with the Committee and have been incorporated into the relevant agenda item for the October 2023 committee meeting and the workshop on 10 January 2024.</p> <p><b>Outstanding:</b></p> <p>The Street Scene Service should develop a fly tipping prevention plan based on the analysis of data and information in consultation with the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee that will aim to change behaviour and stop fly tipping occurring.</p> <p>Ward level information should be shared with ward members and the City Observatory.</p> |
| 4 Oct 23 | Cleaner Streets Tracking                                             | The street cleaning schedules to be shared with all Councillors.                                                                                         | Awaiting information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                    | Outstanding Action                                                                                                                                                   | Notes / Update                                          |
|----------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                                | The wards contacts for street cleaning and waste collection to be provided to all Councillors.                                                                       | Awaiting information.                                   |
|          |                                                | The Cabinet Member to present the draft litter prevention strategy to the Committee before the end of the year for comment and feedback.                             | This is outstanding and subject to wider restructuring. |
| 4 Oct 23 | Fly Tipping Enforcement                        | Sajeela Naseer to provide a report when appropriate on selective licensing and the positive effect on reducing fly tipping.                                          | Awaiting report.                                        |
|          |                                                | Cabinet Member to provide all Councillors with the point of contact to report business and trade waste on the public highway and fly tipping on private land.        | Awaiting information.                                   |
| 1 Nov 23 | Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings | The Chair agreed to ask the Commissioners if they would like to attend a future committee meeting to open a dialogue with the Commissioner overseeing the portfolio. |                                                         |
| 1 Nov 23 | Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy             | A written report to be provided to the Committee prior to the final Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2024 presentation to Cabinet.                                 | Awaiting report.                                        |
|          |                                                | Officers to explore whether additional special training sessions could be provided to Councillors.                                                                   | Awaiting.                                               |

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                             | Outstanding Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Notes / Update                                                                      |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Nov 23 | Work Programme                                          | January 2024 Committee Meeting - Draft Litter Prevention Strategy: The Committee's recommendation one (page 245 in the papers) included a fly tipping prevention plan which should be discussed alongside the draft litter prevention strategy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Discussed at the workshop on 10 January 2024 and is subject to wider restructuring. |
| 6 Dec 23 | Birmingham Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report | <p>The BCSP to provide the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A progress report on the ASB pilot when they have meaningful data and information.</li> <li>• An update on the ASB integrated approach to include cuckooing.</li> <li>• The future BCSP's annual report to include more data on the use of re-deployable CCTV cameras.</li> <li>• An impact report on the additional value and progress of the Locality-based Community Safety Intervention Officers in 12 months (August 2024)</li> <li>• A briefing paper on the breakdown of the sources of funding and funding amounts.</li> <li>• To report back to the Committee if any risks to the grant funding were identified.</li> </ul> |                                                                                     |

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

| Date       | Agenda Item                                                          | Completed Action                                                                                                                                          | Notes / Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7 Jun 2023 | Action Trackers                                                      | The 'slab in the cab' will be discussed at a committee meeting, with this information then being available to all Members.                                | The workshop to place on 10 January 2024.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 7 Jun 2023 | Developing the Neighbourhoods O&S Committee's Work Programme 2023/24 | The cleaner streets paper, and recommendations made to the Cabinet Member to be e-mailed to the Committee.                                                | E-mailed on 20 June 2023.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|            |                                                                      | The Commonwealth Games Legacy Framework to be e-mailed to Members.                                                                                        | E-mailed on 21 June 2023.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|            |                                                                      | A copy of the briefing paper for the Cabinet Member regarding the Community Safety Partnership review day to be e-mailed to the Committee.                | This information was provided in the presentation at the 5 July 2023 committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                         |
|            |                                                                      | Cleaner Streets and Fly Tipping – a position paper to include an update on the meeting with officers from legal services, and performance on fly tipping. | Information provided at the October 2023 committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 5 Jul 23   | Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BSCP)                       | A list of the local managers for the six locations to be provided.                                                                                        | E-mailed the information on 7 September 2023.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 6 Sep 23   | Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Savings and Recovery Plan        | The level of missed garden waste collections and the scale of income being lost through the refund process to be provided.                                | At the October committee meeting the Cabinet Member highlighted that there were 55 properties with three or more missed consecutive collections that were entitled to a refund. At the November committee meeting it was confirmed this refund totalled £2,750. |

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                                                                                                        | Completed Action                                                                                                                                                        | Notes / Update                                                                 |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                                                                                                                    | The position on the redevelopment of the Lifford Lane depot and whether this would still be going ahead to be provided.                                                 | The Committee was informed on 1 November 2023 that deliberations were ongoing. |
| 6 Sep 23 | Work Programme                                                                                                                     | Members to let scrutiny officers know if they have any further comments on the recommendations to be incorporated into the report for the October meeting.              | No further comments received.                                                  |
| 4 Oct 23 | Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on the Council's Response to the S114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan | The pro-forma for each saving to be provided.                                                                                                                           | The information was provided at the November committee meeting.                |
|          |                                                                                                                                    | Relevant officers provide fully developed presentations to future committee meetings.                                                                                   | The relevant officers attended the November committee meeting.                 |
| 4 Oct 23 | Fly Tipping Enforcement                                                                                                            | Paul Pritchard to provide the standard letter sent when addresses were found in fly tipping to the Committee.                                                           | Emailed to the Committee on 23 October 2023.                                   |
|          |                                                                                                                                    | A future report and separate demonstration / workshop to be arranged to address the fly tipping recommendations made by the Committee as set out in the work programme. | The workshop took place on 10 January 2024.                                    |
| 4 Oct 23 | Work Programme                                                                                                                     | The Bee Friendly Brum initiative (Petition – Ban Use of Pesticides) be added to the menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.                   | Work Programme updated.                                                        |

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                    | Completed Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Notes / Update                                    |
|----------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                                | <p>The Localisation item be moved to the December agenda.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member to present the draft litter prevention strategy to the Committee for comment and feedback (as discussed under the Cleaner Streets Item).</p> |                                                   |
| 1 Nov 23 | Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings | An audit trail of the process for how the four non-deliverable savings were signed off, to include timelines, responsible officers, and supporting paperwork is provided for the next committee meeting.                         | This will be picked up by the Budget T&F Group.   |
|          |                                                | The £710,000 non-delivery savings for Customer Services – Bereavement to be picked up when the Bereavement item was discussed at the January committee meeting.                                                                  | Work programme updated.                           |
| 1 Nov 23 | Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy             | The weblink for the consultation be e-mailed to Committee Members to disseminate.                                                                                                                                                | E-mailed to Committee Members on 3 November 2023. |
| 1 Nov 23 | Work Programme                                 | December 2023 Committee Meeting: Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings Item:                                                                                                                                            |                                                   |



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

| Date | Agenda Item | Completed Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Notes / Update                                                                                                                                       |
|------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |             | <p>An audit trail of the process for how the four non-deliverable savings were signed off, to include timelines, responsible officers, and supporting paperwork to be provided for the next committee meeting (agreed under item 7).</p> <p>The Committee was concerned about the impact of S114 spend controls on the level of missed waste collections, which is an essential service. A request was made for the Strategic Director to attend and provide statistics on missed collections for the individual depots before and after spending controls measures, and also statistics on missed green waste collections.</p> | <p>This action will be picked up by the Budget Task &amp; Finish Group.</p> <p>This action was discussed at the December 2023 committee meeting.</p> |
|      |             | <p>December 2023 Committee Meeting - The Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Annual Report: The Committee requested information is provided on measures to tackle cuckooing, and an update on the operation and impact of the introduction of localised community safety officers.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Discussed at the December 2023 committee meeting.</p>                                                                                             |

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

| Date     | Agenda Item                                                           | Completed Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Notes / Update                                                                                                                     |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                                                                       | Customer Services – Bereavement Services, the £710,000 non-delivery savings should be discussed (agreed under item 7).                                                                                                                                                                                  | Work Programme updated.                                                                                                            |
|          |                                                                       | <p>The perceived rise in incursions onto parks and green spaces, to include enforcement powers and the security of green spaces to be added to the Menu of Topics.</p> <p>The Assistant Director to share a copy of the report going to Licensing and Public Protection Committee in November 2023.</p> | <p>Work Programme updated.</p> <p>The report and the weblink to the recording of the meeting was e-mailed on 21 November 2023.</p> |
| 6 Dec 23 | Action Tracker                                                        | A workshop takes place on 10 January 2024 instead of the scheduled committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | The workshop took place on 10 January 2024.                                                                                        |
| 6 Dec 23 | Impact of S114 Spend Control on the Level of Missed Waste Collections | Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee may want to look at the potential of amalgamating the current separate services for fly tipping on housing land funded by the Housing Revenue Account, and on other Council owned land.                                                                           | Details have been passed to the Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee.                                                             |
| 6 Dec 23 | Action Tracker                                                        | Clarity sought from the Budget Task & Finish Group on what was going to be picked up and the timescales                                                                                                                                                                                                 | The Chair fed back to the Budget Task & Finish and highlighted the committee's concerns over the non-                              |

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

| Date | Agenda Item | Completed Action                                                    | Notes / Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |             | in relation to the audit trail of the four non-deliverable savings. | <p>delivery of cross cutting 2023/24 savings at January 2024 City Council.</p> <p>The Cabinet report 27 February '2024/25 Budget Setting for General Fund Revenue Account, 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Programme and 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Policy' (Paragraph 9.18- b) states:</p> <p>Cross-cutting savings have been part of the process. The majority of these are now assigned to service level budgets (to avoid the mistakes of the 2023/24 savings programme in which savings were held corporately and not assigned to Directorates). Cross-cutting savings must be accepted at a Directorate level to be deliverable.</p> |



# Birmingham City Council

## Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024



**Subject:** Delays in Births and Deaths Registrations  
**Report of:** Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement  
**Report author:** Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update since the last report was presented on 26 September 2022

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the report is noted.

### 3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 The improvements to the service delivery referred to in appendix 1 will enable the ongoing generation of income to meet the budget requirements.

### 4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 imposes a duty upon a Local Authority to register the birth of every child by the Registrar of Births and Deaths for the sub-district in which the child was born before the expiration of 42 days from the date of birth.
- 4.2 And, subject to the provisions of this this Act, the death of every person dying in England or Wales and the cause thereof shall be registered by the registrar of births and deaths for the sub–district in which the death occurred within five days of the death.
- 4.3 Council recognises that the Coroners Service is an independent judicial function separate from the local authority and under the present law, its performance management is the responsibility of the Chief Coroner for England and Wales, not the City Council.

## **5 Any Equalities Implications**

5.1 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.
- 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.

5.2 To meet the needs of Birmingham's diverse community the service area provide urgent death registrations for faith or other reason. Appointments are generally available on the same or next day on receipt of the required documentation.

## **6 Appendices**

6.1 Update on delays in birth and death registrations

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT TO THE  
HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**UPDATE ON DELAYS IN BIRTHS AND DEATHS REGISTRATIONS**

Updates on the previous actions are as follows:

**1. Development of Muslim Burial Section – Quinton Cemetery**

- 1.1 The new Muslim burial section that was opened in Quinton Cemetery in September 2022 provides a wider choice of locations for burials in the South of the city. To date there have been 41 Muslim burials in Quinton Cemetery. The services are available at a minimum of four hours' notice and the bookings will be accepted as soon as the appointment to register the death is confirmed. Burials are available Monday to Friday, up to 3pm in the Winter months and 3:30pm during the Summer.

**2. Evening Burials**

- 2.1 Sutton New Hall Cemetery provides a burial service that is available at a minimum of three hours' notice, seven days a week (except Christmas Day). A funeral booking is now accepted as soon as the family have confirmation that a registration of death appointment is arranged, rather than when the Registrar's Certificate is issued, which further reduces waiting times for families.
- 2.2 Since the introduction in the winter of 2022, floodlit burials take place up to 6pm even through the winter months, which has improved the services' response to requests for short notice burials during this period.
- 2.3 There are approximately 800 Muslim burials carried out at Sutton New Hall Cemetery each year, most at short notice. Of those, less than 1% take place more than one day from booking due to a lack of available service times.

**3. Investment in IT telephony**

- 3.1 In the Summer of 2022, Bereavement Services, working in partnership with the Contact Centre team, introduced a 'one number' telephony system, enabling callers to select the reason for their call so that it could be directed to the appropriate office. There were initial problems but, following a redesign of the caller menu options and which teams the calls were directed to, the telephony has since improved and the feedback from Funeral Directors has been more positive.
- 3.2 The service has also introduced a single e-mail address, where enquiries are directed to the relevant offices, based upon the e-mail content.

**4. Working with communities**

- 4.1 Work continues with the engagement across community groups and Friends of Cemeteries groups. Regular meetings take place and there are various activities that are supported by the service. The community activities have reduced in recent months as Bereavement Services no

longer has an Activities Manager due to the completion of the Jewellery Quarter Restoration Project and the cessation of the project funding.

## **5. Registration Services**

- 5.1 Recruitment to the vacancies within the Register Office is ongoing. There are more trained Registrars and Deputy Registrars than at the point of the previous report. Along with a planned programme of additional hours' working and some later opening times during the week, this has increased the availability for birth and death registrations.
- 5.2 Where families or Funeral Directors advise the service of a requirement for an urgent registration for faith or another reason then, upon the receipt of the required documents to enable the registration to be completed, appointments are generally available either the same or following day.
- 5.3 The Birmingham Register Office completes around 20,000 birth registrations each year. There has been a significant improvement in the backlog of birth registrations. At the point that the service reintroduced these after the suspension during the Covid 19 Pandemic, there was a backlog of 6,000 birth registrations over 42 days following birth. In May 2023, the backlog had been reduced to around 2,000 birth registrations over 42 days of birth and in December this had further reduced to under 1,000 birth registrations outstanding that were over 42 days after the birth.
- 5.4 The service aims to be registering 95% of birth registrations within 42 days of birth by the end of the third quarter of 2024. The statutory target is 98% of births registered within 42 days of birth, however there will always be circumstances where families are either unavailable or choose not to register within 42 days. We will monitor our performance and take steps to increase the target if it is achievable. The performance of the Birmingham Register Office is monitored by the national General Register Office and we provide data to them and meet regularly for compliance meetings and to discuss service improvements.
- 5.5 In December 2023 the percentage of deaths being registered within 5 days of death was 23%. The major reason for this delay in the next kin receiving the Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD), without which the death cannot be registered. This national problem which has been exacerbated by the introduction of a Medical Examiner for community deaths. Birmingham has pilot area for this from 2023 while this is planned to be rolled out nationally from April 2024. The General Register Office is currently looking at changing the statutory KPI to 5 days within receipt of the MCCD.

## **6. Update on Projects – Bereavement Services**

- 6.1 Cremator replacement programme Yardley Crematorium – In April 2023, Yardley Crematorium closed to enable the existing three cremators to be replaced with two modern bariatric cremators, fridges to enable coffins to be held over to provide more efficient usage of gas and the installation of mercury abatement equipment, providing cleaner emissions to air.



- 6.2 The crematorium chapel also underwent refurbishment, and the catafalque was widened to also accept larger coffins. Full services resumed in January 2024 and the feedback from service users has been very positive.
- 6.3 Extension of Kings Norton Cemetery – This project is ongoing but has been delayed due to the findings of the ecological and habitat scoping surveys that were completed in the Autumn 2023. The findings support that the site potentially has habitats of bats, badgers, Greater Crested Newts and Grass Snakes. The proposed road layout has been changed which enables more land to be utilised to develop an additional 100 new graves spaces, extending the availability within the existing cemetery.



# Birmingham City Council

## Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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**Subject:** Bereavement Services – Customer Service Programme  
update February 2024

### Commissioner Review

Commissioners are supportive of the ongoing review of processes and customer contact in response to previous feedback. There may be further options to improve performance as the Council develops its cross-cutting savings proposals. This includes the review of business support, customer contact, maximising the benefits of process redesign and use of technology.



# Birmingham City Council

## Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6<sup>th</sup> March 2024



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**Subject:** Bereavement Services - Customer Service Programme update February 2024

**Report of:** Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement

**Report author:** Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the 9th December 2022 and supplementary 27th January 2023 and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023 reports on the actions established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the progress of the actions in the Bereavement Services' customer service improvement programme attached at appendix 1 are noted.

### 3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 The Bereavement Services Customer Services Programme originally had savings attached. During the review of all savings and budgets that took place as part of the 2024/25 Budget Setting report going to Cabinet and Full Council on 5 March 2024, the entirety of the 2023/24 savings plan is proposed to be written off. This recognises that the savings related to the Bereavement Services Customer Services Programme were non deliverable. However, the programme will deliver customer improvements and is being progressed for that purpose.

### 4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

### 5 Any Equalities Implications

- 5.1 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.

- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The Service has considered these responsibilities and have ensured that it has adapted to the needs to of the residents of Birmingham. This includes providing burials and cremations 364 days a year, delivering short notice funerals and providing extended evening burials in the winter.

## **6 Appendices**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 - Bereavement Services' customer service improvement programme

## BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

### RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

**Overview:** In Spring 2022 the Customer Service Programme conducted user research with our customers to understand the current customer experience by targeting high demand services accessed digitally and offline, in order to identify a model customer experience, based on best practice, to increase/improve customer satisfaction.

| Code | Original Insight                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Original Recommendation - summary                                                         | Original Recommendation - detail<br><b>Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group</b><br><b>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</b><br><b>Update against recommendation February 2024</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Priority Rating | Delivery Accountability<br><b>R = issues / blockers</b><br><b>A = underway and on track</b><br><b>G = completed</b> |
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| A    | Citizens find the process of laying their loved one to rest complicated and confusing, at an already difficult time. There is a lack of clarity over what choices a family has, who does what and when. Relatives call sites as they don't trust the accuracy of the information on the website, but note our website page view analysis does demonstrate that citizens are visiting the BCC web site pages for the bereavement service guidance and information on the service offerings. | Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options | Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options, detailing who is involved and who is responsible for what, approximate timelines and costs (including BCC service fees and what is/not included), documentation requirements, what to expect and what to do if these expectations are not met. Consider including recommended suppliers. This guidance should start from the point of death and include registering a death. It should include the process if relatives are not using a funeral director. Conduct an audit of the current guidance available online and understand how we can tailor/expand this. This guidance should be available both online and in paper format. Distribute to partners to reach customers as soon as they need that information. Ensure it is available in a range of formats and languages.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Clear online guidance has now been developed and published: 'What to do after someone dies', A guidance booklet has been produced and is awaiting sign off. From April 2023, a medical examiner will investigate and authorise all Medical Certificates of Cause of Death. This will result in a further change to the documentation being required which will impact all services. Hold print run until after update to ensure accuracy.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Improved content has been published. The introduction of the requirement for Medical Certificates of Cause of Death issues by GPs (non hospital deaths) to be authorised by a Medical Examiner (a national directive providing an additional layer of governance) has now been delayed until April 2024. Therefore more detailed information regarding Coroners Service is to be included in online guidance and a small print run of the offline guidance (along with posters and QR code) will now proceed ahead of an update and reprint for April 2024 when the Medical Examiner requirement is expected.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> Improved content completed. Action will be marked as completed but will be revisited when the update regarding the Medical Examiner process and how the services are changed in response is available at some point during 2024. | Medium          | Programme<br>Work in progress<br>COMPLETED                                                                          |
| B    | Wildlife can have a negative impact on grave sites, which can be distressing for the family.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Communicate with relatives that wildlife can be an issue in graveyards                    | Communicate with relatives that this can be an issue and recommend particular plants and flowers that wildlife will not disturb (e.g. deer and rabbit resistant herbaceous plants)<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Damage caused by wildlife is an on-going issue across a number of sites and is being managed by the service - adding information to information boards and signage with QR codes (linking to webpage information on wildlife); community meeting in Yardley Chapel to involve local Cllrs to educate public regarding badger activity. Online content around types of wildlife and impact on the sites - Content Manager to pick up requirements with Activities Manager and capture positive aspects of the wildlife (e.g. Bham SpringWatch Trailcams / webcams).<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Website content has been updated. A review of all signage is to be completed - see update against insight / recommendation Q. ACTION COMPLETED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Medium          | Service - with support from<br>Programme<br>COMPLETED                                                               |
| C    | Some grave sites are not well maintained over time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave                    | Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave, including the rules/requirements around plastic flowers. Recommend ways of establishing a low maintenance grave and the grave maintenance service offering.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Work in progress to articulate clear guidelines for people, e.g.; plastic fading flowers, look at signage in the graveyards etc. Activities Manager reviewed signage at all sites to prioritise replacements and noticeboard - website needs to be aligned, Content Manager to work with Activities Manager to promote existing grave maintenance service from April 2023 when service is likely to be fully staffed.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> "Looking after a Grave" page on website updated in March 2023. A review of all signage is to be completed - see update against insight / recommendation Q.<br>BCC also has a responsibility for maintaining sites (grass cutting). Grass cutting is currently based on a city wide contract managed by Parks. The grass cutting schedule for each site will be reviewed with Parks to and supported by clear communication back to customers.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> This action has not been progressed due to the s114 notice. It is anticipated that the grass cutting schedule will remain unchanged.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Low             | Service - with support from<br>programme<br>Held due to s114 notice                                                 |

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |        |                                                              |  |
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| D | Documentation is often paper based and time consuming to manage for bereavement staff and partners. There is often duplication of forms, missing information and the need to scan in documents or manually input details.                                                                                                                                                                                            | Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible as part of the new system              | <p>Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible by ensuring the new bereavement system has capability to upload, share and view documentation for all partners, as well as input data via forms directly and make use of digital signatures. Ensure this is possible for all types of funerals. Offer support to those partners that need it to adopt new system.</p> <p>Note: Can only build online forms for non-statutory docs, all statutory docs need to remain on paper with the new system having ability to upload a scanned version / attachment to support digital record.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Need to establish the timeline for this BACAS replacement and full digitised applications. Soft market testing is underway to produce an analysis of options for new system. A lot of paperwork printing has already been eliminated but manual entry still being carried out where necessary. Digitisation of Bereavement forms in progress (a true copy of signature that complies with the e-signature requirements is needed).</p> <p>This activity may link to Register Office digitisation of records (DRS) Limited trials are in place in another Registration Authority before wider roll out for full replacement of Registration Online (RON) and NHS Digital (EMCD element - no physical medical certificates required no scanning/printing). All Register Officer digitisation is out of scope for this programme.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Ongoing - The programme and service have currently prioritised the top 20 paper forms which have now been re-designed to digital forms including advanced payment features. The forms have now been tested by the service and all budget codes have been configured into solution. In line with the new forms the programme has reviewed all information, advice and guidance for these forms which have all been signed off. The remaining activities include configuration of the payments into the right fund codes in Oracle (awaiting a timeline for completion) and back office training for the new system to action any requests. Once the Oracle configuration is completed shortly, there will be a phased go-live of the forms on birmingham.gov.uk. The forms will allow customers to complete their request in a simple and easy way, allow them to add additional documents, status updates and pay for the service. The forms should improve the customer experience, reduce some admin in processing times and reduce delays in delivery due to lapse time for payments to be made.</p> | High   | Programme<br>Work in progress                                |  |
| E | Burials are complex and have many variations, so bookings need to be taken via phone currently. This is time consuming for bereavement staff and funeral directors, and limits when bookings can be made.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Review the process for booking burials to understand how we could simplify the service         | <p>Review the process for booking burials (including statutory and non-statutory requirements) to understand how we could simplify the service. Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to take bookings for burials online. There is an opportunity to learn from Solihull Council about their system that allows for this.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Process for booking burials, looking at putting this all online. Research with Solihull MBC to review their system for burials (parameters that control bookings), links to BACAS replacement and potential RPA options and ensure scope to include faith/religious burials can be accommodated. Requires support from the programme for soft market testing and maybe some support for implementation.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The intention is to put the process for booking burials online. The demonstration of the Funeral Directors portal used at Solihull MBC has been completed. Positive user feedback was provided on the portal. A further meeting with Solihull MBC is scheduled for 15th June to view the back end of the system. Once this has taken place, the service / programme will explore further options with DTS on how to progress. A specification of requirements will be developed over the following three months, ahead of procurement.</p> <p><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> The service is expecting to make a limited number of online burial bookings available online by April 2024. This will not be possible for short notice burials due to the very quick turnaround requiring office involvement from the point of booking to ensure that urgent instructions are passed to cemetery teams without delay.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | High   | Service - with support from<br>programme<br>Work in progress |  |
| F | In some cultures back filling graves (i.e. by hand) after the burial is a tradition and a sign of respect. Often a back fill is a lengthy process, and requires a staff member to stay on site at the grave whilst this is being done. Currently relatives can only choose to back fill themselves or have a manual fill using a digger, and are not always aware that they can change their minds part way through. | Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill option for relatives                            | <p>Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill option for relatives, so they can honour their loved ones in this way, but relieve the burden of time spent by the staff overseeing the process. Consider different charging options to accommodate these traditions. Ensure relatives are aware of what their choice entails before the funeral (e.g. the average time it takes for 2 people to fill an adult grave).</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> The service has always provided a manual backfill option but some bereaved families wish to have a partial backfill option. A partial backfill has risks associated with it relating to potential accidents on site with both mourners and heavy plant machinery operating in close proximity, which is increased where there are large numbers of mourners. The service has now overcome this by offering barriers for crowd control, but this is time intensive and requires additional resources to provide this level of service, which may impact upon scheduling of other funerals if partial backfill is required and the machines are requested (H&amp;S and timing issues). Where resources are available this service will be available upon request. Resolution in place to offer partial backfill where the access and resources are available.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 Jun:</b> The service recognises and is sensitive to the requirements in some cultures around backfilling of graves. A partial manual/mechanical back fill option is available to relatives on request where the resources to enable this are available. Resources to increase availability will be considered as part of any future operating model.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Medium | Service:<br>COMPLETED                                        |  |
| G | Some funerals run over time, which has a knock on impact for later bookings and for staff.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Communicate to citizens the overrun charge, ensure they are aware of where responsibility lies | <p>Communicate to citizens the overrun charge and ensure they are aware of where responsibility for this penalty lies (i.e. funeral directors)</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> All Funeral Directors are advised when an additional charge for the overrunning of the funeral is being applied, which has been in place for many years.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 Jun:</b> Mitigating circumstances will always be considered before any charge is applied. An interval exists between cremations / burials in the event of an overrun. Any instance of an overrun will be looked at on a case by case basis.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Medium | Service<br>COMPLETED                                         |  |
| H | Some burials are well attended by mourners. This can mean that graves already in use in the vicinity are stood on by mourners. This is viewed as disrespectful by some.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Clearly demarcate graves, ask ministers to request mourners are mindful of where they stand    | <p>Clearly demarcate where graves are, create narrow paths between rows of graves to help show where citizens should stand. Ask ministers to request that mourners are mindful of where they are standing at the start of graveside ceremonies.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Graves that are being opened are demarcated by boarding and matting around the grave. Traditional type graves, with kerb sets, are also demarcated when a memorial is placed. Grave owners are permitted to lay slabs between the graves if they wish. It is not feasible to demarcate a lawn type section without a significant increase in grounds maintenance costs due to the obstacles created by pathways preventing the ride on mowers from cutting the lawns.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Low    | Service<br>COMPLETED                                         |  |



|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |        |                                                           |
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| I | The current system is unable to notify funeral directors of updates and changes to their bookings.                                                                                                                                                                                       | Ensure the new digital system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated                            | Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated without having to make manual checks on the system.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> It is unlikely that a new digital system will be developed/installed as part of the Customer Services Improvement Programme due to the cost/saving identified as unfeasible. Bereavement Services will continue to explore options updating technology within the service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| J | The current system has no high-level view of all bookings a particular funeral director has with BCC. Currently in order to get this view, the funeral director needs to click through to 'cancel' all bookings.                                                                         | Ensure the new system can provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings                       | Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings with the council.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> (As per comment I) It is unlikely that a new digital system will be developed/installed as part of the Customer Services Improvement Programme due to the cost/saving identified as unfeasible. Bereavement Services will continue to explore options updating technology within the service.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| K | The process for delivering a burial or cremation differs across BCC's bereavement sites. This creates additional confusion for funeral directors and staff that may work across multiple sites.                                                                                          | Consider which sites are most streamlined and effective and how to standardise across all sites               | Consider which sites are most streamlined and effective. Consider how to standardise the process across all sites based on best practice.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> The service has merged teams in response to business continuity issues. There will always be some differences as not every site offers the same services as another. There are standardised processes, based upon best practice, in place across all sites. There are also individual standardised processes for particular sites which are based upon the specific needs of the site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Low    | Service<br>COMPLETED                                      |
| L | Some funeral directors give incorrect information to citizens about BCC's availability to conduct funerals.                                                                                                                                                                              | Have online view of ceremony availability across all sites for citizens                                       | Host an online view of ceremony availability across all sites so citizens are able to book the slot that works best for them. Ensure this view reflects when sites are expected to be temporarily closed down due to short staffing, due to annual leave for example. Ideally this would be additional functionality as part of the new bereavement system.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system for online and digitisation, better guidance.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> (As per comment I)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| M | The process of reassigning ownership of a grave is complicated, lengthy, and requires a lot of time from staff to support customers through this process. Often customers lose copies of deeds.                                                                                          | Review the current process of reassigning grave ownership                                                     | Review the current process of reassigning grave ownership. Consider how to better inform citizens about the process and what is needed at each stage - this could be written guidance, or something more interactive like a video.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Process has been streamlined and information will be developed to provide more details relating to the process on the BCC website as part of the work currently being carried out by the web content team and Bereavement Services.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Overview details have been updated on the BCC website. More detailed information required to explain the process will be made available over the next 3 months.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Low    | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| N | There is some disconnection between the various bodies that need to be made aware of a death, both within BCC and across the system. This results in citizens having to tell multiple agencies that someone has died and repeat information to different parts of the same organisation. | Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars         | Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars. Consider the 'Tell us once' scheme and how we can bolster existing information, advice and guidance. Establish an open dialogue between other partners across the system (e.g. coroner, funeral directors etc) to explore opportunities to become more joined up.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> National 'Tell us once' function, the service is also in the process of appointing a HOS for both Bereavement and Registrars which will join the process up better. Some information may not be available to share due to legislative restrictions so need to review the use of TUO.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The Head of Bereavement and Registration Service was appointed 1 May 2023. A review of working processes is being carried out to develop a more joined up approach where possible and where BCC holds responsibility. It is expected that this review will conclude within 3 months.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> The Registration Service only provides a signposting introduction to the TUO process which is a government database. Information can't legally be shared between services. A more joined up approach between services has been adopted by the Bereavement and Registration Services team to enable short notice burials to be accepted in shorter timescales than previously available, upon receipt of the confirmation of the Registration Appointment rather than the production of the Registrar's Certificate. | Medium | Service - COMPLETED                                       |
| O | The process of applying for a permit for a headstone is lengthy and time consuming for bereavement staff, stone masons and relatives.                                                                                                                                                    | Review the process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised | Review the current process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised. Provide access to the new bereavement system for stone masons and use that portal for all documentation. Provide guidance on the process and timelines to relatives.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Process and timelines have improved since new recruits have started within the service. Further improvements will include considering an automated checking process and improved information on website as part of the work being carried out with the web content team and Bereavement Services. Customers need to know what to deal with, what to do and when - support users through the process with simple online guidance.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The backlog for approval of memorial permits has been cleared. The online portal for memorial permit applications is still to be developed. It is anticipated that the specification for this will be developed within the next 3 months. The possibility of automation will be explored.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> Permit applications are being received electronically and processed more efficiently, using a shared drive to enable officers to access and approve remotely. There is still scope for automating this process using an online application and checking process.                                                                                                                                                                                | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |

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| P | Stone masons are often posted invoices from BCC for each individual permit, which creates a lot of manual paperwork for both parties.                                                                                                                                                                         | Explore possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system                                                                       | Explore the possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system or using the new finance system for this.<br>Investigate if an integration can be added between the current / new finance system and the new Bereavement system to output the invoice.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Service is raising invoices via Oracle and will process in batches instead of individual invoices. Full integration of automated invoices will be included in specification for new system. Also investigating option for online payment at point of request for service.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Integration of automated invoices is not available using current system as this raises invoices to the appropriate funeral director recorded on the funeral record. The monumental mason is usually a different company, hence this is not possible at present. The requirement for invoices to be raised to both funeral directors and masons where these are different companies will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal (see update against insight / recommendation E). There will be a dependency on the interface with Oracle.<br><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> The potential for online payments is to be explored if an online application can be developed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Medium | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress                                                                                              |
| Q | Some sites are confusing to get around, for example finding appropriate parking and the right location for ceremonies. Some locations have names that are similar to other local sites, meaning citizens go to the wrong site. All of this adds to the stress on the day of a funeral.                        | Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps                                                                          | Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps. Consider how we could name sites in a way that removes confusion for visitors. Consider including all site information on the BCC service web site pages and new system. Could it be included as part of the booking confirmation for funeral directors that they could send on to relatives, or could relatives view this information on the system.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed that website is useful but signage could be better, so reviewing all signage across sites and also including better information for users on the website as part of the review that is currently taking place by the web content team and Bereavement Services. Dependency of the new bereavement system for some website changes.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Service to commission a review of signage across all sites. Contact to made with the Comms team to identify company to deliver. Identification of an appropriate company and procurement route to be made in next 2 months. All contents and directories for each site have been updated on the website.<br><b>Status Update 20 Feb:</b> Postponed due to s114 notice. However, the service will explore options to improve the current cemetery maps and to publish online for ease of access, which may be achieved at nil cost.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Low    | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress                                                                                              |
| R | The service generally operates during core hours (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm). Sutton New Hall does operate seven days a week. In some cases, partners need to contact Bereavement services outside of these hours, but are unable to (e.g. Muslim burials over the weekend in other areas of the city). | Consider establishing an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace                                                                      | Where there is appropriate lighting, services could be conducted into the early evening in the winter. Consider if there is demand to establish an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace across the whole of Birmingham, for example could we offer an out of hours service for Muslim burials that cannot wait at a premium charge?<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> The service already provides a very successful out of hours emergency burial service at Sutton New Hall Cemetery. Floodlighting has also been introduced to enable later burials up to 6pm through the darker winter months, which has been welcomed by the communities that utilise the later burial times. A planning restriction restricts the use of lighting after 8pm. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this will increase the options and a similar approach may be adopted at that site too. The booking service operates every day except Christmas day to accept short notice bookings both during the week and at weekends.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The service monitors demand and is currently providing burials for short notice funerals within 24 hours of request. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this could increase the options and demand will be reviewed when the extension is completed. However, this is not expected to be completed until 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Medium | Service<br>COMPLETED                                                                                                                                   |
| S | The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the local staffing issue. Some of the staff working in the service long term are agency staff, which carries a higher cost than permanent staff.                                                                                                                        | Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent staff                                                             | Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent members of staff, reducing costs and the negative impact of short notice periods on the service. Consider how to make the service (and wider council) attractive as a career path. Update and improve guidance documentation for new staff, ensure staff have online access to remain connected to their colleagues across sites.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Three new office staff and three cemetery operatives have been recruited to vacant posts and more cemetery operatives interviews are taking place from 1st Feb. If the required amount of new starters are not identified in this round of interviews, then the post will be readvertised for a third time. There are another four vacancies that have occurred since the previous update. Following a wider advertising campaign, more interest has been shown following the more recent job advertisement. Staff have access to e-mails via smartphones and access to laptops in offices.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> 2 rounds of recruitment have now taken place since the original insight and recommendation. 5 permanent staff have been recruited. However, vacancies remain. Recruitment remains an issue within the service with a lack of suitable candidates coming through the recruitment process and hence a lack of appropriate applicants to fill the vacancies that have been advertised. Some of those recruited to permanent posts were previously long term agency staff working in the service. There is no corporate process / strategy to make temporary agency staff permanent, therefore effectively any of these staff who become permanent are interviewed twice. There needs to be a corporate response to provide a process to more easily recruit agency to permanent. This has been fed back to corporate HR as a matter to consider when reviewing processes, given the impact on services. The Customer Service Programme will also raise through its governance.<br><b>Status Update 20 Feb:</b> Recruitment has improved and a number of vacant posts have or are being filled. For future recruitment, priority will be given to internal movers in BCC who have been identified as being at risk. | Medium | Service - Recruitment of long term agency staff to permanent staff - COMPLETED<br><br>People Services - Corporate Temp to Perm HR policy - OUTSTANDING |
| T | There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses that the service must manage                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries - opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre | Move to one main service contact number and mailbox. There is an opportunity in the Customer Services Programme for this service to use the corporate contact centre to help log, triage, track and report all enquiries received, in one place. This would help to reduce the volume of enquiries the Bereavement service receive via the triage process, leveraging best practice technologies for voice, IVR, routing of calls & omni handling of non-voice contacts like email, chat, social media all managed via a single process & technology. This would support the single phone number/email strategy.<br><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Bereavement Services now has one published telephone number and e-mail address. Further programme work is required in the background, but the customer now has one point of contact. Customer also has an online contact form that they can complete for enquiries. The forms are directed through to the appropriate service area for action/response.<br><b>Status update 7 June:</b> One single email address and one telephone number are now being used across the service. Menus on the telephone system have been updated (6th June) to direct calls to the most appropriate teams within Bereavement Services. The very early indication is that this has introduced further improvements with calls being managed more effectively and queue times being reduced and in target. This will be monitored over time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | High   | Programme<br>COMPLETED                                                                                                                                 |

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| U | No key performance indicators available                                                                                                                                                                                            | Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries - opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre               | <p>Identify key service operational and financial KPIs so that the service can get an overview of how the service is performing on a regular basis. Consider using power BI to report from BACAS data to create visual, dynamic dashboards. The dashboards can also be used to setup service KPIs.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Service is using Outlook and not omni-mail, so some work remains outstanding for the IT to be developed by the team to support the service to produce BI data. In addition, the programme team is working with Bereavement Services to review and re-introduce the Service User Questionnaire that was in place prior to the pandemic and sent to every service user following a funeral. The responses were used to shape service improvements within the service to meet customer needs.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> As per the update for the recommendation against code T, one single email address and one telephone number is now published and being used across the service.</p> <p>We have allowed some time to embed the telephony solution and analyse the data and contact themes before we look to implement the Omni channel technology / capability within the service to handle all non-voice contacts (email, webchat etc) via a single process &amp; technology. The next step will be a "Go" decision to stand up a delivery team to bring in this Omni Channel capability within the service as it will result in operational changes, as did the telephony implementation. Omni will produce BI data for performance measures for all non-voice channels.</p> <p><b>Status Update 20 Feb:</b> The option to move to omnimail has been placed on hold due to savings not being identified. However, the service now operates one number and one e-mail address, utilising Outlook. KPIs have been developed by Bereavement Services.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| V | Citizens make general enquires about the condition of cemeteries and ask for help in completing deed replacements and transfers. Some of these calls can take a long time and can result in repeated calls from the same citizens. | Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries                                    | <p>Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries. Work with existing Friends groups to spread awareness including the benefits of having a Friends group can make by raising funds or applying for government funding to improve the condition of cemeteries.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed - work already ongoing - Bereavement Services Activities Manager working with numerous volunteer groups to organise activities across cemeteries. Since working with the service in July, a number of attempts have been made to gain interest in developing a Friends group at Handsworth Cemetery, but the interest has been low to date, so will keep trying. There is more interest in the ad-hoc volunteer task groups for litter picks etc.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> There are now Cemetery Friends groups for Handsworth, Key hill, Warstone Lane and Brandwood End cemeteries. The website has been updated to inform people about how they can become involved and communication will also be reviewed under update against insight / recommendation Q, relating to review of signage. An activity manager to support the coordination and organising involved in establishing Cemetery Friends groups at other sites will be considered as part of any future operating model.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Low    | Service<br>COMPLETED                                      |
| W | User feedback is not available – this was suspended during the pandemic to enable the service to prioritise core services (funerals and memorials).                                                                                | Consider restarting service customer feedback (make available in online and offline) - opportunity to use corporate solution to measure satisfaction levels already in place | <p>Restart capturing customer feedback in both online and offline formats. There is an opportunity to work with the Customer Service Programme to repurpose the corporate solution for customer satisfaction to log, monitor, review and report. Signposting to service feedback, could also be added to the existing service web pages and form part of a service request in the new Bereavement system. This will ensure we have a consistent measure of satisfaction and will allow us to benchmark/measure at intervals of the end-to-end journey.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed - Linked with item U. Assistance needed from the programme on what the service can do - need to scope activity and identify points at which customer gives feedback end2end and build in satisfaction form based on corporate model. Questionnaire under review, customer complaints through corporate system being monitored. Customer contact form now available on website to enable service users to make request for assistance directly to the service as an alternative to phoning.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The programme has supported by providing project management resources to review and develop the customer satisfaction questionnaire, Quality assurance has been completed by the programme to ensure it meets best practice and design principles. The service can implement the satisfaction survey offline to customers now. Further work is needed on the technical implementation of the questionnaire and digital solution capability is to be identified as the next step <b>TIMELINE</b>. If a go decision is "given to stand up a delivery team to bring in Omni Channel capability within the service (see update against insight / recommendation U), then customer satisfaction can be 'plugged in' as part of this. The need to be sensitive to the customer's situation when gathering feedback is paramount and recognised.</p> <p><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> A customer service questionnaire has been developed and added to all e-mails that Bereavement Services sends out. However, the format is not usable online so work is underway to transfer this questionnaire to BeHeard so it can also be published on the Service's web pages.</p> | High   | Service - with support from programme<br>Work in progress |
| X | The complaints data shows the most common root cause problems to be:<br>'Not the quality or standard expected'<br>'Failure to deliver a service'<br>'Disagree with policy or procedure'                                            | Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends                                                                                         | <p>Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends. Work with the complaints leads to see how they can be avoided through service improvement plans.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed - work started/ongoing. The service area has no access to complaint data. Programme supporting the service with obtaining raw data and providing a summary report to inform the service's action plan.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The Customer Service Programme is currently working with the corporate complaints team to put the summary reports together for the Bereavement Service to have access to all the complaints data to inform the service action plan. This should be in place for July 2023. The most common theme for complaints raised to the service for 22/23 was Service Quality at 74%. The top three problem categories were Not to the quality or standard expected at 47%, efficiency of Service at 29% and failure to deliver a service at 18%. There is still some further work to do in this area which - the Programme will be working with the corporate complaints team and the service to take a deeper dive approach in reviewing some of the themes. A meeting will be scheduled between the Programme, the complaints team and the service area in the month of July to support Bereavement services accessing the data and understanding root cause reasons for complaints to form part of their service action plan.</p> <p><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> The Service works closely with the Birmingham Feedback team to identify trends and ensure that complaints are responded to within the corporate timescales and trends are identified. The trends have been skewed recently due to a persistent complainant.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Medium | Service - with support from Programme<br>COMPLETED        |

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| Y | The complaints data shows the response target for stage 1 citizen complaints was 73% in 2019, 69% in 2020 and 41% in 2021. This shows a gradual decline in responses provided to citizens within 14 working days and could be attributed to the level of demand experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. It could also be down to the complaint leads prioritising waste management complaints. | Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays.                       | <p>Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays. This will ensure the team have enough time to investigate complaints and provide a response within the set number of working days. Request regular reports from the complaint leads to check for the team is improving their stage 1 response times.</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed - work started/ongoing using root cause analysis to improve, complaint volumes very low. All complaints are to be sent to Bereavement.Services@birmingham.gov.uk and not to individual officers to remove the risk of them not being picked up when the person is away from the office.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Some improvement in the response rates for complaints is being seen. Year to date performance for 22/23 is 52% which is an increase from 41% for 21/22. The Customer Service Programme will be working with the corporate complaints team and the service area to identify any further opportunities for improvement and to review the end to end process on how complaints are assigned and to who (if its an officer or the generic mailbox). A meeting will be scheduled between the programme, the complaints team and the service in the month of July.</p> <p><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> The Service works closely with the Birmingham Feedback team to ensure that complaints are responded to within the corporate timescales. The action in response to internal delays is considered to be complete.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Medium                                  | Service - with support from programme COMPLETED                                   |
| Z | Additional income generation opportunities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>a. Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue</p> <p>b. Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services</p> | <p>Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue, to understand how the service can maximise income</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Agreed - work already ongoing to review income generation opportunities. There is a review of fees, charges and usage conducted with Finance when reviewing fees and charges each year - completed November 2022.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> Cabinet and Cabinet Member reviewed the fee proposals and it was decided that no increase in fees for 2023/24 would be made.</p> <p>Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services, e.g. maintenance or borders for graves</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> Subject to Rules and Regulations. An increase in current staffing levels will be needed through recruitment to vacant posts ahead of any new packages being considered. A grave maintenance scheme was introduced many years ago but has not been popular and is very resource intensive. The service will work with the Content Manager to promote existing grave maintenance service from April 2023 when the service is likely to be fully staffed.</p> <p><b>Status update 7 June:</b> The recruitment process has had limited success and the service is still operating with vacancies and absences, impacting upon the ability to identify the resources that would be necessary to consider providing new packages. Resources required for new packages to be provided will be considered as part of any future operating model.</p> <p><b>Status update 20 Feb:</b> No change since last update, however the service is working with CPS to develop a Mortality Contract tender for future services to explore possible options for developing memorial schemes with new suppliers.</p> <p>Offer longer lease lengths or renewal options for grave leases to generate additional income</p> <p><b>Status Update 17 Jan:</b> The option to extend a lease from 75 years up to 99 years has been available for a number of years but there has been very limited demand for this. The wording on the fees and charges document is: Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB). NB. An extended lease of 99 years is available upon request - POA</p> | <p>Medium</p> <p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> | <p>Service COMPLETED</p> <p>Service Work in progress</p> <p>Service COMPLETED</p> |

# Birmingham City Council

## Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 March 2024



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**Subject:** Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

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

**Report author:** Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager  
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### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24.
- 1.2 Following the findings and recommendations from the independent Governance Review of Birmingham City Council and specifically recommendation 5, the Committee has reframed its work programme to be aligned to Council's improvement and recovery priorities.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives. Appendix 1 also lists topics previously identified by the Committee. In light of the reframing of this work programme, these topics will be deferred for future consideration at the right time.
- 1.4 Members are also asked to consider moving the date of the next scheduled committee meeting from 10 April 2024 to 2pm on 17 April 2024, to avoid a clash with Eid al Fitr.

### 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 that are aligned to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.
  - Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider in April 2024, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
  - 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 OSC to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

- Agrees the date of the next meeting be moved from 10 April to 17 April 2024.

### 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. Additional criteria to be applied to work programme priorities by the Governance Stabilisation Plan are set out in paragraph 4:

- 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 Since June 2023, Overview and Scrutiny Committees have identified a ‘menu’ of issues (including policy development, policy review, issues of accountability and statutory functions). Each Committee has regularly reviewed their ‘menu’ and decided which issues needed to be examined further, and how that work would be undertaken.

### ***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.

### ***Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee***

- 3.9 The Committee’s Terms of Reference is to fulfil its functions as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:
- The collection and removal of waste from residential and other properties within the city.
  - Pest control.
  - Street cleansing, litter prevention, fly tipping/placarding removal and enforcement, graffiti removal, scrap yard and motor salvage operator enforcement.
  - Parks and allotments.

- Local events held in parks.
- Cemeteries and crematoria, mortuary and Coroners Court services, Register Office services.
- Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Development briefs, localisation.
- Commonwealth Games Legacy framework.

3.10 This Committee shall be the Crime and Disorder Committee (Police and Justice Act 2006) as referred to in the [Council Constitution](#). The [Crime and Disorder \(Overview and Scrutiny\) Regulations 2009](#) provides information to Local Authorities about how this function should be carried out. In fulfilling this function, the Committee will fulfil its functions as it relates to:

- Community safety, anti-social behaviour, fear of crime, support for victims of crime.
- Relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Police.
- Youth offending.
- Domestic abuse.

3.11 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Shabrana Hussain, and its membership comprises Cllrs. Gurdial Singh Atwal, Marcus Bernasconi, Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin, Izzy Knowles, and Darius Sandhu.

#### **4 The Governance Review – Reframing the Work Programme 2023-24**

4.1 The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2023 acknowledged the recommendations in the Governance Review of Birmingham City Council agreed by Cabinet on 12 December 2023. Recommendation 5 stated the need to reframe scrutiny work programmes on the Council's improvement and recovery priorities, and that alignment of work programmes should focus on:

- a) Having an active part in the 2024/25 budget development process.
- b) The safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.
- c) Critical performance issues emerging "by exception".
- d) Equality and equity issues arising from the development of the 24/25 Budget, the Emergency Budget (to be identified by exception), and other priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget.
- e) Culture, behaviour change and organisational development.

4.2 On 10 January 2024, the committee met informally to consider the developing Improvement and Recovery Plan and the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review. The committee reviewed its work programme for February – April and reframed it to ensure it aligns with the issues set out above.



- 4.3 Appendix 1 sets out the updated work programme and provides information on topics which have now been deferred by the Committee as a result of these discussions.
- 4.4 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 aligning to the Council's priorities and improvement journey, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in paragraphs 3.5 and 4.1.
- 4.5 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 |
|-----------|------------------|---------------------------|
|           | None at present. |                           |

- 4.6 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: Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)
- 9.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021
- 9.3 [Independent Governance Review of Birmingham City Council, Cabinet 12 December 2023](#)

Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme March – April 2024

| Month | Item/Topic                                                                                                                                                                                | Aims and Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Scrutiny Method                                                                                                                                 | Cabinet Member/<br>Lead Officer                      | Other Witnesses                                         | Additional Information and Outcome*                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March | <p><b>Delays in Births and Deaths Registrations</b></p> <p><b>CfGS Governance Review Criteria :</b><br/>The safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.</p> | <p>Provide an overview of, and demonstrate the impact of, the engagement and work undertaken with the Coroner, partners and communities on steps to eliminate delays within the service.</p> <p>Outline progress towards developing a new mortuary facility for the city, including a permanent digital autopsy scanner.</p> <p>Provide statutory requirements and performance information for the service.</p> | <p>Committee Meeting standing item: 6 March 2024</p> <p>Venue:<br/>Committee Room 6, Council House</p> <p><b>Deadline: 20 February 2024</b></p> | Sajeela Naseer, Director, Regulation and Enforcement | Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services | <p>Following Council Resolution on 14 June 2022, a <a href="#">report</a> responding to the Motion was presented to Housing and Neighbourhoods O&amp;S Committee on 26 September 2022. A summary of the discussion is <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The Committee requested a further update in 4-6 months' time.</p> |
| March | <p><b>Customer Services Programme: Bereavement Services</b></p> <p><b>CfGS Governance Review Criteria :</b> The safe and effective delivery of key</p>                                    | <p>Monitor the progress and impact of the 18 outstanding recommendations from the Customers Services programme scrutiny inquiry undertaken by Co-ordinating O&amp;S Committee</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>Committee Meeting standing item: 6 March 2024</p> <p>Venue:<br/>Committee Room 6, Council House</p>                                          | Sajeela Naseer, Director, Regulation and Enforcement | Bev Nash, Head of Bereavement and Registration Services | <p>Co-ordinating OSC convened Task and Finish groups to identify and monitor progress of recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Bereavement Services.</p> <p>A final Task and Finish group report was presented to Co-</p>                                                                |

| Month | Item/Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Aims and Objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Scrutiny Method                                                                                                                            | Cabinet Member/<br>Lead Officer | Other Witnesses | Additional Information and Outcome*                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       | services supporting vulnerable people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Provide statutory requirements and performance information for the service.                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Deadline: 20 February 2024</b>                                                                                                          |                                 |                 | ordinating O&S on 14 July 2023. <a href="#">here</a> minutes are available <a href="#">here</a> .<br><br>It was agreed that Neighbourhoods OSC takes forward this work for Bereavement Services in the future. |
| April | <b>Budget Challenge and Financial Recovery</b><br><br><b>CGFS Governance Review Criteria 5:</b> Equality and equity issues arising from the development of the 24/25 budget; the Emergency budget (to be identified by exception) and other priority scrutiny activity relating to the budget. | Track the progress on savings made to date.<br><br>Consider the impact of savings on policy and service delivery.<br><br>Consider how relevant services are mobilising to delivery budget savings for 24-25 and agree how the Committee will monitor these savings. | Committee Meeting single item: 10 April 2024 / 17 April (TBC)<br><br>Deadline: 27 March 2024<br><br>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 6 | TBC                             | TBC             | This will be specific to the remit of this Committee.<br><br>This will be a standard agenda across all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.                                                                       |

\*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 have 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| All items below had been identified by the Neighbourhoods O&S Committee and will need to meet the CfGS Independent Governance Review Criteria if placed on the agenda. |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Street Scene                                                                                                                                                           | A progress report on the direction of travel for street scene improvement (Cabinet Member for the Environment to be invited). | To be confirmed.                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Customer Services – Waste                                                                                                                                              | Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme.                             | This was discussed at the workshop on 10 January 2024                                                         | Co-ordinating OSC convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in four areas including Waste.<br><br>The Task and Finish report was presented to Co-ordinating OSC 14 July 2023. The papers are available <a href="#">here</a> and the minutes are available <a href="#">here</a> . It was agreed that Neighbourhoods OSC takes forward the work. |
| Bee Friendly Brum Initiative – Ban Use of Pesticides                                                                                                                   | Update on the progress of the Petition.                                                                                       | A subsequent petition was submitted in November 2023 and a written update was circulated on 21 February 2024. | The petition was discussed at the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee on 26 September 2023 and the papers are available <a href="#">here</a> and the minutes are available <a href="#">here</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Item/ Topic                                                                                                            | Proposed Aims and Objectives                                                    | Proposed Scrutiny Method                                                             | Additional Information                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The perceived rise in incursions onto parks and green spaces. Enforcement and security of green spaces to be included. | To be confirmed.                                                                | The Licensing and Public Protection Committee will receive a further update on this. | November <a href="#">Licensing and Public Protection Committee</a> report on work to manage unauthorised encampments, including data trends on number of incursions in the city was forwarded to Committee members. Birmingham City Council and West Midland Police have a Joint Protocol on the Management of Unauthorised Encampments. |
| Localisation<br><br><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 6, 7, 9, 17 and 21                                                    | To ascertain how the Leader proposes to take forward the localisation agenda.   | To be confirmed.                                                                     | The Housing and Neighbourhoods OSC discussed this <a href="#">item</a> in April 2023. Related strategies, policies and plans can be found <a href="#">here</a> .                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Draft Litter Prevention Strategy and Fly Tipping Prevention Plan<br><br><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 17                | To inform the draft litter prevention strategy and fly tipping prevention plan. | To be confirmed.                                                                     | The fly tipping prevention plan is an outcome from the fly tipping enforcement item discussed at the October 2023 committee meeting.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

#### Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item, Committee meeting - single theme, Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings), On location, Other - (describe)

#### 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                                     |

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- |                                                              |                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 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 Delivering a Bold Best in Class Council |

Information on the Corporate Priorities, Performance and City Outcomes was reported to the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2023 and available [here](#).

