

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 16 APRIL 2024 AT 14:00 HOURS
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE,
BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING

Lord Mayor to advise 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 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

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

3 MINUTES

To confirm and authorise the signing of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2024.

4 LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(10 minutes allocated) (1400-1410)

To receive the Lord Mayor's announcements and such communications as the Lord Mayor may wish to place before the Council.

5 PETITIONS

(10 minutes allocated) (1410-1420)

To receive and deal with petitions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 E of the Constitution)

As agreed by Council Business Management Committee a schedule of outstanding petitions is available electronically with the published papers for the meeting and can be viewed or downloaded.

6 QUESTION TIME

(70 minutes allocated) (1420-1530)

To deal with oral questions in accordance with Council Rules of Procedure (B4.4 F of the Constitution).

- A. Questions from Members of the Public to any Cabinet Member or Ward Forum Chair (20 minutes)
- B. Questions from any Councillor to a Committee Chair, Lead Member of a Joint Board or Ward Forum Chair (up to 10 minutes)
- C. Questions from Councillors other than Cabinet Members to a Cabinet Member (up to 20 minutes)
- D. Questions from Councillors other than Cabinet Member to the Leader or Deputy Leader (up to 20 minutes)

7 APPOINTMENTS BY THE COUNCIL

(5 minutes allocated) (1530-1535)

To make appointments to, or removal from, committees, outside bodies or other offices which fall to be determined by the Council.

93 - 94 8 **COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON AGENDA**

For the Council to note the attached comments on the agenda.

95 - 98 9 **STANDARDS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING CODE OF CONDUCT HEARING**

(10 minutes allocated) (1535-1545)

The Chair of the Standards Committee to move the following recommendations:

"Council is requested to:

1. Note the findings of the Standards Committee that the Code of Conduct has been breached and that Councillor Hughes apologise for his conduct.

2. Agree the Recommendation that Councillor Hughes be removed from his outside appointments representing the Council on the Board of the Birmingham Royal Ballet and as a Trustee of Barry Jackson Tower.

3. Agree that the Council takes promptly all reasonable steps to recover the outstanding overpayment of salary in the sum of £6,189.96.

99 - 192 10 **IMPROVEMENT & RECOVERY PLAN (IRP)**

(75 minutes allocated) (1545-1700)

Councillor John Cotton to move the following recommendation:

"City Council is recommended to approve the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) (attached at Appendix 1) as the overarching document that summarises the key programmes, projects, and activity the Council needs to deliver improvement."

(break 1700-1730)

193 - 214 11 **EXECUTIVE BUSINESS REPORT - HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

(30 minutes allocated) (1730-1800)

Councillor Jayne Francis to move the following recommendation:

"That City Council notes the report".

215 - 264

12 **SCRUTINY INQUIRY ON CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION: HOW ARE THE COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF EXPLOITATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?**

(45 minutes allocated) (1800-1845)

Councillor Des Hughes to move the following recommendations:

"It is recommended that:

Recommendations R01 to R15, set out in Appendix 1, be approved and that the Executive be requested to pursue their implementation".

265 - 284

13 **AUDIT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT**

(30 minutes allocated) (1855-1915)

Councillor Fred Grindrod to move the following recommendations:

"That City Council:

1. Receives and considers the annual report of the Audit Committee.
 2. Endorse the new approach to the production of the Annual Governance Statement ensuring that the Committee are able to fully contribute to its development and that the statement becomes the foundation upon which the work of the Committee is built.
 3. Support the ongoing development of the Committee recognising that this is not a quick fix but a journey of development".
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**MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM
CITY COUNCIL, TUESDAY,
5 MARCH 2024**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL HELD
ON TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2024 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE COUNCIL
CHAMBER, COUNCIL HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT:- Lord Mayor (Councillor Chaman Lal) in the Chair.

Councillors

Akhlaq Ahmed	Alex Aitken	Deirdre Alden
Robert Alden	Gurdial Singh Atwal	Raqeeb Aziz
Shabina Bano	David Barker	David Barrie
Baber Baz	Matt Bennett	Jilly Bermingham
Marcus Bernasconi	Bushra Bi	Sir Albert Bore
Nicky Brennan	Kerry Brewer	Marje Bridle
Mick Brown	Zaker Choudhry	Debbie Clancy
Liz Clements	Maureen Cornish	John Cotton
Phil Davis	Adrian Delaney	Diane Donaldson
Jayne Francis	Ray Goodwin	Rob Grant
Colin Green	Fred Grindrod	Roger Harmer
Deborah Harries	Kath Hartley	Adam Higgs
Des Hughes	Jon Hunt	Mumtaz Hussain
Mahmood Hussain	Timothy Huxtable	Mohammed Idrees
Katherine Iroh	Ziaul Islam	Morriam Jan
Kerry Jenkins	Meirion Jenkins	Amar Khan
Ayoub Khan	Saqib Khan	Izzy Knowles
Narinder Kaur Kooner	Kirsten Kurt-Elli	Bruce Lines
Mary Locke	Ewan Mackey	Basharat Mahmood
Majid Mahmood	Rashad Mahmood	Lee Marsham
Karen McCarthy	Saddak Miah	Shehla Moledina
Gareth Moore	Yvonne Mosquito	Richard Parkin
David Pears	Miranda Perks	Rob Pocock
Julien Pritchard	Hendrina Quinnen	Lauren Rainbow
Darius Sandhu	Kath Scott	Shafique Shah
Rinkal Shergill	Sybil Spence	Ron Storer
Saima Suleman	Jamie Tennant	Sharon Thompson
Paul Tilsley	Lisa Trickett	Penny Wagg
Ian Ward	Ken Wood	Alex Yip
		Waseem Zaffar

NOTICE OF RECORDING

239 The Lord Mayor advised that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcasting via the Council’s Public-I website and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

240 The Lord Mayor reminded Members that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

The Lord Mayor further reminded Members that the Chair of the Standards Committee in consultation with the Monitoring Officer had granted dispensations to those Members who had sought such a dispensation in order that they could participate and vote in the budget debate.

The Monitoring Officer had also agreed a general dispensation in respect of being a council taxpayer, member of a trade union or where a family member was employed by the Council.

Members noted that details of these dispensations had been published with the meeting agenda and papers on the Council’s committee management information system (cmis).

The Lord Mayor advised Council that where a dispensation had been granted, Members did not need to declare these interests at the start of the meeting. Members were reminded however that when they were called to speak, they simply stated that they had been granted a dispensation.

Councillor John Cotton declared an interest in respect of agenda item 7 ‘Pay Policy Statement 2023/24’. He would leave the Chamber in advance of the commencement of this agenda item.

MINUTES

It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and –

241 **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 be taken as read and confirmed and signed.

LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor advised Council that his announcement was a sad one, as he informed the Chamber of the death of former Councillor Suzanna McCorry, who passed away on 9 February 2024.

Suzanna served as a Councillor for Erdington Ward from 1996 to 2006, during which time she served on numerous committees, and was Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health 2002-2004.

Suzanna was survived by her husband, former Councillor Mick Rice; and she left 2 sons and 8 grandchildren.

The Lord Mayor and Council extended to Mick and Suzanna's family their deepest condolences.

The Council placed on record its sorrow at the death of former Councillor Suzanna McCorry and its appreciation of her devoted service to the residents of Birmingham.

The Council extended its deepest sympathy to Suzanna's family in their sad bereavement.

Members and Officers stood for one minutes' silence. Following this, a number of tributes were made by Members.

PETITIONS

Petitions Relating to City Council Functions Presented at the Meeting

The following petitions were presented:-

(See document No. 1, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

In accordance with the proposals by the Members presenting the petitions, it was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and:-

242

RESOLVED:-

That the petitions were received and referred to the relevant Chief Officer(s).

Petitions Update

A Petitions Update had been made available electronically:-

(See document No. 2, 'Additional Meeting Documents')

It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and

243

RESOLVED:-

That the Petitions Update be noted and those petitions for which a satisfactory response has been received, be discharged.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED:-

1.) That City Council approved the following appointments:

ROLE	APPOINTEE	TERM OF OFFICE
Lay member – Standards Committee	Sandra Cooper	March 2024 – March 2028
Roman Catholic Diocese Representative – Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Ted Hammond	March 2024 onwards (Church Representative appointments are for an indefinite period).

Councillor Ray Goodwin addressed the Council and it was-

RESOLVED:-

- 1.) That City Council noted that Councillor Katherine Iroh was appointed as Chair of the Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - 2.) That City Council noted that Councillor Katherine Iroh be appointed to the Co-Ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillor Akhlaq Ahmed.
-

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24

Councilor John Cotton left the Chamber before the commencement of this agenda item.

A report of the Director of People Services was submitted:-

(See document No. 3, agenda item 7)

Councillor Sharon Thompson moved the recommendation which was seconded from the floor.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Sharon Thompson to sum up.

It was therefore-

244

RESOLVED:-

- 1.) That City Council approved the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24.

2.) That Council agreed to the publication of the Pay Policy Statement in line with the statutory requirements.

2024/25 BUDGET SETTING PROCESS: LEADER AND CABINET'S BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION FOR 2024/25

A report from Cabinet was submitted:-

(See document No. 4, agenda item 8).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor John Cotton moved the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Sharon Thompson.

In accordance with Council Standing Orders, Councillors Robert Alden and Ewan Mackey gave notice of the following amendments to the recommendations:-

(See document No. 5)

Councillor Robert Alden informed the Council that his wife worked for the Birmingham Museum Trust. Councillor Robert Alden further noted that he was a Council appointed trustee of the BMT and was appointed to various boards at the Local Government Association. Councillor Robert Alden was also a director of the Erdington BID. The City Solicitor had been notified of these interests in advance of the meeting.

He moved the amendments which were seconded by Councillor Ewan Mackey who informed the meeting that he had received a dispensation in relation to a non-pecuniary interest (Councillor Mackey was appointed to the Board of B Music).

In accordance with Council Standing Orders, Councillors Roger Harmer and Morriam Jan gave notice of the following amendments to the Motion:-

(See document No. 6)

Councillor Roger Harmer moved the amendments which were seconded by Councillor Morriam Jan.

The Leader of the Green Group, Councillor Julien Pritchard, addressed the Council.

The Chair of the Co-Ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Sir Albert Bore addressed the Council in relation to the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

A debate ensued.

ADJOURNMENT

245 It was moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded and-

RESOLVED:-

That the Council be adjourned until 1700 hours on this day.

The Council then adjourned at 1630 hours.

At 1700 hours the Council resumed at the point where the meeting had been adjourned.

The debate continued following the completion of the adjournment.

Following the completion of the debate the Lord Mayor invited Councillor John Cotton to respond to the debate and to sum up.

The first amendment to the recommendations in the names of Councillors Robert Alden and Ewan Mackey having been moved and seconded were put to the vote and, by the recorded vote set out below, were declared to be lost.

For the First Amendment (30)

Darius Sandhu	Adrian Delaney	Matt Bennett
Paul Tilsley	Jon Hunt	Robert Alden
Deirdre Alden	Baber Baz	David Pears
Gareth Moore	Timothy Huxtable	Richard Parkin
Mumtaz Hussain	Adam Higgs	Ayoub Khan
Alex Yip	Bruce Lines	Morriam Jan
David Barrie	Penny Wagg	Izzy Knowles
Ken Wood	Ron Storer	Zaker Choudhry
Ewan Mackey	Colin Green	Debbie Clancy
Roger Harmer	Deborah Harries	Kerry Brewer

Against the First Amendment (53)

Ray Goodwin	Mary Locke	Diane Donaldson
Des Hughes	Saddak Miah	Raqib Aziz
Miranda Perks	Rob Pocock	Kath Scott
Alex Aitken	Ziaul Islam	Sir Albert Bore
Karen McCarthy	Kirsten Kurt-Elli	Amar Khan
Jamie Tennant	Jayne Francis	Akhlaq Ahmed
Sharon Thompson	Saima Suleman	Yvonne Mosquito
Nicky Brennan	John Cotton	Katherine Iroh
Saqib Khan	Lisa Trickett	Sybil Spence
Shafique Shah	Basharat Mahmood	David Barker
Marje Bridle	Shehla Moledina	Jilly Bermingham
Hendrina Quinnen	Shabina Bano	Fred Grindrod

Mahmood Hussain	Ian Ward	Lee Marsham
Lauren Rainbow	Majid Mahmood	Mick Brown
Mohammed Idrees	Liz Clements	Marcus Bernasconi
Waseem Zaffar	Rinkal Shergill	Gurdial Singh Atwal
Rashad Mahmood	Kath Hartley	Bushra Bi
Phil Davis	Narinder Kaur Kooner	

Abstentions (2)

Julien Pritchard
Rob Grant

The second amendment to the recommendations in the names of Councillors Roger Harmer and Morriam Jan having been moved and seconded were put to the vote and, by the recorded vote set out below, were declared to be lost.

For the Second Amendment (30)

Darius Sandhu	Adrian Delaney	Matt Bennett
Paul Tilsley	Jon Hunt	Robert Alden
Deirdre Alden	Baber Baz	David Pears
Gareth Moore	Timothy Huxtable	Richard Parkin
Mumtaz Hussain	Adam Higgs	Ayoub Khan
Alex Yip	Bruce Lines	Morriam Jan
David Barrie	Penny Wagg	Izzy Knowles
Ken Wood	Ron Storer	Zaker Choudhry
Ewan Mackey	Colin Green	Debbie Clancy
Roger Harmer	Deborah Harries	Kerry Brewer

Against the Second Amendment (53)

Ray Goodwin	Mary Locke	Diane Donaldson
Des Hughes	Saddak Miah	Raqib Aziz
Miranda Perks	Rob Pocock	Kath Scott
Alex Aitken	Ziaul Islam	Sir Albert Bore
Karen McCarthy	Kirsten Kurt-Elli	Amar Khan
Jamie Tennant	Jayne Francis	Akhlaq Ahmed
Sharon Thompson	Saima Suleman	Yvonne Mosquito
Nicky Brennan	John Cotton	Katherine Iroh
Saqib Khan	Lisa Trickett	Sybil Spence
Shafique Shah	Basharat Mahmood	David Barker
Marje Bridle	Shehla Moledina	Jilly Bermingham
Hendrina Quinnen	Shabina Bano	Fred Grindrod
Mahmood Hussain	Ian Ward	Lee Marsham
Lauren Rainbow	Majid Mahmood	Mick Brown
Mohammed Idrees	Liz Clements	Marcus Bernasconi
Waseem Zaffar	Rinkal Shergill	Gurdial Singh Atwal
Rashad Mahmood	Kath Hartley	Bushra Bi
Phil Davis	Narinder Kaur Kooner	

Abstentions (2)

Julien Pritchard
Rob Grant

Council then voted on the substantive recommendations.

The recorded vote in relation to recommendations c.) and d.) was as follows:

For the Substantive Recommendations (53)

Ray Goodwin	Mary Locke	Diane Donaldson
Des Hughes	Saddak Miah	Raqib Aziz
Miranda Perks	Rob Pocock	Kath Scott
Alex Aitken	Ziaul Islam	Sir Albert Bore
Karen McCarthy	Kirsten Kurt-Elli	Amar Khan
Jamie Tennant	Jayne Francis	Akhlaq Ahmed
Sharon Thompson	Saima Suleman	Yvonne Mosquito
Nicky Brennan	John Cotton	Katherine Iroh
Saqib Khan	Lisa Trickett	Sybil Spence
Shafique Shah	Basharat Mahmood	David Barker
Marje Bridle	Shehla Moledina	Jilly Birmingham
Hendrina Quinnen	Shabina Bano	Fred Grindrod
Mahmood Hussain	Ian Ward	Lee Marsham
Lauren Rainbow	Majid Mahmood	Mick Brown
Mohammed Idrees	Liz Clements	Marcus Bernasconi
Waseem Zaffar	Rinkal Shergill	Gurdial Singh Atwal
Rashad Mahmood	Kath Hartley	Bushra Bi
Phil Davis	Narinder Kaur Kooner	

Against the Substantive Recommendations (32)

Darius Sandhu	Adrian Delaney	Matt Bennett
Paul Tilsley	Jon Hunt	Robert Alden
Deirdre Alden	Baber Baz	David Pears
Gareth Moore	Timothy Huxtable	Richard Parkin
Mumtaz Hussain	Adam Higgs	Ayoub Khan
Alex Yip	Bruce Lines	Morriam Jan
David Barrie	Penny Wagg	Izzy Knowles
Ken Wood	Ron Storer	Zaker Choudhry
Ewan Mackey	Colin Green	Debbie Clancy
Roger Harmer	Deborah Harries	Kerry Brewer
Julien Pritchard	Rob Grant	

Abstentions (0)

It was therefore-

245

RESOLVED:-

- 1.) That City Council agreed to note the Report under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (as presented to Cabinet on 27 February 2024).
- 2.) That City Council agreed to note the Response to the Budget Scrutiny Task & Finish Group (as presented to Cabinet on 27 February 2024).
- 3.) That City Council approved the 2024/25 Budget Setting for General Fund Revenue Account, 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Programme and 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and Policy (as presented to Cabinet on 27 February 2024) in its totality.
- 4.) That City Council approved the formal 2024/25 Council Tax Resolution for Birmingham City Council, that supported the 2024/25 Budget Setting.

The meeting ended at 1919 hours.



CITY COUNCIL 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

A To the Leader of the Council

1. Deduction of Union Subscriptions

From Councillor Darius Sandhu.

2. Perry Barr Village

From Councillor Rick Payne

3. Job Evaluation

From Councillor Adam Higgs

4. Job Evaluation trade union costs

From Councillor Ron Storer

5. Perry Barr HIF bid

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

6. Home working from abroad

From Councillor David Barrie

7. 6 February 2023 Equal Pay meeting

From Councillor David Pears

8. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

9. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

10. Bank Holiday Working

From Councillor Bruce Lines

11. Inquiry

From Councillor Robert Alden

12. Equal Pay Claims

From Councillor Roger Harmer

13. Council boundaries

From Councillor Izzy Knowles

B To the Deputy Leader of the Council

1. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

2. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

C To the Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families

1. School Budgets

From Councillor Adam Higgs

2. 365

From Councillor Alex Yip

3. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

4. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

D To the Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage & Tourism

1. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Ron Storer

2. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

E To the Cabinet Member for Environment

1. Rookery Park

From Councillor Robert Alden

2. **Park Keepers**
From Councillor Gareth Moore
3. **All relevant considerations**
From Councillor Adrian Delaney
4. **Budget Delivery**
From Councillor Kerry Brewer
5. **Tyseley tip**
From Councillor Penny Wagg
6. **Tyseley tip**
From Councillor Roger Harmer
7. **Love your streets**
From Councillor Morriam Jan
8. **MHRC without recycling**
From Councillor Deborah Harries
9. **Recycling and the MHRC's**
From Councillor Izzy Knowles
10. **Moved to I3**
11. **Absence management**
From Councillor Paul Tilsley
12. **Tree removals and planting**
From Councillor Baber Baz

F To the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

1. **Perry Barr Village borrowing costs**
From Councillor Darius Sandhu
2. **Social Care costs**
From Councillor Parkin

3. **NEC debt**
From Councillor Robert Alden
4. **All relevant considerations**
From Councillor Arian Delaney
5. **Budget Delivery**
From Councillor Kerry Brewer
6. **Oracle £45m additional spend**
From Councillor Bruce Lines
7. **Loans to other places**
From Councillor Morriam Jan

G To the Interim Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care

1. **All relevant considerations**
From Councillor Arian Delaney
2. **Budget Delivery**
From Councillor

H To the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

1. **Section 21 evictions**
From Councillor Debbie Clancy
2. **Housing for asylum seekers**
From Councillor Robert Alden
3. **All relevant considerations**
From Councillor Adrian Delaney
4. **Budget Delivery**
From Councillor Kerry Brewer

I To the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities

1. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

2. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

3. Cemeteries

From Councillor Jon Hunt

J To the Cabinet Member for Transport

1. Parking Bays

From Councillor Ken Wood

2. Parking Bays suspended

From Councillor David Barrie

3. All relevant considerations

From Councillor Adrian Delaney

4. Budget Delivery

From Councillor Kerry Brewer

5. School Crossing Patrols

From Councillor Debbie Clancy

6. Road works management

From Councillor Jon Hunt

7. CAZ spending by ward

From Councillor Morriam Jan

8. Parking enforcement tickets

From Councillor Roger Harmer

9. FPN's

From Councillor Izzy Knowles

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU

“Deduction of Union Subscriptions”

Question:

What steps has the Council taken to implement the Trade Union (Deduction of Union Subscriptions from Wages in the Public Sector) Regulations, specifically ensuring that check-off arrangements are cost-neutral and that all affiliated trade unions offer reasonable payment options other than check-off (e.g. Direct Debit)?

Answer:

The council can now only make the deductions for union subscriptions on a full cost recovery basis. In anticipation of this, HR colleagues have been working with Payroll to ensure compliance.

Payroll are recovering the costs of deduction of the monthly subscriptions from the respective unions.

We will continue to monitor the situation.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RICK PAYNE

“Perry Barr Village”

Question:

How much in total has been spent so far on the Perry Barr Village and what is the current forecast total cost of the scheme?

Answer:

At the end of March 2023 the total spend was £351.697m. A further £5.5m had been spent up to the end of December 2023 giving a current expenditure of £357.197m.

The remaining budget for 23/24 and 24/25 was £57.354m which gives a forecast total cost of £409.051m for the village although future spending is currently under review and this forecast may be revised.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS**

“Job Evaluation”

Question:

On what dates were all job analysts for job evaluation

- a) In post, and**
- b) Fully trained**

Or by what date will this happen?

Answer:

As of today we have 13 Job Evaluators in place.

- 1 already in post as Job Analyst & Research Officer since July 2021
- 7 in post from 6th November 23
- 4 in post from 5th February 24
- 1 starting on 4th March 24 (appointed today)

Since joining the Job Evaluators (Nov 23 & Feb 24 intake) have been training on the project side of the programme, e.g. induction, data cleansing, identifying duplicates on RoleMapper, running JDQ workshops, shadowing etc.

The 12 week formal West Midlands Employer (WME) element commences on 4 March to be completed by 17 May 2024 during which time they will undertake the benchmarking evaluations as part of their training supported by WME.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR RON STORER**

“Job Evaluation trade union costs”

Question:

How much of the £20m budget for delivering job evaluation will be paid to Trade Unions, either directly, or via facility time?

Answer:

The joint trade unions (GMB, UNISON and UNITE) have been supporting the programme with representatives on pre-existing release arrangements (e.g. Branch Secretaries etc). Approval was given to release four representatives per union to support the programme and release is still be arranged for some. Initially, the requirement is for 2 days a week for training plus time to support employees in Job information workshops. If all of these roles are backfilled, including on-costs it is estimated that this would amount to approximately £640k per annum, although it is anticipated that their role will only be required during the first 6 to 8 months of Job information and we will review the requirement thereafter.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY**

“Perry Barr HIF bid”

Question:

Within the grant application for the Housing Infrastructure Fund for the Athletes Village, what was

- a) The agreed delivery date**
- b) The agreed number of homes**
- c) The agreed number of affordable homes?**

Answer:

The Council was granted a total contribution of £148.3m from MHCLG (as the Department was then called) towards the cost of the Perry Barr Regeneration Scheme, including the associated road improvements, in March 2019, with the grant to be drawn down in tranches between 2018/19 and 2021/22. The grant has been drawn down and utilised in its entirety.

The Grant Agreement included some overarching requirements for housing growth in and around Perry Barr as set out below but was silent on tenure. It should be noted that the housing growth requirements include both direct delivery by the Council and activity from other developers.

Phase 1 Athletes’ Village

18/	19/	20/	21/	22/	23/	24/	25/	26/	27/	28/2	Tot
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	9+	al
0	0	0	0	0	700	475	0	0	0	0	117
											5

Other Sites: Phase 2 Athletes’ Village, Birchfield Gateway, and wider Perry Barr sites

18/	19/	20/	21/	22/	23/	24/	25/	26/	27/	28/2	Tot
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	9+	al
1	0	7	150	200	55	149	509	473	915	1498	395
											7

Total

18/	19/	20/	21/	22/	23/	24/	25/	26/	27/	28/2	Tot
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	9+	al
1	0	7	150	200	755	624	509	473	915	1498	513
											2

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DAVID BARRIE

“Home working from abroad”

Question:

Does the council’s remote\home working policies allow staff to work from other countries, and if so how many staff have done so?

Answer:

Our policies are currently silent on working from other countries. We are not aware of any requests having been made via HR to work from abroad.

A7

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR DAVID PEARS**

“6 February 2023 Equal Pay meeting”

Question:

Which of the three Cabinet Members who received the 3 February 2023 email on equal pay, were in attendance at the meeting on 6 February, and were any other Councillors present?

Answer:

The former Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance (in her then role as Deputy Leader), together with the current Leader accepted invitations to the meeting on 6 February 2023.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year you were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

A9

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Leader for the delivery of them, as well as the budget overall?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR BRUCE LINES**

“Bank Holiday Working”

Question:

Is there any equal pay risk from bank holiday working in any council department?

Answer:

All NJC (Grades 1-7) employees are employed on the same variation of the Birmingham Workforce Contract; therefore, all employees have the same contractual terms to bank holiday working.

Bank holiday working is service dependent and providing there is a justifiable reason for work to be undertaken on bank holiday, there is very little equal pay risk. This is also providing that the employee is being paid in line with the Birmingham Workforce Contract.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Inquiry”

Question:

Given your comments at Cabinet and in your letter to residents about wanting the inquiry into Birmingham’s financial collapse to start as soon as possible, will you write to the Secretary of State before the end of March, asking for it to start by September this year and conclude before the end of 2025, as set out in our motion to Council on 6 February?

Answer:

I made abundantly clear my desire for the inquiry to be launched as soon as possible when I met the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities Simon Hoare MP on Monday 15 January.

The Local Government Minister suggested that we should meet again to discuss the Government’s intentions and timetable for this work.

I subsequently wrote to the Minister on 15 February, requesting a meeting at his earliest convenience.

A12

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER

“Equal Pay Claims”

Question:

“Please provide the number of live Equal pay claims known to date broken down by current job grade?”

Answer:

All 'technically live' equal pay claims currently in the Employment Tribunal system are being assessed for validity.

It is important to stress that a number are stayed pending settlement negotiations, some of which have now been settled in full or in part, while others are duplicate claims.

This is the focus of intense work by the council's legal team and we will provide a further update once we have a verified figure.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR IZZY KNOWLES

“Council boundaries”

Question:

“Please could you confirm a map showing the boundary of the Council owned land at Wake Green Playing Fields, Moseley including the area leased to Pickwick Cricket Club. There is believed to be a covenant on this land, from when it was originally gifted to the Council. Can you please confirm if the Council holds a copy of the covenant and if so provide a copy?”

Answer:

Please find attached the title deed plan that illustrates the land we understand to now be within the freehold ownership of the Council. Records indicate that an element of the site is now leased (presumably to the Cricket Club referenced) and officers have requested a copy of this lease from the Council’s records to further review this document.

The Council does hold the original deed of conveyance and upon detailed inspection of this document dated 2nd November 1928 by the Council’s legal team, there is no reference of any covenants over the land other than an obligation that the landowner would maintain the fences between the points marked “A and “B” and “B” and “C” on the plan at the boundary with the adjoining land.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR ADAM HIGGS

“School Budgets”

Question:

For the schools for which the Council provides financial services, where Heads were asked to sign to say they agreed with the 2022/23 accounts, how many:

- Have signed to say the balance is accurate?**
- Have had queries settled and subsequently signed?**
- Have queries outstanding and have not yet signed?**
- Have not responded?**

Answer:

We can report the following:

Have signed to say the balance is accurate?	82
Have had queries settled and subsequently signed?	1
Have queries outstanding and have not yet signed?	72
Have not responded?'	67

The Schools and Fair Funding team are working with individual schools to address the outstanding issues with agreeing 2022-23 account sign off. The team is aware that these all need to be resolved before work starts on the closedown of school accounts for 2023-24 and have contacted schools who have not responded.

Resolving the imbalances remains our priority and this work will continue for 2023-24.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR ALEX YIP

“365”

Question:

Between the procurement of 365 software for Home to School Transport in 2020, and the termination of the contract in January 2024, how much in total (including any exit costs) was spent on the system, and how many routes did it manage?

Answer:

The contract with 365 Response was terminated in November 2023.

The actual costs of the solution are set out in the table below:

Contract Year	Price	Paid?
Year 1 (17th August 2020 – 16th August 2021)	£140,800 (includes platform fees and non-recurrent mobilisation fees)	Yes
Year 2 (17th August 2021 – 16th August 2022)	£126,000	Yes
Year 3 (17th August 2022 – 16th August 2023)	£145,900	No
Year 4 (17th August 2023 – 16th August 2024)	£106,900	No

The council notified the provider that it would not be paying the Year 3 and 4 invoices as the associated milestones had not been completed. There are no additional exit costs.

365 Response held the route data during academic year 2022-23 of approximately 1,000 routes. In place of 365 Response's system, the service is continuing its in-house development of custom-built applications and solutions utilising existing council technologies and software.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR RON STORER

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year at least 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE,
HERITAGE AND TOURISM FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN**

“Rookery Park”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of the budget for play improvements in Rookery Park, including the use of any contingency and what sum was left over, including any unspent contingency?

Answer:

Budget: £62,393 S106
 £10,000 Friends Contribution
 £72,393 Total

Costs: Works: £64,977.54 – Final account
 Professional fees: £7,393
 Total: £72,370.54

Balance of contingency: £22.46

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH MOORE**

“Park Keepers”

Question:

For the current year, and budgeted for 24/25, please list the number of park keepers by park, split between directly employed, and contracted.

Answer:

All park keepers are directly employed by Birmingham Parks and Nurseries. Park keepers are currently assigned to the following parks (or paired parks):

Small Heath Park – A two person dedicated mobile team manage site.

Norman Chamberlain/Ward End Park – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Aston Park – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Summerfield Park – A two person dedicated mobile team manage site.

Senneleys Park/ Ley Hill – A two person dedicated mobile team manage site.

Victoria Park – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Witton Lakes – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Centre Park (Castle Vale Dowry) – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Perry Hall Park – An allocated park keeper is on site.

Brookvale Park – An allocated park keeper is on site.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR PENNY WAGG**

“Tyseley tip”

Question:

“Can the online booking system at Tyseley tip be reviewed to permit non-bookers to visit during the week when it is quieter? The current online only booking system disadvantages people without internet access and easy access to cars; predominantly elderly people, vulnerable people and people living alone?”

Answer:

The booking system at the HRC sites has created several positive impacts for Birmingham City Council:

- Since the introduction of the booking system, the HRC site recycling percentages have risen by 16 per cent. This is in part due to the fact that the booking system gives people the chance to manage their visits in advance and consider what and how they will be presenting their materials;
- Health and Safety on site has improved, as people are not frustrated by having to wait in queues before being able to access the facility and as such are calmer and more focused on site;
- Customer satisfaction has improved, as we provide an agreed access time to our facilities, so they can better plan their day with the knowledge that they will be in and out of site quickly rather than the hours it took before the booking system. We receive lots of complements from our users;
- The respect to the workforce has improved with acts of aggression falling, again due to ease of use of the facilities;
- The carbon footprint has been improved. This is due to two things. One, we no longer have queues of traffic waiting to get into the site for over an hour (longer at peak times) with engines running. Two, the users of the site make less journeys as they make fuller use of their appointments by bringing in more waste per visit, so less journeys overall.

We would not recommend creating a two-tier access to the facility. Creating two lots of messaging for site users will create confusion frustration and possible confrontation. It should also be noted that a number of our HRC sites have a planning condition in place which requires the booking system to remain in place, so this would prohibit us from making changes at those sites.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER**

“Tyseley tip”

Question:

“Can a system be set up to allow those using active travel to use Tyseley tip?”

Answer:

As the booking system is in place and enables us to manage traffic flows into the site, it may be possible for us to explore the opportunities of the site being used by those using bicycles.

Knowing when these site users are arriving, opens up opportunities of how we could manage the facility for bicycles.

In the past without the booking system, it would have been very difficult to manage safety.

But as part of our wider emerging transformation plan, we can explore the possibility of offering specific time slots – however, this will be dependent on demand and impact of available slots for the wider community as well as any investment that may be necessary.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN

“Love your streets”

Question:

“Please provide details of all clean ups on unregistered land within the last 12 months by location/ ward/ month and cost?”

Answer:

Love Your Streets (LYS) is an initiative which aims to seek improvements to streets (and other localities) by listening to the community voice and working co productively with key stakeholders to deliver action days.

Part of the community offer was to support community clean up days on unregistered land where there is engagement from residents and local stakeholders who would directly be impacted.

Since last April we have delivered the following:

LYS Activity	Location	Ward	Date	Cost for LYS crew (approx.)
Alleyway Clearance	Alleyway clearance with residents Crantock Rd	Perry Barr	01/06/2023	£1,244 plus associated tipping costs
Alleyway Clearance	Alleyway with residents - Park Grove	Small Heath	16/06/2023	£1,244 plus associated tipping costs
Alleyway Clearance	Alleyway with residents - Windsor Passage	Sutton Vesey	23/06/2023	£1,244 plus associated tipping costs

Alleyway Clearance	Alleyway clearance with residents - Cliffe Dr	Glebe Farm and Tile Cross	10/08/2023	£2,488 plus associated tipping costs
Alleyway Clearance	Taunton Alleyway	Sparkbrook and Balsall Heath East	21/06/2023	£1,244 plus associated tipping costs

In respect to the costs, we don't normally separate the costs for these events and normally are delivered with the LYS resources allocated to deliver, which is mainly staff time (inc. oncosts), and vehicle related expenses.

The figure does not take into account staff time used in developing the day and any follow up work.

The costs associated with the days are mainly linked to salary costs and would be incurred for that day regardless of location.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR DEBORAH HARRIES

“MHRC without recycling”

Question:

“Having been made aware of a number of MHRC sessions taking place without a recycling vehicle, could you please confirm how many and what percentage of sessions took place in the last 3 years without a recycling facility please?”

Answer:

We do not keep a record of when a MHRC was deployed without a recycling vehicle. However, when this situation has occurred, it will only have been a last resort as a consequence of staffing issues, mechanical breakdown or annual maintenance.

As of the start of March, the MHRC service is no longer being operated with a recycling truck present. This operational decision has been based on service data (including high availability of booking slots at our static HRCs) and a need to provide the best possible value for citizens.

A briefing note was sent to all city councillors and MPs on 1 March 2024 to explain in detail the reasons behind this.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR IZZY KNOWLES

“Recycling and the MHRC’s”

Question:

“Please provide the amount of recyclable and re-usable materials accepted and recycled or re-used by the MHRC in the last year itemised as follows:

Card/paper

Plastic/metal/glass

Textiles /Clothes

Tetra-pacs

Toys

Small furniture

Household items

Electrical items

What was the total MHRC visits completed by ward in 2023?. Please separate those into visits of 1. General waste truck only, 2. General waste truck and MHRC lorry. 3. Waste truck and garden waste truck.

When the MHRC lorry is unavailable is there any reason that a normal recycling truck could not be deployed in its place?”

Answer:

Itemised Total Weights (t) of each recycle recorded in 2023:

Card/Paper	45.92	
Plastic/metal/glass	5.71	
Textiles	4.56	
Misc.	0.06	(Tetra-Pak/Toys/Small Electrical & Household Items)
Green	6.64	(Introduced on one MHRC in late November 2023)

The four MHRCs were deployed a total of 984 (246 each) times in total in 2023. The visits per ward are detailed below. We do not keep a record of when a MHRC is deployed without a recycling vehicle.

The configuration of the recycling vehicles normally used for household recycling collections means that it is not possible to manually load them (as per the open-backed vehicle used for the residual waste) due to health and safety reasons, so it would not be possible to deploy these in place of the normal recycling vehicle.

Ward	No. of MHRC Visits in 2023
Acocks Green	21
Allens Cross	9
Alum Rock	22
Aston	25
Balsall Heath West	12
Bartley Green	22
Billesley	21
Birchfield	11
Bordesley & Highgate	12
Bordesley Green	10
Bournbrook & Selly Park	19
Bournville & Cotteridge	15
Brandwood & Kings Heath	20
Bromford & Hodge Hill	24
Castle Vale	10
Druids Heath & Monyhull	10
Edgbaston	15
Erdington	22
Frankley Great Park	12
Garretts Green	7
Glebe Farm & Tile Cross	23
Gravelly Hill	9
Hall Green North	15
Hall Green South	10

Handsworth	12
Handsworth Wood	23
Harborne	22
Heartlands	9
Highters Heath	8
Holyhead	12
Kings Norton North	7
Kings Norton South	10
Kingstanding	21
Ladywood	21
Longbridge & West Heath	15
Lozells	11
Moseley	15
Nechells	12
Newtown	9
North Edgbaston	17
Northfield	7
Oscott	15
Perry Barr	18
Perry Common	7
Pype Hayes	10
Quinton	18
Rubery & Rednal	9
Shard End	8
Sheldon	18
Small Heath	21

Soho & Jewellery Quarter	25
South Yardley	9
Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East	21
Sparkhill	24
Stirchley	11
Stockland Green	23
Sutton Four Oaks	7
Sutton Mere Green	7
Sutton Reddicap	8
Sutton Roughley	8
Sutton Trinity	7
Sutton Vesey	18
Sutton Walmley & Minworth	15
Sutton Wylde Green	6
Tyseley & Hay Mills	12
Ward End	10
Weoley & Selly Oak	25
Yardley East	8
Yardley West & Stechford	9

E10 has been redirected to I3

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR PAUL TILSLEY

“Absence management”

Question:

“Please provide absenteeism figures from the waste management division for January. Please provide the number of employees at each site, and the total amount of sickness days taken that month?”

Answer:

The changes in buildings have not been reflected in the staffing structures so it is not currently possible to provide an accurate report based on location. The overall figures for the service have been provided below:

Sum of Work Days Sickness Absence Duration In Period	Total Occupied Headcount	Absenteeism Rate (Headcount) %
2363	851	12.62%

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT FROM
COUNCILLOR BABER BAZ

“Tree removals and planting”

Question:

“Further to your written answer in January about tree removals and replanting in Yardley East Ward. My current tally – as per notifications from Kier – are for 42 tree removals between August 2023 and February 2024, which is more than double your claim of 20 trees removed, further confused by your 2022/23 timeline.

Seen as you could only confirm five of those being replanted and 15 remaining, could you please give me more confidence that you are replacing one tree for every one you remove. Could I ask you to introduce, as a matter of course, sending Councillors notifications of when and where those replacement trees have been planted, as you notify us of those details for tree removals.

Finally, it would be useful to know that substantial saplings, rather than small whips, are being used for the replacement trees to mitigate vandalism and natural failure?”

Answer:

Thank you for the question, we have reviewed previous responses and can issue the following clarification.

Some confusion arises as we have a number of differing timescales over which works will be undertaken.

Firstly, most operations are aligned to fiscal years rather than calendar years and as such reporting is generally on an April to March basis.

This is the time frame we use when undertaking our cyclical tree inspection regime. When undertaking that inspection, we survey each tree individually so it can often take several months to complete a ward area.

Following this essential tree works are prioritised according to urgency.

High priority works may be scheduled for within 6 weeks while lower priority works may be scheduled for within 6 months.

This means that tree works may be carried out in a different year to when they were identified.

Secondly, when it comes to replacement tree planting this can only be undertaken during a trees dormant period, which is typically November to March

This offers a relatively small window of opportunity for planting and as such some replanting for removals carried out late in the fiscal year will be carried forward to the next available planting season.

For example, a tree removed in March 2023 would not be replaced until the planting season November 23 - March 24.

With regard to the table of trees planted (E11 response 9th January 2024), it was stated that 5 of 20 trees had been replanted with the 15 remaining to be completed prior to the end of April 2024.

Those plantings relate directly to trees that were removed in the fiscal year 2022/23 and not to any trees removed (or notified to be removed) following 2023/24 inspection period.

In relation to the 2023-24 survey year, 45 trees were noted for removal of which 15 have been replanted with 30 carried forward into the next planting season (November 24 – March 25), this is summarised in the table below.

It is worth noting that the number of notifications received from Kier may exceed the number of trees removed, this is down to how the notification system works.

Kier will notify of an intended date/ time for a tree to be removed, however, should that not occur on that specific date to, for example, an obstruction, then the job is rescheduled, and a new notification sent out – therefore if relying on notifications alone, it would seem more trees have been removed than actually will have.

The trees that are replanted have to be suited to the harsh environment of the highway network, these have always been what are termed heavy standards or extra heavy standards

These are trees that are between 10 and 15 years old with a height of between 3.5 and 4 metres These trees are also supplied containerised, so they have a healthy and active root system.

When these trees are planted, we now use a metal mesh cage and watering bag to increase the protection of these new plants and improve their establishment rates.

Whips are seedling trees of no more than 3 years of age and are only suited to woodland creation projects or similar where higher number of trees are required.

In terms of notifying of tree replacement planting, we can issue an end of season summary for wards where replanting activity has been undertaken.

All tree works and annual replanting programme do however have to be approved by the council prior to commencement

This review and approvals are undertaken by the strategic lead for Urban Forestry and Nature, who, for impartiality, is independent from the Highways teams.

Ward	Notification date	Road	Location	Reason	Felled Date	Replacement Date	Replacement Location
Yardley East	11/08/2023	Church road	337/339	Dead	06/11/2023	22/02/2024	337/339
Yardley East	17/08/2023	Barrows Lane	Opp 41	Senescent	01/11/2023	21/02/2024	Opp 31
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Farnol Road	60	Structural Integrity	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Vibart Road	8	Disease Decay	24/10/2023	21/02/2024	8
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Vibart Road	24	Disease Decay	24/10/2023	21/02/2024	24
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Vera Road	66	Structural Integrity	08/02/2024	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Vera Road	50	Disease Decay	18/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	25/09/2023	St Edburghs Road	Adj 7	Disease Decay	18/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	25/09/2023	Shaw Drive	Side 48 Vicarage Rd	Structural Integrity	05/01/2024	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Abbeys Grove	3	Dead	06/11/2023	22/02/2024	3
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Barrows Lane	183/185	New Planting Failure	01/11/2023	21/02/2024	185
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Barrows Lane	182	Disease Decay	01/11/2023	21/02/2024	184
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Barrows Lane	151/153	New Planting Failure	20/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Barrows Lane	81	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Barrows Lane	136	Disease Decay	20/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Bilton Grange Road	82	Structural Integrity	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Charlbury Crescent	103/105	Dead	Not Felled	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Duncroft Road	107	Structural Integrity	01/11/2023	2023/24 Planting Programme	Planned at 107/109
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Stoney Lane	107/109	Disease Decay	06/11/2023	22/02/2024	Opp 107
Yardley East	26/09/2023	Stoney lane	288	Disease Decay	26/10/2023	22/02/2024	290
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Charlbury Crescent	139	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Charlbury Crescent	117	Disease Decay	Not Felled	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Church road	397	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Church road	584	Disease Decay	15/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Church road	578	Disease Decay	15/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Gleneagles Road	6/8	Disease Decay	30/10/2023	2023/24 Planting Programme	Planned 8/10
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Gleneagles Road	21	Structural Integrity	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Gleneagles Road	69	Structural Integrity	23/11/2023	2023/24 Planting Programme	Planned 67/69
Yardley East	27/09/2023	Gleneagles Road	66	Structural Integrity	23/11/2023	2023/24 Planting Programme	Planned 66/68
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Barrows lane	Opp 113	Disease Decay	21/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Blakesley Road	22	Structural Integrity	26/10/2023	22/02/2024	36
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Blakesley Road	18	Structural Integrity	Not Felled	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Croft Road	76	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Charlbury Crescent	126	Disease Decay	Not Felled	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Ingfield Road	56	Disease Decay	08/11/2023	21/02/2024	52/54
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Partridge Road	15	Disease Decay	08/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	28/09/2023	Blakemere Avenue	20	Structural Integrity	12/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	02/10/2023	Yardley Fields Road	22	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	02/10/2023	Yardley Fields Road	46/50	Disease Decay	Felled to Stump	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	02/10/2023	Duncroft Road	22	Structural Integrity	21/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/10/2023	Patrick Road	34	Damage to Structures	15/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	01/11/2023	Patrick Road	34/36	Damage to Structures	15/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	21/11/2023	Barrows Lane	143	Senescent	20/12/2023	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	27/11/2023	Yardley Fields Road	82	Dead	25/01/2024	2024/25 Planting Programme	
Yardley East	06/02/2024	Barrows Lane	204	Disease Decay	Not Felled	2024/25 Planting Programme	

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR DARIUS SANDHU

“Perry Barr Village borrowing costs”

Question:

What are the forecast borrowing costs for the Perry Barr Village in each year since first loan taken until repaid in full?

Answer:

The Interest costs charged to the Perry Barr Regeneration Scheme to date can be broken down as follows:

2018/19 - £0.140m

2019/20 - £0.156m

2020/21 - £0.665m

2021/22 - £1.725m

2022/23 - £8.508m

2023/24 - £12.500m (estimate)

At this stage it is not possible to state the future interest costs, or the period over which they will be incurred, as this is heavily dependent on future interest rates, as well as the value and timing of disposals of the land and dwellings that form the overall scheme.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR RICHARD PARKIN

“Social Care costs”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of social care costs by constituency for a) adult social care and b) children’s social care, including a separate line for any central overheads.

Answer:

The financial commitment for 2023/24 Adult Social Care expenditure is below. Constituency team commitments have been separated out from other team commitments, which have been included as a separate table for completeness.

This commitment is from the Adult Social Care Case Management System, Eclipse, and excludes any overhead adjustments as these are apportioned by the Final Accounts Team as part of the year end closure of accounts.

Adult Social Care - Care Packages Financial commitment for 23/24		Adult Social Care - Care Packages Financial commitment for 23/24	
Constituencies	£m	Other	£m
Edgbaston	23.55	Complex Care	0.77
Erdington	30.42	Forensics	0.19
Hall Green	26.29	Hospital Teams	15.66
Hodge Hill	23.50	Other	4.54
Ladywood	31.65	Shared Lives	0.24
Northfield	30.68	Transitions	27.28
Perry Barr	23.77		
Selly Oak	23.36		
Sutton	22.64		
Yardley	24.79		
Sub Total	260.65	Sub Total	48.68
		TOTAL	309.33

Information is not available by constituency for Children’s Social Care due to the carer's home and the location of the child sometimes differing or changing and so spend information is not recorded on this basis.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“NEC debt”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown, with monthly cost, interest rate, and outstanding balance, of any loans for which the council is liable, connected with the NEC?

Answer:

1. Birmingham City Council Loan Notes

- Outstanding balance of £214.971m is due for repayment on maturity in 2030
- Interest rate 9.675%, set when loan notes issued in 2005.
- Annual interest payment of £19.629m paid in April.

2. The National Exhibition Centre (Developments) Plc loan stock

- Outstanding balance of £73.0m is due for repayment on maturity in 2027
- Interest rate 7.5625%, set when loan stock issued in 1997
- Annual interest charge £5.521m paid half yearly at the end of March and September.

3. From early 1970, the City Council raised some debt directly to fund the original NEC Group site, as part of the Council’s overall borrowing for capital works. This debt was not separately identified. Some of this debt may have been repaid but it is not possible to quantify the current value of this historical debt or capital expenditure funded through prudential borrowing.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year you were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

This year’s budget has been set against a backdrop of a very challenging financial landscape. Information relating to the financial challenges facing the city council has been outlined and published publicly.

The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

Comprehensive due diligence work has taken place in relation to the deliverability of the proposed savings in all council portfolios. The Commissioners have also provided detailed scrutiny and have stated that the budget is deliverable.

I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES FROM COUNCILLOR BRUCE LINES

“Oracle £45m additional spend”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of what the additional £45m spend (on top of the £86m already spent) for the Oracle programme will be used for?

Answer:

There will be a report Cabinet in April 2024 setting out the options available including re-implementation.

This will include a further cost breakdown to be approved by Cabinet as part of this report.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES
FROM COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN**

“Loans to other places”

Question:

“Please provide a list of the entities that BCC has lent money to and the amount outstanding from each one?”

Answer:

Entity	Forecast loan value outstanding at 31/3/2024 (£)	Reasons for loan	Additional information
Acivico Ltd	532,177	Property costs	Acivico Ltd is 100% City Council owned company providing mainly building related services.
Warwickshire County Cricket Club	17,738,211	Property development	Loan to develop stands at Edgbaston Cricket Ground
Millennium Point Property Ltd	11,582,246	Property/operations	MPPL leases property at Millenium Point in Birmingham.
Performances Birmingham LTD	619,659	Property development	PBL operate the ICC and Symphony Hall and BCC is the sole guarantor for the company.
Green Transport Birmingham	181,117	Business support	Business support loan
City Propco Ltd	19,789,278	Property purchase	Birmingham City Propco Ltd is 100% City Council owned company holding two NEC based hotels
InReach Birmingham Ltd	12,930,991	Property development	InReach Birmingham Ltd is 100% City Council private rented landlord company holding The Embankment, St Vincent Street
Birmingham Wholesale	351,963	Property fit-out	Loan to Birmingham Wholesale Market Company Ltd for tenant unit

Market Company Ltd Arden Cross Ltd	727,490	Partnership operation costs	fit out. The City Council is 50% shareholder of BWMC. City Council's land interest is held with ACL as a 31% shareholder with Packington Estate and Coleshill Estate.
InReach Birmingham Ltd	1,505,982	WOC operation	InReach Birmingham Ltd is 100% City Council private rented landlord company holding The
Birmingham Museums Trust	414,270	Operational	Embankment, St Vincent Street BMT is responsible for governing and managing the museum sites and collections owned by Birmingham City Council
Northfield T2 BID	9,000	Operational	Not for profit limited company to improve business trading environment
Erdington T3 BID	9,000	Operational	Not for profit limited company to improve business trading environment
Sutton T2 BID	9,000	Operational	Not for profit limited company to improve business trading environment
Birmingham Childrens Trust Ltd	4,000,000	Operational	Birmingham Childrens Trust Ltd is 100% City Council owned company providing statutory children's services.
BLLP (Building Schools for the Future - BSF)	374,860	Operational	Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - Phase 1A
BLLP (Building Schools for the Future - BSF)	199,980	Operational	Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - Phase 1B

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER

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Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY

“Section 21 evictions”

Question:

On how many occasions in the last 6 years has the Council used section 21 evictions against any of its tenants (including those in non-social housing such as through Inreach)?

Answer:

It has been identified that on 5 occasions in the last 6 years the Council has used Section 21 eviction notices. These 5 were via InReach for the apartment in use, Embankment, but did not result in any actions, as the tenants either left or paid. There are no other occasions identified.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ROBERT ALDEN

“Housing for asylum seekers”

Question:

Since 2012, how many houses has the Council acquired in order to house asylum seekers? Split between inside and outside the Birmingham local authority area, and broken down by

- a) Open market purchase**
- b) Auction**
- c) Rent**
- d) CPO**

Answer:

The council does not acquire accommodation to house asylum seekers. SERCO, on behalf of the Home Office, procure accommodation for asylum seekers in Birmingham against a regional plan.

Once a decision is made on an asylum seeker’s application the individual either has a positive outcome and becomes a refugee living as a citizen in Birmingham with rights to accommodation, or if their application is refused they have no recourse to public funds nor rights to accommodation unless they are assessed to have care and support needs.

Birmingham has participated in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) through which grant from the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities (DULHC) has been secured. Through this grant contribution Birmingham City Council has made open market purchases of 43 homes, all in Birmingham. These homes now form part of BCC’s Temporary Accommodation portfolio. Of these, 16 are initially let to Afghan households who come to the UK via one of the Government’s resettlement schemes (ACRS or ARAP)-and 27 to households who are already in the UK via the Homes 4 Ukraine scheme and are at risk of homelessness. There remain a further 13 properties in the pipeline for purchasing for households from Ukraine.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

Given this, can you confirm that you have not been made aware, from any source, of anything that has the potential to have a material impact on this year’s budget that has not been included in the papers for consideration by Council?

Answer:

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER

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Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

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I am accountable for these savings, and I will hold the senior officers to account for their delivery.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR ADRIAN
DELANEY**

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR KERRY
BREWER**

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE,
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EQUALITIES FROM COUNCILLOR JON HUNT

“Cemeteries”

Question:

“What is being done to repair flood damage from recent inclement weather and flooded drains in all Birmingham cemeteries? Please advise on each individual cemetery’s damage and actions for repair?”

Answer:

In general, mechanical road sweepers are called in where there is significant debris on the roads because of heavy rain/winds. Regular site inspections take place to check the condition of the drains and the gulley cleaning machines are brought in if drain gulleys are blocked. Where additional drainage works are required then the service calls upon Acivico or the Flood and Drainage team to investigate and advise.

Any tree damage is addressed by the tree officer and contractors.

The response regarding each cemetery is as follows:

Kings Norton cemetery - Temporary barriers erected to flooded area around section 1. Flood waters dissipate once heavy rains have ceased.

Brandwood End Cemetery - Flood defence works were completed in 2022/23 to prevent flooding of neighbouring properties. A broken drain towards the centre of the cemetery is currently being investigated to assess the works required to repair.

Lodge Hill Cemetery - Severn Trent completed major flood defence works to prevent flooding of neighbouring properties, which appears to have worked well and previous flooding is not an issue. There are some sections where the ground water is high and becomes very wet during periods of heavy rain, but the water naturally drains into the soil when the rain ceases.

Quinton Cemetery – There are a small number of sections where the ground water is high and become very wet during periods of heavy rain. The water will naturally drain into the soil once the rains cease.

Sutton Coldfield Crematorium - Drainage works that were carried out in 2022/23 have proven effective in preventing heavy pooling on the exit drive and surrounding

areas of the crematorium. The gulleys are regularly cleared to ensure that the drains are working effectively.

Handsworth Cemetery - Following flooding due to heavy rains in the Autumn of 2020, flood defence works and additional drainage and road resurfacing was completed to prevent a recurrence, which is generally successful. The drains sometimes back up and drain slower during periods of very heavy and persistent rain but quickly clear once the rain has stopped.

Additional drainage works were completed on an area towards Park Lane in 2022, with new drainage installed.

Further works are under investigation close to the cemetery chapel where it is believed that the drains have either collapsed or are clogged by tree roots. The service is working with contractors to resolve.

Witton Cemetery - Some standing water collects in some lower areas during periods of heavy rain but quickly dissipates once the rain has ceased.

Sutton Coldfield Cemetery - No issues, just general clearance of brash required following storms

Sutton New Hall Cemetery - An extensive drainage system was designed and installed as part of the development of the cemetery. The drainage from the cemetery is effective and the ground water runs into large swales at the bottom of the fields before entering the natural water course below. There are no issues with flooding during storms.

Jewellery Quarter Cemeteries – Key Hill and Warstone Lane - The restoration works that were completed in 2022 included additional drainage works in both cemeteries, but mainly Key Hill Cemetery, to address the flooding on the low levels following heavy rainfall. This has been effective in preventing the rainwater from pooling in those areas.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR KEN WOOD**

“Parking Bays”

Question:

Since 2018, please list the location and number of fee-paying parking bays removed from the City Centre.

Answer:

	Removed	Date
Graham St	8	2020 - 2021
Warstone Lane	5	2020 - 2021
Waterloo St	2	
Aston Road	1	Jan-22
Colmore Row	13	2019 - 2022
Waterloo St	20	2020 - 2023
Weaman St	2	2022
Weaman St	3	2022
Woodcock St	3	2022
Staniforth St	1	2022
Edward St	2	Oct-22
Margaret St	3	Oct-23
Cornwall St	19	Oct-23
Edmund St	15	Oct-23

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR DAVID BARRIE**

“Parking Bays suspended”

Question:

When chargeable on-street parking is suspended or closed off for use of private company, for example during filming or construction, what is the Council’s charging policy and fee per space per day?

Answer:

£15.75 per day for each of the first 3 bays then £15.75 for each subsequent ‘block’ of up to 3 bays:

Eg: 2 bays = £31.50
4 bays = £63.00
6 bays = £63.00
9 bays = £78.75

An admin fee of £15.75 is then applied for each suspension and a charge of £73.50 for up to 15 bays by the contractor who attend to suspend the bays by setting out suspension cones, erecting signage and checking the suspension each day whilst in place.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN DELANEY**

“All relevant considerations”

Question:

Last year 3 of your colleagues were presented with information about a potential £800m equal pay liability 3 weeks before the budget was set, but did not share that information with other Councillors to allow them to take it into consideration when voting on the budget.

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Answer:

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The budget has also been subject to detailed oversight from the Commissioners.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR KERRY BREWER**

“Budget Delivery”

Question:

Can you confirm that you believe that all the savings in the proposed budget within your portfolio are deliverable and that you take responsibility as Cabinet Member for the delivery of them?

Answer:

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CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR DEBBIE CLANCY**

“School Crossing Patrols”

Question:

What are the conditions and changes being demanded of school crossing patrols for them to be funded through the CAZ grant?

Answer:

Funding from Clean Air Zone revenues has been provided to the Highways service for a period of up to three financial years to support the development of an alternative delivery model for the service.

The Clean Air Zone team and other colleagues from the Transport and Connectivity service will support this work – especially where there may be linkages to other initiatives with schools that support or encourage more active modes of travel and/or contribute to the goal of improved air quality.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR JON HUNT

“Road works management”

Question:

“What is going to be done about the new system of people who dig up the roads using contractors to supply temporary traffic lights, which are then left in place for days after work is completed, causing network congestion? How is this licensed and monitored?”

Answer:

Birmingham City Council’s Permit Scheme was introduced in March 2023. This scheme provides the Council with the ability to robustly manage the network and monitor works promoter performance in line with our Network Management Duty, as per the Traffic Management Act 2004.

We currently have 8 network inspectors working across the city and part of their role is to identify, or attend when notified, live works sites that are causing issues on the network. The inspectors have the ability to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for non-compliant works, i.e. use of temporary traffic lights when this hasn’t been agreed as part of the Traffic Management proposal. In the most extreme circumstances, our inspectors are also able to instruct the works promoter to remove all Traffic Management and leave site, i.e. working without a permit/illegal occupation of the highway.

We also have the ability to issue overrun charges against works promoters where works or Traffic Management equipment continues to occupy the highway post the agreed end date of the works. We notify the works promoter of the issue, and in the event they fail to clear the highway, the overrun charges increase daily.

We use public facing IT programmes such as One.Network to manage and monitor planned and emergency works. We also work closely with our partners at Transport for West Midlands and the West Midlands Combined Authority to share network intelligence across the region and react as best as possible to instances causing congestion and disruption to highway users.

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR MORRIAM JAN**

“CAZ spending by ward”

Question:

Please provide a breakdown of all CAZ spending by ward giving the total amount spent and the projects that were paid for?

Answer:

The use of the revenues generated from the operation of the Clean Air Zone is determined by the legislation used to create the scheme (i.e. for the purpose of directly or indirectly facilitating the achievement of local transport policies of the authority) and the Clean Air Zone Charging Order, which sets out the high level spending priorities for any net surplus revenues generated from the scheme.

The table below includes all schemes that will be supported, as approved by Cabinet, up to the end of March 2023.

CAZ Ref	Projects with approved allocations of CAZ net surplus revenues	Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) Theme	Amount funded (£m)
CAZ001	Hydrogen Buses	Reallocate Road Space	3,289
CAZ002	City Centre Pedestrianisation / City Centre Public Realm Phase 1	Transform City Centre	7,395
CAZ003	City Centre Pedestrianisation / City Centre Public Realm Phase 2	Transform City Centre	8,082
CAZ004	Electric / Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles Running Costs (M2c)	Clean Air Strat	1,000
CAZ005	University Station	Reallocate Road Space	3,400
CAZ006	Camp Hill Line Rail Stations	Reallocate Road Space	5,218
CAZ007	Cross-City Bus Scheme	Reallocate Road Space	4,225
CAZ008	Pinch Points City Council Match Funding from CAZ	Transform City Centre	1,500
CAZ009	Clean Air City Fund (£20k per Ward)	Clean Air Strat	1,480
CAZ010	Clean Air City Fund (£40k for 2 Member Wards)	Clean Air Strat	2,560
CAZ011	Transport & Environment CAZ Programme	Active Travel	5,250
CAZ012	Transformational Transport Plans upto 2050	Transform City Centre	500
CAZ013	City Centre Traffic Cells implementation	Transform City Centre	3,000
CAZ014	Places for People Delivery (Kings Heath & Bournville)	Active Travel	3,000
CAZ015	Active Travel Fund Enhancement (Tranche 2) Schemes	Active Travel	1,250
CAZ016	Measures that support the Management of Travel Demand	Active Travel	1,000
CAZ017	Support the increased use of Active Modes of Travel & Public Transport	Active Travel	3,000
CAZ018	Council's Route to Zero Team - CAZ Funding Support	Clean Air Strat	2,000
		TOTAL	57,149

The nature of these schemes means that their benefit is likely to be felt in more than one ward and, in a number of instances, the benefit arising from any one scheme could be felt across the whole of the city.

More specifically the table includes an allocation of just over £4m towards the Brum Breathes Fund (i.e. Clean Air City Fund CAZ009 and CAZ010). This scheme provides an allocation of £20,000 p.a. for a single member ward and £40,000 p.a. for a two-member ward. In both instances the allocation is per annum for a total period of two years (i.e. 2023/24 and 2024/25). The funds from the scheme are subject to an application process.

The table below summarises the applications to the Fund that have been approved. More information about the Brum Breathes Fund can be found at:

www.brumbreathes.co.uk/BrumBreathesFund

Ward	Number of Councillors	DISTRICT	Total Funding Available 2023-25	Amount Allocated	Budget Remaining	Type of Application	Project details
Stirchley	1	SOUTH	£ 40,000.00	£ 19,980.00	£ 20,020.00	Community	Encouraging the adoption of e-bikes through trial and education.
Sutton Reddicap	1	NORTH	£ 40,000.00	£ 37,091.00	£ 2,909.00	Councillor	Newdigate Fields wild meadow / Redicapp 20mph zone
Sutton Roughley	1	NORTH	£ 40,000.00	£ 35,265.76	£ 4,734.24	Councillor	Reducing vehicle use through use of verge protection measures (Slade Road)
Sutton Wylde Green	1	NORTH	£ 40,000.00	£ 40,000.00	£ -	Councillor	Contribution towards creation of Wylde Green Public Transport Interchange Hub

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM
COUNCILLOR ROGER HARMER**

“Parking enforcement tickets”

Question:

“How many parking enforcement tickets have been issued by ward/ month throughout 2023?”

Answer:

We do not hold data of Parking Penalty Charge Notices issued by ward. Please see below the total number of PCNs issued by month during 2023:-

**PARKING PENALTY
CHARGE NOTICE
ISSUE 2023**

Month	PCN Issue
Jan-23	13,964
Feb-23	13,947
Mar-23	14,382
Apr-23	15,718
May-23	16,659
Jun-23	14,864
Jul-23	13,030
Aug-23	12,001
Sep-23	13,701
Oct-23	15,910
Nov-23	16,631
Dec-23	14,956
TOTAL	175,763

CITY COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2024

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT FROM COUNCILLOR IZZY KNOWLES

“FPN’s”

Question:

“How many patrols have taken place and how many FPNs have been issued between 1st October 2022 and 31st January 2024 (broken down monthly) for parking on the grass verge in both Yardley Wood Road and Swanshurst Lane, Moseley?”

Answer:

Number of Patrols

Location	Month	Total Patrols
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Oct-22	15
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Nov-22	5
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Dec-22	5
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Jan-23	8
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Feb-23	3
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Mar-23	7
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Apr-23	15
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	May-23	21
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Jun-23	10
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Jul-23	18
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Aug-23	16
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Sep-23	2
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Oct-23	4
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Nov-23	4

Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Dec-23	1
Yardley Wood Road Moseley	Jan-24	0
	Total	134

Location	Month	Total Patrols
Swanshurst Lane	Oct-22	18
Swanshurst Lane	Nov-22	3
Swanshurst Lane	Dec-22	5
Swanshurst Lane	Jan-23	4
Swanshurst Lane	Feb-23	14
Swanshurst Lane	Mar-23	11
Swanshurst Lane	Apr-23	21
Swanshurst Lane	May-23	42
Swanshurst Lane	Jun-23	20
Swanshurst Lane	Jul-23	51
Swanshurst Lane	Aug-23	35
Swanshurst Lane	Sep-23	3
Swanshurst Lane	Oct-23	5
Swanshurst Lane	Nov-23	8
Swanshurst Lane	Dec-23	5
Swanshurst Lane	Jan-24	2
	Total	247

PENALTY CHARGE NOTICES ISSUED FOR PARKING ON A GRASS VERGE

Month	Yardley Wood Road	Swanshurst Lane
Oct-22	0	3
Nov-22	0	0
Dec-22	0	0
Jan-23	0	0

Feb-23	0	5
Mar-23	1	0
Apr-23	0	4
May-23	0	15
Jun-23	0	5
Jul-23	0	3
Aug-23	1	5
Sep-23	0	0
Oct-23	0	0
Nov-23	0	2
Dec-23	1	0
Jan-24	0	0
TOTAL	3	42

Birmingham City Council

City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Commissioner Comments: Standards Committee Recommendations following Code of Conduct Hearing, Improvement Recovery Plan (IRP) and Executive Business Report – Housing and Homelessness

Commissioner Review – Agenda Item 9

Commissioner comments in relation to this agenda item are to follow.

Commissioner Review – Agenda Item 10

The IRP is a crucial step on the road to recovery for the City Council. The Council needs to ensure that it secures delivery of every element of the Plan at the pace required to enable the intervention to come to an end as planned.

Commissioner Review – Agenda Item 11

This report highlights the scale and challenges facing the housing sector within Birmingham City Council. The report outlines a wide range of priorities and areas for improvement and these must be delivered, appropriately resourced and closely managed. Commissioners should expect to see performance and risks being reported on regularly through the refreshed governance arrangements and these will form important elements of the Council's overall improvement and recovery journey.

Birmingham City Council

City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Standards Committee Recommendations following Code of Conduct Hearing

Report of: Marie Rosenthal Interim City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

1 Executive Summary

1.1 On 22nd March 2024, the Standards Committee held a hearing into a complaint that Councillor Des Hughes had breached the Code of Conduct for Elected and Co-Opted Members. The complaint alleged that Councillor Hughes:

- Failed to correctly register his register of interests.
- Continued to access Council systems to extend employment contracts whilst no longer a Council employee.
- Continued to receive his salary after his resignation and failed to take steps to repay an overpayment in the sum of £6,189.96.
- Failed to declare his non-registerable interests and failed to recuse himself from meetings of the Education and Childrens Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.2 The Committee decided that Councillor Hughes had breached the Code of Conduct. A copy of the Decision Notice is attached at Appendix 1. The Committee decided that a report be submitted to Council recommending that Councillor Hughes apologise for his conduct.

2 Recommendations

2.1 Council is requested to:

- 2.1.1 Note the findings of the Standards Committee that the Code of Conduct has been breached and that Councillor Hughes apologise for his conduct.

- 2.1.2 Agree the Recommendation that Councillor Hughes be removed from his outside appointments representing the Council on the Board of the Birmingham Royal Ballet and as a Trustee of Barry Jackson Trust.
- 2.1.3 Agree that the Council takes promptly all reasonable steps to recover the outstanding overpayment of salary in the sum of £6,189.96.

Appendix 1: Standards Committee Decision Notice issued on 22 March 2024

Background papers: None

Other useful documents: The original report to Standards Committee on 22 March 2024 which can be found at:

ENDS

In the matter of Alleged breaches of the Birmingham City Councils Code of Code

Standards Committee Decision Notice

The findings were that Cllr Des Hughes breached the Code of Conduct, in the following respects:

1. By failing to register his trusteeships of two charities on his register of interests, he has breached paragraph 9.1 of the Code;
2. By continuing to access Council systems (including the Hays 3SS platform to extend the employment contracts of agency workers), he has breached paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2(a) of the Code, as well as bringing his role and the Council into disrepute, in breach of paragraph 5 of the Code;
3. By continuing to receive his salary after his purported resignation, and by failing to take steps to repay that money, he has breached paragraph 7.1 of the Code, as well as bringing his role into disrepute, in breach of paragraph 5 of the Code;
4. By failing to declare a Non-Registrable Interest, and by failing to recuse himself from the discussion of the NCB review of SENDIASS at meetings of the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 November 2022 and 25 January 2023, he has breached paragraph 9.1 of the Code.

As a result of these findings, the Committee made the following recommendations:

1. That he be removed from his BCC outside appointments as a Trustee of the Barry Jackson Trust and as the BCC representative on the Board of the Birmingham Royal Ballet.
2. A report be made to Council recommending that Cllr Hughes apologises to Council for his conduct.
3. Council takes promptly all reasonable steps to recover the outstanding overpayment of salary.

Peter Wiseman
Chair of Standards Committee

22 March 2024

Birmingham City Council

City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Improvement & Recovery Plan (IRP)

Report of: Councillor John Cotton – Leader
Councillor Sharon Thompson – Deputy Leader
Prof. Graeme Betts CBE – Acting Chief Executive

Report author: Paul Clarke, Assistant Director (Programmes, Performance, and Improvement)

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Intervention Directions issued to the Council under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 require the preparation and agreement of an Improvement Plan.
- 1.2 This report seeks the approval of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). The IRP provides the basis for improvement and change required, and will help provide assurance to citizens, councillors, officers, partners, commissioners, and other stakeholders that the Council is taking steps to improve its financial sustainability and the way it operates to deliver the services and outcomes the city and its citizens need.
- 1.3 The IRP document attached at Appendix 1 summarises the key priorities and actions that will address the immediate and most significant issues for improvement. It brings together programmes already underway and planned, as well as new projects and programmes which have been initiated in response to the more recent reviews and judgements, such as the review of governance by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS).
- 1.4 The IRP has been considered and endorsed by Commissioners Improvement and Recovery Board on 13th March 2024 and Cabinet on 4th April 2024. Cabinet agreed to recommend approval of the IRP to City Council.

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 City Council is recommended to approve the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) (attached at Appendix 1) as the overarching document that summarises the key programmes, projects, and activity the Council needs to deliver improvement.

3 Background and context: the need for improvement and change

3.1 A series of reviews and judgements provide evidence of significant and systemic failure at the Council, and highlight exceptional financial, governance and cultural challenges. These reviews and judgements have been a catalyst for the Government's Intervention Directions issued on 5th October 2023, and the arrival of Commissioners, and include:

- Governance and service delivery concerns raised in several reports by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Housing Ombudsman, and the Department for Education's Commissioner for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- The findings from an independent review of governance by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS), commissioned in view of the issues above, identifies significant governance challenges requiring attention, including culture and behavioural issues. Many have been cited previously and are arguably the root causes of some of the current challenges.
- External Auditor Statutory Recommendations issued on 29th September 2023 which include 12 recommendations focused on improvements needed in financial management, practice, and governance.
- Internally, two Section 114 Notices and a Section 5 Notice were issued during September 2023 which reflect the exceptional financial position and severity of budget challenges. The potential equal pay liability, and implementation of the Oracle ERP system were major contributing factors to these Notices.

3.2 The Intervention Directions themselves reference concerns about financial governance and systemic failings over several years including weak governance, poor culture, a challenging relationship with trade unions, and ineffective service delivery, which have been exacerbated by churn at senior officer level.

4. The Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP): Overview

4.1 The Council is required to prepare, agree, and implement an IRP within the first six months of intervention. The Plan should set out the Council's response to the intervention and the identified challenges and failures. An IRP has been developed and is attached at **Appendix 1** for consideration. Commissioners have confirmed the IRP meets the required Directions for the first 6 months of

the intervention.

4.2 The IRP has a focus on three overall aims:

- (1) **Financial Sustainability:** Building on the initial financial recovery response, including ongoing work to address external auditor statutory recommendations, to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. The delivery of budget savings and a solution to equal pay issues remain the most immediate issues to address, as well as re-setting the foundations for the medium and longer term.
- (2) **Improving how the Council is run:** The significant cultural and governance challenges facing the Council need to be addressed, and the IRP sets out the steps we are taking to address these, to become a better functioning organisation, with modern practices, and improved working relations based on high levels of trust, respect, openness, and transparency. This will better enable the Council to deliver its citizen facing services.
- (3) **Citizen Services:** The Council has historic issues with several key services, and they will be the initial focus. The Council needs to improve and restore public trust across all its services, ensuring clear service standards and customer focus. An improved financial position and better run organisation will enable this to happen.

4.3 The IRP is about resetting the culture of the organisation. It will improve levels of trust and respect, increase levels of openness and transparency, move away from a blame culture, enable more corporate and less siloed working, and ensure there is appropriate accountability and responsibility. The Council needs a consistent and positive organisational culture, with clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of elected members and staff. It needs to be an organisation that is member-led, officer-run, and citizen focused.

4.4 At the heart of the IRP is a programme focussed on future organisational design and culture change. But other projects and programmes within the IRP will embed the change in culture and behaviours needed. The programmes focussing on Governance and Relationships, Employee Relationships and People Management, and Programme Management, Performance & Risk will all play a role resetting the culture of the organisation.

4.5 It is important to note the Council's improvement and recovery journey does not start with the agreement of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP). Many of the programmes and projects within the IRP have been initiated in response to issues and challenges as they have come to light. Key improvement programmes already in progress include Oracle, Job Evaluation Programme, improved compliance with Regulator for Social Housing Consumer Standards, and SEND improvement.

4.6 It should also be noted that there has been improvement and recovery activity initiated since the Commissioners arrival to develop proposals for budget savings, and responses to the External Auditor Statutory recommendations and the CfGS Governance Review.

4.7 The IRP includes the following content:

Section	Content
Foreword	Introduction from the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive.
Introduction	Sets out the context for our improvement including the need to change and improve, and the challenges that have led to Government intervention.
How We Will Improve	Summarises the phases of our improvement and the journey to an improved future council, including the underpinning principles that will drive and shape all our change moving forward.
Immediate Recovery and Stabilisation	Sets out the immediate recovery and stabilisation period and progress the Council has achieved between the Directions being issued in October 2023 and the development of the IRP.
Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities	Sets out the overarching themes, priorities and structure used to organise the improvement programmes, projects and activities that are in the Plan. The overall outcomes that will be achieved by the delivery of the Plan are also set out.
Governance, Assurance and Monitoring	Sets out how we will provide assurance on delivery of the Plan, including the governance model, approach and the reporting and monitoring mechanisms. Also explains how we will manage risks and dependencies.
Engagement and Communication	Outlines our communications and how we will keep citizens, councillors, staff, and other stakeholders informed of progress and delivery. It also summarises the engagement that has informed the development of the Plan.
Enabling and Supporting Delivery of the IRP	Summarises how we will ensure there is the required capacity, capability, and resource to deliver the programmes, projects, and activity in the IRP.
Appendices	Priority Programme Activity Summaries Key Performance Indicators Response to the External Auditor Statutory Recommendations Response to the CfGS Governance Review: Stabilisation Plan Risk and Dependency Management

5. Delivery of the IRP: governance, assurance, and resources

5.1 Robust governance and assurance arrangements have been put in place to oversee the delivery of the improvement programmes and budget savings proposed by the

IRP. Section 5 of the draft IRP attached sets out the arrangements for robust and comprehensive governance which includes elected member oversight.

- 5.2 The Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO) will provide independent corporate assurance to a Transformation & Improvement Board (officers) and elected members. It will provide visibility of programmes and savings initiatives and the associated benefits through robust and transparent monitoring and reporting practices. The scale of the challenges facing the Council is considerable and the CPMO function is being strengthened to reflect this. There will be a bi-monthly assurance report presented to the Commissioner's Improvement and Recovery Board.
- 5.3 The IRP will be refreshed and renewed as improvements are delivered, and new programmes of work need to be developed. Not every element of the Council's improvement can be plotted at the start. The draft IRP is an initial Plan. It sets out the priorities and the focus for the next 12-18 months. But some of the delivery plans for the programmes in it will need to be further scoped, developed, and resourced over the forthcoming months, informed by baselining and further engagement.
- 5.4 Significant and sustained investment is required to deliver the scale and pace of change that is required across the organisation. Without directing the right resources to delivering those programmes the Council will not be able to achieve the necessary changes or deliver required budget savings. While improvement activities will, where possible, be funded from within established Directorate/Service budgets, the delivery of the IRP, including budget saving proposals, will require capacity and expertise over and above business-as-usual resources. Section 7 of the IRP sets out our approach to resourcing the IRP.

6. Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 6.1 Do nothing. This is not an option as there is a Statutory Direction on the council to produce an IRP within 6 months of the intervention starting.
- 6.2 Approval of the IRP. This provides assurance to the Government, commissioners, and Birmingham citizens that we understand the scale of recovery and improvement and have a robust, achievable plan in place to deliver what is needed.

7. Consultation and engagement

- 7.1 The IRP has been informed by engagement with a range of officers, elected members and with commissioners. Engagement has taken place at different levels and through different forums throughout the process of developing the IRP. The Plan has been informed and shaped through engagement with Corporate Leadership Team, Directors and Assistant Directors, Cabinet Members, Leaders of Political Groups, Overview and Scrutiny Committees, council staff, and Commissioners. We will continue to ensure there are good levels of awareness

and understanding of the IRP programmes and projects across the organisation.

- 7.2 The Best Value duty under the Local Government Act 1999, requires local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. There is a duty to consult on how to do that, and there will be plans and proposals arising from the IRP programmes we will need to consult citizens and service users on.
- 7.3 Consultation on improvement priorities more generally will be undertaken over the summer of 2024 as part of a planned '*Shaping Birmingham's Future Together Commission*' which will include a programme of engagement with partners and citizens. This will provide input on the priorities for the city, but also the future direction, role, and purpose of the Council.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 The development of the IRP is required to comply with the Intervention Directions issued to the Council under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999. The IRP is a requirement of the Intervention Directions issued to the Council under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 Delivering financial stability is one of the IRP's three overarching aims. The delivery of budget savings and balancing the budget is a key priority within the IRP. Achieving a balanced budget over the next two years will require savings in the region of £300m. This can only be achieved through significant change that improves the way we operate and how we deliver services.
- 9.2 Significant and sustained investment is required to deliver the IRP and the scale and pace of change that it requires across the organisation. Without directing the right resources to deliver those programs, the Council will not be able to achieve the necessary changes or deliver the required budget savings. While most improvement activities will be funded from within established Directorate/Service budgets, the delivery of the IRP and in particular the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget saving proposals, will require capacity and expertise over and above business-as-usual resources.
- 9.3 A budget provision of £20m has been included in the 2024/25 budget, approved at Full Council on 5th March, to fund the additional capacity and resources required to support the delivery of the savings programme and the improvement and change detailed in the IRP.

10. Public Sector Equality Duty

10.1 Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs) will be responsible for ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are completed on programme activity included in the IRP where it is required.

11. Other Implications

How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans, and strategies?

The IRP will sit alongside a refreshed Corporate Plan and Two-Year Financial Plan.

- The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities guiding delivery; aligns resources, delivery plans, strategies, operational activity, and partnership working with these priorities, and enables and influences for the city and citizens.
- The Two-Year Financial Plan sets out the Council's financial income and expenditure for 2024/25, and how the Council intends to manage and deploy its financial resources for the next two years. This includes delivering savings in the region of £300m, which will be achieved through transformation and improvements in the way we operate and deliver services.
- The IRP sets out how the Council will continue to improve its financial management, operation, and service delivery to deliver Corporate Plan priorities, and work as an organisation and partner in the most effective, productive, and impactful way. It provides a framework for the actions to secure continuous improvement and restore public trust across all the Council's functions.

The IRP has been previously recommended for approval at Cabinet on 02.04.2024 and the Improvement & Recovery Board on 13.03.2024.

12. Background Papers

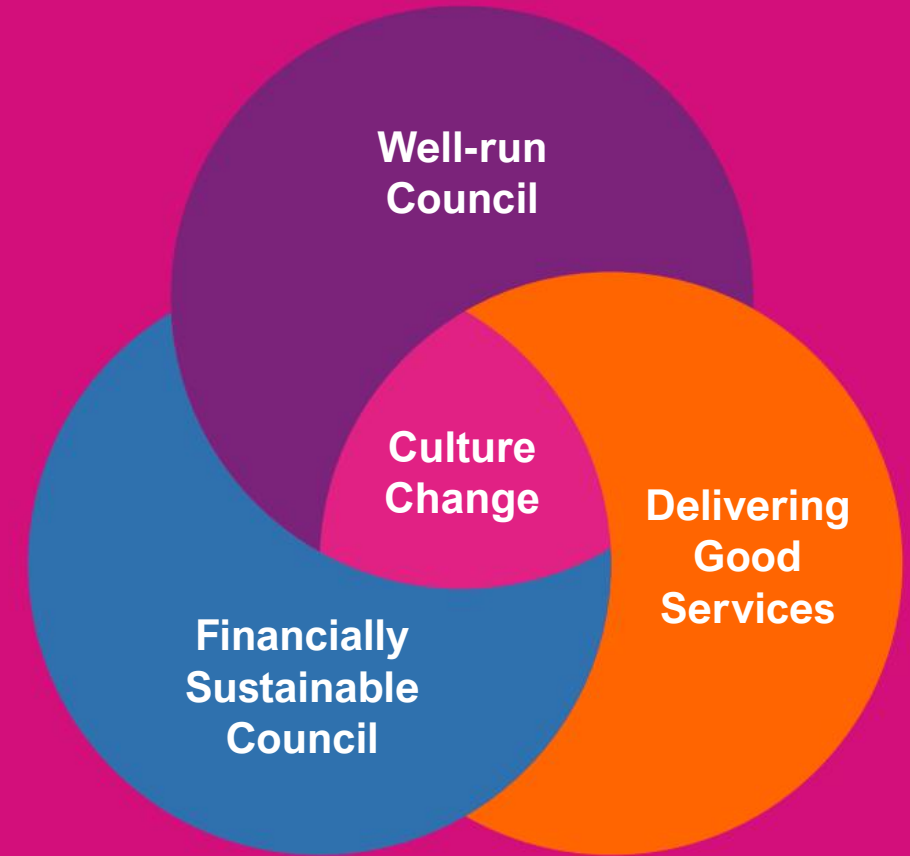
Cabinet Report 02/04/24: 'Draft Improvement and Recovery Plan'.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Improvement & Recovery Plan (IRP).

Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP)

March 2024



Foreword

Welcome to the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan ('IRP').

This plan marks the beginning of a journey for the organisation as we look to dramatically improve our performance and outcomes for our citizens. It is focused on ensuring that the organisation is financially sustainable, well-run, and consequently delivers good quality services.

For too long the Council has not met the standards that this great city expects. This has been demonstrated in a number of areas including the failure to:

- a) Prudently manage the Council's finances including the failure to ensure that previously agreed savings reductions were delivered;
- b) Implement the Oracle ERP System;
- c) Mitigate the risk of legal claims under the Equality Act 2010;
- d) Ensure that Council services are delivering value for money for the taxpayer.

As a consequence, the Council is subject to an intervention by Central Government, with Best Value Commissioners appointed to oversee the organisation's journey towards improvement for a period of up to 5 years.

It is clear that, in order to improve, the Council requires a fundamental reset in the way that it thinks, feels and acts. This reset goes beyond dealing with immediate challenges and will look to build an organisation that is fit for the future. This will lead to a smaller, leaner Council, that is focussed upon getting the basics right and being more responsive to the changing needs of our City.

Birmingham is a city of enormous opportunity and potential. The Council must improve so that it can play a full and active part in supporting the City's continued prosperity and tackling the inequalities that are present within Birmingham.

Our future approach will be shaped by the following values and underpinned by the principle of putting our **citizens, communities, and partners first**. This means:

- Keeping our promises to our partners and to ourselves. On too many occasions officers and members have pledged to do things and not delivered;
- Sharing power by creating opportunities for citizens to participate in decision making, have a greater say in how public services are designed and delivered and more control over what happens in their local neighbourhoods;

- Transforming our services so they are geared towards prevention or intervening at the earliest possible stage. Services will be designed to achieve maximum efficiency but also securing the best outcome for the citizen. Like many Local Authorities across the country, the Council is grappling with unprecedented levels of demand in Adults and Children's social care. Without a change in approach we will not be able to support those that need us most;
- Collaborating, innovating, and joint problem solving with our partners, drawing upon the immense reservoir of skill and expertise within the city;
- Providing greater accountability and transparency in relation to why and how the Council makes decisions and spends taxpayers' money.

We have already begun to demonstrate that changes in our approach can provide tangible benefit to our citizens. The approval of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan will have a significant impact on the quality of our homes over the next 30 years. The proposed approach to investment is a step change and sets out planned investment in the Council's existing stock portfolio



Foreword

(ensuring residents live in high-quality homes), as well as investment in direct delivery of new affordable housing.

We understand that there is a significant amount of work to be done to regain the trust of our key stakeholders, which is why we are creating the **Shaping Birmingham's Future Together** Commission.

This Commission will lead one of the largest public engagements undertaken within the City in recent years to seek the views of the public and strategic partners upon the future role and purpose of the Council and how we can develop the power sharing agenda.

The feedback from this consultation will inform the Council's new Corporate Plan that will be launched in October 2024. This document will set out the future vision, mission and priorities of the Council and the future shape of the organisation.

The future of the Council must be built on solid foundations. Crucial to achieving our ambitions in the short, medium, and long term will be to change the culture of the organisation both at an operational and political level. We are here to serve and that will be the ethos that will run through this Council.

We will create the conditions where our staff and elected members feel empowered, involved, and included in the journey ahead. At the same time, we expect everyone involved with the Council to act in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

We want to create an organisation that puts its citizens, communities, and partners first. This IRP starts us on the route to an improved Council. Whilst the destination is clear, there will be challenges along the way, but we must stay the course if we are to give the City of Birmingham the Council that it deserves.

Councillor John Cotton
Leader of the Council

Councillor Sharon Thompson
Deputy Leader of the Council

Prof. Graeme Betts CBE
Acting Chief Executive



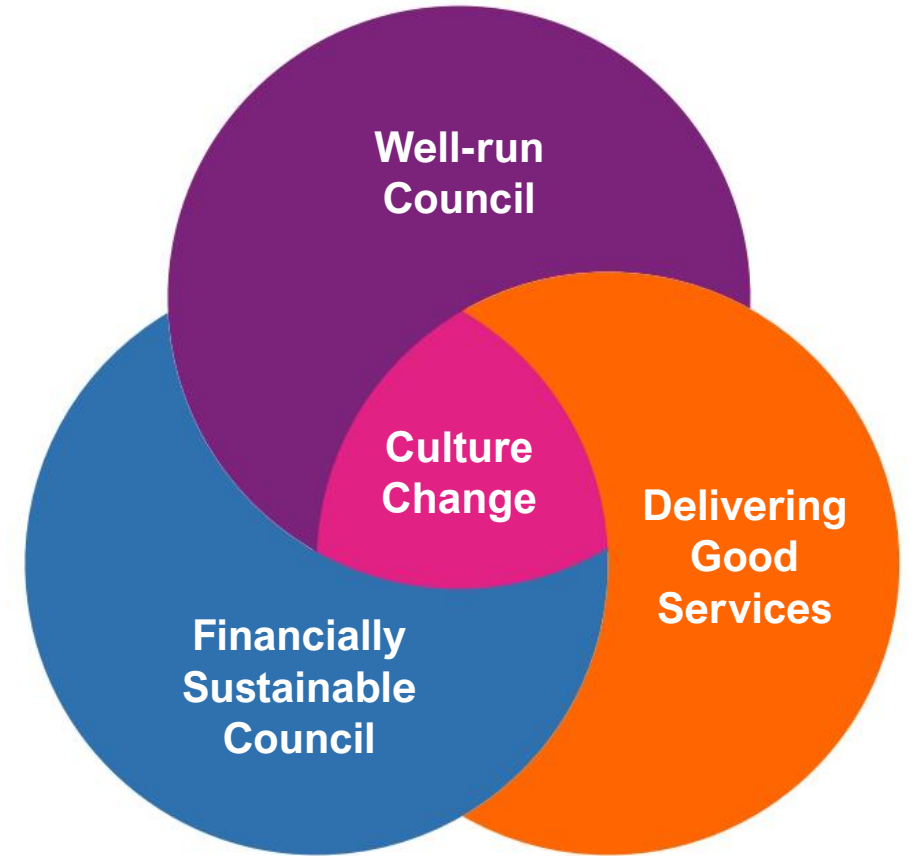
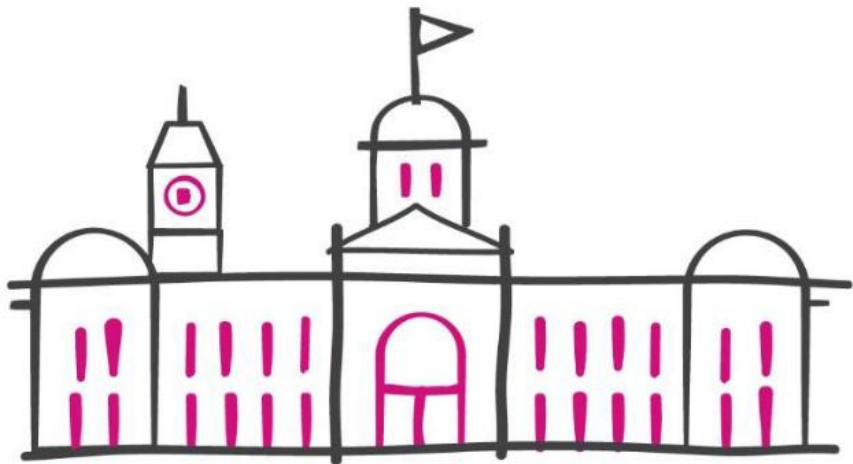
Contents

Section	Purpose	Page
1. Introduction	Sets out the context for our improvement including the need to change and improve, and the challenges that have led to Government intervention.	5
2. How We Will Improve	Summarises the phases of our improvement and the journey to an improved future Council, including the underpinning principles that will drive and shape our change moving forward.	11
3. Immediate Recovery and Stabilisation	Sets out the immediate recovery and stabilisation period and progress the Council has achieved between the Directions being issued in October 2023 and the development of the IRP.	15
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5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring	Sets out how we will provide assurance on delivery of the Plan, including the governance model, approach and the reporting and monitoring mechanisms.	25
6. Engagement and Communication	Outlines how we will keep citizens, members, staff, and other stakeholders informed of progress and delivery. It also summarises the engagement that has informed the development of the Plan.	31
7. Enabling and Supporting Delivery of the IRP (Resources)	Summarises how we will ensure there is the required capacity, capability and resource to deliver the programmes, projects and activity in the Plan.	33
Appendix		
A1 – Priority Programme Activity Summaries		36
A2 – Priority Programme Activity Plans on a Page		59
A3 – Performance Indicators		73
A4 – Response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendations		77
A5 – Response to CfGS Governance Review: Stabilisation Plan		80
A6 – Risk and Dependency Management		83



1. Introduction



1. Introduction

Our City and Citizens

Birmingham is a city of enormous opportunity and potential and home to 1.14 million citizens. It is one of the most diverse and youthful cities in the country, with 51% of the population from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups, and 44% of citizens are under 30 years old.

Although Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in Europe, it is predicted that by 2033 there will be an additional 180,000 people aged over 65 years, 26,600 of whom will be 85 years old. Our public services must be fit to respond to the changing demographics of our population.

Birmingham has a strong economy, with a GVA (Gross Value Added) in the region of £22.3 billion with a strong base in manufacturing, construction, professional services and real estate.

The arrival of HS2 has seen Birmingham attract significant foreign direct investment. Despite this, the city faces significant socio-economic challenges. 43% of our population live in the most deprived areas nationally and 4 in 10 children aged between 4 and 15 years live in relative poverty.

Between July 2022 and June 2023, Birmingham's unemployment rate was 7.6%, the rate for England was 4.5%. Just less than a quarter of working age residents in Birmingham have no qualifications.

Birmingham's diversity brings with it a wealth of creativity, talent and energy, but also serious responsibilities for the Council to build relationships, tackle inequality and promote opportunity.

Our citizens need a Council that reflects and understands its diverse communities, that is inclusive and accessible, and that people can depend upon whatever circumstances they face.

Our Council

Birmingham City Council is made up of 101 members representing 69 wards. Labour are the current majority group on the Council and form the administration. A Leader and Cabinet model of political governance is in place.

We employ nearly 10,000 staff and have a budget of £3.8bn (2023/24). 47.3% of our workforce is White, 20.2% Asian, 13.8% Black, 2.4% Mixed, and 16.4% are Other or Unknown.

79% are between 40 and 69 years and 58.4% of the overall staff base is female. 9.43% of employees have declared a disability.

The Council has 7 directorates. 5 are responsible for the delivery of frontline services and 2 provide our enabling, corporate functions.

The National Context for Local Government

Recent LGA analysis identified that councils in England face a funding gap of £4bn over the next two years, making it increasingly challenging to fund the delivery of essential services.

All councils face rising demand pressures in both Adults' and Children's services. The cost of living continues to drive both increased demand and increased costs for councils.

Councils are reducing early intervention to focus on immediate crises, and face closing valued amenities to protect core services for their most vulnerable residents. There are acute pressures on Housing and Homelessness services; the number of households in Temporary Accommodation has risen by 89% in the last ten years.



1. Introduction

The Case for Change and Improvement

We must become a well-run, financially sustainable organisation that values its people and works effectively with its partners. We must deliver consistently good services, effectively engage our communities and play a leading role in making Birmingham a city where people are proud to live and work.

We must also work to restore trust. A 2023 citizen perception survey highlighted that approximately half of respondents had little to no trust in the Council and a cause for dissatisfaction was related to unresponsiveness and unhelpfulness of the Council. Citizens asked us to be more resident focussed, more accountable and to work to improve outcomes.

A series of reviews and judgements provide evidence of significant and systemic failure and highlight the financial, governance and cultural challenges we must address:

- Governance and service delivery concerns raised by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the Housing Ombudsman, and the Department for Education's Commissioner for SEND;
- The findings from an independent review of governance by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) identifies significant governance challenges, including systemic culture and behavioural issues. Many have been cited previously and are the root causes of some of the challenges BCC is now facing;
- External Auditor Statutory Recommendations issued on 29th September 2023 which include 12 recommendations focussed on improvements needed in financial management, practice, and governance;
- Internally, two Section 114 Notices and a Section 5 Notice issued during September 2023 which reflect the exceptional financial position and severity of budget challenges. The potential equal pay liabilities, and failed implementation of the Oracle ERP system were major contributing factors to these Notices;
- The Government's Intervention Directions issued under the Local Government Act 1999 on 5th October 2023 reference concerns about financial governance and systemic failings over several years including weak governance, poor culture, a challenging relationship with trade unions, and ineffective service delivery, exacerbated by churn at senior officer level.

We recognise and accept these views and judgements. And we are committed to addressing them through this **Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP)**.

Purpose of the Plan

This IRP is the overarching framework that holds our improvement activity together. It responds to the requirements of the Government Intervention and addresses the challenges we face and sets out the outcomes we will work to achieve.

The IRP will provide assurance to citizens, members, officers, partners and commissioners, that we are improving the way we operate so that we can strengthen delivery. By delivering the IRP we will improve how the future Council looks, feels, and operates for citizens, staff and partners.



1. Introduction

Our Improvement and Recovery Journey

Our improvement and recovery journey is already underway. The IRP strengthens and enhances existing work, as well as initiating new projects and programmes. Delivering a balanced budget over the next two years is an immediate priority.

The IRP will continue to evolve as our improvement journey progresses. It will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect a phased approach to improvement, informed by engagement and consultation, and changes in priorities and new requirements.

Our Improvement and Recovery Aims

The future Council will need to look, feel, and operate differently to now. This IRP sets us on that journey, which will enable Birmingham City Council to be:

- **A Financially Sustainable Council**
- **A Well-Run Council**
- **A Council Delivering Good Services to Citizens**

Figure 1 sets out that improvement journey and the strategic context for it. Figure 2 summarises the IRP aims and outcomes.

A Refreshed Corporate Plan and Two-Year Financial Plan

The IRP will sit alongside a refreshed Corporate Plan and Two-Year Financial Plan:

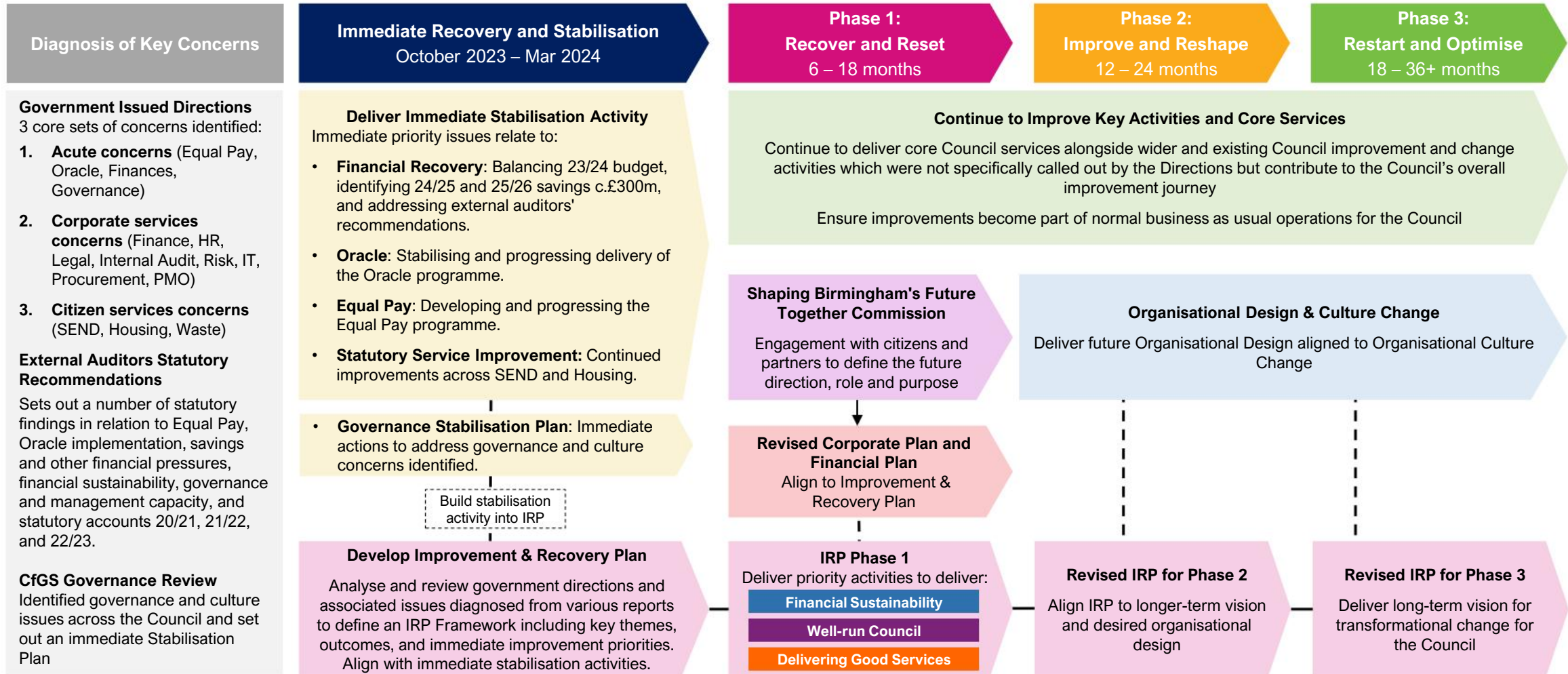
- The Corporate Plan sets out the strategic priorities guiding delivery; aligns resources, delivery plans, strategies, operational activity and partnership working with these priorities, and enables and influences for the city and citizens.
- The Two-Year Financial Plan sets out the Council's financial income and expenditure for 2024/25, and how the Council intends to manage and deploy its financial resources for the next two years. This includes delivering savings in the region of £300m, which will be achieved through transformation and improvements in the way we operate and deliver services.

- The IRP sets out how the Council will continue to improve its financial management, operation and service delivery to deliver Corporate Plan priorities, and work as an organisation and partner in the most effective, productive, and impactful way. It provides a framework for the actions to secure continuous improvement and restore public trust across all the Council's functions.



1. Introduction

Figure 1: IRP Journey and Strategic Context



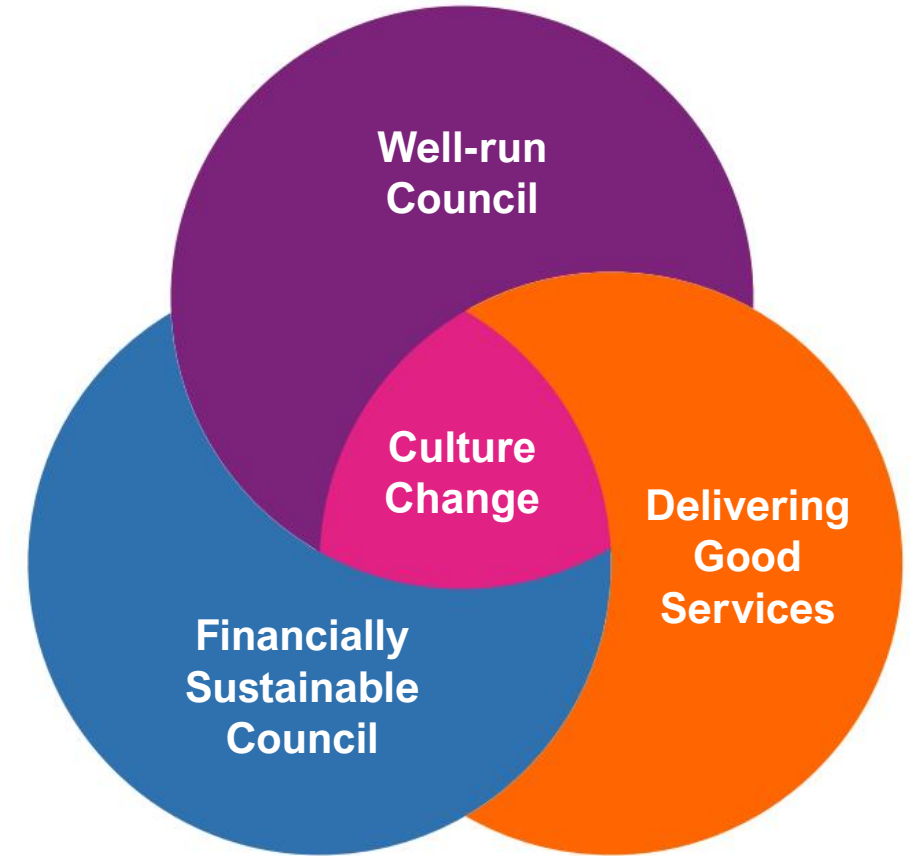
1. Introduction

Figure 2: IRP Framework Aims, Focus and Outcomes

Aim	Focus	Outcomes
<p>A Financially Sustainable Council</p>	<p>To address the exceptional financial challenges and risks facing the Council and achieve a stable and sustainable financial position and medium-term financial plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A balanced budget ▪ A sustainable medium-term financial plan ▪ A resilient capital assets programme ▪ Delivery of agreed savings ▪ Resolution of potential Equal Pay liabilities ▪ Robust financial management including compliance with statutory rules and guidelines ▪ Improved efficiency and productivity
<p>A Well-run Council</p>	<p>To improve the way the Council operates, focusing on key internal services and functions that enable and support the Council to deliver for its citizens, and governance and working relationships that enable policy development and decision making. Cultural change will be a fundamental part of the improvement journey and built into everything the Council does.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A reset organisational culture, including values and expected behaviours, with leaders demonstrating the highest ethical standards ▪ A workforce that feel valued and listened to, and are supported and trusted to deliver their roles ▪ Reimplementation and optimisation of Oracle HR & Finance system ▪ Effective and efficient corporate services that are set up to operate appropriately and demonstrate value for money ▪ Reduced levels of functional duplication in delivery of Council activities ▪ Clear, effective governance and decision-making supported by a modern constitution and clarity in member and officer roles and responsibilities ▪ Clear roles and responsibilities and effective working relationships with all our partners ▪ Effective management of performance and risk, supported by clear and consistent frameworks and enabled by robust challenge and support, with a culture of clear accountability
<p>A Council Delivering Good Services</p>	<p>Improve the way services are delivered to citizens, ensuring value for money, continuous improvement, clear service standards and a customer focus are central to how we manage and deliver.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Efficient and effective citizen services which consistently provide safe, compliant, fair, and lawful services ▪ Conforming with best value duty to deliver value for money services in line with expected standards and statutory requirements ▪ Improved citizen experience with clear, consistent, and well-defined services ▪ Improved external review and inspection outcomes



2. How We Will Improve



2. How We Will Improve

Whole Council Change

This IRP is about delivering whole Council change. Delivery is everyone’s responsibility and to be successful we need buy-in and support from all our officers and members. We need to be a learning organisation focussed on continuous improvement and knowledge of best practice in the local government sector and beyond. Our citizens and partners also need to understand our improvement priorities and the role and contribution they can make.

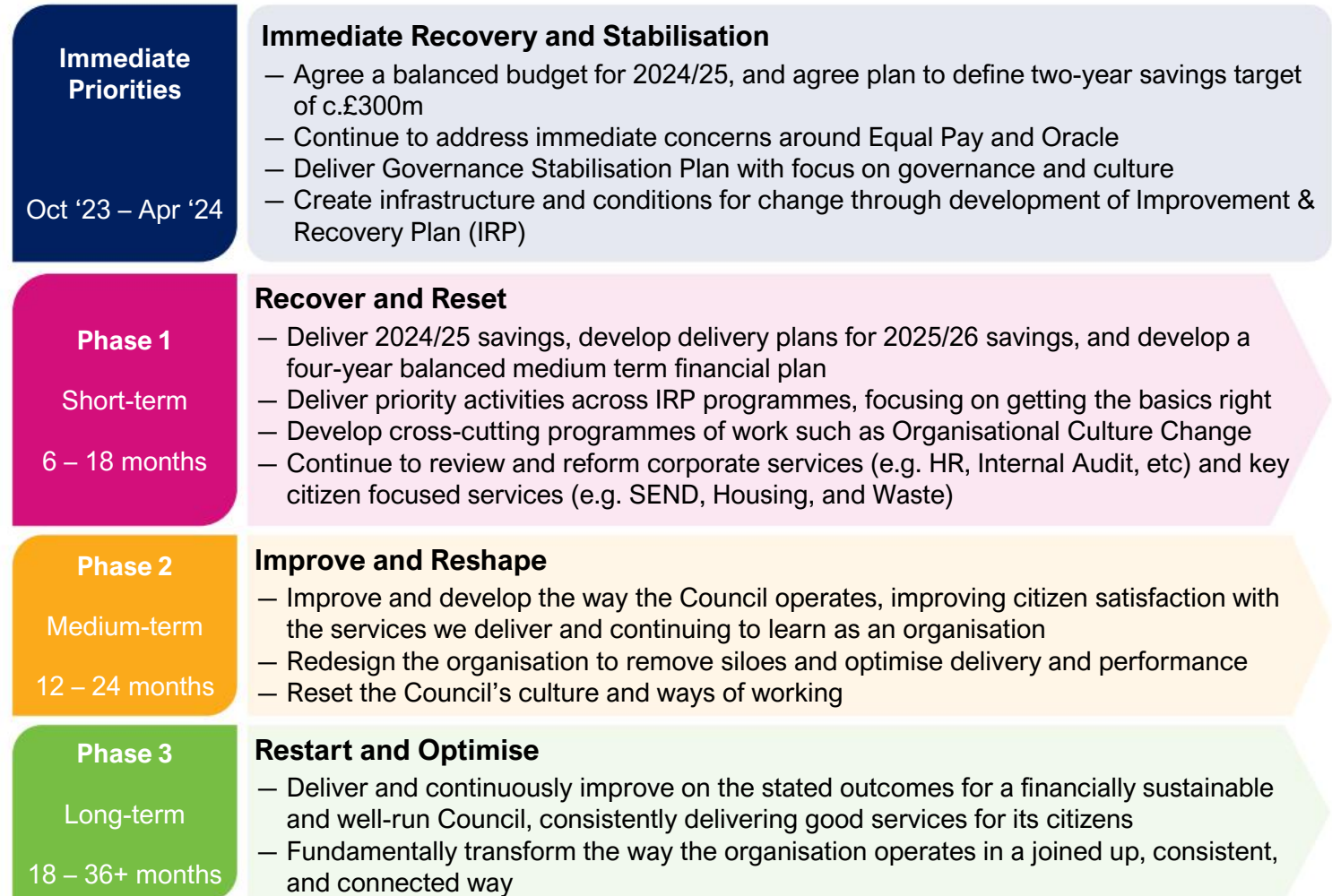
A Phased Approach to Delivering Improvement

There will be a phased approach to improvement. This will ensure we prioritise the most critical aspects of our recovery (such as budget, pay equity, corporate services, oracle) while not losing sight of the longer-term.

Section 4 of this IRP summarises 16 priority programmes that will deliver the budget savings, and improvement and change. The IRP programmes are not equal in size, reflecting a proportionate approach developed for each improvement priority.

Although the outline phasing looks sequential, different aspects will move at different paces and the phases of the improvement journey will overlap.

Figure 3: Overview of the Phased Improvement and Recovery Approach



2. How We Will Improve

Future Council Principles

The IRP will support and enable a future Council that looks, feels and operates differently to now. It will be smaller, leaner, and more focused on value for money. It will operate as one Council which puts our citizens, communities, and partners first.

It will be guided by the following high-level design principles, which will be further developed through an Organisational Design and Culture programme:

- Better understanding of our citizens to determine how we best serve them in an outcome-focused way
- More targeted range of services with a focus on earlier intervention and prevention including strength-based approaches for citizens and communities
- Consolidating and centralising Council activities to simplify, standardise, and remove duplication
- More effective and defined corporate services which better enable service delivery
- Greater digital enablement including more self-service by citizens and staff, and automation of processes
- Enhanced productivity of staff with a focus on continuous improvement

- Leaner organisational structures, with fewer management chains and rationalisation of spans and layers
- Improved partnership working, taking a whole-system perspective to service delivery and improvement

There are also cross-cutting corporate priorities that underpin how and what we deliver:

- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Underpinning Council-wide change will be Our Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business (EBEB) programme, which embodies the Council's objectives on equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes ensuring a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve and culturally competent service delivery.
- **Early Intervention and Prevention:** We must not lose focus of our early intervention and prevention principles, which will support the Council to think differently about the way in which it delivers services, anticipating demand and avoiding crises from forming - ultimately providing better outcomes for citizens and requiring less Council resources in the future.

- **Net Zero:** The Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 with the commitment to take action to reduce the city's carbon emissions, and to do so in a way which reduces inequalities across the city and brings communities with us. To achieve this alongside our improvement objectives, we must embed climate action at the heart of the future Council and Council decision-making, ensuring that all directorates make the necessary changes to deliver these outcomes.

Resetting the Organisation's Culture

At the heart of this IRP is a programme that will be focussed on culture change. We will improve levels of trust, transparency, respect, openness and transparency, and move away from a culture of blame and siloed working.

A consistent and positive organisational culture, with clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of members and staff, will be vital to us being an organisation that is member-led, officer-run, and citizen focussed.



2. How We Will Improve

Resetting the Organisation's Culture (cont.)

That Organisational Design and Culture Change programme will define a strengthened culture through a focus on improving outcomes for citizens; empowering staff to make decisions at the right levels; learning lessons and embedding customer focus throughout the organisation. Values and expected behaviours will be reframed to align with these objectives.

Other programmes will help embed the change in culture and behaviours needed – Governance and Relationships, Employee Relationships and People Management, and Programme Management, Performance & Risk, and Improving Citizen Services and Customer Standards Programmes will all play a role resetting the culture.

Organisational culture change will be a critical part of the vision and purpose of a future Council that will be leaner, more efficient, and more productive.

Shaping Our Future with our Citizens and Partners

The environment within which we need to deliver the change and improvement will

continue to be challenging, for the Council, the citizens we serve, and the partners we work with. Ensuring that we understand the changing needs and priorities of our citizens and partners is critical.

We will ensure we are listening and communicating effectively and being honest with our citizens and partners. We need to be willing to share power with them. A **Shaping Birmingham's Future Together** Commission will provide a vehicle to co-produce and collaborate with partners and citizens in shaping the future direction of the Council.

The Commission will focus initially on a programme of engagement over the summer of 2024 which will provide input on the priorities for the city, but also the future direction, role, and purpose of the Council. It will include consultation on our improvement priorities.

We will need to address some issues and challenges through a whole system perspective, ensuring our partners and stakeholders are central to the way we develop and deliver improvement. This IRP includes a workstream focused on Partnership and Stakeholder Engagement.

The recently launched Birmingham Together partnership provides the opportunity to face these challenges together

A New Corporate Plan

The Commission and its programme of engagement, coupled with several elements of the IRP, will shape and inform a new Corporate Plan which we will publish in October 2024. The new Plan will set out the Council's vision, mission and priorities, and how the future Council will operate to deliver those priorities.

Further Engagement and Consultation

As improvement programmes are developed and delivered, there will be a need for engagement and consultation any major proposals for change.

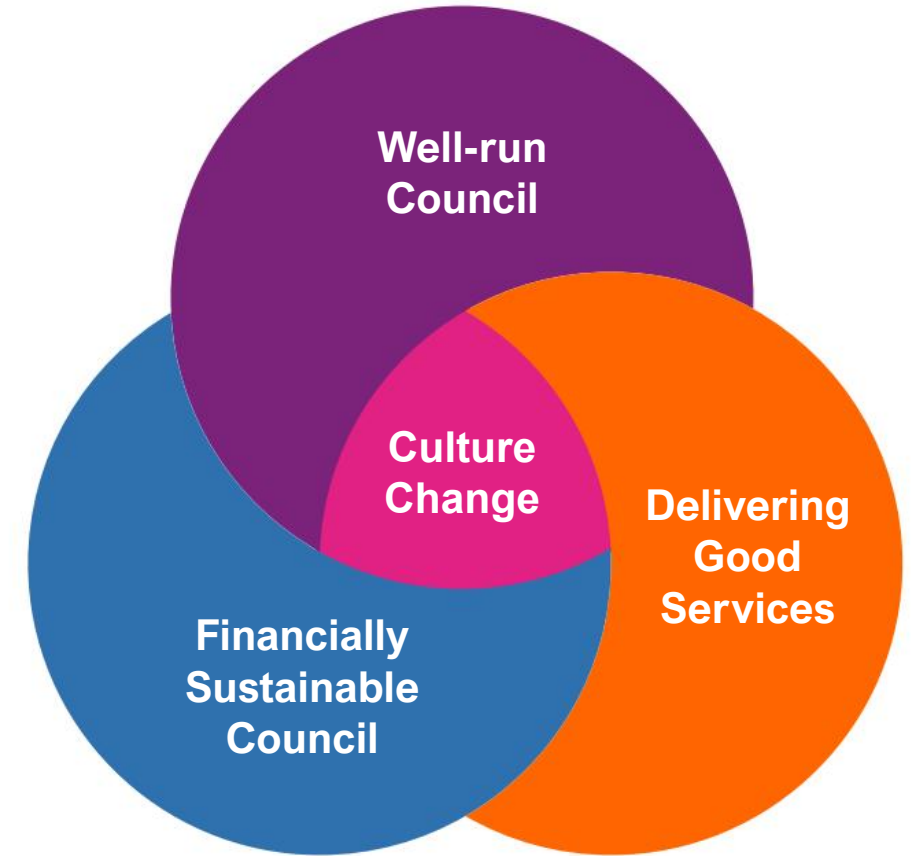
Baselining Perceptions and Experiences

As part of the IRP, we will seek to establish a baseline in terms of how citizens, partners, members and staff feel about the Council. We will engage through surveys, and other activity to ascertain the views of people now – for example:

- Elected Member Survey
- Employee engagement
- Citizen engagement
- Partner/Stakeholder Sentiment Survey



3. Immediate Recovery and Stabilisation



3. Immediate Recovery and Stabilisation

Recovery and Stabilisation Period

The Council has been in a period of ‘Recovery and Stabilisation’ with a focus on the most immediate issues identified in the Intervention Directions, alongside the development of the IRP.

Financial Recovery

Immediate steps were taken to improve the in-year management of the 2023/24 budget. These included reviewing the credibility and deliverability of the current savings programme, writing off savings undeliverable in-year, re-basing the budget for the 2023/24 financial year to uncover previous financial management issues, identifying additional in-year savings to mitigate a savings gap, and implementation of spend and accounts payable controls as a first line of defence to limit non-statutory Council expenditure.

Extensive work has been undertaken to develop savings proposals amounting to £149.8 million for 2024/25 and £226.1 million total to 2025/26. There remains a £67.4m budget gap in the 2025/26 financial year which must be closed by additional savings (as reported to Council on 5th March 2024).

Those savings proposals have undergone challenge from both commissioners and members with risks and mitigations being identified.

Achieving our savings for 2025/26 and beyond will require a radical reshaping of services, and transformation in the way the Council operates.

External Auditor Statutory Recommendations

The Council is committed to complying with all relevant legal requirements and obligations, including conducting independent reviews and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.

It is crucial for the Council to respond to the statutory recommendations issued by the external auditor in September 2023. Updates and progress on the Council’s response is reported on quarterly to the Audit Committee. More detail on the Council’s response can be found in Appendix 4.

Equal Pay and Job Evaluation

The Job Evaluation programme is essential to close the on-going equal pay liability after 1 April 2025. Progress has been made by the Council following agreement of a methodology and approach to job evaluation. The programme is one of the priorities within this IRP.

Oracle Stabilisation and Re-Implementation

We have moved quickly to establish a strengthened programme governance for the Oracle programme, focusing on resolution of backlogs including bank reconciliations, cash allocations, and data cleansing.

The programme is currently going through a period of ‘reset’ with new sponsorship/governance and additional capabilities being on-boarded. The programme will continue to develop and form a key part of the Council’s overall improvement and the IRP.

Going forward we will focus on resolution of key issues such as income management, systemised controls, and maximising the benefit of auditing tools.



3. Immediate Recovery and Stabilisation

Governance Stabilisation Plan

The CfGS report published in December 2023 identified significant governance and cultural issues within the Council which need to be addressed.

A Stabilisation Plan was jointly developed by the Council and CfGS and contains recommendations and immediate actions to support the short-term stabilisation of governance at the Council over the next six months. Actions for longer-term improvement have been developed as part of the Governance and Relationships, and other programmes within this IRP.

A number of activities in the Stabilisation Plan have been progressed including conducting a Constitution legal compliance check, support to the Audit Committee, and arrangements to provide member oversight and scrutiny of the 2024/25 budget process. We have worked with the CfGS to develop a new draft member officer protocol and to support the development of the scrutiny function.

More detail on the Stabilisation Plan is included in Appendix 5.

Performance Improvement in Adults and Children's

We have demonstrated good and improving performance in our major statutory services to adults and children.

Our recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services (ILAC) in February 2023 judged the provision of Children's Services to be 'Good'. This is a significant improvement following many years of inadequate inspection judgements and subsequent Department for Education (DfE) intervention.

There is evidence of improvement in the delivery of our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services in response to the Secretary of State for Education's statutory direction to the Council.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has been given new powers to assess how local authorities deliver against key aspects of their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. Following an assessment in 2023, CQC has awarded BCC Adult Social Care an overall indicative rating of 'Good'. Our focus on Early Intervention and Prevention was also highlighted as a strength.

Improvements in Housing

Following the Housing Ombudsman's Special Paragraph 49 report in January 2023, City Housing were issued with a regulatory notice by the Regulator for Social Housing in May 2023.

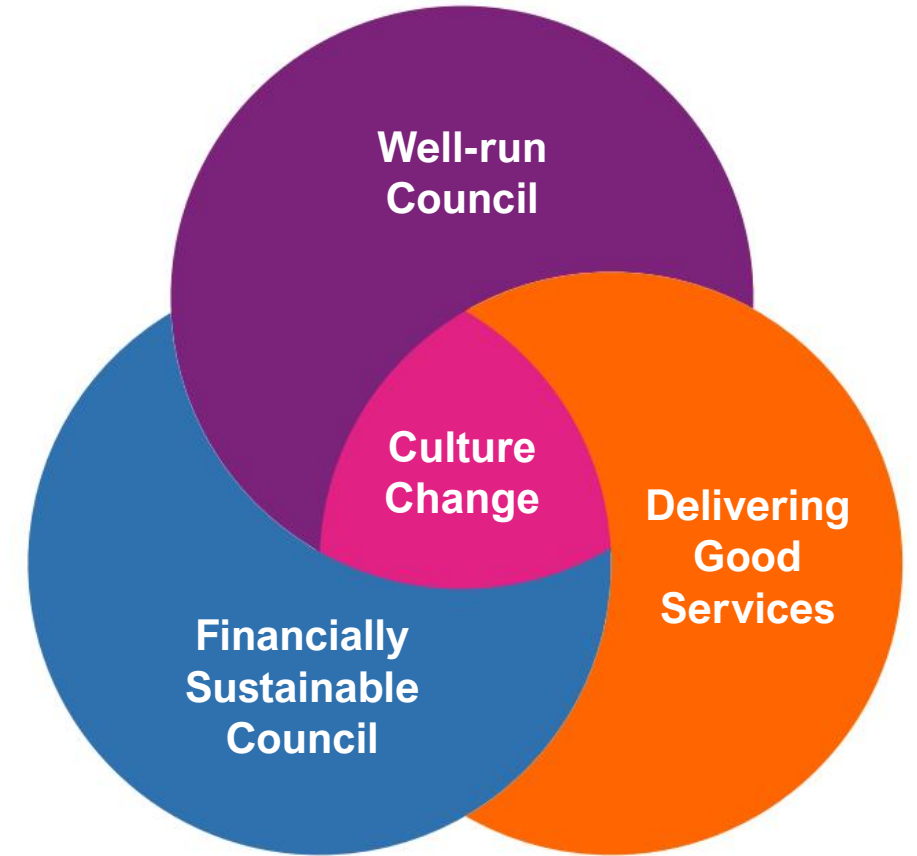
The Council has now delivered a full action plan in response to the Housing Ombudsman's recommendations, including improvements to complaint handling, record keeping and repair management and a new Compensation Policy.

The regulatory notice issued by the Regulator of Social Housing related to a breach of two Consumer Standards devised to regulate social housing. The Council have improved governance arrangements to ensure areas of breach and compliance are better rectified and managed.

An officer led Compliance Board was mobilised in January 2023 to address areas of breach and ensure the Council has full oversight of landlord compliance requirements. We are on track to deliver against key Health and Safety breaches and complaints improvements by June 2024 and have a Cabinet approved business plan and Asset strategy to deliver Decent Homes compliance by 2031.



4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities



4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Improvement and Recovery Aims and Priorities

To build on the immediate recovery and stabilisation and address the challenges and concerns outlined in the Intervention Directions, our IRP Framework (see Figure 4) has three overall aims:

- **A Financially Sustainable Council**
- **A Well-Run Council**
- **A Council Delivering Good Services to Citizens**

The IRP is focused on an initial set of 16 priorities requiring immediate attention. We know that further requirements and priorities will develop, particularly as corporate and citizen services are reviewed. The IRP Framework will continue to adapt and develop to account for this.

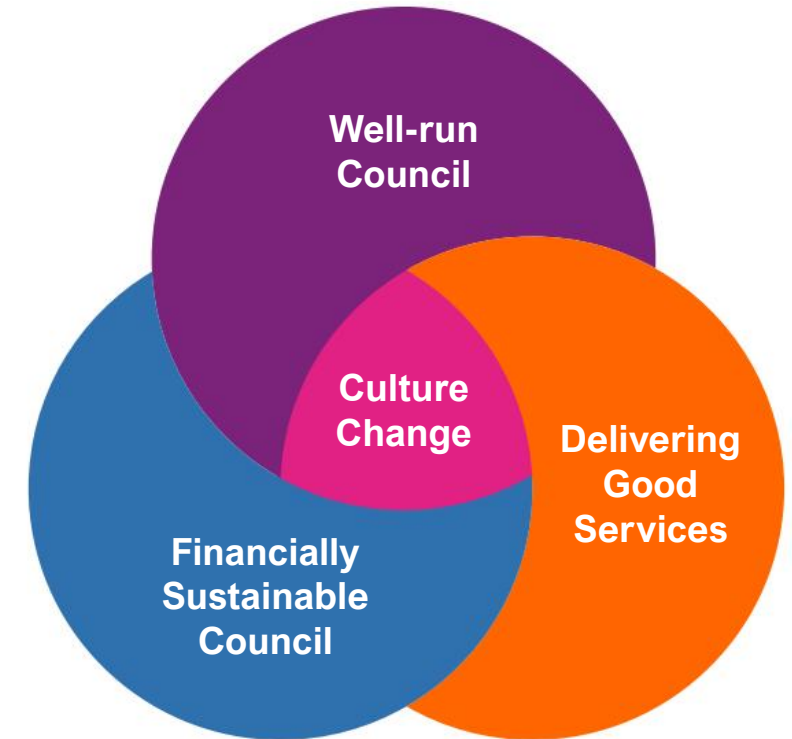
For each priority there is a programme of activity. Some of these programmes are in place already and have been incorporated into the IRP while others are new programmes initiated to ensure we are responding to all issues referenced in the Intervention Directions.

Although programmes and projects are primarily aligned to a single IRP theme, most are interdependent, and the outcomes will be cross-cutting. Many will be instrumental in delivering the change to organisational culture.

Mapping of the dependencies and overall outcomes across all programmes has been an important step in developing our IRP, to ensure aims do not become rigid, and the priority programmes are not standalone entities.

Figure 5 provides an overview of the IRP aims and outcomes, and displays the component programmes against each aim.

Figure 4: IRP Framework



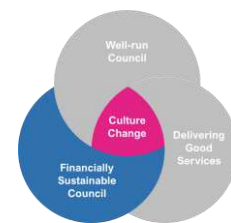


4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Figure 5: IRP Aims, Outcomes and Priorities

Aims What we want to be	Outcomes The things that will tell us we have achieved our aims	Priorities The key programmes of work that will help deliver this improvement and change
<p>A Financially Sustainable Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A balanced budget A sustainable medium-term financial plan A resilient capital assets programme Delivery of agreed savings Resolution of potential Equal Pay liabilities Robust financial management including compliance with statutory rules and guidelines Improved efficiency and productivity 	<p>Deliver Savings & Balance the Budget</p> <p>Job Evaluation Programme</p> <p>Asset Sales Programme</p> <p>Review of Companies & Traded Services</p>
<p>A Well-run Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reset organisational culture, including values and expected behaviours, with leaders demonstrating the highest ethical standards A workforce that feel valued and listened to, and are supported and trusted to deliver their roles Reimplementation and optimisation of Oracle HR & Finance system Effective and efficient corporate services that are set up to operate appropriately and demonstrate value for money Reduced levels of functional duplication in delivery of Council activities Clear, effective governance and decision-making supported by a modern constitution and clarity in member and officer roles and responsibilities Clear roles and responsibilities and effective working relationships with all our partners Effective management of performance and risk, supported by clear and consistent frameworks and enabled by robust challenge and support, with a culture of clear accountability 	<p>Organisational Design & Culture Change</p> <p>Oracle Reimplementation & Business Process Change</p> <p>Review Key Corporate Services</p> <p>Consolidation Programme & Digital Efficiencies</p> <p>Employee Relations & People Management</p> <p>Programme Management, Performance & Risk</p> <p>Governance & Relationships</p> <p>Corporate Landlord Programme</p>
<p>A Council Delivering Good Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient and effective citizen services which consistently provide safe, compliant, fair, and lawful services Conforming with best value duty to deliver value for money services in line with expected standards and statutory requirements Improved citizen experience with clear, consistent, and well-defined services and standards Improved external review and inspection outcomes 	<p>Children & Families Improvement</p> <p>Street Scene Transformation – including Waste</p> <p>Housing Improvement</p> <p>Improve Key Citizen Services & Customer Standards</p>





4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Aim 1: A Financially Sustainable Council: The Council must build on the initial financial recovery response, including ongoing work to address external auditor statutory recommendations, to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. The delivery of budget savings and a solution to equal pay issues remain the most immediate issues to address, as well as resetting the foundations for the medium and longer term.

The focus of this aim is:

To address the exceptional financial challenges and risks facing the Council and achieve a stable and sustainable financial position and medium-term financial plan.

The things that tell us we have achieved our aims are:

- A balanced budget
- A sustainable medium-term financial plan
- A resilient capital assets programme
- Delivery of agreed savings
- Resolution of potential Equal Pay liabilities
- Robust financial management including compliance with statutory rules and guidelines
- Improved efficiency and productivity

The key programmes of work that will help deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description
Deliver Savings & Balance the Budget	This programme is focussed on the development and delivery of budget savings proposals to achieve a balanced budget in 2025/26. This includes the delivery of savings proposals totalling £149.8m for 2024/25 and the development of proposals for budget savings in 25/26.
Job Evaluation Programme	This programme will deliver a new Pay Equity Scheme at the Council by April 2025 which will help address and mitigate the Council's equal pay liability, implement a fair and equitable pay and grading structure across the Council. It will also implement directorate and cross-directorate moderation.
Asset Sales Programme	This programme will undertake a review of capital assets to identify opportunities to generate capital receipts that will contribute to a balanced near-term budget, of securing £500m of capital from asset sales by December 2024, and a further £250m by December 2025, accepting the impact on longer-term revenue from the loss of income attributed to the sale of leased/income-producing assets.
Review of Companies & Traded Services	This programme is undertaking a detailed review of Council-controlled companies and traded services that will identify options to raise funds, reduce costs and minimise financial risk. The programme will support the delivery of a balanced budget and financial sustainability.



4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Aim 2: A Well-run Council: A series of external reviews and judgements have highlighted significant cultural and governance challenges facing the Council. The Council must address these in order to become a better functioning organisation, with modern practices, and improved working relations based on high levels of trust, respect, openness and transparency. This will better enable the Council to deliver its citizen facing services.

The focus of this aim is:

To improve the way the Council operates, focusing on key internal services and functions that enable and support the Council to deliver for its citizens, and governance and working relationships that enable policy development and decision making. Cultural change will be a fundamental part of the improvement journey and built into everything the Council does.

The things that tell us we have achieved our aims are:

- A reset organisational culture, including values and expected behaviours, with leaders demonstrating the highest ethical standards
- A workforce that feel valued and listened to, and are supported and trusted to deliver their roles
- Reimplementation and optimisation of Oracle HR & Finance system
- Effective and efficient corporate services that are set up to operate appropriately and demonstrate value for money
- Reduced levels of functional duplication in delivery of Council activities
- Clear, effective governance and decision-making supported by a modern constitution and clarity in member and officer roles and responsibilities
- Clear roles and responsibilities and effective working relationships with all our partners
- Effective management of performance and risk, supported by clear and consistent frameworks and enabled by robust challenge and support, with a culture of clear accountability

The key programmes of work that will help deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description
Organisational Design & Culture Change	Define and establish a new organisational design for the Council, including a focus on organisational culture as the heart of the Council's improvement and transformation journey, that delivers sustainable improvement and change for the Council. This will ensure delivery for our citizens, a focus on earlier interventions and prevention to deliver better outcomes for citizens, financial sustainability and improving efficiency of structure.
Oracle Reimplementation & Business Process Change	The programme will resolve critical fixes and reset the implementation programme, introduce new ways of working for staff, enable greater accountability and ownership across the organisation, deliver a real-time view of the Council's finances to enable more robust financial management, and provide staff with the right tools to manage performance and development.



4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Programme	Description
Review Key Corporate Services	This programme will review the provision and operation of key corporate services and define the target operating model for corporate services that will be aligned to the future ways of working enabled by the Oracle reimplementation. There is an interdependency with the 'Improve Key Citizen Services & Customer Standards' programme.
Consolidation Programme & Digital Efficiencies	This programme will seek to identify opportunities for further consolidation where similar activities may be duplicated across the Council, aiming to deliver services in a more consistent, standardised, efficient and cost-effective way to improve performance and enhance the customer experience. The Digital Efficiencies workstream will involve cross-organisation multi-disciplinary teams working to deliver across a range of small, quick value return, low complexity products that release efficiencies.
Employee Relations & People Management	This programme will review and strengthen communication and engagement with and between managers, teams, employees and staff bodies across the Council, improve relations and rebuild trust with Trade Unions, and create an embedded portfolio of support and development for our people to ensure that we develop and support talent.
Programme, Performance & Risk Management	The programme will bring together and build on work that is already underway to strengthen the information and the analysis and reporting of it to inform better decision-making, programme delivery, performance and risk management across the Council. All aspects of performance management will be reviewed and improved to ensure a focus on using performance data to drive service improvement, value for money, and support effective decision-making. We will enable continuous service improvement through consistent and effective performance management and use of sector benchmarking data.
Governance & Relationships	This programme will improve the way the political governance of the Council works, continuing key facets of the CfGS Governance Review Stabilisation Plan. This will include a review and refresh of the constitution and the member and officer roles, responsibilities, and relationships that are critical to ensure effective decision-making, partnership working and policy development.
Corporate Landlord Programme	This programme will create a central and professionalised property function to strategically manage all of the Council's operational and community facing property assets. It will support the Corporate Landlord's ability to work across the Council and will consider the tenure by which property assets are held, both freehold and leasehold.





4. Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) Priorities

Aim 3: Delivering Good Services: The Council has historic issues with several key services which will be the initial focus of our service improvement. The Council needs to secure continuous improvement and public trust across all of its services, ensuring clear service standards, customer focus, and value for money – achieving the best possible outcomes for citizens in most efficient way. An improved financial position and better run organisation will enable this to happen.

The focus of this aim is:

Improve the way services are delivered to citizens, ensuring value for money, continuous improvement, clear service standards and a customer focus are central to how we manage and deliver.

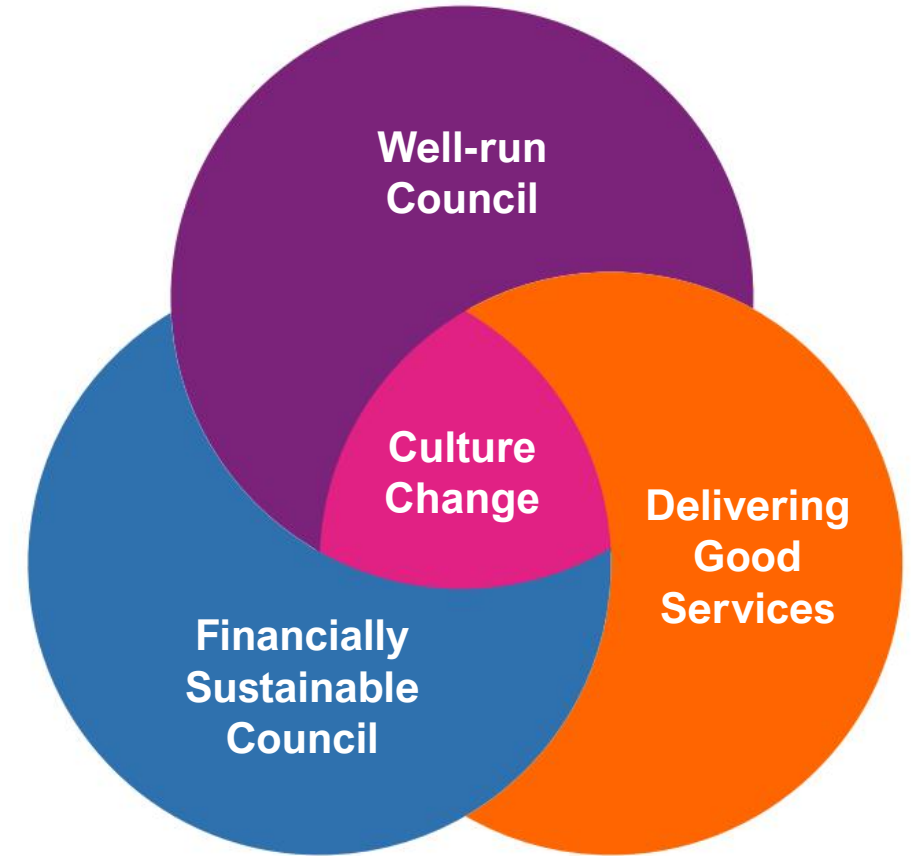
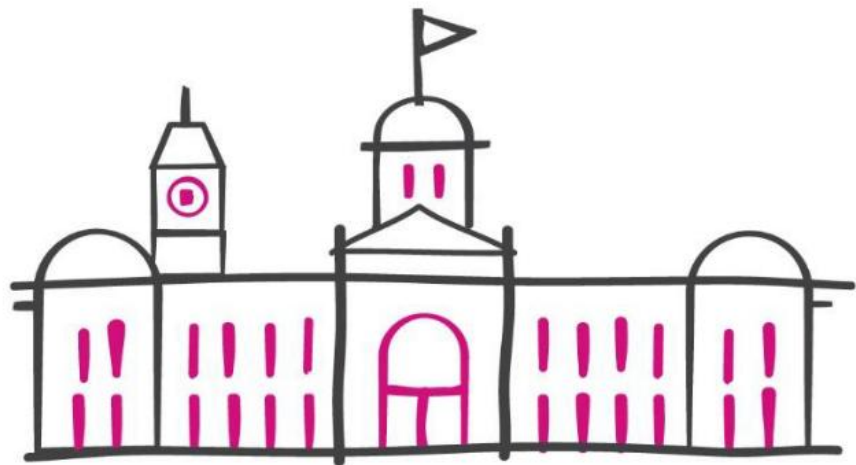
The things that tell us we have achieved our aims are:

- Efficient and effective citizen services which consistently provide safe, compliant, fair, and lawful services
- Conforming with best value duty to deliver value for money services in line with expected standards and statutory requirements
- Improved citizen experience with clear, consistent, and well-defined services
- Improved external review and inspection outcomes

The key programmes of work that will help deliver this improvement and change are:

Programme	Description
Children & Families Improvement	Delivery of short and medium-term priorities through the Children and Families Plan, to systematically improve service provision and outcomes for children across the City, with a key focus on improvement of SEND services.
Street Scene Transformation – including Waste	This programme will address both immediate short-term issues to stabilise Street Scene services and deliver longer term transformation to drive consistent service performance and improved outcomes for citizens. It will cover 5 workstreams, which will each have their own transformation plan, being waste, street management, fleet, parks and green spaces, and management controls.
Housing Improvement	To drive improvement across key areas of the City Housing Portfolio delivering better outcomes and benefits for residents. There are 3 areas of immediate focus being Affordable Housing, Quality of Council Housing, and Homelessness.
Improve Key Citizen Services & Customer Standards	This programme will build on the ‘Review Key Corporate Services’ programme, by defining a standardised approach to review and embedding good practice characteristics and principles for how citizen focused services are led, managed, and delivered, so that our model of service delivery is focused on value for money and continuous learning and improvement.

5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring



5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring

Governance Principles

Effective governance and assurance are critical to delivering the transformation, improvement and budget savings proposed by the IRP.

The arrangements established provide members and officers the mechanisms to manage the delivery of the IRP, as well as ensuring that the desired impacts and benefits are being achieved.

The principles as set out in Figure 6 underpin the governance and assurance of the IRP.

Governance Model and Approach

The governance model and approach works on the premise of clear accountability of delivery. The officer governance layers will ensure that progress is reported and acted upon, political leadership, scrutiny and decision making is timely and informed and there is proactive management of risks, actions, issues and dependencies.

Strategic Directors will act as Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs) for all the IRP programmes, and budget saving initiatives being led/delivered by their directorates.

Figure 6: Governance Principles

Principle	Description
Transparent accountability	Each programme in the IRP has clear accountability through named ownership of responsibilities and defined roles – including a Senior Accountable Officer, Responsible Delivery Lead and Lead Member.
Transformation and Improvement Board	Comprising the Chief Executive and members of the Strategic Leadership Team, the Board operates with specific terms of reference detailing roles and responsibilities, routes of escalation and decision making. The Board plays a critical role in providing challenge and ensuring Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs) and Responsible Delivery Leads (RDLs) are accountable for delivery and mitigations.
Proportionate Directorate Board arrangements	Accountability for delivery sits with Strategic Directors (as Senior Accountable Officers), who are responsible for ensuring grip and pace of delivery. Strategic Directors take a tailored and proportionate approach that reflects different levels of maturity of projects, and the varying size and complexity of individual initiatives within their portfolio.
Consistent and robust monitoring and assurance arrangements	There is a consistent flow of information from Directorate Boards to the Transformation and Improvement Board, members and the Improvement and Recovery Board. The Corporate Programme/Portfolio Management Office (CPMO) will apply an overarching corporate assurance method that delivers relevant, timely and accurate reporting of progress against objectives.
Member and senior officer oversight of delivery and impact	Members are integrated into the model and have clear oversight via forums including, Cabinet Member briefings, Executive Management Team (Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team) and Overview & Scrutiny and Audit committees.
Risk based approach	Risk will be managed dynamically with clear routes of escalation and resolution. Clear mitigation plans and actions will be proactively reviewed and owned by Responsible Delivery Leads and Senior Accountable Officers, and consistently reported to the Transformation and Improvement Board.



5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring

Governance Model and Approach (cont.)

In addition, they will be assigned a number of corporate initiatives/programmes by the Chief Executive. They will be held accountable for delivering by the Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB) and the Chief Executive through regular performance reviews.

The key governance structures are set out in Figure 7. SAO and RDL roles are described below:

- **Senior Accountable Officer (SAO):** Accountable for the overall delivery and success of the programme. They are responsible for ensuring the programme is delivering as required and making key decisions. They are also responsible for ensuring engagement with key stakeholders including members takes place in a timely manner.

- **Responsible Delivery Lead (RDL):** Responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of the programme activity, ensuring key stakeholders are engaged and the workstream is progressing as planned. They will be accountable to and report on progress to SAOs and be supported by project officers and programme managers to ensure programmes and savings initiatives are delivered.

Assurance Reporting

Reporting on the IRP will be robust, proportionate, transparent, and regular. All programmes and projects will report progress against key delivery milestones and performance alongside actively monitoring and managing risks to ensure that their outcomes are achieved in a timely manner.

A standardised approach to reporting on the IRP will be defined and established by the Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO), working closely with finance and directorate delivery resources.

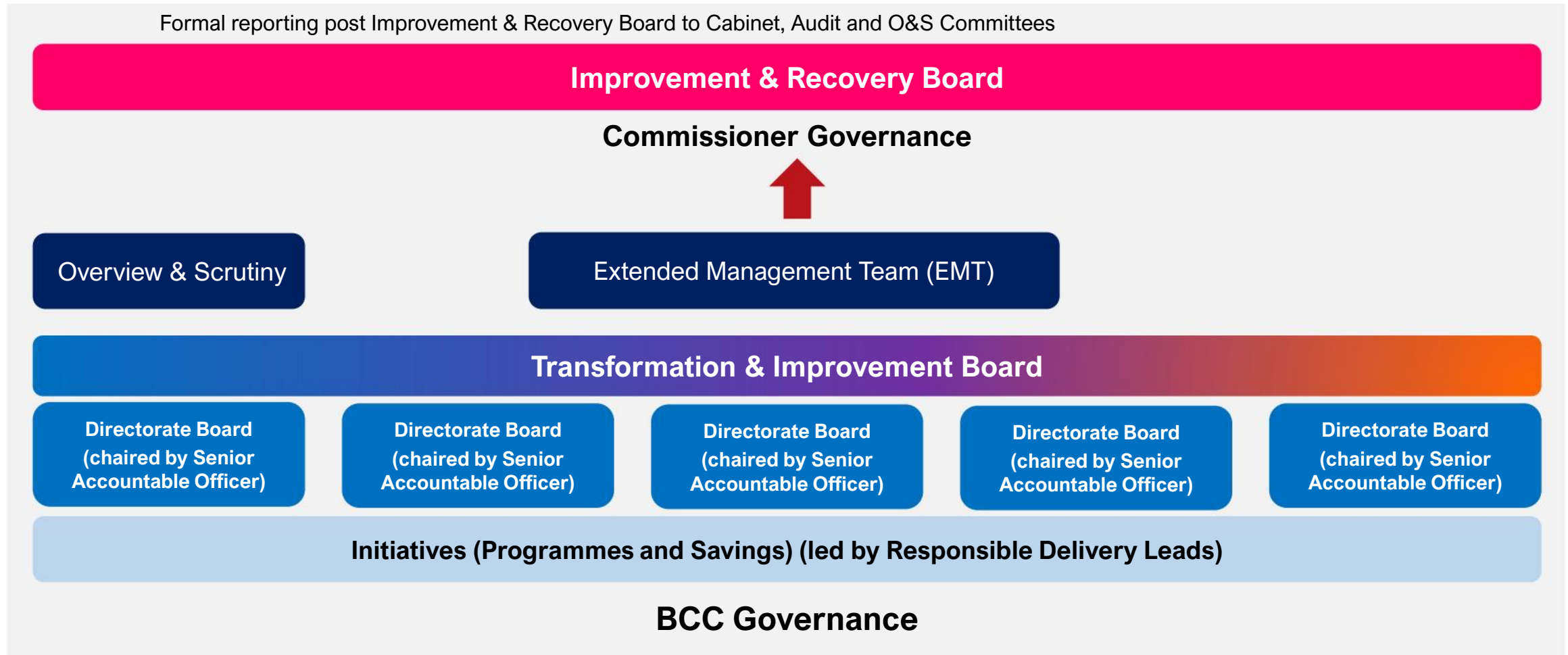
The TIB will receive an assurance pack produced by the CPMO which is compiled with data from across the initiatives reporting into the Directorate Boards. SAOs are held to account in this forum and issues and decisions are escalated here for resolution.

The TIB is the key officer level forum for resolution of issues prior to reporting to the Commissioners Improvement and Recovery Board (IRB). Cabinet members will be briefed at Extended Management Team (EMT) on key headlines, progress and risks.

After the IRB, reporting to the Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee will provide member assurance, challenge and oversight.

5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring

Figure 7: Key Governance Structures



5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring

Elected Member Oversight (cont.)

Overview and Scrutiny work programmes are aligned to the IRP. Key programmes and projects report regularly into specific Overview and Scrutiny Committees – for example:

- SEND Improvement (Education, Children & Young People OSC)
- Housing Regulatory Compliance (Homes OSC)
- Oracle Stabilisation (Finance & Resources OSC)
- Job Evaluation and Pay Equity (Finance & Resources OSC)
- Budget (O&S Budget task and finish group)

Role of the Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO)

The CPMO provides independent corporate assurance to the Transformation and Improvement Board and Members. It also supports and enables delivery across the Council.

It acts as the single source of truth providing visibility of programmes and savings initiatives and the associated benefits through robust and transparent monitoring and reporting practices.

The scale of the challenges facing the Council is considerable and the CPMO function has been strengthened and changed to reflect this increase in scale and pace, driving delivery & supporting assurance more effectively.

IRP Performance Framework

Each aim of the IRP is broken down into a series of outcomes. To demonstrate progress towards, and achievement of, these outcomes, a small but focussed set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed.

Appendix 3 provides a more detailed summary of this, listing the KPIs.

We recognise that the prevailing low levels of citizen satisfaction and trust in our services may be compounded by the activity required to become financially sustainable.

Therefore, we will be realistic in the first year and ensure that we are monitoring progress in the context of the position the Council is in at each measurable moment of its performance journey.

This will mean using measures that not only monitor progress against the IRP but also against our services more generally, so that we can evidence improvement over time.

Managing Impacts

As described, the CPMO will provide regular reporting on the IRP and benefits realisation. Unplanned consequences and negative impacts of changes the Council is making, in particular with regards to budget savings will continue to be a key consideration through wider governance and assurance, including overview and scrutiny committees.

This will also be captured and managed through completing Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all policy/strategy development and changes to ensure the implications of our decisions on our residents are understood and considered.

5. Governance, Assurance and Monitoring

Risk Based Approach

A detailed awareness and understanding of risks and dependencies across all improvement and recovery work is critical.

Clear mitigation plans and actions will be proactively reviewed and owned by Responsible Delivery Leads (RDLs) and Senior Accountable Officers (SAOs), and consistently reported to the Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB).

The governance layers put in place, alongside specific tools such as Risks, Actions, Issues and Dependencies (RAID) Logs, will ensure that there is proactive management of risks and dependencies across all programmes, considering also how they interrelate with each other and considering how best to mitigate risks before they materialise as issues.

Directorate Boards will manage and monitor risks and dependencies in more detail for each individual programme (including delivery of budget savings).

The TIB, informed by CPMO reporting, will provide visibility and focus on strong and proactive management of cross-cutting risks and dependencies.

High-risk and/or significantly sized programmes (e.g., Oracle, Job Evaluation, SEND) already have dedicated programme boards and associated governance which will continue.

The governance, assurance and monitoring approach will develop and mature as it embeds. Engagement with IRP SAOs and RDLs during the development of this IRP has ensured each programme has clear ownership, accountability, risk management and dependency mapping built in from the outset. These will be further developed as programme delivery plans are formed and finalised.

Alongside all the detail set out on how risks will be managed across the programme, the improvement of risk management is a priority within this IRP. This will improve consistency, ownership and rigour within and across the Council.

Dependency Management

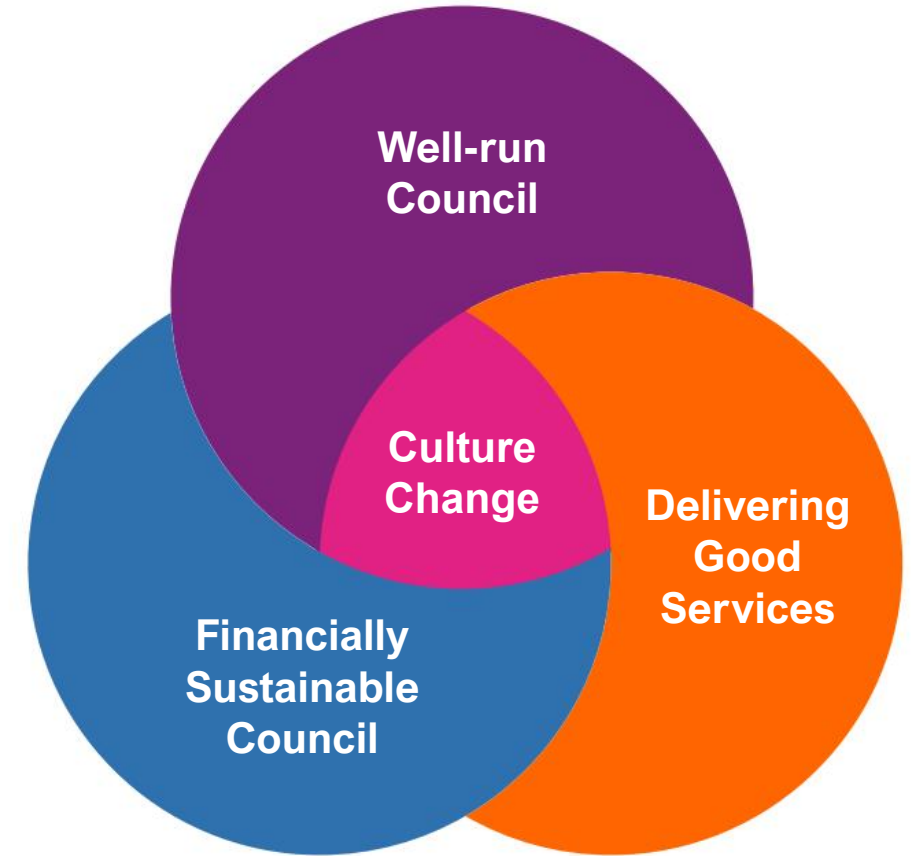
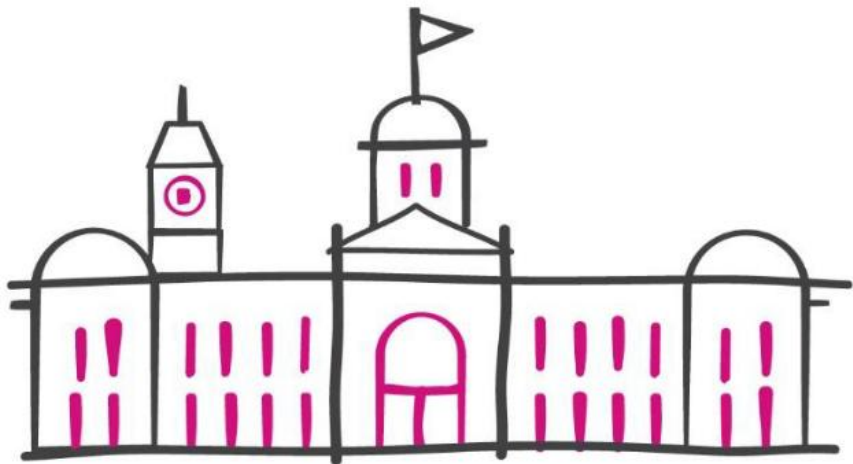
Interdependencies between IRP programmes have been considered and this will continue as part of the IRP governance, assurance and monitoring.

Consideration of interdependencies have informed how we have structured our priority programmes. For example: The Governance and Relationships Programme brings together the priorities of member/officer roles and relationships, member development and support and the review of the constitution joining up interrelated facets of improvements to governance and culture.

Key Overarching IRP Risks and Dependencies

Alongside the risks and dependencies identified against each individual programme, there are a number of key overarching risks and dependencies to delivery of the IRP which need to be considered and mitigated against. These are set out in the tables in Appendix 6. These tables are not an exhaustive list.

6. Engagement and Communication



6. Engagement and Communication

Engagement and Communication

Engagement has taken place at different levels and through different forums throughout the process of developing the IRP, to ensure the IRP has been developed collectively and plans have been continuously iterated using feedback.

As the Council's improvement journey develops, we will continue to engage and communicate on our plans and progress to our citizens, members, staff, partners, businesses, and stakeholders. Listening to and learning from them and adjusting and updating the plan in line with new and emerging priorities.

Reporting Progress

Regular reporting to the Cabinet, Audit Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will take place for the duration of the IRP. This will provide assurance to members and citizens we are making progress towards the commitments we have made.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programmes have also been aligned to the IRP, so that key programmes and projects are reported regularly into specific Committees.

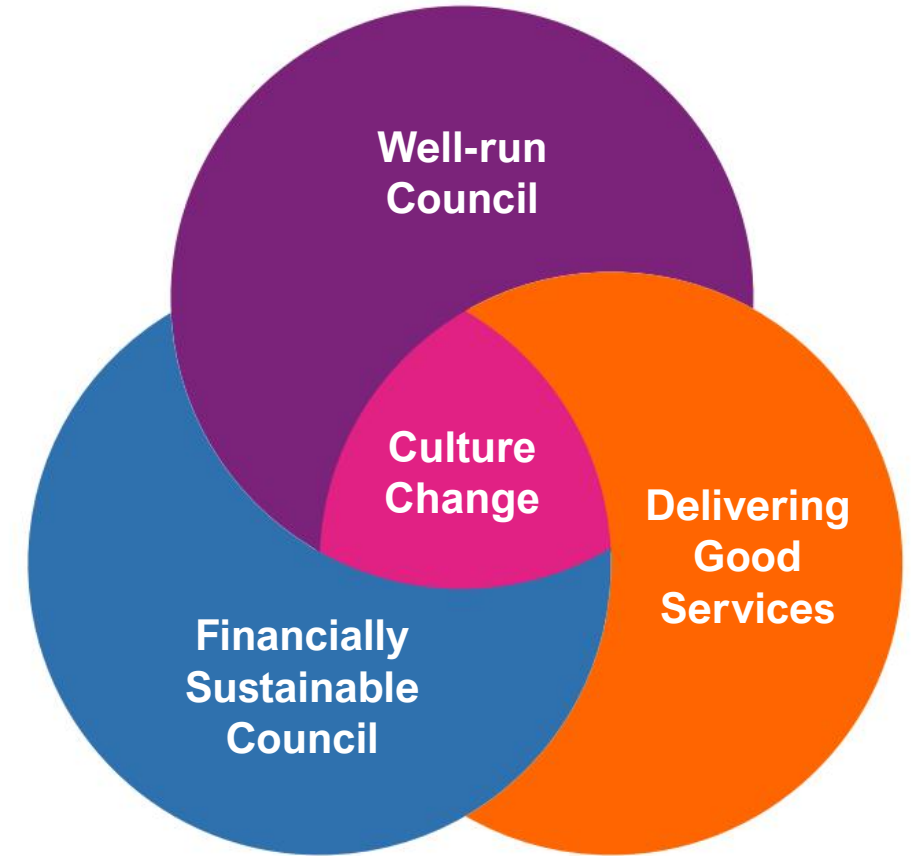
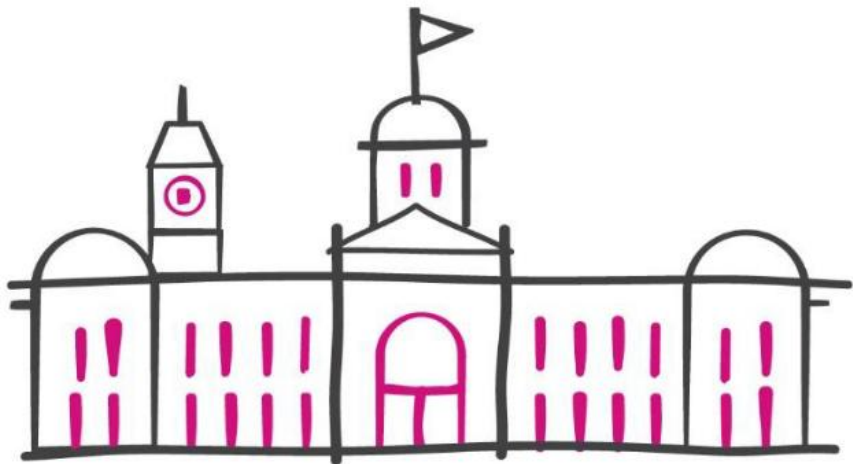
An annual review of progress will be undertaken each year.

Figure 9: Engagement and Communication Forums

Engagement forum	Stakeholders	Description of engagement
Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)	Strategic Directors	Developing the overarching IRP Framework and specific elements within the framework requiring steer, such as the development of governance arrangements and resourcing approach.
Extended Corporate Leadership Team (ECLT)	Directors and Assistant Directors	Developing and testing the IRP outcomes and improvement priorities to ensure the IRP is targeting the right areas. Considering how we measure success against each of the outcomes.
Extended Management Team (EMT)	Cabinet and CLT Members	Ongoing briefings to keep members informed on the progress in developing the IRP and provide feedback on the overarching IRP framework including outcomes and priorities.
Informal Cabinet	Cabinet Members	
Party Leadership	Political Group Leaders	
Overview & Scrutiny Committees (O&S)	Members	Presentations to each of the 8 O&S committees during January and Feb 2024 to test and develop key aspects of the IRP and ensure IRP features in O&S work programmes.
Improvement & Recovery Board (IRB)	Commissioners	Testing and developing key aspects of the IRP detail (framework, governance, resourcing, etc) with commissioners to get steer and guidance. Presentation of draft IRP to the Improvement and Recovery Board (IRB).
Corporate Communications & Engagement	Council Staff and Members	Providing regular updates on how the IRP is developing through webinars, email bulletins, and intranet page updates. Staff survey to provide an opportunity for specific feedback and expression of interest to support IRP development.



7. Enabling and Supporting Delivery of the IRP (Resources)



7. Enabling and Supporting Delivery of the IRP (Resources)

Resourcing the IRP

Significant and sustained investment is required to deliver the scale and pace of change required. Without directing the right resources to delivering those programmes we will not be able to achieve the necessary changes or deliver required budget savings.

Delivery of the IRP, including budget saving proposals, will require capacity and expertise over and above business-as-usual resources. This will include both capacity within directorates and within our corporate services (e.g. People Services and Finance).

There is budget provision of up to £20m (in the Council budget from 2024/25) to fund additional capacity and resource to support transformation, improvement and change. This will enable additional delivery capacity to be deployed across Directorates where it is needed.

Resourcing Strategy

Our approach to sourcing and deploying the additional capacity required includes a mixed approach, ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and value for money. It ensures we have the right resources at the right time with the relevant skills to support delivery. Figure 12 outlines the three core components of the resourcing approach.

Mobilising and Deploying Resources

For existing programmes, such as Job Evaluation, Oracle, SEND and Housing Improvement, there is already resource secured, deployed and in place to support delivery that is well underway.

For other programmes, resource requirements will be defined as the programme is fully scoped.

The Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO) provides an overview of the whole Council’s requirements for transformation, and improvement resource and will inform decisions about the deployment of resources.

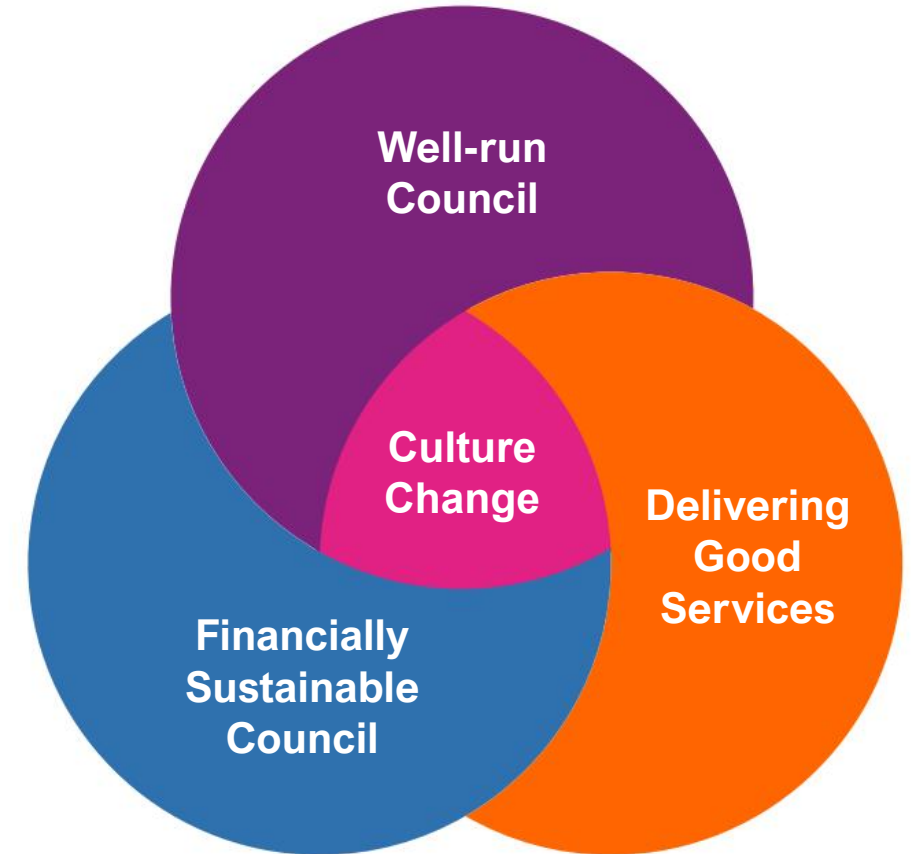
Figure 10: Resourcing Strategy

Component	Approach
Internal BCC Resource	A refocussing of internal resources to support the development and delivery of budget savings and improvement programmes. Identification of capacity from across the organisation that can potentially be redirected and/or deployed to support IRP delivery.
Interim External Capacity	Short-term capacity and technical expertise to support development and delivery of budget proposals through established framework arrangements with agencies. Support from the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny (CfGS) and Local Government Association (LGA) to some elements of the IRP programme development, including Governance & Relationships programme
Transformation Partners	Engagement of external partners where necessary to support the delivery of programmes and savings initiatives. This may include specialist capability to support improvement in specific areas (e.g. sector and technical expertise). We will also draw on sector networks, expertise and capacity across the local government sector, including from local authorities that have successfully navigated similar challenges, and from the Local Government Association.

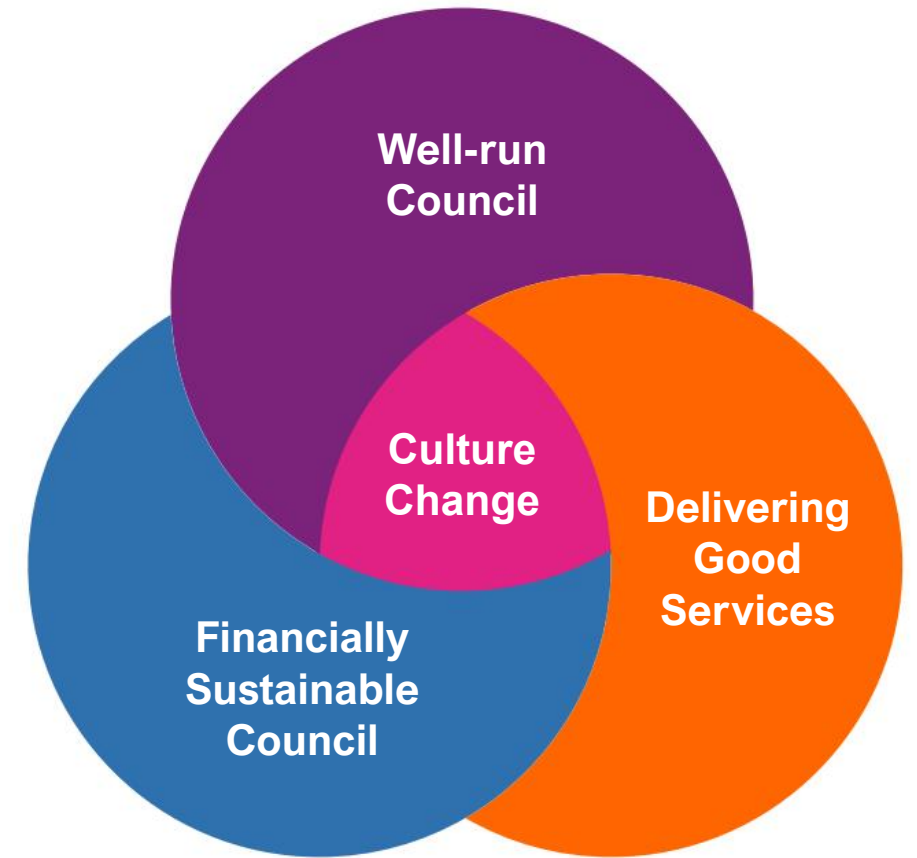
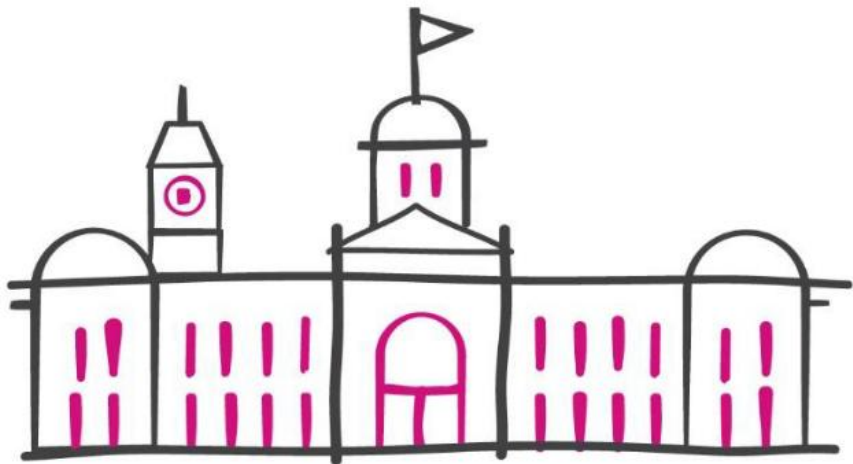


Appendices

- A1 – Priority Programme Activity Summaries
- A2 – Priority Programme Activity Plans on a Page
- A3 – Performance Indicators
- A4 – Response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendations
- A5 – Response to CfGS Governance Review: Stabilisation Plan
- A6 – Risk and Dependency Management



Appendix 1 Priority Programme Activity Summaries



Aim 1: A Financially Sustainable Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End	
Deliver Savings & Balance the Budget	<p>This programme is focussed on the development and delivery of budget savings proposals to achieve a balanced budget in 2025/26. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of savings proposals totalling £149.8m for 2024/25, ensuring a robust approach to monitoring and assurance to ensure that savings are delivered as planned, and achieve the savings intended. The development of further proposals for budget savings in 2025/26. Some of the proposals will be significant in size and complexity and will require a fundamental transformation of services and functions, or cross-cutting (rather than directorate specific) and are likely to become a dedicated programme within the IRP, such as consolidation, procurement savings and corporate landlord. 	Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Monitoring of 2024/25 savings delivery and development of 25/26 savings plans, which currently includes 150+ savings proposals, with particular focus on top 12 savings initiatives identified which account for over half 2024/25 savings identified:	Feb 2024	Mar 2025	
		Budget 24/25 Savings Proposals (Top 12 monetary value)					
		Strategic Director for City Operations	Cabinet Member for Transport	Reduce spend on Highways maintenance	Mar 2024	May 2024	
		Strategic Director of Children and Families	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	Children's Travel Transport Contracts Re-procurement	Mar 2024	Sep 2024	
				Reduction of contract sum for Birmingham Children's Trust	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	
				Commissioning of Early Help Contracts for Children, Young People and Families	Mar 2024	Sep 2024	
				Review of non-statutory transport packages (Post 16)	Mar 2024	Sep 2024	
		Strategic Director for Adult Social Care	Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care	Headcount reductions in Children and Families	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	
				Review Care Packages to reflect a strength-based approach whilst still meeting assessed needs	Mar 2024	Mar 2025	
				Review of third sector inflationary uplifts	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	
		Strategic Director for Adult Social Care	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Grant Maximisation - Adult Social Care	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	
				Service re-design and restructure	Mar 2024	Jun 2024	
Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity and Sustainability	Leader of the Council	Increased tax collection - additional debt recovery teams	Mar 2024	Mar 2025			
Director for Strategy, Equality and Partnerships	Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism	Digital and Technology Services Redesign	Mar 2024	Apr 2024			

Aim 1: A Financially Sustainable Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Job Evaluation Programme	<p>This programme will deliver a new Pay Equity Scheme at the Council by April 2025. The Pay Equity Scheme will help to address and mitigate the Councils equal pay liability, implement a fair and equitable pay and grading structure across the Council and ensure staff satisfaction with these changes.</p> <p>To deliver this, the programme will allocate and evaluate pay grades, model pay, revise the terms and conditions for appropriate roles and review roles across the Council. To support these activities, the programme will carry out an eight-week trial of the Job Description Questionnaire process that will help to ensure additional information on roles can be provided by employees and taken into consideration.</p> <p>The programme will also implement directorate and cross-directorate moderation. The success of the programme will rely on the mobilisation of an Operational Steering Group, and effective engagement with employees and the Union throughout.</p>	Director of People Services	Leader of the Council	Mobilisation of Operational Steering Group	Oct 2023	Dec 2023
				Commence 8-week trial of JDQ process	Jan 2024	Jan 2024
				Formal evaluator training started	Feb 2024	Feb 2024
				200 benchmark roles evaluated	Mar 2024	May 2024
				All non-benchmark (circa 2,500) roles evaluated	May 2024	Aug 2024
				Directorate moderation completed	Sep 2024	Sep 2024
				Cross directorate moderation completed	Sep 2024	Sep 2024
				Pay modelling completed	Mar 2024	Oct 2024
				Employee and Union Consultation/Negotiation completed	Oct 2024	Jan 2025
				Change processing and implementation completed	Feb 2025	Mar 2025
				Full implementation of new pay and grading structure completed	Mar 2025	Apr 2025



Aim 1: A Financially Sustainable Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Asset Sales Programme	<p>This programme will undertake a review of capital assets (principally commercial and surplus operational properties) to identify opportunities to generate capital receipts that will contribute to a balanced near-term budget. The programme has an overarching aim of securing £500m of capital from asset sales by December 2024, and a further £250m by December 2025.</p> <p>To achieve this, the programme requires the asset sales strategy to be agreed, the Cabinet Property Committee to be set up and an agreed Disposal methodology.</p> <p>Underpinning the programme is the implementation of an asset disposal strategy (both commercial and operational).</p>	Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity and Sustainability	Leader of the Council	Review assets list and agree disposal methodology (Economy and Skills O&S Committee)	Jan 2024	Jan 2024
				Undertake first tranche of public auctions	Feb 2024	Feb 2024
				Implement asset disposal programme in line with Strategy, with the following activities completed:		
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake due diligence Market asset Seek approval through Cabinet Committee Property (CCP) Agree heads of terms Legal contract negotiations, etc. Complete sale and collect capital receipt 		
				This approach will work to the following milestones:		
				• Generation of £15m capital receipts (cumulative) from asset sales	Feb 2024	Mar 2024
				• Generation of £45m capital receipts (cumulative) from asset sales	Apr 2024	Jun 2024
• Generation of £185m capital receipts (cumulative) from asset sales	Jul 2024	Sep 2024				
• Generation of £500m capital receipts (cumulative) from asset sales	Oct 2024	Dec 2024				
• Generation of a further £250m capital receipts from asset sales	Jan 2025	Dec 2025				



Aim 1: A Financially Sustainable Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Review of Companies & Traded Services	<p>This programme involves a detailed review of Council-controlled companies and traded services to identify options to raise funds, reduce costs and minimise financial risk.</p> <p>The programme will support the delivery of a balanced budget and financial sustainability across the Council. Central to the delivery of this programme is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of a reduction programme which will reduce the portfolio of companies to those that are financially viable, required for statutory purposes, or for service delivery A review of material traded services to maximise traded opportunities and ensure that the traded services retained are contributing positively in terms of finance and risk management 	Chief Operating Officer	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Review of Companies		
				Agree action plan to drive rolling programme of deep dives into Council-controlled companies	Feb 2024	Mar 2024
				Deliver rolling programme of deep dives into all Council-controlled companies	Apr 2024	Dec 2024
				Programme of improving Governance and officer for all companies where BCC have a controlling share (>20%)	Apr 2024	Sep 2024
				Complete implementation of company portfolio reduction	Apr 2024	Dec 2024
				Monitor review progress through Cabinet Committee Group Company Governance	Monthly	Monthly
				Review of Traded Services		
				Review material traded areas for new opportunities	Apr 2024	Jul 2024
				Review other smaller traded services for new opportunities and risk management	May 2024	Jul 2024
				Note: Dedicated resource identified and in place to carry out above Traded Services activities.		



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Organisational Design & Culture Change	<p>This programme is predicated on culture change being at the heart of the Council’s improvement and transformation journey and its future shape. The programme will involve collaborative work across the whole Council to define and establish a strengthened organisational culture that delivers sustainable improvement through a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving outcomes for citizens Empowering staff to make decisions at the right levels Learning lessons and embedding customer focus throughout the organisation. <p>Key dependencies for the programme will be early intervention and prevention principles and our Everyone’s Battle, Everyone’s Business (EBEB) programme, which embodies the Council’s objectives on equality, diversity and inclusion.</p> <p>This programme will be a key dependency for all other programmes across the Council and within the IRP. The initial focus of this programme will be to define a vision, strategic priorities, and leadership principles which will drive the approach. The assessment and design will then set out the future organisational culture required to deliver on those aims.</p> <p>Organisational Design will set out to analyse and benchmark the current shape of the Council, proposing standardised principles and a governance approach. This will support the directorates in the design and delivery of the future organisation shape ensuring delivery for our citizens, a focus on earlier interventions and prevention to deliver better outcomes for citizens, financial sustainability and improving efficiency of structure.</p>	Director of People Services	Leader of the Council	Culture Change		
				Developing the Cultural Blueprint, identifying the target culture	Feb 2024	May 2024
				Development support for leaders and managers in living culture	Mar 2024	Jun 2024
				Design and delivery of mechanisms to support embedding culture for all to include policies, procedures, communications and training	Jun 2024	Dec 2024
				Staff Engagement during programme, design, pilot and continuing	Oct 2024	Jun 2025
				Organisational Design		
				Leadership Future Organisational Shape designed and delivered	Mar 2024	May 2024
				Existing Organisational Structure analysis and report produced	May 2024	Sep 2024
				Creation of Organisational Design Principles and Design Authority	May 2024	Jul 2024
				Staff Engagement during programme, design and delivery	May 2024	Jan 2025
				Future Organisational Shape design and delivery	Aug 2024	Dec 2024



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Oracle Reimplementation and Business Process Change	<p>The programme will resolve critical fixes and reset the implementation programme, including new sponsorship/governance and additional capabilities, to deliver an effective Oracle system for Finance and HR that will support the efficient delivery of corporate support services to the rest of the organisation.</p> <p>The programme will introduce new ways of working for staff, enable greater accountability and ownership across the organisation, deliver a real-time view of the Council's finances to enable more robust financial management, and provide staff with the right tools to manage performance and development.</p> <p>The approach will adopt best practice processes rather than adapt the system to fit legacy Council ways of working. This will involve supporting staff to review and revise business processes that deliver efficiencies and improved productivity across the organisation.</p> <p>Key areas of delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the case and implementation approach for re-implementation. • Concluding delivery of Phase 1 essential fixes and a roadmap to maintain the current system while re-implementation work is undertaken. • Implementing a standard solution for Council Income management. • Addressing critical control and security issues • Building Oracle skills and capabilities in the Council • Addressing ways of working across Finance, People Services, procurement, programme and Digital and Technology Services (DTS) to underpin programme of work. • Developing a reporting strategy to support essential data provision in the Council. 	Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources	Note: Re-implementation Milestone approvals and assurance gates to be confirmed.		
				Submission of options and approach	Mar 2024	Apr 2024
				Phase 1 Essential Fixes and Changes Complete	Mar 2023	Apr 2024
				Income Management Solution Go-Live	Feb 2024	Mar 2025
				Phase 2 Essential Fixes and Changes Complete	April 2024	Apr 2025
				Oracle Re-Implementation Go-Live	April 2024	Sep 2026



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Review Key Corporate Services	<p>The first stage of this programme will be to review the provision and operation of key corporate services to identify immediate repositioning and changes required to support the organisation to deal with major Council programmes and achieve the overall savings identified, alongside delivering specific savings initiatives identified within corporate services.</p> <p>The next stage will be to define the target operating model for corporate services, aligned to the future ways of working enabled by the Oracle reimplementation. This will consider further centralisation of corporate activity, the combining of delivery of transactional services, the creation professional centres of excellence and the refinement of business partnering arrangements across corporate services.</p> <p>There is an interdependency with the 'Improve Key Citizen Services & Customer Standards' programme, which will undertake a series of evidence-based reviews using the work done in this programme as the enabling foundation.</p> <p>Corporate Service reviews will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance – response to external auditor recommendations is in progress, alongside completing a review of vacant roles and assessing whether savings can be made from reallocation of tasks, which will result in a savings for 2024/25. A fundamental review of the future functional structure to improve efficiency and effectiveness and leverage the investment in Oracle. <p>(continued on next page)</p>	Chief Operating Officer	Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council	Complete reviews of all corporate services	Feb 2024	Sep 2024
		Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer		Define Target Operating Model for corporate services	May 2024	Oct 2024
		Finance				
		Address external auditor recommendations including those on broader financial management and decision making across the Council		Oct 2023	Ongoing	
		Deliver range of diagnostics to inform Finance improvement (this could include reviews of business partnering, transactional services, etc.)		May 2024	Oct 2024	
		Internal Audit & Risk				
		Review the structure of the current Internal Audit team through engagement and consultation with Officers to develop a future team structure		Jan 2024	Sep 2024	
		Review the sourcing options for specific expertise, such as external expertise for technical audit work		Jan 2024	Sep 2024	
		People Services				
		Implementation of People Services improvement plan and new functional structure		Jan 2024	Jan 2025	
		Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO)				
		Map source and deploy corporate enabled resources to deliver savings, transformation and improvement across the Council		Feb 2024	Jun 2024	
		Implement new CPMO model, infrastructure and reporting approach		Apr 2024	Sep 2024	
(continued on next page)						



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End	
Review Key Corporate Services cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Audit & Risk – restructure has been identified as a savings proposal, with a review underway of the structure and future operating model explore potential alternative sourcing options. The outcome of this review will be presented by Q3 2024/25. People Services – transitional structure to support major programmes, implementation of improvement plan. A fundamental review of the future functional structure to improve efficiency and effectiveness and leverage the investment in Oracle. CPMO – strengthened programme, performance and risk management for delivery of budget savings, improvement and transformation. Legal & Governance – the service is undertaking a full transformation programme (to April 2025), starting with a restructure but looking at processes and procedures, culture, learning and development, modernisation of legal roles and much more. Procurement – Redefining of organisational expectations of procurement and commercial functions to improve governance and ensure valued outputs in relation to a sustainable Council. Digital Services –An interim review of the organisational model to achieve the 2024/25 savings and digital enablement of frontline services that are dependent on rapid deployment of digital solutions to ensure the achievement of their 2024/25 objectives and key results and delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan. An assessment of the operating model implemented in 2023 with a focus on enhancing responsiveness, further reducing operational risk, removing or minimising legacy system maintenance costs and increasing the skills and knowledge to support the investment in strategic platforms such as Oracle. 	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council	Legal & Governance			
					Consult on proposed new structure for Legal Services to modernise the practice, including change of job titles and roles	Jan 2024	Jun 2024
					Create a business/strategy plan to support growth and improvement and assist with implementation of the other transformation activity	Jan 2024	Jun 2024
					Procurement		
					Reviewing and refocusing of target operating model (to include prioritisation around resourcing of roles, establishing the right balance of commercial governance, and ensuring quality information drives effective decision making around procurement and commercial activity)	Jan 2024	Dec 2024
					Digital Services		
					Re-baseline digital delivery plan to support priority business objectives and key results	Apr 2024	May 2024
					Assessment (VFM, Maturity, Fit of Purpose) of Digital and Technology service operating model	Apr 2024	Jun 2024
					Alignment with emerging organisational design and implementation of an enhanced functional operating model	Jun 2024	Mar 2025



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End	
Consolidation Programme & Digital Efficiencies	<p>This programme will seek to identify opportunities for further consolidation where similar activities may be duplicated across the Council. This approach will aim to deliver services in a more consistent, standardised, efficient and cost-effective way to improve performance and enhance the customer experience. The programme will be a driver of budget savings for the organisation.</p> <p>A number of activities have been identified as in scope starting with a 12-week discovery into several priority 1 areas as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support • Debt Recovery • Customer Contact • Integrated Transport Unit • Digital Post & Print <p>Digital and Technology Services (DTS) will lead cross-organisation multi-disciplinary teams (Foundry) to deliver across a range of small, quick value return, low complexity products that release efficiencies – focusing on using the Microsoft range of products where possible; UI Path for more complex process automation opportunities and Birmingham Guardian for field workers.</p>	Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships	Deputy Leader of the Council	Consolidation			
				Discovery: To collate necessary information and data relating to Priority 1 projects, starting with Fleet & Transport Management, Debt Recovery and Business Support. To analyse the data and propose future models for each consolidation.			
				Baseline as-is data and position	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	
				Validate baseline data and define future opportunities	Feb 2024	Feb 2024	
				Develop to-be plans and proposals	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	
				Go / No-go decision on Priority 1 plans and proposals	Apr 2024	Apr 2024	
				Implement agreed Priority 1 plans and proposals to bring services and budgets together	May 2024	Mar 2025	
			Note: Plans for the Consolidation Programme are in development. Future Discovery and Implementation phases for Priority 2 plans and proposals will be agreed in due course as Priority 1 plans develop.				
			Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism	Digital Efficiencies			
				Onboarding, opportunity gathering, supplier engagement	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	
				Establishment of governance and communication channels	Feb 2024	Apr 2024	
				Delivery of Q1 efficiency products	Apr 2024	Jun 2024	
				Foundry governance boards (monthly)	Apr 2024	Monthly	
				Development of business case to draw down further funding	Jun 2024	Jun 2024	
Note: The approach taken will be iterative, and therefore will develop further following the first quarter of delivery activity and dependent on the agreement of further funding.							



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Employee Relations & People Management	<p>This programme will respond to issues in the CfGS Governance Review and strengthen communication and engagement with and between managers, teams, employees and staff bodies across the Council. It will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving relationships and rebuild trust with Trade Unions through better communication and collaboration during the delivery of key programmes, such as Job Evaluation. The programme will continue to strengthen our employee relations capability through a centralised team and improved governance, and through new and better relationships with senior union representatives, recognising the importance of rebuilding trust as we transform our culture and ways of working. Improving our internal systems, networks, communication channels, and talent development approaches, to ensure we support and develop our people, and communicate effectively so that expectations are well-informed and realistic. A key early activity will be an employee survey to understand key concerns and establish a baseline against which we can measure progress. Creation of an embedded portfolio of support and development for our people to ensure that we attract, nurture and develop talent, as well as better support and manage those who are underperforming, fostering a culture of continuous learning supported by active performance management. We will create a pipeline of enabled and empowered future leaders whilst also investing in and foster opportunity for early careers through work experience, apprenticeships and graduate schemes. <p>All of this will be done in line with our Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business (EBEB) programme, which embodies the Council's objectives on equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>	Director of People Services	Leader of the Council	Trade Union Relations		
				Note: Relations with Trade Unions will initially continue to be improved through collaborative working to deliver major activities such as the Job Evaluation & Equal Pay programme.		
				Create Employee Relations Strategy and tactical plan 2024-25	Apr 2024	Jun 2024
				Resource and upskill Employee Relations Team	Jul 2024	Dec 2024
				Industrial Relations		
				Review and propose any changes to the Trade Union consultation framework across BCC	Jun 2024	Dec 2024
				Clarify escalation processes/avoidance of disputes procedure, focusing on informal resolution	Jun 2024	Oct 2024
				Plan and introduce Informal Sharing meetings with all Regional Officers, and CTU/DTU (50) reps hosted by senior management (6 monthly)	Sep 2024	6 monthly
				Review meeting structure, Terms of Reference and programme of meetings	Jun 2024	Dec 2024
				Deliver Industrial Relations Training and Development Programme (Leadership, Line Managers, Members). 70% of Line Managers are trained by end date	Sep 2024	Dec 2025
				Review Facilities and Time Off Agreement	Apr 2024	Mar 2025
				HR Policy		
				Facilitate consultation on changes to key HR policies (simplify) in consultation with SME's and key stakeholders, incl Policy Working Group	Jun 2024	Dec 2025
				People Management (Advisory Team)		
Review of team structure, governance, ways of working, reporting, case management, employment tribunals	Apr 2024	Oct 2024				
Employee Relations (Case Management) Training and Development Programme (Leadership, Line Managers, Members)	Apr 2024	Mar 2025				

Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Employee Relations & People Management cont.		Director of People Services	Leader of the Council	Internal Communications & Employee Engagement		
				Internal Communications & Colleague Engagement Strategy 2024-2026	Mar 2024	Jun 2024
				Communications & Engagement Tactical Plan 2024-2026	Mar 2024	Jun 2024
				Resourcing Engagement & Internal Communications Teams (People Services & Corporate Communications)	Feb 2024	May 2024
				Develop Measurement & Evaluation Framework	Apr 2024	Sep 2024
				Colleague Engagement Survey, Focus Groups, & Interviews (Baseline)	Apr 2024	Dec 2024
				Internal Communications Channel & Engagement Activities Review & Change Implementation (Online & Offline)	Apr 2024	Dec 2024
				Continuous Colleague Engagement Initiatives & Tools	May 2024	Nov 2025
				Colleague Experience Lifecycle Review & Change Implementation	Sep 2024	Dec 2025
				Communications & Engagement Training & Development Programme (Leadership, Line Managers, Members)	Jan 2025	Sep 2025
				Colleague Recognition Events	Jan 2025	Dec 2025

Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Employee Relations & People Management cont.		Director of People Services	Leader of the Council	Talent Development		
				Initial scoping of training requirements across the business. Training Budgets defined and approval from S151	May 2024	Sep 2024
				Early Careers		
				Early Careers Scoping & Team Establishment	Jun 2024	Sep 2024
				Development of Early Careers Programme and support tools CLT commitment to embedding early entry routes	Sep 2024	Dec 2024
				First Early Careers Intake	Sep 2025	Sep 2025
				Leadership Development		
				Scope & Develop Leadership Development Programme (Senior, mid Manager and Team Leader)	Sep 2024	Dec 2024
				Scope & Develop Future Leadership Programme	Mar 2025	Jun 2025
				Performance, Talent & Succession		
				Development of Performance Management	Sep 2024	Mar 2025
				Establish workforce planning identifying skill needs and aligning succession planning	Nov 2024	Mar 2025
				Robust performance management system in place to evaluate our top performers	Apr 2026	Review annually
Talent Management and Career pathways clearly defined for career mobility within the organisation	Dec 2025	Mar 2026				

Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Programme Management, Performance & Risk	<p>The programme will bring together and build on work that is already underway to strengthen the information and the analysis and reporting of it to inform better decision-making, programme delivery, performance and risk management across the Council. We will:</p> <p>1. Programme Management: Establish a strengthened and repositioned CPMO that will: Embed improved programme management standards, tools and practices across the organisation and strengthen assurance through information, reporting and accountability – with a particular focus on the programmes within the IRP</p> <p>2. Performance Management: All aspects of performance management will be reviewed and improved to ensure a focus on using performance data to drive service improvement, value for money, and support effective decision-making. We will enable continuous service improvement through consistent and effective performance management and use of sector benchmarking data.</p> <p>3. Risk management: Continue to develop the corporate approach to risk in response to recommendations in the CfGS governance review, which identified a lack of consistency, ownership and rigour to the management of risk. This includes development of a new Risk Platform to deliver improved visibility, real-time reporting and dynamic views of risk exposure; and a refresh and relaunch of the Council's documented Risk Management Framework.</p>	Chief Operating Officer	Deputy Leader of the Council	Programme Management		
		Work with Finance colleagues to develop and implement a robust process to track savings delivery		Dec 2023	Apr 2024	
		Develop and implement tracking tool that provides coherent programme information and allows identification of interactions, dependencies and cross-cutting issues between programmes, and collate key programme information into this 'grid view'		Feb 2024	Sep 2024	
		Performance Management				
		Refresh of performance information and products to focus on the things that matter most and can inform decision making (leads on from CFGS stabilisation plan)		Feb 2024	Jun 2024	
		Develop a corporate KPI set to better focus on ensuring the delivery of value for money, safe, compliant basic services		Feb 2024	Jun 2024	
		Commence reporting against refreshed KPIs, including relevant benchmarking data where available.		Jun 2024	Jul 2024	
		Develop training on the components of the performance framework and the roles and responsibilities within this for members and officers		Apr 2024	Sep 2024	
		Launch of phase 2 of the performance knowledge hub to support the training		Sep 2024	Sep 2024	
		Launch training		Dec 2024	Dec 2024	
Review impact of new arrangements and refine for new reporting year (25/26)	Feb 2025	Mar 2025				



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Programme Management, Performance & Risk cont.	3. Risk management: Continue to develop the corporate approach to risk in response to recommendations in the CfGS governance review, which identified a lack of consistency, ownership and rigour to the management of risk. This includes development of a new Risk Platform to deliver improved visibility, real-time reporting and dynamic views of risk exposure; and a refresh and relaunch of the Council's documented Risk Management Framework.	Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	Deputy Leader of the Council	Risk Management		
				Refresh of the Council's Strategic Risks, with enhanced articulation and effective assessment and evaluation criteria	Feb 2024	Jun 2024
				Following on from the Stabilisation Plan deliverables, scope and agree the longer-term Risk Platform requirements to deliver improved visibility of the Council's risk exposure	Jul 2024	Dec 2024
				Refresh and relaunch of the Council's documented Risk Management Framework	Apr 2024	Jul 2024
				Deliver five-day governance and assurance training to officers and members which includes Risk Management module	Apr 2024	Mar 2025
				Development of Key Risk/Control Indicators as low/high tolerance triggers within the Council's existing KPI suite and further KRI/KCIs as necessary	Oct 2024	Dec 2024



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Governance & Relationships	<p>This programme will focus on responding to issues and challenges identified in the CfGS Governance Review. Programme activity will improve the way the political governance of the Council works, including a review and refresh of the constitution and the member and officer roles, responsibilities, and relationships that are critical to ensure effective decision-making, partnership working and policy development. members will engage and support in shaping activities within this programme. The programme will contribute to more effective governance, clearer accountability, stronger working relationships and better decision-making, continuing key facets of the Governance Review Stabilisation Plan and include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Constitution, including the Scheme of Delegation, to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and enables efficient, effective, and accountable decision making, including clearly defined delegations within a refreshed scheme of delegation. Member Development and Support, including a comprehensive and co-ordinated programme of member training and development focussed to ensure that all members can confidently and effectively undertake their responsibilities in terms of Council leadership and decision-making, scrutiny and challenge, audit, and regulatory roles, participation in wider decision-making partnerships and representing local communities. <p>(continued on next page)</p>	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Leader of the Council	Constitution Review		
				Establish a cross party working group and an officer group to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider proposals from Members, Officers and Commissioners Ensure the Constitution is fit-for-purpose Put forward proposed changes for consideration by Full Council 	Jan 2024	Jan 2024
				Develop new Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee, informed by CIPFA best practice standards, and use these to drive new ways of working. The Constitution will also be updated to reflect the new Cabinet Committee Property.	Jan 2024	Jan 2024
				Undertake a legal compliance check to identify priority constitution review areas.	Jan 2024	May 2024
				Undertake comprehensive review to make the Council's Constitution fit for purpose and ensure a development programme for Members and Officers to understand and comply with its provision.	May 2024	May 2026
				Member / Officer Development		
				Re-establish and mobilise the Member Development Group to review the member / officer protocol, and advise on improved support and development for members – including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member induction programme Member Development offer Role development and support Information, communications and web-based resources Attracting candidates Support and remuneration for members 	Feb 2024	Sep 2024
				Scope bullying, intimidation and harassment support action plan	Feb 2024	Apr 2024
(continued on next page)						



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End		
Governance & Relationships cont.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member and Officer Roles and Responsibilities, including activities that will improve and develop the mutual understanding of respective member and officer roles. A programme of training and support, closely aligned with work to improve our organisational culture, will help embed new protocols and strengthen knowledge, skills and co-operation between officers and members at all levels in the Council. Ensuring effective engagement and working relationships with external partners and stakeholders. 	City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer	Leader of the Council	Design, deliver and analyse a member survey to baseline perceptions and inform support and development needs	Feb 2024	May 2024		
				Begin work with the Local Government Association (and other partners as needed) to scope and develop a development offer for members, and for officers who support members	Apr 2024	Sep 2024		
				Brief Overview and Scrutiny members, Audit Committee members and Cabinet members to provide oversight and challenge of Improvement and Recovery Plan activity and delivery	Apr 2024	Jun 2024		
				Development of proposed new development offer for members, and for officers who support members (including approach to individual member development plans)	Apr 2024	Sep 2024		
		Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships	Deputy Leader of the Council	Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement				
				Finalise and roll-out Succeeding in Partnerships (to be followed by ongoing work corporately and within Directorates to embed the principles of good partnership working)	Nov 2023	Sep 2024		
				Trial and roll-out of the stakeholder sentiment tracker as BAU	Feb 2024	May 2024		
				Refresh the City Partnership Board (Vision, Mission, Purpose)	May 2024	Sep 2024		
					Initiate and deliver Shaping Birmingham's Future Together Commission with public and partner engagement	Apr 2024	Oct 2024	



Aim 2: A Well-run Council



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Corporate Landlord	<p>This programme will create a central and professionalised property function to strategically manage all of the Council's operational and community facing property assets, reducing duplication of property management activity, delivering a safer (fully compliant) and higher quality estate, and enabling the delivery of operational efficiencies through the adoption of a more sustainable and heavily reduced asset profile.</p> <p>This programme will facilitate ongoing strategic asset management planning and support the Corporate Landlord's ability to work across the Council to identify opportunities for service co-location, relocation and to target assets for programmed rationalisation, divestment and disposal. The programme will also consider the tenure by which property assets are held, both freehold and leasehold.</p> <p>The Corporate Landlord approach will form a key part of the Council's approach to organisational redesign, supporting a leaner and more efficient organisation with a fit for purpose and sustainable operational estate profile.</p>	Strategic Director of Place, Prosperity and Sustainability	Leader of the Council	Workstream 1: CAB Estate Rationalisation		
				Vacation of Woodcock Street and associated decant and decommissioning activity	Feb 2024	May 2024
				Vacation of New Aston House and Sutton New Road and associated decant and decommissioning activity	Apr 2024	Sep 2024
				Other CAB Estate related rationalisation and delivery of an asset strategy in respect of the retained estate profile	Mar 2025	Apr 2026
				Workstream 2: Wider Operational Estate Rationalisation		
				Deliver optimum asset profile for new Council size and shape, requiring a refreshed asset strategy for operational property.	Apr 2024	Apr 2026
				Create a single operational asset portfolio with centralised budgets, a supporting Corporate Landlord structure and a singular commissioning model for all property related spend	Apr 2024	Apr 2026
				Identify and deliver works to enhance assets identified for retention and use optimisation, to ensure synergy with evolving service demands and achieve VfM for premises related costs	Apr 2024	Apr 2026
				Workstream 3: Full Implementation of the Corporate Landlord Model		
				Restructuring of Corporate Landlord staffing (phase 1) reviewing and enhancing the current resource in PPS to deliver WS 1 & 2	Jan 2024	Jun 2024
				Delivery of procurement/commissioning function for Corporate Landlord e.g. a professionalised intelligent client function for property related expenditure	Jan 2024	Apr 2025
				Restructuring of Corporate Landlord staffing (phase 2a) - centralisation of all property related activity (and the corresponding teams/staff)	Jun 2024	Apr 2025
				Restructuring of Corporate Landlord staffing (phase 2b) - further restructuring to produce more streamlined Corporate Landlord to reflect all operational building divestment and associated reduction in property management and FM activity over 25/26	Apr 2025	Apr 2026
				Deliver optimum asset profile for new Council size and shape with centralised budgets, a supporting Corp Landlord structure and singular commissioning model for property related spend	Jun 2025	Apr 2026

Aim 3: Delivering Good Services



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End				
Improving Services for Children & Families	<p>Activity centres on the delivery of short and medium-term assessed priorities to systematically improve service provision and outcomes for children across the City. Priorities are set out in the refreshed Improving Services for Children and Families Plan which aligns with corporate and wider children and families associated ambitions and workstreams. The Plan is the overarching document which brings together all City Council continuous improvement activity that impacts on children, young people, and their families.</p> <p>Crucial to the success of this plan are three critical priorities that are the foundations of the journey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Children’s Services: developing and implementing a model of services for the future with clear portfolios of work • Workforce sufficiency and stability: building a stable, sufficient, and permanent workforce that is supported, able to grow and develop and encouraging experienced professionals to come and work in Birmingham • IT, Data, and Digital: ensuring that services have the right tools to deliver their work efficiently and effectively and the access, provision, evaluation and triangulation of robust evidence, insight and performance information. 	Strategic Director of Children and Families	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	<p>Note: An updated SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan is under development to be agreed by April 2024. Subsequent detail on key activities will be published in due course.</p>						
				Review and refresh of the Improving Services for Children and Families Plan to respond to changing need and resources to ensure continued conditions for success	Feb 2024	Apr 2024				
				Transfer of identified existing improvement activity into business-as-usual arrangements, ensuring appropriate support processes are in place	TBC	TBC				
				Delivery of priority improvement projects (to be defined)	TBC	TBC				
				Monitoring of progress via Improving Services for Children and Families Board	Every 6 weeks					
				SEND Improvement						
				Develop SEND Improvement Plan and AP Improvement Plan (to include the Accelerated Progress Plan actions and priorities from both the SEND and Inclusion strategies) and sign off at SEND Improvement Board (SIB)	Feb 2024	Mar 2024				
				Implement SEND improvement priorities as agreed in the SEND and AP Improvement Plan	Apr 2024	Ongoing				
				Monitoring of progress via SEND Improvement Board (SIB)	Every 6 weeks					
				DfE / NHSE stock take of Accelerated Progress Plan for SEND	Jun 2024	Jun 2024				
Develop and publish SEND Commissioner Report	TBC	TBC								





Aim 3: Delivering Good Services

Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Street Scene Transformation – including Waste	<p>This programme will address both immediate short-term issues to stabilise Street Scene services as well as delivering longer term transformation to drive improved and consistent service performance and outcomes for citizens.</p> <p>The programme will determine the most appropriate future long-term solutions for how the Street Scene service will operate, in line with steps the Council is taking to secure its broader financial sustainability. Street Scene Transformation will cover the below 5 workstreams, which will each have their own transformation plan.</p> <p>Waste has been identified as a specific area of concern and there is a detailed workstream of change and improvement for the waste service identified as part of this programme.</p> <p>Workstreams are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste • Street Management • Fleet • Parks & Green Spaces • Management Controls 	Strategic Director of City Operations	Cabinet Member for Environment	<p>Note: Although some activities have already commenced, this programme is still under development, informed by commissioners. The final programme plan is anticipated to be agreed by March 2024 and subsequent detail on key activities will be published following this.</p>		
				Agree Street Scene Transformation Plan with Commissioners and outline programme of activities	Feb 2024	Mar 2024



Aim 3: Delivering Good Services



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Housing Improvement	<p>To drive improvement across key areas of the City Housing Portfolio delivering better outcomes and benefits for residents.</p> <p>There are 3 areas of immediate focus for the Improvement & Recovery Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of affordable housing, both through direct delivery and third-party providers Improving the overall quality of Council housing and ensuring the Council achieves compliance against the Consumer Standards Ensuring homelessness is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurring <p>This doesn't capture all improvement activity within the Directorate, but the Commissioner-led Housing Sub-board will have oversight of a range of other projects which will provide assurance to Commissioners and the Cabinet Member that the Directorate are delivering on agreed service improvements.</p>	Strategic Director of City Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness	Affordable Housing		
				Report on affordable supply achieved for 2023/24 and what can be understood from this	Apr 2024	Apr 2024
				Complete review of direct delivery model and consider recommendations from this as detailed in the Building Birmingham Cabinet paper	Feb 2024	Apr 2024
				Complete options appraisals for Council owned properties already identified for affordable housing and bring forward to Cabinet Committee property	Feb 2024	May 2024
				Exchange contracts first 8 sites for disposal to registered providers	Jun 2024	Jun 2024
				Report bi-annually against workstreams identified in the affordable housing PID- governance/process, direct delivery and partnerships	Every 6 months	
				Report on supply achieved for 2024/5 and what can be understood from this	Apr 2025	Apr 2025
				Regulatory Compliance		
				Phase 1: Address immediate issues arising from breach and agree Voluntary Undertakings with the Regulator	May 2023	Apr 2024
				Phase 1: Complete external reviews against areas of landlord health and safety compliance – Fire, Gas, Elec, Water, Asbestos, Lifts, Carbon Monoxide, Smoke Detection	Jul 2023	Apr 2024
				Phase 2: Ensure all landlord health and safety compliance areas are within operational tolerance	May 2023	Jun 2024
				Phase 2: Ensure complaints backlog and SLA performance are within operational tolerance	May 2023	Jun 2024
				Phase 3: Actions from external audits and remedials completed	Jul 2023	Sep 2024
				(continued on next page)		



Aim 3: Delivering Good Services



Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Housing Improvement cont.	<p>To drive improvement across key areas of the City Housing Portfolio delivering better outcomes and benefits for residents.</p> <p>There are 3 areas of immediate focus for the Improvement & Recovery Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the supply of affordable housing, both through direct delivery and third-party providers Improving the overall quality of Council housing and ensuring the Council achieves compliance against the Consumer Standards Ensuring homelessness is prevented wherever possible, and where it does occur, it is rare, brief and non-recurring <p>This doesn't capture all improvement activity within the Directorate, but the Commissioner-led Housing Sub-board will have oversight of a range of other projects which will provide assurance to Commissioners and the Cabinet Member that the Directorate are delivering on agreed service improvements.</p>	Strategic Director of City Housing	Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness	Regulatory Compliance (cont.)		
				Phase 4: 100% compliance across all standards - except Decent Homes Standards	May 2023	Dec 2024
				Phase 4: Deliver on the recommendations of the Nov 2023 self-assessment, to ensure the Directorate are prepared for the implementation of the new Consumer Standards	Nov 2023	Dec 2024
				Phase 5: 100% Council homes meet decent homes standard	Jan 2024	Dec 2032
				Homelessness Prevention		
				Develop and launch the Homeless Prevention Strategy and subsequent Action Plan	Oct 2023	May 2024
				Consult and appraise options to ensure compliance in assessment of applications to the Housing Register, secure approvals accordingly and mobilise (agreed plan)	Dec 2023	Mar 2024
				Review and re-forecast B&B reduction plan in consultation with DLUHC to agree performance targets for 2024-25; update B&B reduction plan accordingly	Feb 2024	Mar 2024
				Review Temporary Accommodation Strategy (June 2023) in light of resource reductions, amend and refresh objectives and timescales, deliver actions accordingly	Feb 2024	Apr 2024
				Develop options appraisal for alternate forms of Temporary Accommodation and Housing Supply to address the loss of supply relating to resource reductions and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy	Mar 2024	Jun 2024
Consult and develop delivery plan for Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) and Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) commissioning, delivery and outcomes in light of likely resource reductions and pressures.	Mar 2024	Jun 2024				



Aim 3: Delivering Good Services



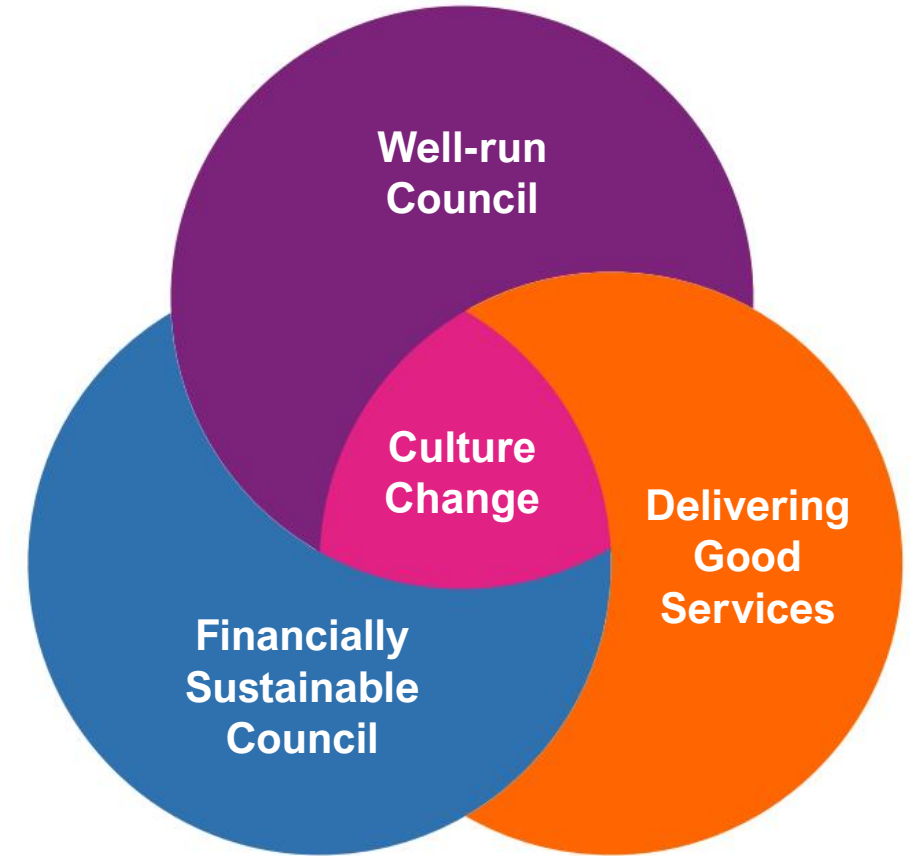
Programme	Purpose	SAO	Lead Member	Key Activities	Start	End
Improve Key Citizen Services & Customer Standards	<p>This workstream will build on the foundations built by the 'Review Key Corporate Services' programme, to define a standardised approach to review and embed good practice characteristics and principles for how citizen focused services are led, managed, and delivered by the Council.</p> <p>The development of an agreed framework, informed by best value themes, will help to ensure services are delivered well to consistent standards, and there is a focus on service delivery being evidence-led, efficient, and continuous improvement using performance information. The approach will consider the most appropriate delivery models for services, including the potential for greater localisation. There will be specific focus and consideration on how these services provide greater value for money. There will be a specific focus on continuing activities to put the customer at the heart of everything we do. Embedding the customer services strategy, principles, and standards, and creating a more customer focussed organisation with an improved end-to-end customer experience for citizens.</p> <p>During year 1, the project will develop the framework of principles and characteristics, and associated tools and approach that services can use to self-assess and identify improvements. The project will consider whether these can be used for delivery of a rolling programme of reviews that support the wider outcomes and aims of the IRP, including the development of a cohort of officers who can provide peer review, challenge, and advice to support improvement and culture change across the organisation.</p>	Strategic Director of Children and Families	Deputy Leader of the Council	Establish a steering group of ADs and Heads of Service to provide leadership, challenge and input to the programme activity	Apr 2024	May 2024
				Develop and agree the framework, principles and approach to service reviews including delivery standards, self-assessment tools and initial training materials, in collaboration with key stakeholders across BCC. This will include how we embed the customer services strategy, principles, and standards into the approach.	Jun 2024	Oct 2024
				Identification and development of capacity (both internal and external where applicable) to support and ensure rigour in the process of self-assessment, reviews and improvement planning	Nov 2024	Dec 2024
				Agree criteria for identification of priority services for review and decide on first tranche of reviews, including the identification of pilot area(s). This is likely to include key customer metrics such as low satisfaction and complaints.	Jan 2025	Jan 2025
				Deliver wider engagement (including focused workshops), training and preparatory work to launch the pilot review(s). Setting the conditions and expectations of the reviews	Feb 2025	Feb 2025
				Pilot service review(s) to be conducted and process tested	Mar 2025	Mar 2025
				Review learning from pilot and use this to refine the framework and approach ahead of rollout in year 2 and beyond	Apr 2025	May 2025
				Carry out a rolling programme of prioritised service reviews, with the objective of ensuring delivery of good, value for money, and customer focussed services	Year 2 & 3	Year 2 & 3
				Monitoring activity agreed and undertaken through life of improvement and delivery plans	Year 2 & 3	Year 2 & 3



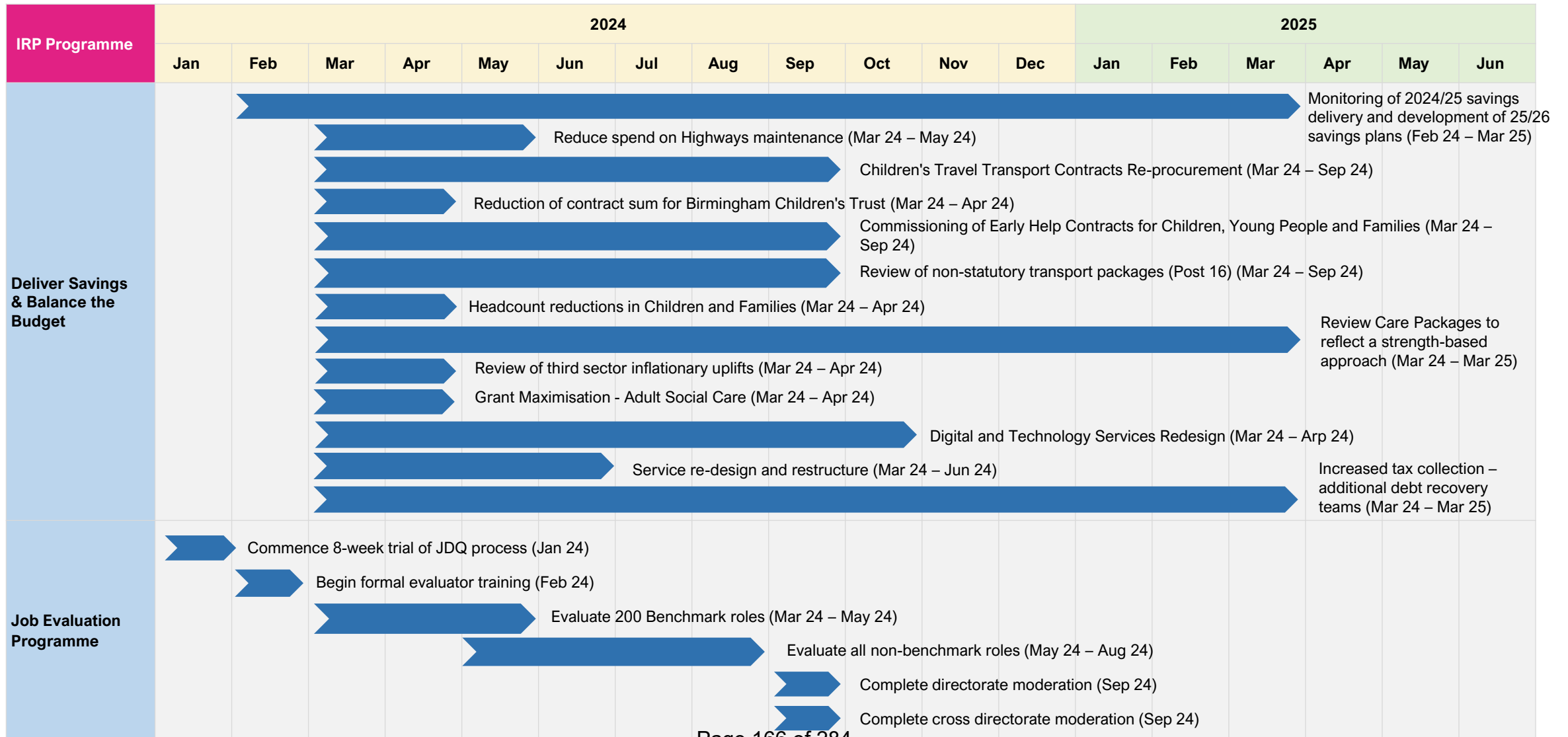
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Priority Programme

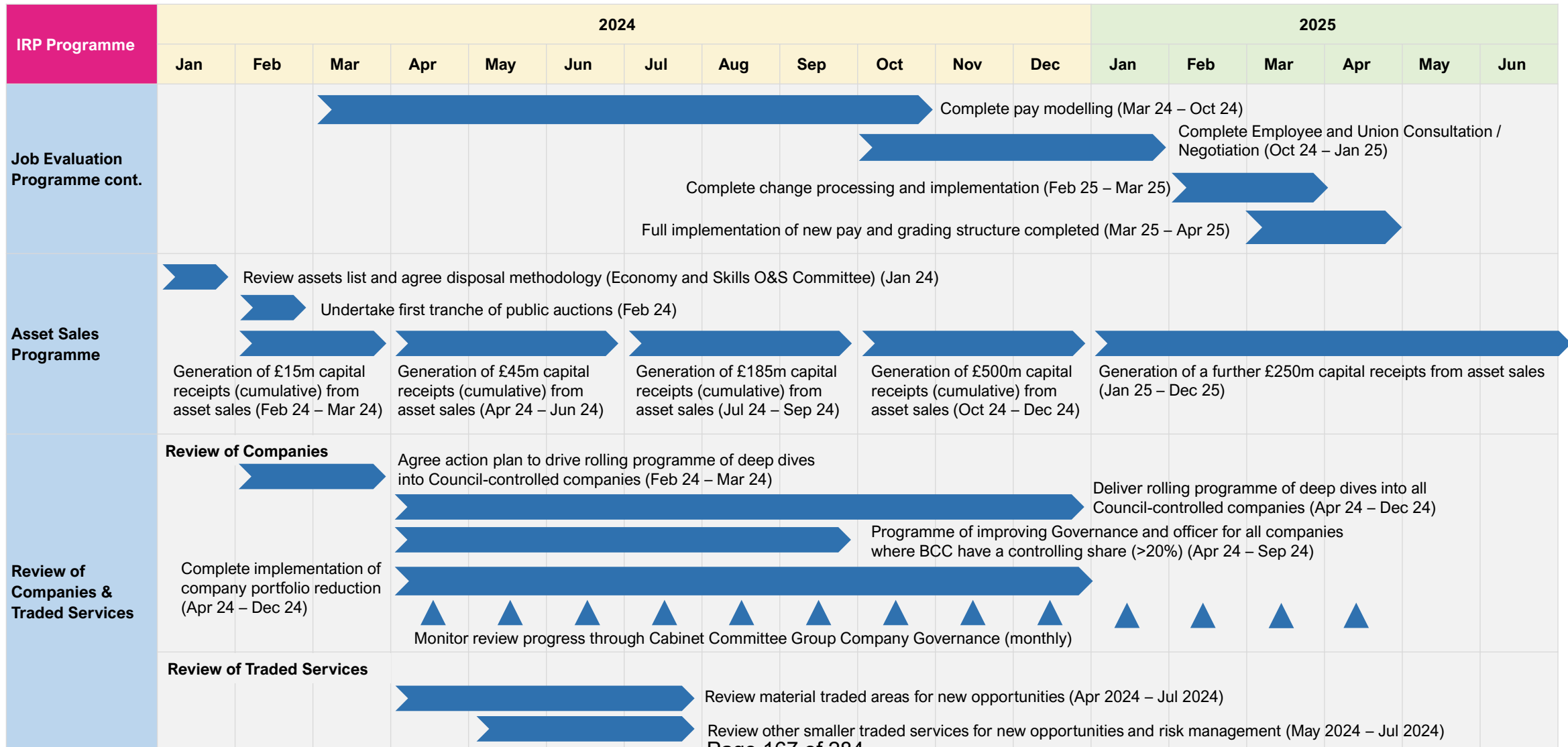
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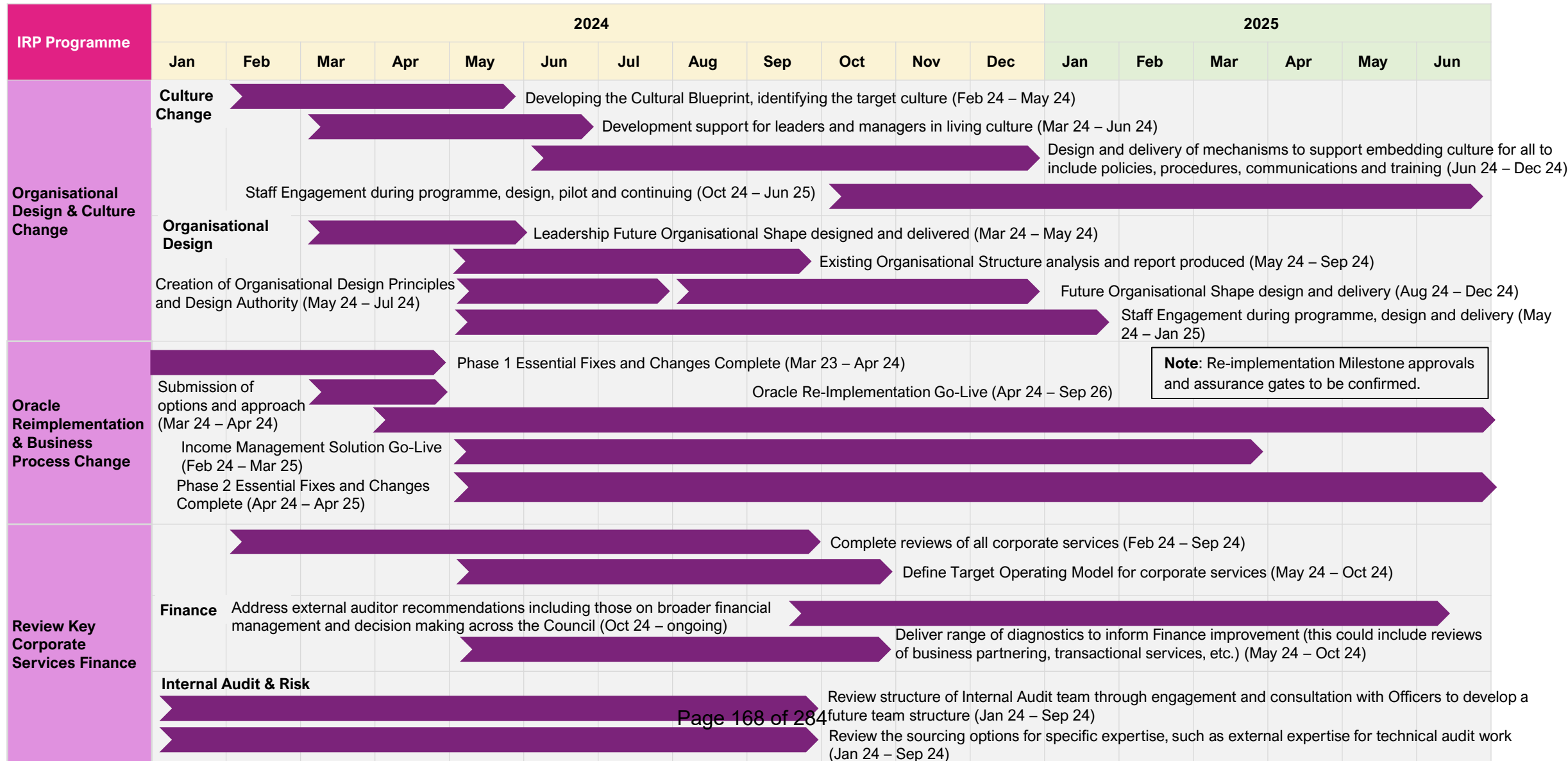
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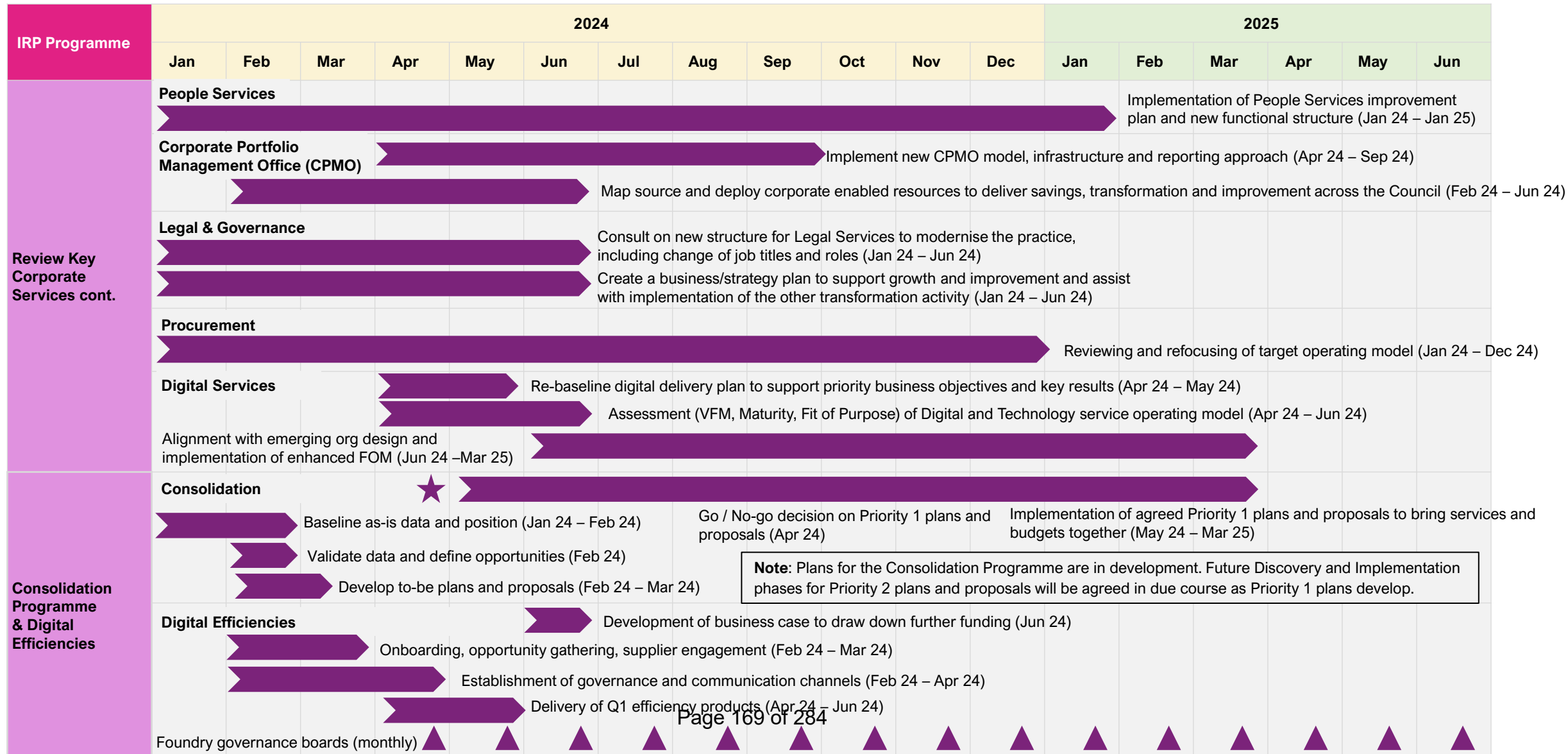
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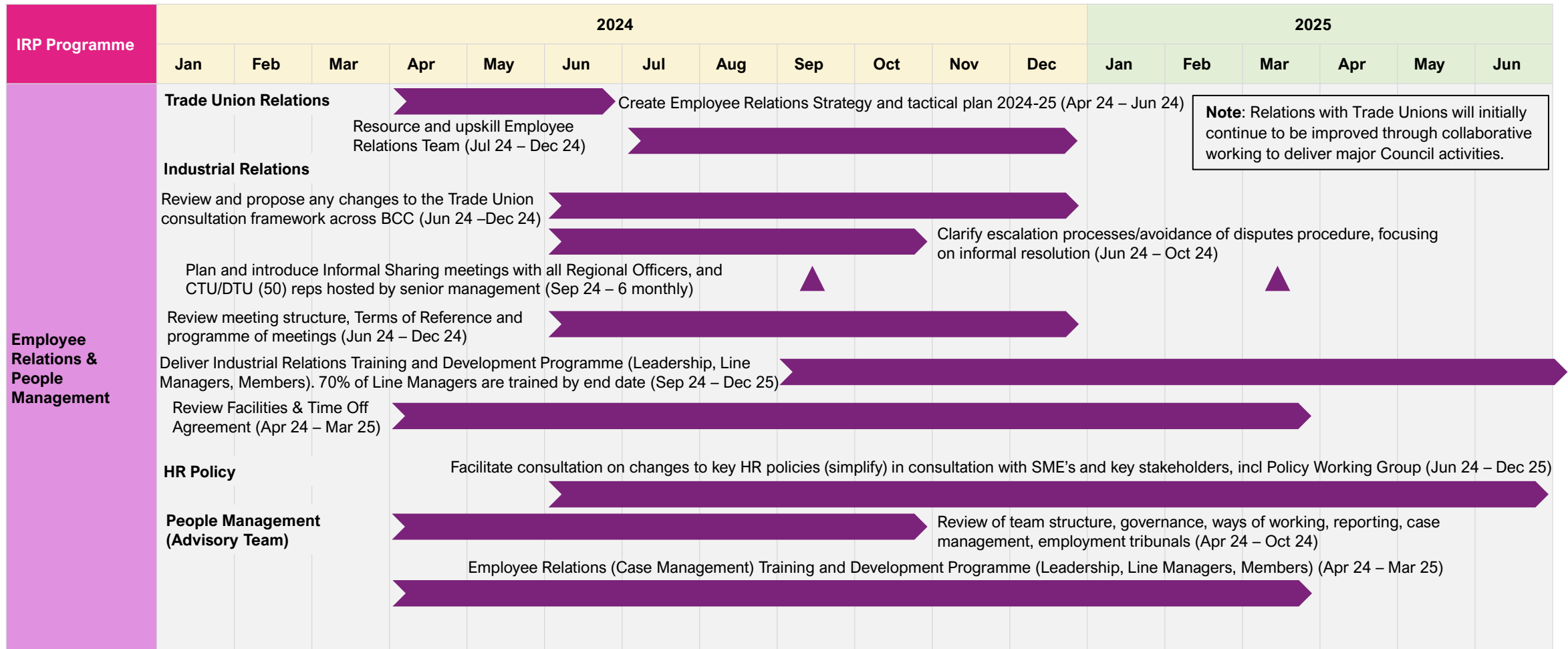
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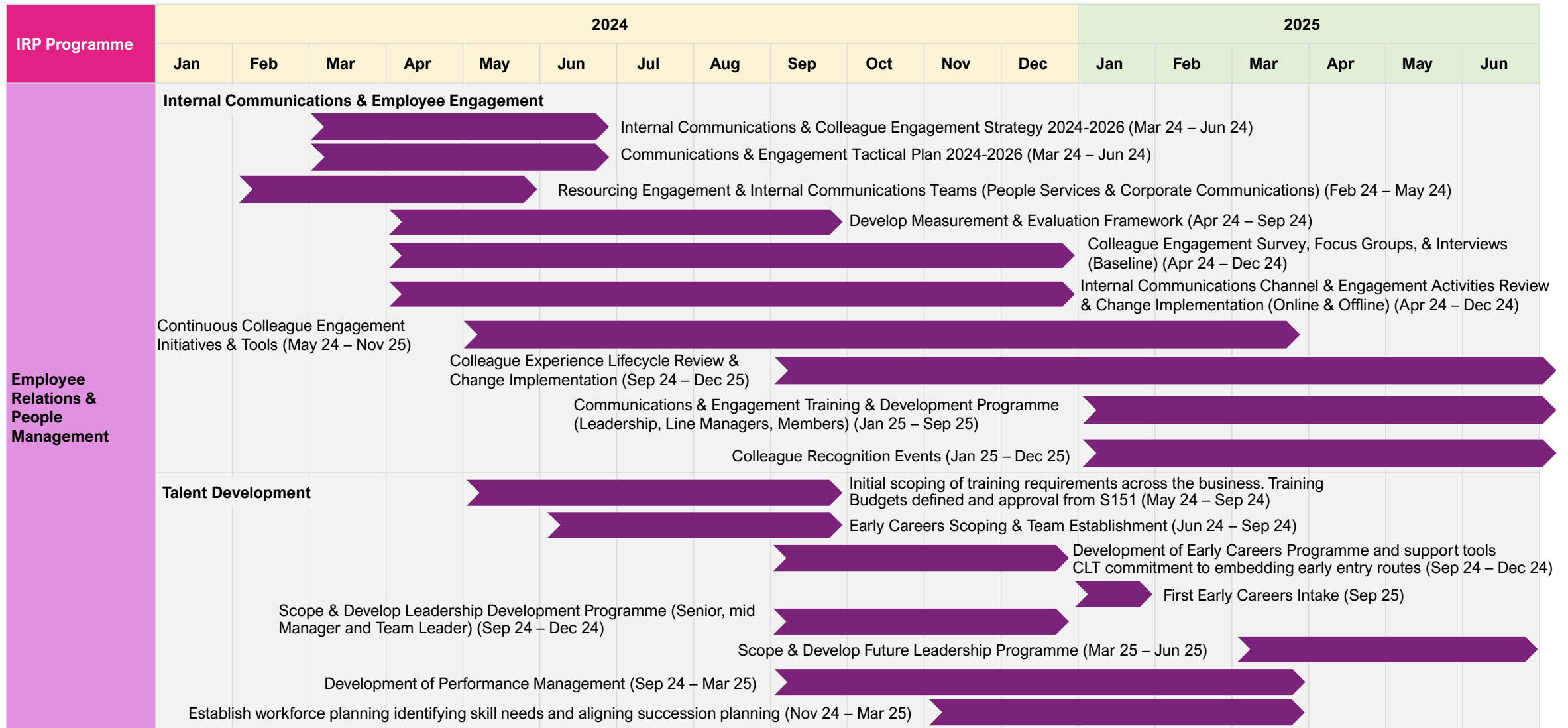
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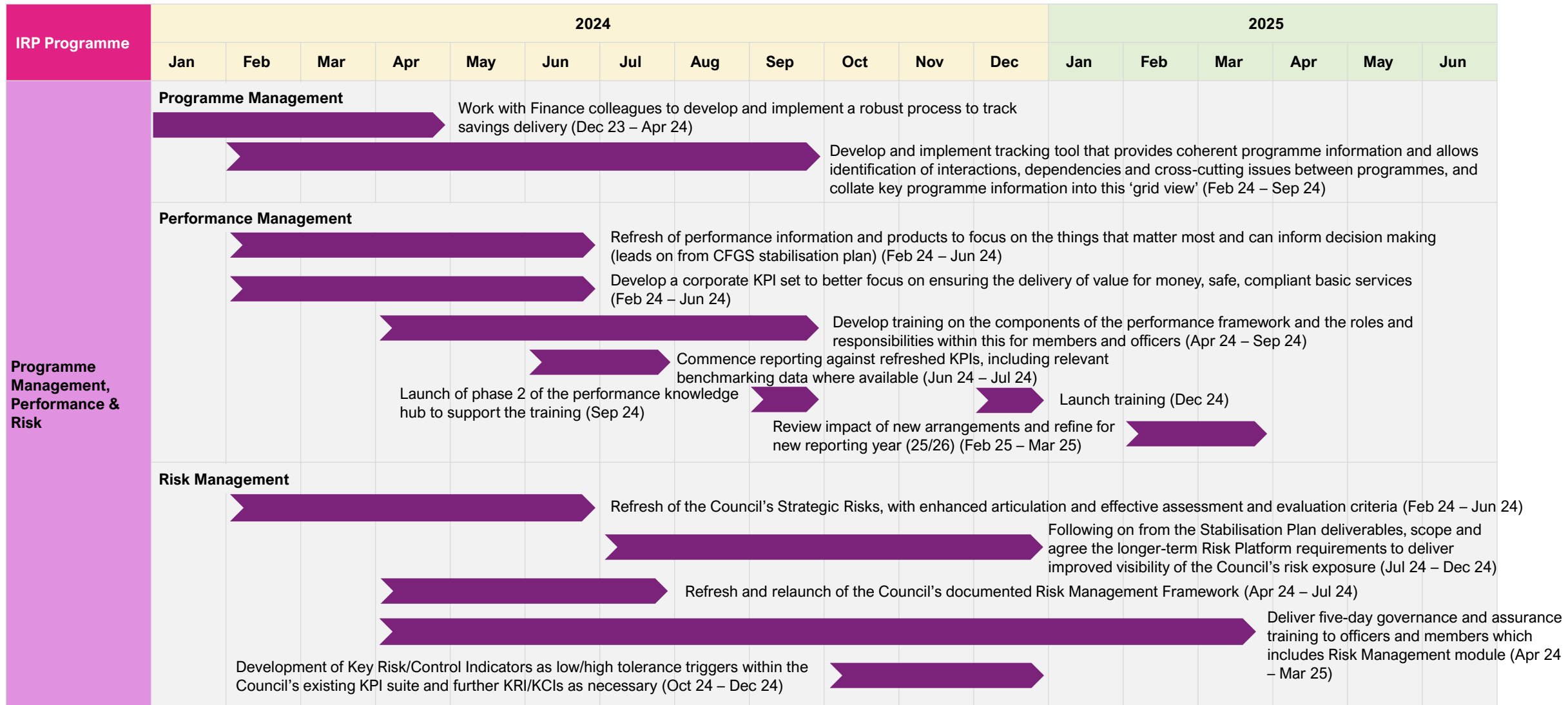
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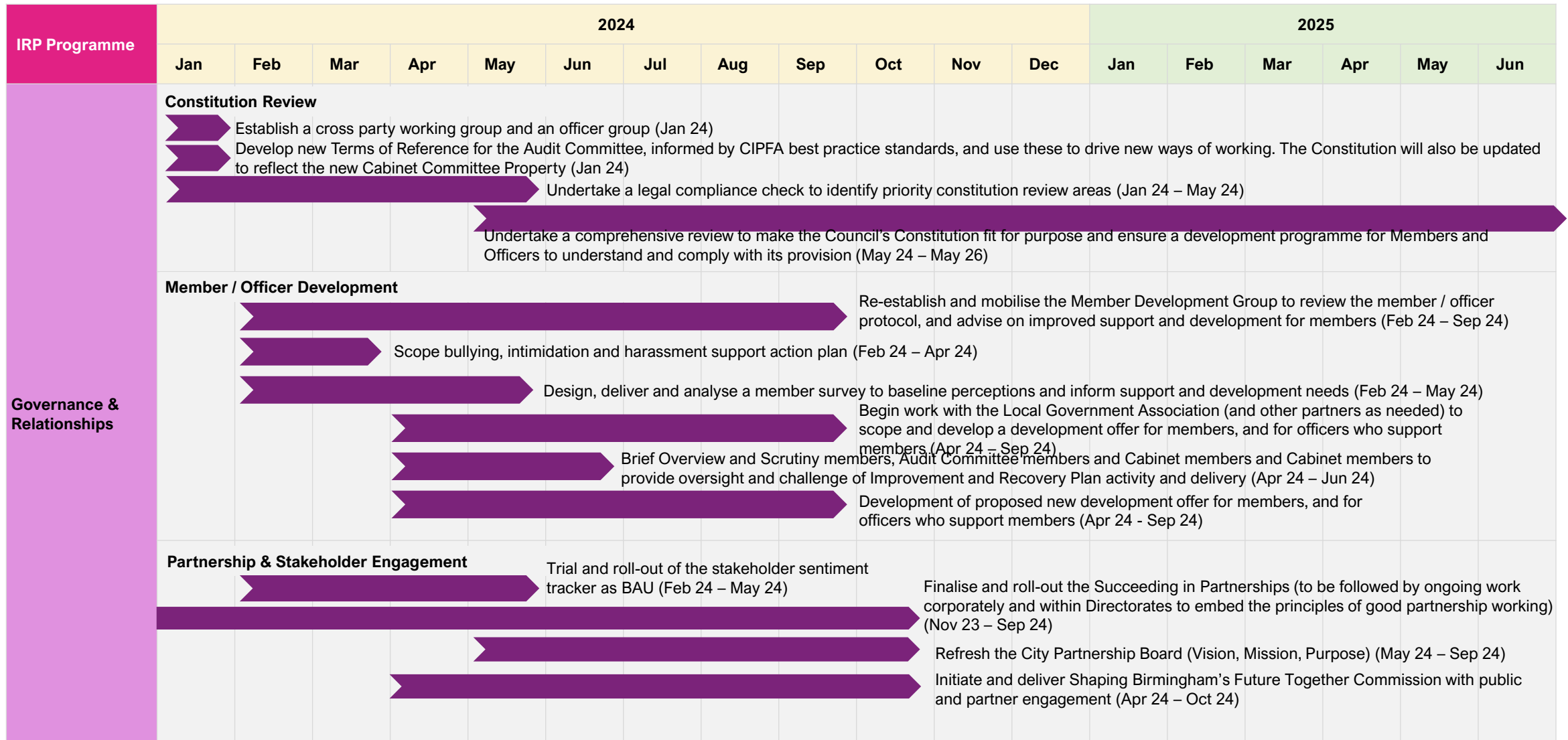
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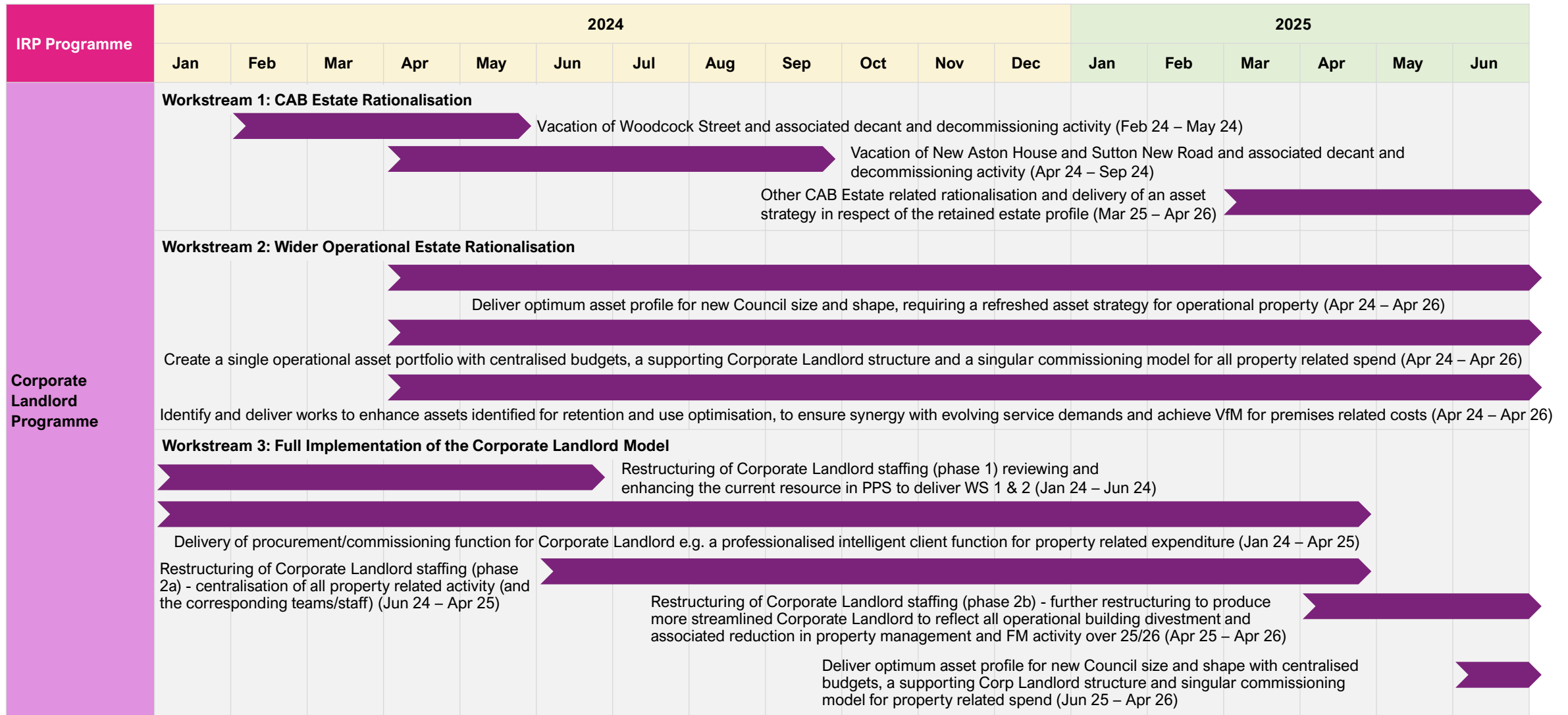
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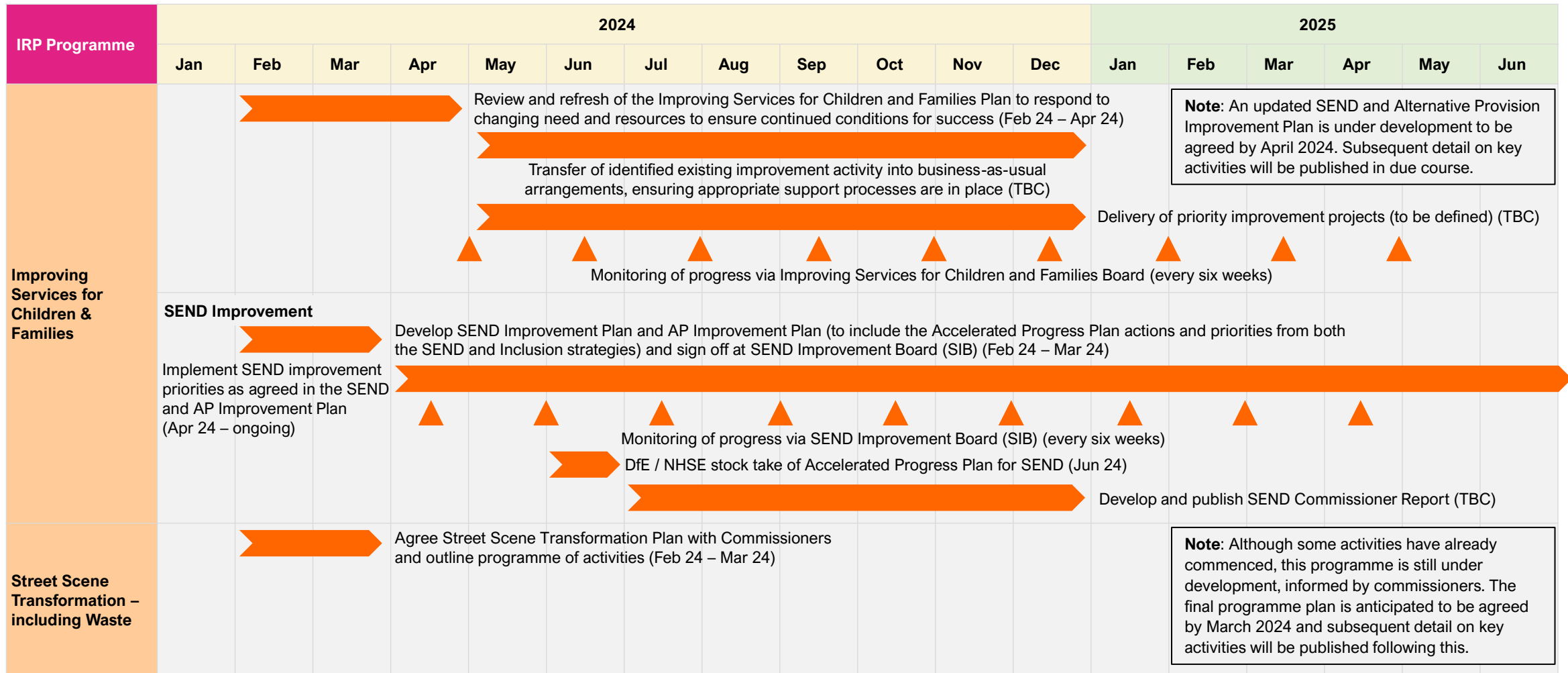
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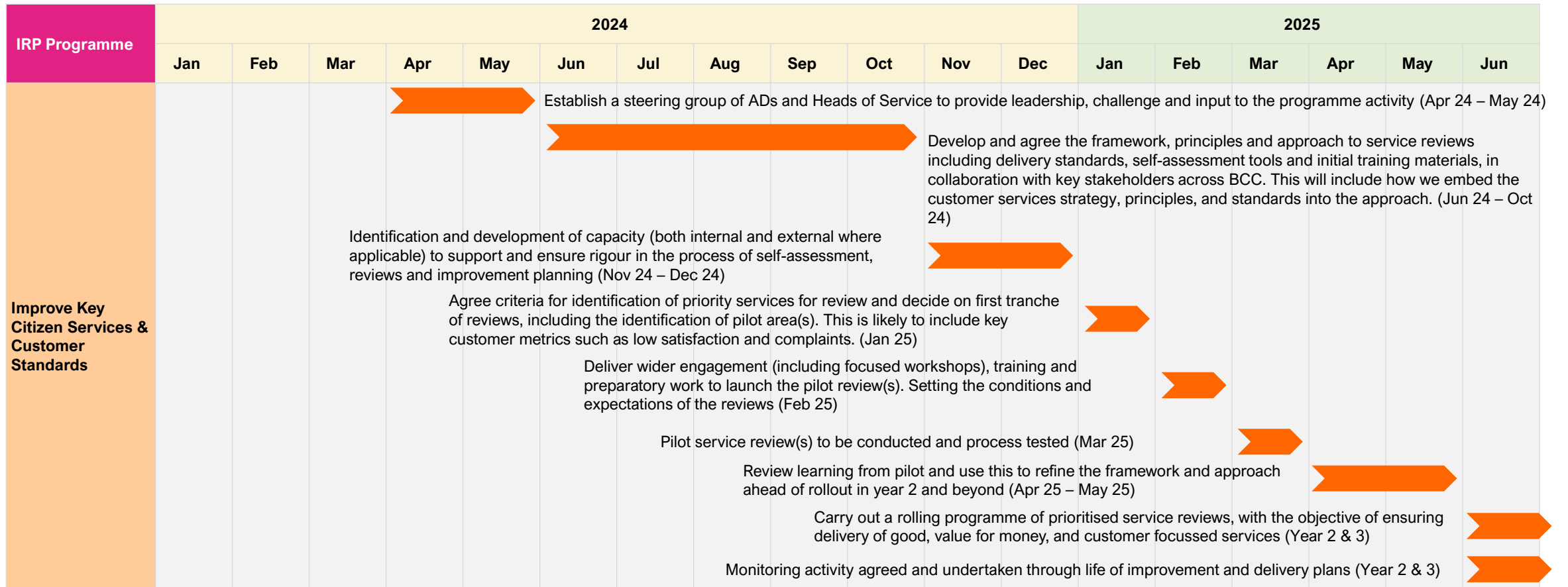
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IRP Programme	2024												2025							
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		
Housing Improvement	Affordable Housing				Report on affordable supply achieved for 2023/24 and what can be understood from this (Apr 24)												Report on supply achieved for 2024/5 and what can be understood from this (Apr 25)			
					Complete review of direct delivery model and consider recommendations from this as detailed in the Building Birmingham Cabinet paper (Feb 24 – Apr 24)															
						Complete options appraisals for Council owned properties already identified for affordable housing and bring forward to Cabinet Committee property (Feb 24 – May 24)														
	Exchange contracts first 8 sites for disposal to registered provider (Jun 24)														Report bi-annually against workstreams identified in the affordable housing PID- governance/process, direct delivery and partnerships (every 6 months)					
	Regulatory Compliance																			
					Phase 1: Address immediate issues arising from breach and agree Voluntary Undertakings with the Regulator (May 23 – Apr 24)															
					Phase 1: Complete external reviews against areas of landlord health and safety compliance – Fire, Gas, Elec, Water, Asbestos, Lifts, Carbon Monoxide, Smoke Detection (Jul 23 – Apr 24)															
							Phase 2: Ensure all landlord health and safety compliance areas are within operational tolerance (May 23 – Jun 24)													
							Phase 2: Ensure complaints backlog and SLA performance are within operational tolerance (May 23 – Jun 24)													
										Phase 3: Actions from external audits and remedials completed (Jul 23 – Sep 24)										
												Phase 4: 100% compliance across all standards - except Decent Homes Standards (May 23 – Dec 24)								
												Phase 4: Deliver on the recommendations of the Nov 2023 self-assessment, to ensure the Directorate are prepared for implementation of new Consumer Standards (Nov 23 – Dec 24)								
																				
Phase 5: 100% Council homes meet decent homes standard (Jan 24 – Dec 32)																				

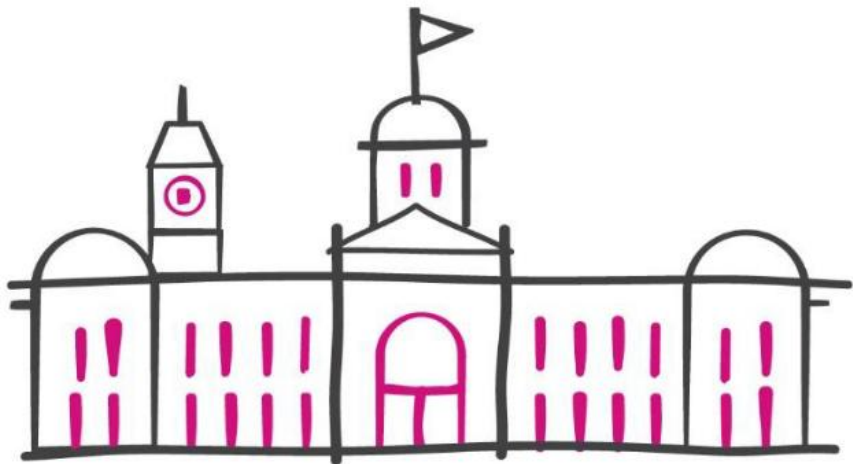
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IRP Programme	2024												2025					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Housing Improvement cont.	Homelessness Prevention																	
	Develop and launch the Homeless Prevention Strategy and subsequent Action Plan (Oct 23 – May 24)																	
	Consult and appraise options to ensure compliance in assessment of applications to the Housing Register, secure approvals accordingly and mobilise (agreed plan) (Dec 23 – Mar 24)																	
	Review and re-forecast B&B reduction plan in consultation with DLUHC to agree performance targets for 2024-25; update B&B reduction plan accordingly (Feb 24 – Mar 24)																	
	Review Temporary Accommodation Strategy (June 2023) in light of resource reductions, amend and refresh objectives and timescales, deliver actions accordingly (Feb 24 – Apr 24)																	
	Develop options appraisal for alternate forms of Temporary Accommodation and Housing Supply to address the loss of supply relating to resource reductions and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy (Mar 24 – Jun 24)																	
Consult and develop delivery plan for Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) and Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) commissioning, delivery and outcomes in light of likely resource reductions and pressures (Mar 24 – Jun 24)																		

Programme Plans on a Page



Appendix 3 Performance Indicators



Proposed KPIs – Financially Sustainable Council

Aim	Outcome (tells us we have achieved our aim)	Measure (things that help us measure progress towards the aim)
A Financially Sustainable Council	A balanced budget	Budget on target (within agreed tolerances) Value of capital receipts generated (£) from asset sales against target
	A sustainable medium term financial plan	Non-ringfenced reserves as a % of net revenue expenditure Balanced budget over 3 years MTFP
	Delivery of agreed savings Improved efficiency and productivity	Savings achieved £, on time, against target Proportion of interim staff as a % of overall staffing establishment Sickness absence rates
	Robust financial management - including compliance statutory rules and guidelines relating to the financial management of the authority	Council tax collection rate % Housing rents collection rate % Business rates collection rate % % supplier invoices paid on time (within payment terms) % of non-contracted (non-managed) spend % of budget delegation letters signed and returned confirming agreement and completion of mandatory budgetary training. % audit recommendations delivered on time



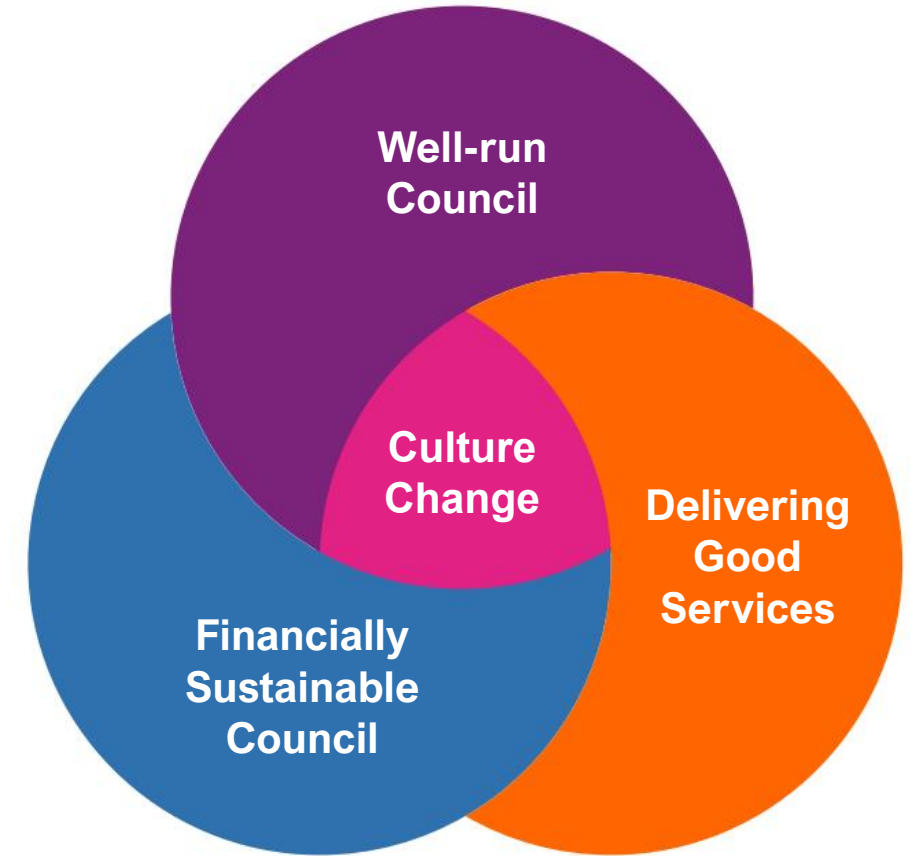
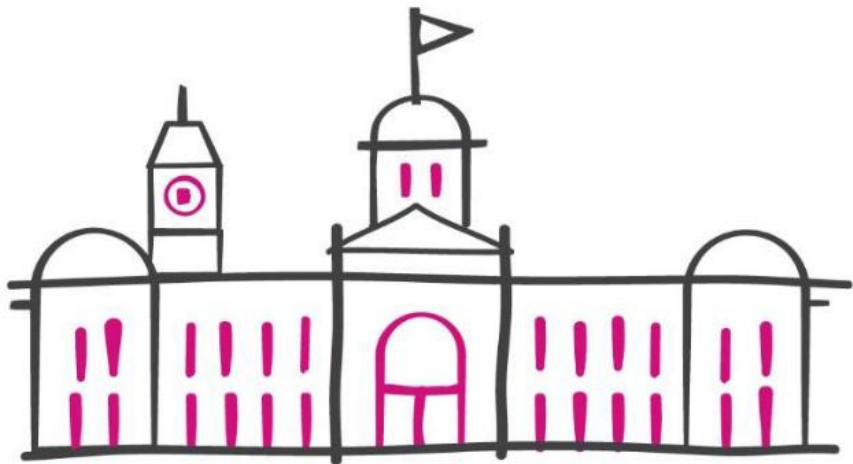
Proposed KPIs – A Well-run Council

Aim	Outcome (tells us we have achieved our aim)	Measure (things that help us measure progress towards the aim)
A Well-run Council	A reset organisational culture, including values and expected behaviours, with leaders demonstrating the highest ethical standards	% citizens that trust the council (baselined via 2023 citizen survey) % responding positively to “when I have a concern about how something is being done (whether by another member or an officer) I have a safe way to voice / escalate my concerns to others” (member survey) Partners perceptions of (stakeholder sentiment survey): Good governance; Socially responsible Numbers of Standards Committee referrals
	A workforce that feels valued and listened to, and are supported and trusted to deliver their roles	% of staff receiving an appraisal / appraisal review in the last 6 months % of employees who are confident in their role and feel supported to do it effectively % staff who are proud to work for the council % staff who agree they have opportunities to develop themselves and their career at BCC % of staff who feel a sense of belonging at BCC % staff who have completed / commenced BCC training courses: a. completed mandatory training and b. commenced other training in the last 12 months % of staff turnover (as a result of internal moves and % of / number of resignations from BCC)
	Effective, efficient, corporate services that are set up to operate appropriately and demonstrate value for money	£ spend on corporate services per head of population (benchmarked) % Corporate Services KPIs showing improvement
	Clear member and officer roles and responsibilities, enabled by a modern constitution, with clear and transparent decision making	% of member respondents agreeing that “I work well with officers” % of member respondents agreeing that “Officers treat me with respect” % of staff responding positively to “I work well with members” % of staff confident or very confident in their ability to perform their duties in their role(s)
	Clear roles and responsibilities and effective working relationships with all our partners	Partners perceptions of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Adaptive to change • Place leadership • Good governance
	Clear and consistent performance and risk frameworks, enabled by robust challenge and support, and with a culture of clear accountability	% of corporate KPIs on target / % of corporate KPIs showing improvement over 2+ report periods (this will be a composite of the current state of all of the refreshed corporate KPIs for the Council, which demonstrate the fullest possible range of performance of our services)

Proposed KPIs – A Council Delivering Good Services

Aim	Outcome (tells us we have achieved our aim)	Measure (things that help us measure progress towards the aim)
A Council Delivering Good Services	Efficient and effective citizen services which consistently provide safe, compliant, fair, and lawful services	<p>% of service delivery corporate indicators (vital signs) showing improvement / meeting target.</p> <p>Within this basket, we propose to include key improvement priorities (housing, SEND, waste and street cleaning are included but this indicator will be a composite result to demonstrate the extent of improvement across a refreshed vital signs set):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corporate Level % improved / % meeting target - Directorate level % improved / % meeting target (1 per directorate)
	Conforming with best value duty to deliver services in line with expected standards and statutory requirements	<p>% of citizens that agree the Council provides value for money (citizen survey – not baselined in 2023)</p> <p>Expenditure per head / head of relevant population on key services (as available via LG Inform):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childrens SC • Adult SC • Public health • Highways • Waste • Education
	Improved citizen experience with clear, consistent, and well-defined services	<p>Citizen satisfaction with local area as a place to live. (baselined via 2023 citizen survey)</p> <p>% of citizens dissatisfied with the Council being unhelpful / unresponsive (baselined via 2023 citizen survey)</p> <p>Customer complaints % and response time within SLA</p> <p>Repeat contacts for the same issue as % of total contacts to the Council</p> <p>Complaints received per 1000 residents</p> <p>% of customer registering satisfaction with the council via the contact centre survey</p>
	Improved external review and inspection outcomes	<p>% of ombudsman complaints upheld (OFLOG and annual letter)</p> <p>% of ombudsman complaints as a proportion of the total BCC complaints</p> <p>% compliance with ombudsman recommendations (annual letter – target 100%, benchmark 99%) and the % outstanding or overdue (locally and more frequently)</p> <p>% ombudsman cases that were upheld which had satisfactory remedies in place before the complaint reached the ombudsman (annual letter)</p>

Appendix 4 Response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendations



Response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendations

External Auditor Statutory Recommendation	Council Response
<p>1 The commencement of the job evaluation process should not be further delayed (as this would further undermine the Council's financial sustainability). As the Addendum was not signed by 11 September 2023, the Council should apply the safeguard within the CBMC report and should determine the job evaluation option it intends to follow at the earliest opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of Job Evaluation • Safeguard Application: the Council will apply suitable safeguards within future CBMC reports to address any further delay. • Determination of Job Evaluation Option
<p>2 It is important that the Council reviews its previous equal pay estimates and regularly updates its estimate of the potential future liability (at least on a quarterly basis). This updated position should be reported to members on a quarterly basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a quarterly review process • Reporting to Members giving regular updates on the updated potential equal pay liability estimates
<p>3 The Council should separately report the financial impact of potentially enriched roles to members as a matter of urgency and should prioritise their assessment as part of the job evaluation process. This should include a consideration of the Council's Best Value duty. Similarly, officers should provide monthly updates to members on the Council's identification of roles where task and finish has been in operation and the financial impact of this practice and confirm at the earliest opportunity that these practices are no longer operated. The Council should undertake a review of all working practices within the Council and ensure that all employees comply with their terms and conditions, including working their full contractual hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting Financial Impact • Job Evaluation Priority • Monthly Updates to key members on the identification of roles operating under 'task and finish,' including the financial impact • Review of Working Practices within the Council

External Auditor Statutory Recommendation	Council Response
<p>4 The Council should commission an independent review of the process for receiving and considering legal advice, including consideration of whether the Monitoring Officer's advice was appropriately taken into account and followed, and whether access to legally privileged information was appropriately safeguarded. If the local inquiry outlined by the Secretary of State does proceed this should be part of the wider inquiry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission Independent Review of the process for receiving and considering legal advice. • Assess whether Monitoring Officer's Advice was appropriately considered and followed. • Safeguarding Legal Privilege: ensure that access to legally privileged information was appropriately safeguarded
<p>5 The Council should set a target date for the completion of the 'safe and compliant' phase. We consider that this should be completed by 30 November 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness review: undertake a review of the safe and compliant phase of Oracle recovery in partnership with the Commissioner and the External Auditor • Transition to optimisation phase: In this review of the scope of the 'safe and compliant' phase, the Council will aim to accelerate work on 'optimisation'.
<p>6 The Council should report its outturn for 2022/23 and its current financial position by 30 November 2023. It should provide financial statements for 2022/23 for audit by 31 January 2024.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting Deadlines: The Council will report its 2022/23 outturn and current financial position by 30 November 2023. • Audit Financial Statements: Financial statements for 2022/23 will be prepared for audit by 31 January 2024.



Response to External Auditor Statutory Recommendations

External Auditor Statutory Recommendation	Council Response
<p>7 The Council should consider the capacity of its senior staff to deal with the Oracle 'safe and compliant' and 're-implementation' phases alongside the other competing pressures. Additional resources should be provided to ensure that this critical project is completed at the earliest opportunity. This may include additional internal or external IT capacity and capability. In the longer term, the Council will need to ensure that it rebuilds its own IT capacity and capability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity Assessment: The Council will assess the capacity of its senior staff to manage the Oracle 'safe and compliant' and 're-implementation' phases. Additional Resources: Additional internal or external IT capacity and capability will be provided to ensure the critical project's timely completion. Long-Term IT Capacity: develop plans for rebuilding own IT capacity and capability in the long term.
<p>8 The Council should provide an updated budget for 2023/24 that takes account of the 2022/23 outturn, its current financial position for 2023/24, its progress on delivering savings plans in 2023/24, and the other financial pressures impacting on the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Revision: The Council will provide an updated budget for 2023/24 and the final 2022/23 outturn will be presented in November 2023
<p>9 The Council must now, as a matter of urgency fully support the Section 151 Officer in effectively responding to the s114 report and, specifically: give full support to the development of the mandatory spending controls and savings and recovery plan;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify and implement a suitable asset disposal plan; and continue to work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities over the extent and timing of support that will then be required to secure the ongoing financial viability of the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory Spending Controls and Savings Plan. Asset Disposal Plan will be identified and implemented. Collaboration with the Department to secure ongoing financial viability.

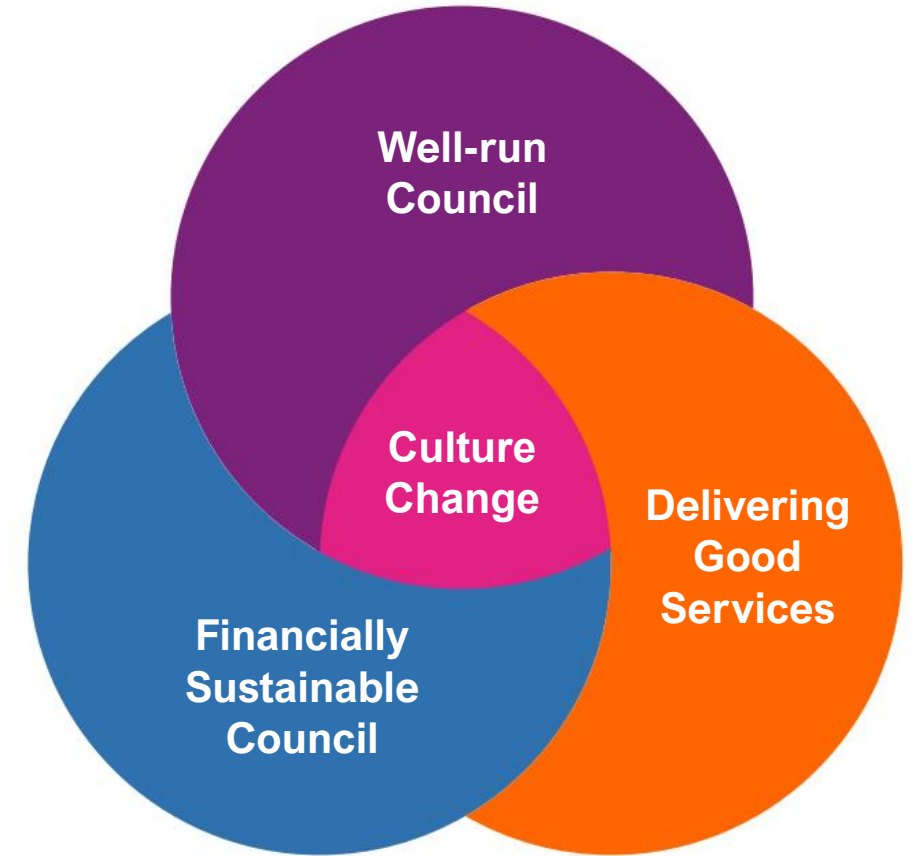
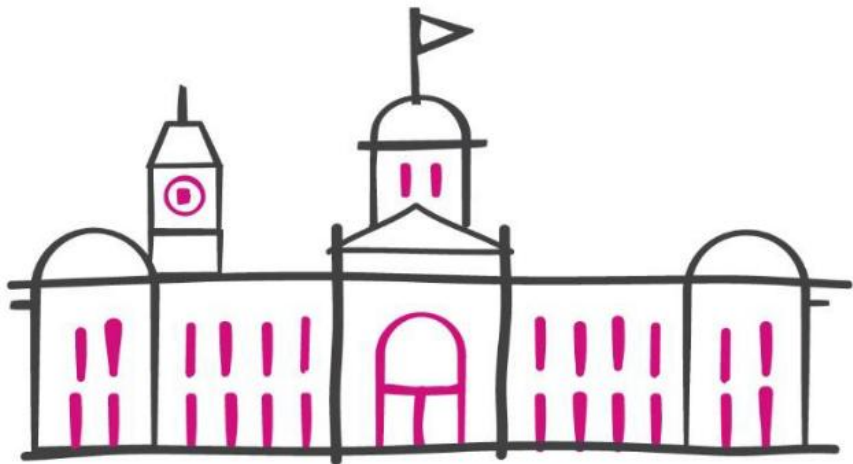
External Auditor Statutory Recommendation	Council Response
<p>10 Officers should put in place a formal and detailed cashflow model that focusses on when the payment of the Council's liabilities will fall due against the timing of its other cash outgoings and inflows (including the estimated funds produced from asset sales). This cashflow model should predict at what point, without Government support, the Council will exhaust its usable reserves and will no longer have sufficient finances to be able to continue to operate or would be unable to meet its financial obligations when they become due.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Cashflow Model based on legal advice on the timing of potential liabilities falling due. This model will predict the point at which, without Government support, the Council will exhaust its usable reserves and be unable to meet its financial obligations.
<p>11 Given the significant risks facing the Council it should ensure that it cooperates with external audit in a timely and appropriate manner, and in accordance with legal requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely Cooperation: The Council will ensure timely and appropriate cooperation with external audit, in strict accordance with legal requirements
<p>12 The EP liability model should be completed, and the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts should be closed by 30 November 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of EP Liability Model Accounts Closure: The accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22 will be closed by 30 November 2023

Appendix 5

Response to CfGS

Governance

Review: Stabilisation Plan



Response to CfGS Governance Review: Stabilisation Plan

Recommendation		Council Response
1	Refocus corporate attention and priorities on ensuring safe, legally compliant, and fairly delivered services to local People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Corporate Plan in context of the financial position and the IRP priorities. Review/refresh key performance reporting Practical steps taken to introduce the wider organisation (members and officers) to prioritisation and effective performance management. Scoping further activity for the IRP
2	Begin work to reframe values and expected behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give consideration to adapting the “best in class” framework so it forms the basis of a service reviews undertaken as part of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, ensuring a focus on culture and values and the essentials of good service delivery. Include workstream on cultural change activity within the IRP to be informed by CfGS blueprint for change. Align appraisal arrangements with the Council’s corporate priorities and embed across the organisation. Reframe values and behaviours framework.
3	Develop and publicise a set of baseline behavioural standards for members and officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a new Member-Officer Protocol Develop / define model behaviours to support the new Officer/ Member protocol Standards Committee to consider a review of member attitudes New guidance to members on the Code of Conduct Ensure focused regular Group Leaders’ meetings with the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer focus on Forward Plan matters, critical business issues and wider stabilisation and improvement matters. Scope and develop a programme of action on member-officer relationships as part of the IRP.

Recommendation		Council Response
4	Review the Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an immediate legal compliance check. Include review of the constitution as a workstream of the IRP, focusing on member-officer relationships; role and functions of Council, Cabinet, scrutiny, and audit; conduct, values, and behaviours; and new financial governance arrangements Develop new Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee and better alignment of the Audit Committee role to CIPFA best practice standards and consider alignment of standards/principles with other committees. Establish a Corporate Governance (Officer) Group to support the Audit Committee and other governance related work. Scoping further activity for the Improvement and Recovery Plan.
5	Reframe the scrutiny work programme to focus on the Council’s improvement and recovery priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A focus on scrutiny in the 24/25 Budget development process. Established a Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to support this. Align the Overview & Scrutiny work programme to the IRP
6	Strengthen working relationships between the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scrutiny Chairs should meet on a monthly basis and the Scrutiny Chairs and Audit Committee Chairs should meet on a quarterly basis.

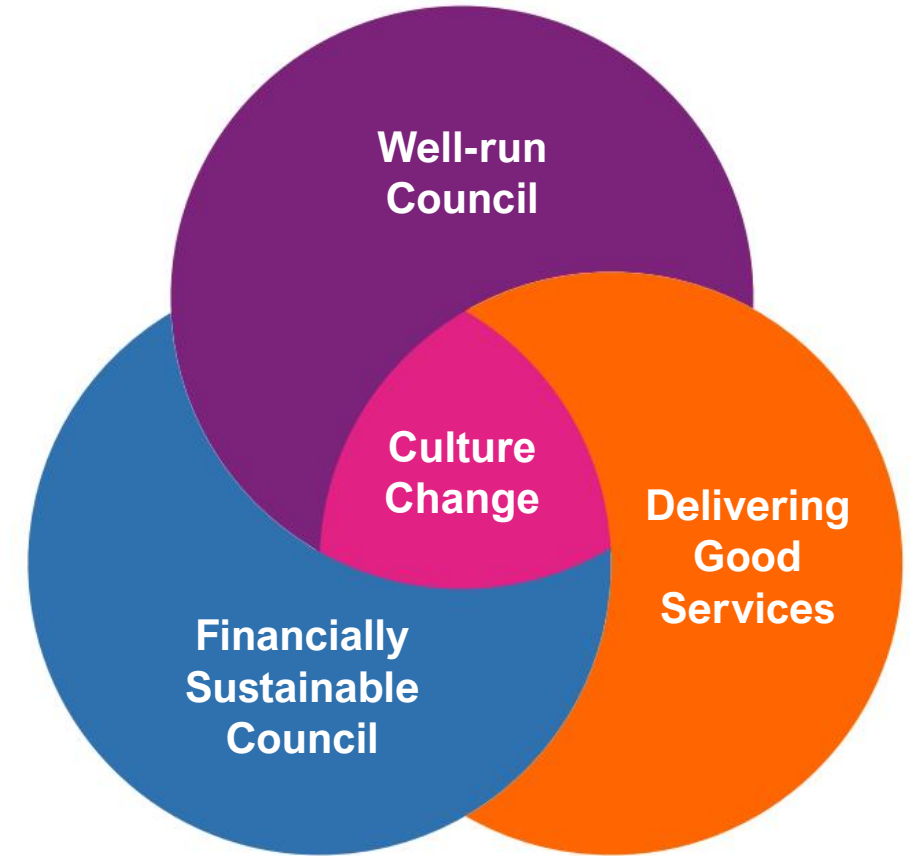
Response to CfGS Governance Review: Stabilisation Plan

Recommendation		Council Response
7	Put in place new arrangements for the support of the internal audit function, the audit committee, and the links between audit and scrutiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit Committee improvements should be informed by CIPFA best practice standards. Use of new terms of reference to drive action on new ways of working for the Audit Committee. Develop new and improved reporting arrangements to/from Audit Committee to other governance committees and groups. Support to officers working within internal audit and wider assurance framework through the Professional Leadership Development Scheme. Agreed further activity as part of the IRP.
8	Design, and begin to put in place, new risk & information management arrangements – with an initial focus on member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how the performance management framework can be strengthened to incorporate indicators of risk. A new risk management framework to be developed Undertake an exercise to baseline the understanding of risk in the authority Enhance officers' capability on risk Develop new Audit Committee Terms of Reference Form a Corporate Governance (Officer) Group Review and revise arrangements for member support and information sharing with Overview and Scrutiny and Audit. Set substantive discussion of risk as a standing item on monthly Cabinet agendas. Scope and develop further programme of action as part of the IRP.

Recommendation		Council Response
9	Put in place robust arrangements for members' oversight of the development of the 2024/25 budget and MTFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early engagement by scrutiny members is being built into the budget development processes. A Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has been established to address this. Review/challenge budget from multi-dimension teams New Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee
10	Integrate action on external auditors' recommendations into wider practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be addressed where required by the IRP A new corporate timetable has been issued to develop a budget. This will result in a more sustainable financial plan.
11	Continue to rebuild relationships with external partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of work is being implemented to understand partner's needs, roles, capacity, and capability. Partnership engagement infrastructure being developed Start to think about how active partnerships can contribute to service redesign as part of the IRP Approach to Member involvement needs to be developed for them to play a strong role in this work. Agreed further activity as part of the IRP
12	Put in place proportionate arrangements to manage governance and decision-making in the context of the role of Commissioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportionate and directed oversight by Commissioners will be integrated into plans for the constitutional review, and other short-term changes to the governance framework. Activity is already underway.
13	Modernise systems and practices in Scrutiny and Committee Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Statutory Scrutiny Officer will be empowered with scrutiny chairs and CLT, to take forward action to ensure that improvement work is taken forward. Ongoing mentoring support to officers supporting the Audit Committee to be used as a model for wider mentoring and coaching for Scrutiny and Committee Services staff.



Appendix 6 Risk and Dependency Management



Risk and Dependency Management

Overarching IRP Risks

Risk	Description	Mitigation
1 Size, Scale and Pace of Change	The size, scale and pace of change required at BCC is unlike anything the Council has undertaken before, and there is a particularly unique context for BCC as the organisation is so large. Trying to join up all the different elements of change into something cohesive is extremely difficult, and the risk of continuing to deliver in siloes means the Council may not reap the benefits of genuinely connected transformation.	There will be clear leadership with a vision and ambition which is understood and bought into by all. Governance needs to join up connect the elements of work being undertaken and ensure they are collectively delivering against the vision for BCC.
2 Organisational Delivery Capacity	There is a risk the Council will not have the capacity to effectively support and deliver the changes and improvements required in the timeframes set out (especially given the size, scale and pace of change required). This includes capacity in our corporate enabling services.	Our resourcing approach (Section 7) will ensure we have additional corporate capacity and resources to support the delivery of budget savings and improvement programmes.
3 Budget Saving Focus	There is a risk that change and improvement activity will be focused on budget savings and not fully utilise the chance to optimise improvement activity. For example, corporate service review/reductions may be driven by cost saving rather than informed by future organisational requirements.	There will be a clear approach that brings together the financial plan, corporate plan, and IRP as the strategic framework that drives the way the Council will operate in the future.
4 Delivery of Critical Programmes	Three critical programmes are required to be delivered effectively otherwise there is a risk that the Council will not be able to achieve financial sustainability and therefore deliver the wider and longer-term improvement required. These programmes are: Deliver Savings & Balance the Budget, Equal Pay Programme, and Asset Sales Programme.	IRP governance will monitor the delivery of all programmes; however, there will need to be a focus on the three programmes ensuring issues and barriers to delivering them are escalated and dealt with immediately.
5 Achieving and Measuring Success	Demonstrating success and positive change in the short-term may be challenging given the immense amount of improvement the Council is required to undertake and the longer-term nature of much of that activity.	There will be clear and realistic targets set for the first phase of the journey, which recognise the reality of progress which is possible to be made given the content of changes the Council is required to make.
6 Citizen and Partner Perceptions	There is a risk that citizen and partner perceptions in the short-term will see the Council's performance as getting worse rather than better, and not recognise the change journey the Council is going through, with the possibility that they lose trust in the Council's ability to improve.	There will be clear external communications and engagement which outlines the process the Council is going through and recognises that things may get worse in the short-term before they get better in the longer-term.
7 Transfer of Income to Capital Assets	In selling Council assets, we are fundamentally transforming an income asset (which is longer term, and more sustainable) into a capital asset (which has a much shorter duration of financial benefit). While contributing to balancing the budget short term, there is a risk this negatively impacts the Council's longer-term financial sustainability.	Through development of the Council's financial plan, we must balance the Council's short-term financial situation and urgent needs with consideration of its longer-term sustainability.



Risk and Dependency Management

Overarching IRP Risks (cont.)

Risk	Description	Mitigation
8 Unintended Impacts	Transformation and improvement activity is broad and cuts across everything the Council does. There is a risk that there will be unintended impacts of changes, particularly those made at pace. has unintended consequences.	Every proposal for change will require an EIA to be completed which will identify individual impacts and risks and set out how they will be managed.

Overarching IRP Dependencies

Dependency	Description
1 Organisational Design and Culture Change	The programme of culture change will impact on the way we approach our day-to-day activities and delivery right across the Council. There will need to be direct connections into programmes and projects to they both inform and respond to developments in the overall vision for the Council and its ways of working. Modernising the constitution and relationships, strengthening Employee Relations and Performance Management and Information are examples of programmes that will need to play a role in strengthening the organisational culture.
2 Leadership and Ambition	There needs to be clear leadership with a vision and ambition for the future Council which is understood and bought into by all. Governance needs to join up connect the elements of work being undertaken and ensure they are collectively delivering against the vision for BCC.
3 Governance and Assurance	Governance and assurance underpins all the programmes, projects and programmes in the plan. A flexible, responsive and iterative approach will ensure that we maintain a focus on the overall aims and objectives while ensuring that the Council can adapt quickly, consistently and effectively to the wider social and economic context.
4 Setting and Delivering a Balanced Budget	The Council has identified a significant programme of spending reductions over the next two years. These immediate reductions are essential to restoring financial viability for the Council and protecting core services in the long term. However, delivering these savings will impact on services during the transition to a leaner, more efficient organisation – and longer-term savings will depend on successfully identifying and delivering sustainable operational savings.
5 Continuous Learning and Improvement	This plan captures a significant process of organisational transformation. We need to ensure that we implement and maintain the culture, processes and systems that enable us to capture and share learning and benchmark our progress to build a solid foundation for sustainable long-term recovery and renewal.
6 Corporate Services and Oracle	Corporate Services are a key enabler of good service delivery to citizens. The review and improvement of key citizen services is dependent on sufficient improvement to corporate services so that appropriate support is provided to services from the corporate centre. Further to this, Oracle as the core ERP system used to enable the Council's corporate services will need to be fit for purpose to service the Council's ambitions and support the effective delivery of enabling activities.



Executive Business Report

Birmingham City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Executive Business Report
Report of: Cabinet
Report author: Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 10 September 2019, Full Council accepted the recommendations of the Coordinating O&S Committee review in respect of changes to the Full Council agenda.
- 1.2 Recommendation 3 of the review requested that the Executive provide an update to Full Council on its work via the provision of an Executive Business Report (EBR). It was agreed that EBR's would be provided to Full Council four times per municipal year and will include details of progress made in relation to Council strategic outcomes and priorities linked to two Cabinet Member portfolios.
- 1.3 This report will be used to provide an update on the Housing and Homelessness portfolio.
- 1.4 The City Housing directorate has faced significant challenges throughout 2023-24. The Housing Ombudsman's Special Report of January 2023 identified failures across the directorate's response to repairs and complaints and resulted in active intervention from the Housing Ombudsman between January 2023 and February 2024. As a result of the Housing Ombudsman's Special Report, a referral was made to the Regulator of Social Housing; following an inspection of the Council's compliance with the Consumer Standards in place at the time, a breach notice was issued in May 2023. These two regulatory breaches required the directorate to

commit to recovery plans to evidence compliance, resulting in significant actions across services to deliver improvements.

- 1.5 The increased regulatory landscape continues to provide challenge to the directorate, there have been several recent consultations on proposed legislative changes which will require significant operational and financial changes across the directorate if implemented. This pressure will be particularly acute across Repairs and Maintenance as a result of Awaab's Law and within Housing Solutions and Support (HSSS) as a result of changes to social housing eligibility and allocation.
- 1.6 The impact of the overall saving requirements following the issuing of the s114 notices has been most acutely evident within Housing Solutions and Support, which is the area of City Housing receiving most funding via the General Fund. The impact of the s114 notice on other areas of City Housing, which are, in the main, funded via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), has not been as significant, however these areas have also contributed to savings within the HRA budget as part of the Directorate's wider response to the challenges faced by the Council.
- 1.7 HSSS continues to see significant demand both as a result of increased homelessness presentations and demand for temporary accommodation. The number of households in bed and breakfast accommodation, the difficulties in moving these households on to more suitable temporary or permanent accommodation within the statutory six-week timescale and the costs of procuring this accommodation remain a significant pressure. Demand for social housing via the housing register continues to rise; there are large backlogs for the assessment of applications to join the housing register and for those households on the register, the supply of properties is not of a scale that meets their needs either in terms of volume or type of properties.
- 1.8 Across Asset Management, pressures continue to deliver on the Council's requirements to deliver Decent Homes compliance within the existing stock. The approval of the Asset Management Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan in January 2024 have unlocked the necessary investment to deliver these improvements for our tenants however there will be a pressure to deliver these improvements at a scale to meet our ambitious targets over the next 8 years.
- 1.9 The intervention of Commissioners within City Housing has necessitated changes in order to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan, which will ensure that work programmes across the directorate are delivering the required changes to deliver improvements to address existing pressures and that the directorate is moving at pace to achieve regulatory compliance whilst also contributing to the necessary financial savings.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Context

3.1.1 Since the last update to City Council on 1 November 2022, officers within City Housing (CH), City Operations (CO) and Place, Prosperity and Sustainability (PPS) directorates have continued to work with partners to respond to the housing needs of Birmingham's citizens.

3.1.2 This update sets out the key challenges facing the portfolio, the priorities driving our business planning, and the progress that we have made against our strategic priorities.

3.2 Pressures

3.2.1 City Housing continues to face significant pressures, both financial and regulatory. Since the Grenfell tragedy in 2016, the Council has moved at pace to deliver necessary legislative compliance across the housing portfolio. This has required significant investment, in particular in relation to fire safety provision, with a total committed spend of c£160m to the end of 2029 to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. No additional funding was provided by central government for this work, which was funded in the main by the diversion of funds from capital projects and other improvements.

3.2.2 In January 2023, the Council was the subject of a Paragraph 49 special report from the Housing Ombudsman, initiated following their concern over the number of complaints received for similar repairs issues, which were often unresolved for long periods. The Housing Ombudsman highlighted particular concerns around the way in which the Council addressed repairs, the way in which complaints were responded to, and the Council's record keeping across repairs and complaints. This active intervention from the Housing Ombudsman required the Council to carry out significant activities across these three areas to provide assurance to the Housing Ombudsman that these failures were being rectified and that the necessary remedial actions were in place.

3.2.3 In May 2023, the Council was issued with a breach notice by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), triggered by the Housing Ombudsman's report of January 2023. The Regulator found the Council to be in breach of both the Home Standard and the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standards. Of particular concern was the Council's performance across the "Big Six" compliance areas (gas safety, electrical safety, water safety, lift safety, fire safety and asbestos), where the Council had significant numbers of overdue surveys and inspections potentially placing tenants at harm.

3.2.4 The Regulator was also critical of the number of homes that did not comply with the Decent Homes Standard, and the way in which the Council engaged with tenants, which it found to be ineffective. Again, a significant programme of work has been and continues to be undertaken, in order to achieve compliance and satisfy the Regulator that the Council has understood and appropriately remedied the failures identified.

- 3.2.5 The regulatory landscape continues to evolve and, in particular, there have been several recent consultations on proposed legislative and regulatory changes that will have a direct impact on the Council's delivery of housing services.
- 3.2.6 **Consumer Standards** – the Regulator consulted in 2023 on proposed changes to the existing Consumer Standards, reducing the existing standards from six to four (tenancy; safety and quality; neighbourhood and community; transparency, influence and accountability). Whilst these standards replace the existing standards under which the Council received the Breach Notice in May 2023, they are also supported by the enhanced powers given to the Regulator under the Social Housing Regulation Act, which became law in 2023. This Act fundamentally changes the way in which social housing is regulated, increasing opportunities for tenants to seek redress in the form of financial penalty when landlords are not performing to a high level. The Act also places an enhanced focus on tenant engagement, management of complaints and building safety, particularly within high-rise blocks.
- 3.2.7 The role of the Regulator is also changing because of the Social Housing Regulation Act, from a reactive approach acting on complaints received to, from April 2024, a proactive inspection-based approach assessing compliance with the Consumer Standards. Given the Council's ongoing engagement with the Regulator following the Breach Notice, it is anticipated that Birmingham may be one of the earlier social landlords chosen for inspection. In preparation for any inspection, in September/October 2023 the Strategic Enabling function carried out a self-assessment against the proposed Consumer Standards. This has been used to gauge the current level of compliance against the standards and drive a series of Task and Finish groups delivering recommendations and changes against each of the new Consumer Standards in preparation for inspection. A further independent mock inspection will also be carried out as an additional check on current levels of compliance before April 2024, with any recommendations or actions being delivered by the relevant service areas.
- 3.2.8 **Awaab's Law** – between January and March 2024, the government consulted on Awaab's Law, in response to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in December 2020. Whilst the Council welcomes legislation to prevent such tragic incidents from occurring in future, the scope of the legislation consulted is significantly wider than anticipated, and is likely, if implemented as drafted, to present significant financial and resource issues for all social landlords in scaling up repairs capacity to meet the anticipated demand, ensuring that sufficient appropriately trained staff are available to carry out inspections and meeting the additional administrative pressures imposed by the legislation.
- 3.2.9 The Council has responded to the consultation to set out its concerns regarding the scope of the proposals and has liaised with national partners

to ensure that a unified response is provided to highlight the potential impact on all social landlords of the legislation as drafted.

- 3.2.10 **Social Housing Allocations** – between January and March 2024, the government consulted on the proposed changes to social housing allocations. Again, the legislation as drafted could place significant financial and administrative pressures on the Council, particularly around the intended exclusion from the housing register of certain groups based on their route to residence in the UK and an increase in the local connection threshold to qualify for an allocation of social housing. The legislation also proposes retrospectively applying these criteria to all persons currently on the housing register, which would have significant implications for households in temporary accommodation and owed a statutory homelessness duty where the Council is no longer able to meet this duty via an offer of social housing.
- 3.2.11 The Council has responded to the consultation and set out its concerns in relation to the effect of the proposed changes on social landlords, particularly those with significant existing social housing demand such as Birmingham.
- 3.2.12 **Competence and Conduct Standard** – between February and April 2024, the government consulted on setting standards for Competence and Conduct across the social housing sector, aimed at driving up standards and ensuring that staff are appropriately trained and experienced to deliver services to tenants. The standard as drafted would place a significant financial burden on the Council of ensuring that all required officers are appropriately trained to demonstrate compliance with the standard, and this training would need to be delivered within a 24-month window which could have significant impacts on ongoing service delivery given the number of officers that may need a relevant qualification.
- 3.2.13 The Council has responded to the consultation and set out its concerns around the operational and financial challenges the standard as drafted would impose.
- 3.2.14 **Decent Homes 2** – following the implementation of the Social Housing Regulation Act, it is likely that a new Decent Homes Standard will be developed, bolstering and building on the existing standard from 2006. Given the Regulator’s criticism of the current rate of compliance with the existing decency standard, there is significant work and investment required to bring the existing housing stock up to the existing standard as a minimum.
- 3.2.15 **Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard** – it is also likely that a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard will be developed, which will require the Council to ensure that all housing stock is compliant with the minimum standard. This programme is also likely to require significant financial investment to ensure compliance.
- 3.2.16 Whilst the effects of the pandemic have somewhat receded, the Cost-of-Living crisis remains a real and significant challenge for many of our citizens,

with an associated impact on those services dealing with households most in crisis.

3.3 Strategic Enabling Service

- 3.3.1 The strategic enabling function was established in February 2022 and since this time has grown and delivered across the directorate in line with its aims to support operational teams to deliver high quality services to citizens.
- 3.3.2 The strategic enabling service has led or partnered in the delivery of several significant work packages since 2022 including the HRA Business Case, Asset Management Strategy and Housing Strategy. The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Prevention Strategy 2024-29 has been developed in conjunction with partners and those with lived experience of rough sleeping and homelessness and builds on the work done by the Housing Solutions and Support service and partner organisations in addressing the housing needs of the most vulnerable residents and to ensure that where it does occur, homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. This strategy will go to Cabinet in May 2024 for approval.
- 3.3.3 In response to the rise in poverty in the city following the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Cost of Living Crisis, the Strategic Enabling service is working to refresh the current Financial Inclusion Strategy and associated partnership. This work will be focused on working closely with residents and groups with lived experience of poverty. Working in conjunction with the Poverty Truth Commission will enable the Council to design appropriate resources, engage with communities and develop solutions for residents facing financial hardship across the city. This work is particularly beneficial for households facing homelessness or reliant on benefits and living in social housing. The directorate will continue to prioritise work to protect these vulnerable groups.
- 3.3.4 The Council is signed up to the Money Adviser Network (MAN), a technology-based scheme aimed to simplify how creditors refer customers in financial difficulties to free, regulated debt advice. This service aims to ease pressure on other face-to-face debt advice provision, ensuring that it is available to those who would benefit the most, with minimal delay at the point of need. This service is available to residents via several means, and officers from Housing Management, Housing Solutions Service, Early Intervention and Prevention, Rents, Revenues and Benefits have received training on referring residents to the service, although residents may also self-refer.
- 3.3.5 In August 2023 the Strategic Enabling service hosted a “Meet the Ombudsman” event for tenants to hear about the role of the Housing Ombudsman and the rights of tenants in holding their landlord to account. The success of this event, both in terms of the benefits to service areas in hearing and responding to the concerns of tenants and citizens and for tenants in feeling that their voice is being heard, has led to quarterly “Tenant

Talk” events being held across the city to continue this good work and build relationships with our tenants and neighbourhoods.

- 3.3.6 In response to the Housing Ombudsman’s Special Report, a team has been set up within the Strategic Enabling function to bring all Ombudsman-related activities within one area of expertise, ensuring that the Council maintains good relationships with the Ombudsman and that lessons learned from Ombudsman determinations are shared with the relevant service areas and improvements monitored. The City Housing Compensation Policy, approved by Cabinet in January 2024, is an integral part of the work of this team, ensuring that citizens are offered appropriate financial redress at the first opportunity to recognise where the Directorate gets things wrong and preventing the need for complaints to be escalated to the Ombudsman.
- 3.3.7 The Strategic Enabling function is the responsible area for the management and monitoring of the Council’s relationship with the Regulator and works to support and monitor the operational delivery of the required regulatory and compliance improvements, whilst also managing the Directorate’s ongoing relationship with the Regulator to ensure that communication is frequent, convivial and productive.
- 3.3.8 The Strategic Enabling function has recently embedded a data team working across the City Housing directorate, to analyse, interpret and act on data and deliver intelligence-led improvements across service areas. This team brings together data from across the directorate, addressing compliance and performance concerns and modernising the Council’s approach to the collection, analysis, assurance and reporting of data to establish current service levels, benchmark against the relevant comparators (including WMCA, Core Cities, Housemark etc) and to support and evidence the delivery of service improvements. The team collaborates with the corporate data team as well as other services to provide content and provide reporting solutions to improve and automate the secure sharing of housing data. This team has been integral to the delivery of the directorate’s response to the RSH’s Breach Notice and the Housing Ombudsman’s Special Report, enabling the directorate to demonstrate the effectiveness of measures taken to respond to the failings found and to evidence the effectiveness of these actions. This team continues to work across Housing Management, Asset Management and HSS to deliver data-driven improvements to benefit the service delivered to tenants and to measure the effectiveness of the directorate’s performance against internal and national measures.
- 3.3.9 The City Housing Strategic Enabling Team (workforce arm) have launched a SharePoint site that serves as a centralized hub for Workforce Development information, guidance and tools, induction information and briefings and can be accessed by all staff across the Directorate. It also offers a feedback form so we can ensure the site information and navigation experience can be shaped around the user needs.

- 3.3.10 In late 2023 the service developed and promoted a Learning Needs Assessment (LNA) tool to allow staff to self-assess their level of knowledge and confidence against a range of skills and subjects which relate to the specific job role they are in. This allows the service, to provide Learning and Development interventions that meet the needs of the workforce, to empower and aid them to do their jobs effectively through tailored personal and professional development. We will continue to deliver key training in response to immediate workforce skills and knowledge demands.
- 3.3.11 From March 2024 onwards, the focus of the workforce programme is to further establish foundations to enable the team to respond efficiently and effectively to future learning and development requirements of the City Housing workforce. The qualification element of the Competence and Conduct standard will come into force in April 2025. The workforce team are currently engaging with key stakeholders to inform a corporate response to the proposals.
- 3.3.12 The service is in the early stages of setting up a sustainable Programme Manager and Business Analyst team to deliver improvement programmes across the directorate. This team will deliver change in conjunction with the relevant service areas, including defining project scope, resource management, risk mitigation and time management. This team will ensure that change is delivered across the directorate in a consistent manner, in line with relevant change management principles. Business Analysts will provide tailored support to service areas in delivering change, including root cause analysis, research and benchmarking, process mapping and embedding change.
- 3.3.13 The service's IT team works alongside DTS to deliver digital and technology-based solutions across the directorate including the scoping and implementation of IT applications and software to support the delivery of new ways of working and change programmes.
- 3.3.14 The Strategic Enabling service continues to lead on the Warm Welcome programme, delivering safe spaces for citizens to keep warm through winter months. This programme ensures that citizens have access to safe, welcoming warm spaces where the focus is not on poverty or an inability to afford to heat their homes. This is delivered by offering hospitality and connection; connecting people to each other, service, wellbeing activity, opportunity and warmth. Officers work closely with key community partners to deliver this programme and there are now 252 Warm Welcome spaces across the city ensuring that citizens can access local warm spaces and the necessary support throughout the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

3.4 Whole House Retrofit

- 3.4.1 The Council is actively working to secure funding to deliver improvements to citizens to make their homes more energy efficient, prevent heat and energy loss in the home and reduce fuel bills. We have allocated £8.1m for the Home Upgrade Grant and Local Authority Delivery (LAD3) programme, targeting fuel poor citizens in both private and public sector homes.
- 3.4.2 The Home Update Grant scheme has progressed to its second phase (HUG2). This scheme focuses on owner-occupied off-gas homes and is delivered in collaboration with the WMCA and ActOnEnergy. Most of the householders who have applied for this scheme will benefit from solar panel installation, and either open-source heat pumps or high heat retention storage heaters. We have targeted owner occupiers in specific areas via mail and in-person visits to communicate the benefits of the scheme and increase uptake.
- 3.4.3 We have a memorandum of understanding with AgilityEco and EON for the delivery of the ECO4 and Help to Heat Group schemes. Householders in specific areas have been targeted with relevant information and over 600 applications have been received across the two schemes. To date, 85 properties have received a complete retrofit. This scheme continues to be publicised and contractors are scaling up operations to be able to deliver increased capacity going forward.
- 3.4.4 The Council has been awarded a grant of £24.8m via the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and has committed significant match funding to retrofit 2076 homes across the city. The aims of this programme are to upgrade stock currently below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C via the delivery of a suite of improvements depending on the type of property. The project is underway with 1178 properties commenced on-site and the remainder being targeted in a rolling scheme with a planned completion date of March 2025.

3.5 Affordable Housing

- 3.5.1 The lack of affordable housing has for many years been, and continues to be, a significant pressure in Birmingham. At the present time, demand for affordable housing is measured at around 22,000 units of all property types and sizes. The total current Affordable Rent and Social Rent pipeline indicates that there are around 1900 homes scheduled to be delivered, which equates to less than 9% of the total demand. This disparity is most acutely felt for households requiring properties of larger size; demand for properties of five bedrooms and larger is calculated at 894 units, whilst the pipeline figures indicate that there are only 6 units planned.
- 3.5.2 Additional housing need across all affordable tenures is 6,426 dwellings per year, which represents 90% of overall additional housing need within Birmingham per year. The limited availability of suitable land across the city, the location and quality of these sites and the difficulties around viable

delivery of affordable housing incentivises developers to use sites commercially rather than for residential use given the associated profit margins.

- 3.5.3 The Affordable Housing Delivery Group is working to understand the need for housing for those low-income households who cannot afford to live in properties being built across Birmingham, and to work with developers to identify need and potential solutions. The Council's [Housing Strategy 2023-2028](#) seeks to address via partnership working and delivering innovative solutions to ongoing need.

3.6 Housing Solutions and Support Service (HSSS)

- 3.6.1 The Housing Solutions and Support (HSS) service delivers services to citizens who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and those citizens (whether existing or prospective tenants) who apply to join the Council's housing register to express an interest in void properties managed by the Council and partner Registered Providers who advertise via the Birmingham Choice scheme.
- 3.6.2 Demand across HSS continues to increase year-on-year, driven by a combination of factors including the cost-of-living crisis, the lack of social and affordable housing options, the rising costs of the Private Rented Sector and the continuing growth in Exempt Accommodation.
- 3.6.3 The HSS service is delivered across three distinct areas: Housing Solutions and Rough Sleepers, Temporary Accommodation (TA) and Applications, Allocations and Accommodation Finding.
- 3.6.4 **Rough Sleeping** – The number of people sleeping rough in Birmingham has broadly reflected the national trend since 2000 – reducing to single figures until 2010/11 then rising to a peak in of 91 in 2018/19. The counts for 2020 and 2021 were lower particularly due to the Covid-19 measures, including the “Everyone In” initiative, before rising to 39 in 2022. The count for 2023 (taken on a single night in October 2023 based on the number of people bedded down plus intelligence from partner organisations, was 36. This 8% reduction should be considered against the national trend of a 27% increase from 2022.
- 3.6.5 Birmingham has been working in conjunction with the WMCA and the Centre for Homelessness Impact since 2022 to deliver the government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022, to deliver the objectives that rough sleeping is rare, brief, and non-recurring. The challenge remains to prevent individuals from experiencing, and returning to, rough sleeping. The service works closely with the voluntary sector to deliver a comprehensive outreach and emergency accommodation offer to those on the street.
- 3.6.6 **Housing Solutions** – Housing Solutions and Support Service continues to encounter homelessness presentations at a significant and increasing rate. In 2023-24 there were on average 418 presentations for homelessness assistance per week, and 285 homeless applications being taken. The

comparable numbers in 2022-23 were 340 presentations per week, with an average of 233 applications taken. The average number of weekly presentations is 54% higher than in 2020, and the number of weekly applications taken 62% higher than in 2020.

- 3.6.7 Homelessness presentations from single people (overwhelmingly single males) continues to be a significant challenge for the service. This cohort makes up 70-85% of the weekly presentations for housing assistance. This number has continued to increase in recent years – in 2019-20 presentations from single people made up between 50-65% of presentations each week. The significant driver for this increase in presentations is the growth in Exempt Accommodation across the city and the ongoing churn within these properties where people may repeatedly move between providers and properties in relatively short periods, in most cases approaching the Council for assistance on each occasion.
- 3.6.8 For families presenting as homeless, the primary drivers continue to be those reflected nationally – the ending of tenancies in the Private Rented Sector, domestic abuse and host households no longer willing to accommodate the family. Prevention activities continue to be successful in many cases; the service is on track to achieve an End of Year Prevention rate of 53%, in line with the national average. This has been delivered by significant improvements in prevention rates over recent months – the recently monthly average has been more than 60%. Successful prevention is more difficult for families than single people, given the relative lack of affordable family accommodation across the city when compared to the buoyant Exempt Accommodation and HMO markets.
- 3.6.9 Activities continue to procure suitable family accommodation to support the prevention and relief offers. The Accommodation Finding Team (AFT) has now secured over 400 homes, in 2 years, in the Private Rented Sector for families threatened with homelessness. This process is not without challenges; landlords require an incentive offer to work with the Council through this route given that there are alternative, more lucrative, opportunities available such as Exempt Accommodation/HMO. The increase in Local Housing Allowance rates in April 2024 should further support the work of the AFT in being able to provide an attractive offer to prospective landlords.
- 3.6.10 Households who have come to the UK through a migrant route appear to be more vulnerable to homelessness in the city. Birmingham's population is made up of 17% migrant households, while this applies to 30% of homeless presentations and 47% of households in temporary accommodation. A Home Office accelerated process of determining the status of asylum seekers between August and December 2023 resulted in increased demand, this approach has been extended into 2024. A partnership working with Homes4Ukraine has successfully found 178 homes in the private rented

sector for households leaving hosted accommodation, and there are similar needs for other populations.

3.6.11 The s114 notice and the requirement to make savings from General Fund activities required the service to review the existing delivery model. To achieve the savings, the service has identified 38 vacant posts to be deleted and two redundancies. The effect of the cuts on planned activities includes the cessation of the Property Acquisition Programme (which was on course to purchase over 300 homes) and a review of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy including a significant reduction in planned investment. The service will continue to actively explore alternative options to increase the supply of suitable family accommodation, in accordance with the revised financial position.

3.6.12 **Temporary Accommodation** – the temporary accommodation team continues to experience significant demand, driven by the increases in presentations and applications when compared with previous years. As of 8 March 2024, the numbers of households in temporary accommodation were as follows:

Tenancy Type	Total	Average Days Stay	Number Out of Borough
Annexe	196	248	0
Bed and Breakfast	713	150	112
Dispersed	2359	783	2
Hostel	500	300	0
Private Landlord	2	5287	0
PSL Tenancy	1307	871	319
Total	5077	514 (average)	434

3.6.13 The number of households in bed and breakfast continues to be a significant pressure, as does the Council's ability to comply with the statutory six-week limit on bed and breakfast accommodation for households with family commitments. As of 26 February 2024, there were 416 such households who have been in bed and breakfast for over six weeks, this is 100 lower than the recent high point of 516 hit in June 2023. The current Bed and Breakfast Reduction Plan is under review in consultation with DLUHC to agree appropriate timescales and actions to deliver against this challenging objective.

3.6.14 The Council's new Homeless Prevention Strategy 2024-29 will go to Cabinet for approval in May 2024.

3.6.15 **Applications, Allocations and Accommodation Finding** – the service continues to receive significant demand for accommodation via the housing register. In 2023-24, an average of 447 applications were received each week, with an average of 490 assessments being completed. The service does however carry a significant backlog of applications due to historical recruitment issues and consistently high volume of applications. The current backlog of applications to be assessed (as of 8 March 2024) stands at 10,358, of which around 63% have exceeded the eight-week assessment target time.

3.6.16 The number of households on the housing register continues to grow; there are now almost 23,500 live applications. In the 12 calendar months to March 2024, 3560 properties were let via the Birmingham Choice scheme. Of these, over half were studio or one-bed properties, with only 156 properties of four bedroom and above being let. Just under 31% of all lets were to households owed a homelessness duty; there are around 7000 households with a Band A award on the housing register, of which almost 5000 have this award as the result of a homelessness duty being owed. A further 7000 households have either a Band B or Band C award for overcrowding.

3.7 Capital Investment and Repairs

3.7.1 The Capital Investment and Repairs service is responsible for maintaining the Council's housing stock of some 59,000 units, including over 200 high-rise blocks and 17,000 low-rise properties. The service works in partnership with two contractors, Fortem and Equans, to deliver on-demand repairs and a scheduled programme of maintenance activity across the city.

3.7.2 In April 2024, interim repairs contracts will commence with Equans and Fortem until April 2026 following a period of review and negotiation. The termination of the existing contract with Wates in March 2022 and the replacement by Equans, has resulted in a higher standard of repairs being carried out in the relevant properties, although the service continues to receive significant volumes of repairs requests and complaints relating to repairs.

3.7.3 City Housing carried out just under 240,000 repairs in 2022-23 and the figure for 2023-24 is likely to be around 250,000. Data also confirms that there are an average of 4.2 repairs carried out per property per year, which is more than the national average of around 3 repairs per property, per year, highlighting the lack of investment in, and the overall age of, much of the Council's housing stock.

3.7.4 It is recognised that there has been an historical lack of investment in the Council's housing stock following the significant investment made to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in 2010, and this is evidenced by the Regulator's

criticisms around the current decency levels. The Council has been under-prepared for events such as the Grenfell tragedy, which required the diversion of significant funds from repairs and maintenance works to building and fire safety. Significant investment is required to bring the Council's stock back up to the current Decent Homes Standard; in January 2023 Cabinet approved the Housing Strategy 2023-28, which set out the strategic priorities for the period as follows:

- i. A strong supply of genuinely affordable housing.
- ii. Citizens can access and sustain the right home for them.
- iii. Neighbourhoods are enhanced and the quality of existing homes are improved.

3.7.5 In January 2024 Cabinet approved the [HRA business plan](#), including the 30-year business case, which sets out the Council's long-term strategic investment plan to support the management, maintenance and investment in the Council's housing stock and relevant commercial assets.

3.7.6 To achieve compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, some £1.434bn will be invested to accelerate the existing works over the next eight years. Over the 30-year life cycle of the plan, some £4.326bn will be invested in the Council's existing housing stock to ensure statutory and compliance obligations are met. There will also be significant investment in delivering affordable homes and estate regeneration as well as towards the Council's decarbonisation goals.

3.7.7 In January 2024 Cabinet also approved the [Asset Management Strategy](#), which sets out the directorate's approach to ensuring that priority 3 of the Housing Strategy – neighbourhoods are enhanced and the quality of existing homes are improved – is delivered.

3.7.8 The Asset Management Strategy seeks to ensure that the Council provides homes that are safe, warm and sustainable, and commits the directorate to carrying out the necessary improvements to both achieve this objective and ensure regulatory compliance. There are ambitious commitments within this strategy to ensure delivery of these objectives, and to ensure that tenant satisfaction with the services provided by the directorate improves as a result of the Council acting in a joined-up way across both Asset Management and Housing Management to bring tangible benefits for tenants.

3.7.9 In response to the Housing Ombudsman's Special Report of January 2023, significant work has taken place across the Capital Investment and Repairs service to accept, implement and evidence the changes identified by the Housing Ombudsman. This has been a wide-ranging piece of work which has delivered improvements in the way in which tenants are able to report repairs, communication between tenants, the Council and contractors and had delivered robust reporting and governance structures to ensure that senior management have appropriate oversight of repairs performance and issues

and are able to both respond to concerns as they arise and take an intelligence-led approach to future repairs and maintenance. We are pleased that the Housing Ombudsman recognised the significant improvements made and confirmed that their active intervention was no longer required from February 2024 based on the progress across these workstreams, although work will continue to embed these improvements going forward.

3.7.10 In response to the Regulator’s Breach Notice of May 2023, significant improvements have been made to the Council’s regulatory compliance across the board. The Council committed to an ambitious target and timescale in order to achieve regulatory compliance, demonstrating both our acceptance of previous failings and our commitment to getting this right. Compliance across the “big six” has increased in all areas and, whilst we acknowledge that there remains work to be done before we can be satisfied that we are compliant across the board, we are pleased with our progress.

Compliance Area	April 2023	February 2024	% Change
Gas Safety (Properties)	99.80%	99.98%	+0.18%
Gas Safety (Blocks)	78.57%	100%	+21.43%
Electrical Safety (Properties)	73.69%	89.10%	+15.41%
Electrical Safety (Blocks)	82.01%	84.44%	+2.43%
Fire Risk Assessments (High Rise)	94.74%	100%	+5.26
Fire Risk Assessments (Low Rise)	34.43%	73.38%	+38.95%
Legionella (Properties)	71.21%	75.79%	+4.58%
Legionella (Blocks)	100%	100%	NA
Asbestos (Properties)	28.20%	45.22%	+17.02%
Lifts	95.60%	99.42%	+3.82%
Carbon Monoxide (Installation)	50.38%	90.62%	+40.24%
Smoke Detectors	52.46%	99.15%	+46.69%

3.7.11 Despite these challenges, there have been many successes within the service. Shelforce, the Council business unit specialising in providing PVCu windows and doors to local authority buildings projects received the King’s Award for Enterprise in Promoting Opportunity, the highest UK award for British business, in recognition of their role in delivering employment opportunities and promoting social mobility. This success builds on the many awards Shelforce has previously received, both locally and nationally, in recognition of their excellence. Shelforce’s award-winning success has put

them on a path for continued growth and investment in people underpinned by their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

3.7.12 Equans and Birmingham City Council were the overall winner in the Contractor of the year category in the 2022 UK Housing Awards.

3.8 Exempt Accommodation

3.8.1 The Exempt Accommodation budget allocation for 2022-23 from the Corporate Invest 2 Deliver programme was £1.9m. There was a £700,000 underspend against this budget returned to the Invest 2 Deliver programme; this was in the main a result of operational difficulties around monitoring the actual spend and difficulties in recruiting staff to short-term contracts.

3.8.2 For the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 the Council has received £3.19m funding from DHLUC (£1.62m in 2023-24 and £1.57m in 2024-25). This was the Silver 'ask' of the Gold, Silver and Bronze funding proposal submitted. The updated business case for 2023-24 and 2024-25 received s151 approval in November 2023. The Supported Exempt Accommodation partnership can continue to deliver the programme and recruit to all vacancies across the partnership.

3.8.3 It is anticipated that the current inspection activity will remain at the same level throughout 2023-24 and 2024-25, however there may be some impact with the loss of funding for the Resident Engagement role in 2024-25.

3.8.4 The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023 will introduce new Supported Housing licensing regulations in 2025-26.

3.8.5 Since 2020, there have been 2878 inspections carried out which equates to just under 32% of a growing sector of currently 26,500 claimants across 8,800 properties. Since April 2022, 18549 desktop assessments have taken place, resulting in 1240 claims being cancelled due to Care Support and Supervision concerns.

3.8.6 In September 2023, the Council launched the Preferred Providers List (PPL) as the benchmark for quality provision within the city. The Housing Solutions and Support Service are utilising the PPL for referrals into the sector. To date, accreditation has been awarded to 32 providers who have demonstrated that they have achieved the standard (2 Gold, 5 Silver and 16 Bronze). There are 9 providers currently awaiting assessment.

3.8.7 The Right to Buy (Restrictive Covenant) Policy was approved in 2023; this sets out the management of properties previously disposed of under Right to Buy where the terms of the disposal agreement specify the usage of the property as a single private dwellinghouse or similar.

3.8.8 The Council continues to work with other local authorities who are part of the National Supported Housing Improvement Programme as well as the Core Cities and the WMCA.

- 3.8.9 **Housing Management** – Following a review of the Housing Management Service by Campbell Tickell in 2022-23, the service is currently at the early stages of a redesign aimed at delivering a locality-based model to increase visibility in local areas by delivering greater officer presence on patches and embedding closer links between tenants and the services they receive. This work will progress throughout 2024-25.
- 3.8.10 **Voids** – City Housing are focusing heavily on void management across the city. Given the pressures that the Housing Solutions and Support service face, it is essential that voids are managed as efficiently as possible. As of March 2024, the directorate is operating at slightly in excess of the 28-day target (28.5 days). Whilst this remains outside of the agreed target, this has fallen from 33 days in November 2022 and demonstrates the excellent work carried out by officers to improve performance by focusing work on Fortem’s performance in the south of the city to bring this in line with the Council’s target.
- 3.8.11 Benchmarking of the Council’s void performance via Housemark does however indicate that our performance is significantly greater than that of most local authorities with retained stock levels over 15,000.
- 3.8.12 **Tenant Engagement** – TPAS, a national lead in the field of tenant engagement, reviewed the Council’s existing tenant engagement framework and effectiveness in delivering tenant engagement across the city. The final report, received in January 2023, highlighted several areas of concern and improvement. The service has been working since this time to develop a revised Tenant Engagement Framework, making necessary changes to the existing structure to deliver greater representation city-wide and to ensure that engagement is effective in that tenants have, and feel that they have, genuine and effective input into the way that the Council develops, delivers and monitors its services.
- 3.8.13 Throughout 2023-24, the Directorate commissioned Housemark to carry out Tenant Satisfaction surveys on a quarterly basis with a representative sample of tenants to assess satisfaction across a wide range of measures including tenant engagement. The results of these surveys, whilst highlighting some areas where tenants feel that the Directorate is not providing services that meet their needs, are helping to shape the delivery of services and the ways in which the Directorate engages with tenants when taking decisions or when delivering services.
- 3.8.14 **Antisocial Behaviour (ASB)** – ASB continues to be a significant issue across both Council-managed estates and within wider communities across Birmingham. The Council’s existing Antisocial Behaviour Policy has been reviewed and revised and will be relaunched in 2024 alongside a specific policy addressing Hate Crime. These new policies have been developed in conjunction with community safety colleagues and other partners to ensure that a preventative approach is adopted wherever possible across tenure,

and that the Council's response to ASB irrespective of tenure is consistent and joined-up. These revised policies will seek to embed and enhance the existing ASB policy and procedures, which include mediation services and signposting to partner agencies to assist with the detection, investigation and where appropriate pursuing of legal action against perpetrators of ASB. The Council will adopt an approach where tenants are supported to sustain their tenancies and appropriate action is taken against perpetrators.

3.8.15 The use of Power BI reporting has enabled management and officers to have greater visibility of ASB issues and ensure that reported cases are dealt with effectively and in line with the Council's current policy. The use of these measures has seen a significant improvement in the way in which ASB is responded to, the ways in which residents are kept informed of the progress of their case and the ways in which the Directorate is able to use intelligence and data to target areas of concern.

3.8.16 **CCTV Strategy** – Tenant feedback via Tenant Satisfaction Measures and for officers working within communities has confirmed that safety is a primary concern for tenants. In particular, tenants within high-rise blocks have highlighted their concerns at the Council's previous decision to decommission CCTV across the portfolio, and the associated rise in crime and antisocial behaviour since this date which had led to tenants feeling unsafe in their homes and neighbourhoods.

3.8.17 A CCTV strategy has been developed by the Directorate, including commitments to install CCTV within "hot spot" areas as a priority to deliver reassurance to tenants and to assist in the delivery of safe homes in line with the Asset Management Strategy. The installation of CCTV via this strategy will seek to deliver against the following key commitments:

- i. We will install CCTV cameras across high-rise blocks in Birmingham where there is elevated evidence of ASB, with a rational approach.
- ii. We will work in partnership to increase safety across the city.
- iii. We will play a key role in reassuring tenants of their safety within their homes and neighbourhoods.

The CCTV strategy will come to Cabinet for approval in 2024.

3.8.18 **Sheltered Accommodation** - The Directorate is undertaking a full review of the existing Sheltered Housing provision. This review was scheduled for 2022-23 but was paused pending the Housing Management service redesign. This review will include a review of the current policies and procedures around how sheltered housing is managed and the physical properties we have available for this provision. A full stock condition programme will take place within the existing sheltered housing provision to inform the review. The overarching objective of the review will be to ensure that the Council's sheltered housing provision meets the needs of existing tenants and provides the appropriate stock levels of a suitable quality for

older people in Birmingham who want to transition into this type of accommodation.

3.8.19 **High-Rise Living** – City Housing has carried out significant improvement works within high-rise blocks, both in response to the Grenfell tragedy and the enhanced regulatory landscape. The Council maintains a stock of 211 high-rise blocks, one of the largest portfolios of this type in the UK.

3.8.20 A review has taken place of communal areas and spaces within high-rise blocks, with these areas being RAG rated based on condition and this information has been shared with Capital Investment to enable targeted investment of those areas most in need of renovation.

3.9 Private Rented Sector

3.9.1 On 1 March 2022 the Council adopted its Private Rented Sector Strategy 2022-27. Work is ongoing to deliver against the Council's seven key priorities for the private rented sector, ensuring that the work of the service directly improves standards in the sector and enables tenants to have safe and stable accommodation. The key priorities are:

- i. Increase the supply of safe and secure accommodation by bringing empty homes back into use.
- ii. Identify and implement local initiatives to address local issues.
- iii. Tackle disrepair and criminality.
- iv. Prevent illegal evictions and harassment.
- v. Improve the energy efficiency of homes, tackle fuel poverty and reduce carbon emissions.
- vi. Operate a high-quality mandatory HMO licensing scheme.
- vii. Seek to influence Government and national regulatory agencies to enhance relevant legislation and regulation.

3.9.2 **Selective, Additional and Mandatory Licensing** – Following a successful application to DLUHC to operate a selective licensing scheme, this has been in operation in 25 of the city's 69 wards since June 2023. This scheme targets wards where both the private rented sector accounts for over 20% of the available housing stock and where there are high levels of deprivation and/or crime. This is the largest scheme of its type in the UK, covering in excess of 40,000 properties. Since June 2023, 23,427 applications have been received for selective licences, with 12,942 landlords being prosecuted for non-compliance.

3.9.3 Currently 2,275 mandatory licenses have been issued across the city.

3.9.4 Under the terms of the selective licensing scheme, landlords can be prosecuted for failing to have a licence, with financial penalties including an unlimited fine or a rent repayment order where landlords fail to comply.

3.9.5 Additional licensing also took effect in June 2023, requiring landlords of smaller, non-mandatory HMOs to be licensed to operate. Since June 2023, 2,243 applications have been received for additional licences and 916 landlords have been prosecuted for non-compliance.

3.9.6 As with selective licensing, landlords can be prosecuted for non-compliance with the sanctions including unlimited fines and rent repayment orders.

3.9.7 The Council's mandatory licensing scheme was reviewed in 2021-22, with additional officer resources and processes in place from April 2022 to ensure that applications are determined within a reasonable timescale and compliance checks and enforcement activity against illegally operating HMOs is effective.

3.9.8 **Empty Properties** – Maximising the supply of available properties is a significant priority. By ensuring that empty properties are brought back into use as residential accommodation, this both increases the available housing stock at a time of unprecedented demand and addresses the issues that properties standing empty for long periods of time can bring to communities, such as fly-tipping, ASB and crime.

3.9.9 In 2022-23, 196 empty properties were brought back into use; this was a reduction in the figure from 2021-22 as a result of the impact of Covid-19 and a lack of resource within the team, however from April 2023-March 2024 a further 340 properties were brought back into use and it is anticipated that in 2024-25 the target of 350 properties will be met. As part of the joined-up approach to tackling both empty properties and homelessness, owners of empty properties are referred to the Accommodation Finding Team or to social housing providers as appropriate. The Empty Property Team continues to explore opportunities for joint working between the Council and property owners.

3.10 **Regeneration** – The Council continues to progress regeneration works across the city.

3.10.1 **Ladywood** – Plans have been approved for a regeneration project across Ladywood through a £2.2bn deal with Berkeley Homes. This scheme will deliver around 7,500 new homes as well as significant regeneration to an area of the city that has seen little significant investment in recent years.

3.10.2 Significant consultation has taken place with Ladywood residents, businesses and stakeholders in recent months, including 12 community consultation workshops and doorstep consultation and engagement with residents who may be specifically affected, and twice monthly drop-in sessions commenced in April.

3.10.3 We are aware of significant local mobilisation and opposition from some Ladywood residents and are seeking to engage in productive and mutually beneficial dialogue going forward.

- 3.10.4 A comprehensive engagement programme is in place, the immediate key activity is the development of a Resident and Community Charter with the community which will focus on, and set out, the approach to engagement and consultation on the proposed masterplan.
- 3.10.5 **Druids Heath** – the current proposed masterplan for the Druids Heath redevelopment has now been approved by the Commissioners. The Druids Heath estate is one of the most deprived across the UK and there are challenges around stock condition, ASB and high levels of poverty and deprivation.
- 3.10.6 An independent advisor (Loconomy) was commissioned in 2021. Working closely with BCC colleagues, Loconomy continue to engage with the community about the proposed development. Through workshops, drop-in sessions and door knocking, the team have been able to capture the community aspirations and concerns about the future regeneration. Over the coming months, the team will be launching the proposed masterplan to the community. An engagement programme has been developed by the team to ensure a meaningful consultation where we engage with as many people in Druids Heath.
- 3.10.7 Following initial consultation, we have developed an Engagement Framework and Resident and Community Charter with both Ladywood and Druids Heath which sets out the Council's offer and commitments to ensure that the community is treated fairly and involved at all stages of the regeneration programmes.
- 3.11 **BMHT** – The Council's Housing Strategy 2023-28 has confirmed that going forward the Council cannot deliver the necessary scale and scope of affordable housing delivery through BMHT alone.
- 3.11.1 Stakeholder engagement across the city has indicated that Registered Providers (RPs) felt disincentivised to deliver developments since the inception of BMHT and that they did not benefit from initiatives such as discounted land sales. The Council has identified a need for stronger partnerships across the city to enable all RPs to bolster the supply of affordable housing and to move away from one delivery vehicle across one tenure type.
- 3.11.2 The Council has delivered the first tranche of site disposals to RPs for several years, leading to significant interest across the sector. Following a highly competitive tender process, these sites have been successfully disposed of.
- 3.11.3 The first tranche of sites is distributed across the city and aims to deliver a total of 246 homes in areas including Hockley, Stechford, Bartley Green, Kings Heath and Bromford, ensuring that the spread of affordable housing developments is a city-wide programme.
- 3.11.4 There is ongoing commitment from the Council to deliver further tranches of land disposals to support the overall affordable programme. Tranche 2 has

been identified and is moving to tender stage; tranches 3 and 4 are currently being finalised.

3.12 Governance

3.12.1 In order to deliver the Improvement and Recovery Plan, the directorate has implemented a revised and robust governance structure to provide the necessary scrutiny and challenge to ensure that activities are targeted to delivering change. Service-specific transformation boards are in place across Asset Management, Housing Management, Strategic Enabling and Housing Solutions and Support. Programme-specific boards are in place internally for Affordable Housing and Regulatory Compliance, whilst partnership boards are in place for Strategic Housing, Homelessness Partnership and the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership. Additional external governance is provided via ongoing monitoring from DHLUC in relation to B&B oversight, the RSH and the Housing Ombudsman. These boards and oversight bodies feed into a new Housing Improvement Sub-Board which includes Commissioners, Cabinet Member, relevant Directors and critical friends; this board ensures that activities across the directorate are delivering on programmes, monitors resources and risk and financial compliance against forecast spend and investment. This board then reports into the Improvement and Recovery Board, Cabinet, Audit and Oversight and Scrutiny.

Birmingham City Council

City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry on Child Criminal Exploitation: How are the Council and its partners working together to reduce the risks of exploitation for young people?

Report of: Cllr. Des Hughes, Chair of Inquiry and Deputy Chair, Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Kerry Jenkins, Chair of Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report author: Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

Not Applicable

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 “Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. One of its forms is County Lines which is the “police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”...This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs” ([NSPCC](#)). Children who are criminally exploited may also be sexually exploited. It is also a form of modern slavery.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Inquiry was established in July 2022 by the Education and Children’s Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The terms of reference for the inquiry set the question: “How are the Council and Partners working together to reduce the risks of criminal exploitation for young people?”.

1.3 The Scrutiny Inquiry identified the following themes from the evidence set out in Appendix 1:

- Definition and Scale
- Early Intervention with specific regard to role of the community; youth services; transitions to adulthood; Missing Children and Education.
- Supporting young people to exit exploitation
- Enforcement
- Strategy and Governance

1.4 Based on this evidence, the inquiry group proposes 15 recommendations to the Executive.

2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

2.2 Recommendations R01 to R15, set out in Appendix 1, be approved and that the Executive be requested to pursue their implementation.

3 Background

3.1 The Inquiry on Child Criminal Exploitation was agreed as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 and due to the range and depth of engagement this work continued into 2023/24.

3.2 The Inquiry Task and Finish Group considered evidence from 12 organisations and services using a combination of face to face sessions and written submissions. The report attached as Appendix 1 provides a summary of the evidence received.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the recommendations agreed by the Inquiry Task and Finish Group.

4.2 The Governance Review of Birmingham City Council by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny set out that the scrutiny work programme should focus on the Council's improvement and recovery priorities. The work of this inquiry aligns with the priority to ensure safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.

5 Legal Implications

5.1 This inquiry relates specifically to three key duties placed upon Councils:

- All Councils have a duty under the [Children Act 2004](#) to work with local police and health partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. In Birmingham, the Birmingham Children's Trust is

responsible for carrying out assessments of children deemed at risk of significant harm and work with partners to put in place plans to keep children safe where necessary.

- As corporate parents, councils are also responsible for supporting and advocating for their children in care and care leavers. Councils will need to ensure that these children and young people are fully supported if they are at risk of exploitation, including ensuring they are in appropriate accommodation.
- Councils also have a duty under the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) to work with partners to develop a community safety strategy that reflects priorities in their local area around tackling crime and disorder, and work with their Police and Crime Commissioner, including through the Police and Crime Panel which is responsible for scrutinising local police and crime plans.
- The more recent [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#) introduces duties for public bodies such as councils, police, health and education to tackle and prevent serious violent crime.

5.2 The Privacy and Information Law Team within the Council's Legal and Governance directorate will be able to provide specific support around the implementation of Recommendation 10. Legal and Governance directorate may also provide support around responding to Recommendation 13 too.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The Inquiry recommendations recognise the financial pressures the Council is facing and set out that the implementation of recommendations will be within existing resources and capacity available. There is no request for additional resource or capacity to implement the recommendations.

7 Public Sector Equality Duty

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 Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular

groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

7.3 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.

7.4 During the Inquiry, evidence indicated that unconscious bias on the part of referring professionals, or even within the community itself, may mean that indicators of Child Criminal Exploitation are not recognised, and referrals made. For example, behaviour indicating a girl is being exploited is not understood in this context, boys who are Black are perceived through the lens of adultification, or children are too young to be victims of exploitation. Recommendation 5 specifically calls for organisations to address this in their training and development offer to staff.

8 Other Implications

8.1 **How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

8.2 The strategic importance of addressing children and young people's mental health is reflected in the Council's Grand Challenges relating to Community Resilience, Cohesion and Living Standards plus Opportunities for Children and Young People and the City Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

- Support and enable young people to thrive
- Protect and Safeguard vulnerable citizens

9 Background Papers

9.1 Birmingham City Council Corporate Plan [Council Plan and Budget | Birmingham City Council](#)

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Scrutiny Inquiry on Child Criminal Exploitation: How are the Council and its partners working together to reduce the risks of exploitation for young people?

10.2 Appendix 2: Executive Commentary

Contents

Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry	1
Chair’s Foreword	4
Summary of Recommendations	7
1.1 Introduction	11
2.1 What is Child Criminal Exploitation?	13
2.2 Why the Committee Decided to Look at Child Criminal Exploitation	14
2.3 Outcomes	15
2.4 Evidence Gathering	15
3.1 Definition and Scale	16
Definition	16
Scale	16
3.2 Early Intervention and Resilience	20
Role of the Community	22
Youth services	23
Transitions and Preparations to Adulthood	25
Increase reporting of young people at risk of CCE	26
Missing Children	28
Education	29
Awareness Raising	30
Gaps in Delivery	31
3.3 Supporting Young People to Exit Exploitation	32
Third Sector	34
3.4 Enforcement	35
3.5 Strategy and Governance	36
Appendix 1 – Inquiry Activities	39
Appendix 2: Contributors	40

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Reports that have been submitted to Council can be downloaded from
www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny

Chair's Foreword



Councillor Des Hughes, Chair of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Scrutiny Inquiry and Councillor Kerry Jenkins, Chair of Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

It is difficult to understand the true scale and prevalence of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and although we have figures of how many children and young people are assessed to be 'at risk' we were advised that the figures put forward are likely to be an underestimate.

This underestimate was linked to several factors, with one of them being that there is no statutory definition of CCE. The Inquiry found little appetite for one. Whilst we cannot be sure of the numbers, or the ages of children and young people in Birmingham being criminally exploited, we can be sure that it is happening and that it is likely many are also being sexually exploited.

Councils have a key role to play in tackling child exploitation, but they cannot and should not be doing this alone and this Inquiry looked at how Birmingham City Council is working with partners to reduce both the risks of exploitation for children and young people and the impact, not only on those exploited but also on families, neighbours, and wider communities.

We also recognised that any discussion of CCE should not just be about the children and young people identified as being victims of exploitation, but there was the need to recognise that all children and young people are vulnerable to exploitation.

We heard from a range of partners from within and external to the Council and it was encouraging to hear about the work being done by them to disrupt this criminal activity, support children and young people and prevent further harm to both victims and communities. But we also uncovered inconsistency stemming largely from the way CCE is defined in legislation and policy and difficulties linked with case referral and the sharing of information.

Where children and young people who had been arrested came to the attention of partners, we heard that the approach used was likely to be down a criminal justice route rather than a safeguarding one, with victims often viewed as offenders rather than as victims. We also learnt that Black and Minority Ethnic children are less likely to be seen as victims, and far more likely to be subject to adultification; this is borne out by research.

As elected representatives, as corporate parents, and as community leaders, councillors have a responsibility to be aware of the signs of child exploitation and to understand what action is needed

where there are concerns. But this is not where our responsibility ends. We must also be ensuring that this understanding is shared with our communities and that we work with them to protect our children and young people from those wishing to exploit them.

We have all heard of the proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' but it has real meaning when you are talking about CCE which by its very nature is insidious, remains hidden, misunderstood and is often 'othered'. It is not spoken about, not accepted, and not recognised as happening in that community.

We know that being criminally exploited in childhood can have a serious, long-term detrimental impact on children's lives, so it is far better to prevent it from happening in the first place. The Inquiry recognised the need for more action to increase the visibility and understanding of CCE, within the Council, throughout partner organisations, within our schools, and amongst young people.

We all have a part to play here but we also need entire communities working with us, working together, to ensure the safety of all our children and young people. A whole systems approach to awareness-raising and engagement across a range of agencies, who must be working in partnership with parents and children and communities to alert them to the signs of grooming, exploitation, and coercion.

We must work in partnership to ensure that children and young people who experience exploitation are recognised as being victims of abuse and that they are coerced into criminal activity, that they are not blamed and criminalised for their 'behaviour', and they are recognised as being children and young people and as such are appropriately safeguarded.

We need to ensure that there is comprehensive training and information for all professionals who work with vulnerable children and that this is mandatory rather than by choice.

At the time of concluding this Inquiry, there are very real concerns about the rise in CCE, seen here in the West Midlands by a large increase in County Lines, and the difficulty by agencies to accurately determine how many children and young people are at risk or are being exploited. The financial challenges we face here in Birmingham will have a significant impact on the non-statutory services currently delivered for children and young people. This is extremely worrying given the difficulties there are already to identify children being exploited.

As already stated, local authorities and partners cannot tackle CCE alone and if it does take a village to raise a child then we need national government to be an active and willing member of the village. Whilst we cannot make recommendations to Government, our Inquiry recognised the urgent need for Government to invest in and expand the provision of support and preventative services for children and young people.

Two of our recommendations therefore ask the Leader, and Cabinet Members to lobby the Government for this investment. For a statutory youth service enshrined in law with sufficient ring-fenced funding and a Minister for Youth, bringing together the scattergun approach to youth policy currently seen in Westminster due to the cross over of departmental responsibilities.

We realise that we have only touched the surface of what is a complex and challenging issue but believe that when our recommendations are carried out then they will make a tangible difference and will help to safeguard more children and young people from those looking to criminally exploit them.

Finally, we would like to thank members of the Committee who contributed so much to this Inquiry and the ongoing support, knowledge, and experience of scrutiny officers throughout this process.

Summary of Recommendations

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Definition and Scale		
R01	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to request the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) commissions a Child Criminal Exploitation problem profile.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	July 2024 (3 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Early Intervention and Resilience		
R02	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the stakeholder engagement group convened by the Violence Reduction Partnership is extended to statutory organisations with a remit for Child Criminal Exploitation*.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R03	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Partners to explore delivery of a campaign to increase the awareness of parents and carers of the risks of exploitation and what steps they can take.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R04	Recommendation: Council asks the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to lobby Government (and any future change in government) to adequately fund the provision of youth services, with ring fenced funding and to protect this in statute with a Youth Service Bill.	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
R05	<p>Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership work with organisations to review their mandatory training offer to better equip staff to recognise signs of Child Criminal Exploitation and minimise the risk of bias in decision making.</p>	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R06	<p>Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Children’s Trust to ensure all staff working directly with children receive mandatory training on Child Criminal Exploitation and this is part of a continuous professional development approach.</p>	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R07	<p>Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to provide a report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the Council’s work with schools to address exploitation as part of their safeguarding policies. This should include academies and primary schools.</p>	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R08	<p>Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to provide a timeline for the development and publication of an Exclusions strategy, engage with the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny in its development, and commit to providing regular reports on outcomes from the new strategy once in place.</p>	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	April 2025 (12 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
R09	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how the Council is monitoring the risk of exploitation with children and young people who receive Elective Home Education.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Supporting Young People to Exit Exploitation			
R10	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to consider how intelligence and information can be better shared with community partners and public sector organisations.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Enforcement			
R11	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to lobby for a national and/or regional campaign to highlight enforcement action against Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) which are exploiting young people.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Governance and Strategy			
R12	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to report back on the	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice,	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

	progress, and outcomes achieved of the strategy and delivery plan: Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26	Community Safety and Equalities	
R13	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to clarify the governance and accountability arrangements for this strategy.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R14	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families and the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to lobby Government (and future Government) for a Minister for Young People to enable joined up and holistic policy making in relation to young people.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Tracking		
R15	Recommendation: Council agrees that the Executive Member reports on progress towards achievement of these recommendations no later than October 2024. Subsequent progress reports will be scheduled by the Committee thereafter, until all recommendations are implemented.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake an Inquiry into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and this was confirmed on 20 July 2022.
- 1.1.2 A cross party Inquiry Task and Finish Group was established comprising members from the Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (later renamed the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee from June 2023). The members of the Inquiry Task and Finish Group were:
- Councillor Des Hughes, Chair of Inquiry and Deputy Chair of Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Councillor Kerry Jenkins, Chair of Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - Councillor Debbie Clancy
 - Councillor Morriam Jan
 - Councillor Jane Jones
 - Councillor Shehla Moledina
- 1.1.3 The key question the Inquiry Task and Finish Group asked was: **'How are the Council and Partners working together to reduce the risks of criminal exploitation for young people?'**
- 1.1.4 In seeking to answer this the Task and Finish Group considered the following lines of inquiry:
- What is the definition of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) being used in the city? If different definitions are being applied by partners, how does this impact upon the effectiveness of joint working?
 - What is the current scale and nature of CCE in Birmingham? How has this picture changed over the past four years? What are the projected risks and threats for the future?
 - How are organisations informed by evidence based practice? How do organisations capture 'what works' and what doesn't work', and how has this information changed their services? How is Birmingham learning from other areas, and how is this learning being implemented to make a difference?
 - What is the current partnership strategy in place to address CCE in the city? How is this strategy being supported and delivered through partners? What are the

partnership mechanisms for collaboration, and how effective are they? How effective is its governance structure?

- Who are the key statutory organisations and what are their respective roles in addressing CCE? What investment is provided to these organisations, and has this changed over the past four years? What are the current plans for investment to meet future demands?
- What is the role of the third sector and community-based organisations involved in tackling CCE? What are the key challenges they face, and what are the solutions they have identified to tackle these challenges? How effective is the cross sector working?
- How do the Council and Partners identify and assess risk for children and young people together for CCE? How are they responding to the challenge in identifying girls and young women as victims? How are the Council and Partners working together to deliver effective interventions when children and young people are likely to be both victims and involved with committing offences at the same time?
- How are the Council and partners working with families to support children and young people at risk, or involved with CCE? How are schools and partners working together to reduce the risk of school exclusion?

1.1.5 You can access the [Terms of Reference](#) here.

2 Background and Context

2.1 What is Child Criminal Exploitation?

- 2.1.1 “Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes. One of its forms is County Lines which is the “police term for urban gangs exploiting young people into moving drugs from a hub, normally a large city, into other markets - suburban areas and market and coastal towns - using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”...This can involve children being trafficked away from their home area, staying in accommodation and selling and manufacturing drugs” ([NSPCC](#)). Children who are criminally exploited may also be sexually exploited.
- 2.1.2 Child Criminal Exploitation is a form of modern slavery.
- 2.1.3 The West Midlands Region have a combined definition for all types of exploitation: ‘An individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child, young person or adult and exploits them:
- Through violence or the threat of violence, and/or
 - for financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
 - in exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- 2.1.4 The victim may have been exploited even if the activity appears consensual due to his/her specific situation. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology, e.g., as the result of a grooming process which takes place during conversations in chat rooms, or through the use of social media.’
- 2.1.5 The trauma of young people’s experiences is highly likely to have a long-term impact on their future and of future generations.
- 2.1.6 While exploitation of young people is not new, it has evolved in many ways presenting increasing risks for children.
- 2.1.7 Research carried out by [Dr Alex Chard](#)¹ (commissioned by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands) concluded that known risk factors ‘appear to have created a virtual escalator’ whereby young people are ‘propelled towards crime and the criminal justice system’, and which leads to their exploitation and abuse. These risk factors include:
- Poverty

¹ [Punishing Abuse: Children in the West Midlands Criminal Justice System](#), WMCA, the WMPCC and YCTCS Ltd, 2021

- Physical disabilities or poor mental health
- Family or individual substance misuse
- Known to Criminal Justice system
- Known to Social Care services
- Experienced parental loss
- Family violence
- Family criminality
- Victim or abuse and violence in the community
- Disrupted education
- Special Educational Needs

2.1.8 The Cost-of-Living crisis has also been identified as a more recent driver for exploitation with children’s charity Barnardo’s stating that “organised criminal gangs are capitalising on rising costs and financial pressures, leaving children more exposed to criminal and sexual exploitation”.²

2.2 Why the Committee Decided to Look at Child Criminal Exploitation

2.2.1 All Councils have a duty under the [Children Act 2004](#) to work with local police and health partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area. In Birmingham, the Birmingham Children’s Trust is responsible for carrying out assessments of children deemed at risk of significant harm and work with partners to put in place plans to keep children safe where necessary.

2.2.2 As corporate parents, councils are responsible for supporting and advocating for their children in care and care leavers. Councils will need to ensure that these children and young people are fully supported if they are at risk of exploitation, including ensuring they are in appropriate accommodation.

2.2.3 Councils also have a duty under the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) to work with partners to develop a community safety strategy that reflects priorities in their local area around tackling crime and disorder, and work with their Police and Crime Commissioner, including through the Police and Crime Panel which is responsible for scrutinising local police and crime plans. The more recent [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act](#)

² [Invisible Children: Understanding the risk of the cost-of-living crisis and school holidays on child sexual and criminal exploitation](#), 2023, Barnardos

[2022](#) introduces duties for public bodies such as councils, police, health and education to tackle and prevent serious violent crime.

- 2.2.4 The Committee had concerns whether the prevalence and threat of CCE had increased in recent years, and if this was the case, how this challenge was being addressed to protect children. The Inquiry Task and Finish Group decided to consider how partners were working together in a broad sense rather than adopt a specific focus for one theme in particular. The key lines of enquiry were developed in line with this.
- 2.2.5 During the scoping, engagement with officers from Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Children’s Trust, and partner organisations was undertaken to ensure this Inquiry added value and was not duplicating effort. The Inquiry was welcomed as an opportunity to provide new insights.

2.3 Outcomes

- 2.3.1 The Inquiry agreed the following outcomes:
- Reduce the number of children and young people becoming at risk of CCE.
 - Improve the effectiveness of partnership working to reduce the risk of CCE.

2.4 Evidence Gathering

- 2.4.1 Evidence gathering commenced in November 2022 and concluded in September 2023. A schedule of the Inquiry’s activities is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.4.2 Eight face to face sessions took place with partner organisations in addition to written evidence. Appendix 2 lists the organisations who contributed to this Inquiry.
- 2.4.3 All councillors were also invited to provide evidence.
- 2.4.4 A survey on the Council’s Be Heard consultation platform was also carried out to capture information from parents and carers. Unfortunately, as only four responses were received, the Inquiry Task and Finish group decided an analysis of these results would be too limited. However, individual contributions from the survey have been captured throughout the report, where possible.

3 Key Findings

3.1 Definition and Scale

Definition

- 3.1.1 Definitions may play an important role in ensuring there is a shared understanding of an issue. This is particularly useful when partnership activity is required to address it. Different partner organisations will have different roles and responsibilities. If these roles and responsibilities are interpreted through a common lens of what the issue is, this may lead to more effective partnership practice and better outcomes.
- 3.1.2 The Inquiry learnt the following:
- There is no current national definition in law for CCE. However, there is a [Home Office description for County Lines](#), which has come to be associated with CCE.
 - There is a West Midlands regional definition for all types of exploitation – contained within the Contextual Safeguarding Board’s [Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-2026 Strategy and Delivery Plan](#).
- 3.1.3 For the most part, organisations did not support the view that a national definition would improve partnership working around CCE locally. They felt that the regional definition provided a common understanding and basis for partnership activity.
- 3.1.4 The Birmingham Children’s Trust highlighted that this definition ensured a consistent understanding of how exploitation can manifest and supported effective joint working practice. Importantly it promotes a ‘[Child First](#)’ approach’ viewing children as victims first and foremost.
- 3.1.5 In fact, concerns were raised that the introduction of a statutory definition would limit the effectiveness of partnership working instead. For example, it would be too rigid and restrictive, and not be flexible enough to respond to emerging threats. This view was particularly expressed by third sector organisations.

Scale

- 3.1.6 As of 31 July 2023, there were 337 children assessed as at risk of CCE in Birmingham. This is based on the number of referrals to the multi-agency Child Exploitation and Missing Hub in the Birmingham Children’s Trust. Birmingham Children’s Trust also highlighted that Birmingham is within the top three areas for County Lines nationally.

- 3.1.7 Of those 337 children identified as at risk, 21% are assessed as high risk; 37% medium risk and 42% as low risk³.
- 3.1.8 In summary:
- 63% are children from non-white backgrounds.
 - 76% are aged 15-17 (with no children under the age of 10).
 - Boys are significantly prevalent within the referrals.
 - 82% of children had either a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan or were a Child in Care.
- 3.1.9 However, it is difficult to understand the true scale of this issue facing Birmingham, and how many children are at risk of, or involved with, CCE.
- 3.1.10 Birmingham Children's Trust believes that the number of children identified is too low for a city the size of Birmingham and the size of the city and its challenges can make it difficult to understand the scale and nature of CCE across the whole system. The Inquiry Task and Finish Group were advised that there is no partnership problem profile in place to assist with this understanding and to drive partnership activity. For example, Birmingham Children's Trust questioned whether it had the right partnerships in place. A problem profile would help them to review this and address, if needed.
- 3.1.11 Reasons provided by witnesses why referral numbers are lower than expected include:
- CCE is complex, as a victim of exploitation may also be exploited to commit harm. While their offending is recognised and investigated, their vulnerability as a victim may not be identified.
 - Children may not understand themselves that they are victims of exploitation.
 - Unconscious bias on the part of professionals. For example, the 'adultification'⁴ of boys who are Black may also mean that they are not identified as at risk or

³ Birmingham Childrens Trust, Empower U Missing and Exploitation Hub provided a further up to date position (as of 1 March 2024). At this time, there had 291 children identified as at risk of CCE. Overall, the percentage of children identified as high risk has fallen, and the number of children assessed as low risk has increased to 54.3%. The majority of these children are boys (74.6%), and the majority is aged 16-17 years old (58.3%); there is also one girl aged 10. 65.4% of referrals are from non-white backgrounds. 69.8% are children who have either a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan in place.

⁴ [Adultification is a form of bias where children from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities are perceived as being more 'streetwise', more 'grown up', less innocent and less vulnerable than other children. This particularly affects Black children, who might be viewed primarily as a threat rather than as a child who needs support \(Davis 2022; Davis and Marsh, 2020; Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2019\). Children who have been adultified might also be perceived as having more understanding of their actions and the consequences of their actions. For example, an analysis of case reviews found that practitioners assumed Black boys who were involved in gangs would be able to protect themselves from harm, even after they had been reported missing from home or care.](#)

behaviour which may indicate girls are at risk is not being recognised, and therefore referrals are not being made.

- Due to the changing nature of CCE and the impact of social media, all young people are at risk. However, assumptions that this issue does not affect some communities and neighbourhoods may prevent referrals being made.

3.1.12 The Inquiry heard that many children grow up in Birmingham in environments which leave them vulnerable. Some of these children may be known to services or are Children in Care. However, many children may be invisible and growing up without adequate support. The Transitions and Preparation to Adults team described the ‘growth of ghost children during and post pandemic’ as a ‘significant concern’ with many of these young people ‘totally isolated’.

3.1.13 Nationally, [analysis by The Modern Slavery Policy Unit](#), a joint initiative led by an anti-slavery charity Justice and Care and a leading think tank, the Centre for Social Justice, highlights that almost half of the victims of criminal exploitation in the UK are British boys aged 18 and under and 45% are aged 17 and under.⁵ This is based on referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

3.1.14 A number of witnesses highlighted their concerns that the age range for children at risk is becoming younger.

3.1.15 The ‘[Punishing Abuse](#)’ Report⁶ by Dr Alex Chard and published by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner researched 80 cases of young people known to Youth Offending Teams across the West Midlands (including Birmingham). It identified that:

- The majority are ‘educationally disenfranchised’.
- Girls are the most at risk victims experiencing ‘highest levels of abuse and exploitation’.
- There is a significant chance of under-recording, in particular related to the sexual exploitation of boys.
- 31% of these cases (including all cases relating to girls) had resulted in multi-agency referrals for sexual exploitation.

3.1.16 When a child goes missing, this could be an indicator for being at risk of or involved with CCE. West Midlands Police advised that the number of young people reported as

[This resulted in the practitioners not acting to protect the boys from sexual exploitation, youth violence and drug and alcohol misuse \(Bernard and Harris, 2019\).](#)

⁵ [Criminal exploitation: Modern slavery by another name](#), the Modern Slavery Policy Unit, 2024

⁶ [Punishing Abuse: Children in the West Midlands Criminal Justice System](#), WMCA, the WMPCC and YCTCS Ltd, 2021

missing has doubled. They suggested that this was due to better recording rather than an actual increase.

- 3.1.17 More young people have high levels of mental health need, often undiagnosed and often are more vulnerable in a group of young people already under severe pressure and increases the risks they face. The number of young people referred to emergency mental health services in England has increased by more than 50% in three years since 2020⁷, and the number of school age children referred to child and adolescent services (CAMHS) has increased by 76% in England since 2019⁸. In 2022, one third of all referrals did not receive help by the NHS as it struggles to managing this caseload.
- 3.1.18 Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust work with the most complex mental health cases for young people in Birmingham – approximately 15-20 young people per year. Their experience is that these young people are vulnerable to exploitation and nearly all have had experience of it. In January 2024, Council approved the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry '[Children and Young People's Mental Health: Is Birmingham meeting young people's mental health needs?](#)'. This outlined the growing challenges for our city's young people with poor mental health.
- 3.1.19 Birmingham's Youth Service and third sector organisations witnesses highlighted how they felt that Child Criminal Exploitation had increased over the last few years. One witness described it as:

"It is growing and getting worse. It has become more organised, violent and deadly"

- 3.1.20 Witnesses identified these factors as increasing the vulnerability of young people:
- Growing prevalence and impact of social media.
 - Cost of Living crisis.
 - Disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.1.21 **Key Finding:** There was no consensus whether a national definition will provide real benefits. As it is constantly evolving, there are concerns a national definition may restrict victims' access to services in the future.
- 3.1.22 **Key Finding:** There is no partnership profile of CCE in Birmingham. It is difficult, therefore, to have a common and evidence based understanding of the true scope and

⁷ '[Children's Emergency Mental Health services referrals soar by 53%](#)', The Guardian, 7 February 2024

⁸ '[Record number of children seek mental health help from NHS England](#)', The Guardian, 27 June 2023

nature of CCE in Birmingham. Moreover, this limits the capacity of all partners to play their part.

3.1.23 **Key Finding:** The true scale of CCE in Birmingham is hidden and is likely to be much higher than the current number of referrals. Its evolving nature means increased numbers of young people may be at risk.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Definition and Scale		
R01	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to request the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) commissions a Child Criminal Exploitation problem profile.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	July 2024 (3 months after report has been published)

3.2 Early Intervention and Resilience

3.2.1 Dr Chard’s [‘Punishing Abuse’](#) report concluded that known risk factors ‘appear to have created a virtual escalator’ whereby young people are ‘propelled towards crime and the criminal justice system’, and which leads to their exploitation and abuse. This report raises the challenge of how to prevent ‘children from being pushed onto this escalator’⁹. This challenge was also highlighted by witnesses to this Inquiry citing recent trends around increased use of social media; cost of living and the impact from the pandemic as new factors to consider and increasing the number of young people at risk of recruitment for exploitation.

3.2.2 It was clear from the evidence provided to the Inquiry the value of early intervention services and programmes to keep young people safe from exploitation.

3.2.3 In summary, examples provided to the Inquiry include:

- The provision of safe spaces for young people outside of school and home.
- Professionals delivering front line services must be equipped to build positive relationships with young people and to make referrals if they have concerns.
- Access to support services which work with children and families and adopt a person centred approach.

⁹ [Punishing Abuse: Children in the West Midlands Criminal Justice System](#), WMCA, the WMPCC and YCTCS Ltd, 2021

- 3.2.4 Birmingham Youth Services and third sector witnesses suggested that they felt services were operating better since the introduction of the [Early Help](#) offer and the setting up of Birmingham Childrens Trust's Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub. However, it was also felt that it could be improved further.
- 3.2.5 The financial challenges facing Birmingham City Council over the next few years and the impact on relevant services, both within the Council and at the Birmingham Children's Trust, will make it difficult to sustain this progress and deliver more. Activity is commissioned through non Council funding streams. However, this funding is often short term and may result in funding 'cliff edges' such as at the end of a financial year. Altogether, delivering an effective programme to meet the diverse needs of young people in this city at risk of exploitation is now even more difficult.
- 3.2.6 Defining 'what works' and using this information to inform service delivery is essential when there is limited funding on the table, but it is difficult to measure results against what was prevented with early intervention¹⁰.
- 3.2.7 Stronger and sustainable networks for organisations to collaborate and prevent duplication is needed. Informal networks have already developed but this will strengthen them. Community organisations suggested that there needs to be a bigger role for all city stakeholders including business - it takes a village to raise a child.
- 3.2.8 **Key Finding:** Early intervention is key to preventing CCE. This provides the best opportunity to identify young people at risk. Working with young people at this stage delivers better outcomes.
- 3.2.9 **Key Finding:** The early intervention offer has improved in recent years. However, the financial context will make it challenging to sustain and continue to improve. The sector needs to continue to find ways to collaborate in spite of these challenges.

¹⁰ Feedback from Birmingham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (BSCP) highlighted that more work could be undertaken to capture learning from other areas as well as case reviews involving exploitation and serious violence. The inquiry will consider this along during their report tracking.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Member	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Early Intervention and Resilience		
R02	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the stakeholder engagement group convened by the Violence Reduction Partnership is extended to statutory organisations with a remit for Child Criminal Exploitation*.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

*This will prevent the need to establish a second group and duplicate activity.

Role of the Community

- 3.2.10 Most witnesses highlighted how community awareness of CCE needs to improve. Specifically, this is to help parents, families and the community to recognise signs of exploitation and protect young people. The Violence Reduction Partnership outlined the progress it has made through developing relationships with faith based settings. Many witnesses described CCE as child abuse and not a lifestyle choice, and that this is currently a national crisis. Witnesses did not believe the public are seeing this in these terms. When talking about CCE, it is important that we use language which recognises young people as victims. Witnesses suggested that a hard hitting national campaign (reinforced locally) was needed to convey this message into all communities.
- 3.2.11 In particular, specific community awareness raising around girls was also raised as important. There are different and subtle indicators which could suggest girls are being targeted.
- 3.2.12 More information is needed to understand how to best work with parents and families. Improved analysis of the issues within this city will help to inform this.
- 3.2.13 **Key Finding:** The evolving nature of CCE means young people from all communities and neighbourhoods throughout the city are at risk, and at younger ages. Parents and carers for all young people need to be aware of these risks and understand what steps they can take at an early stage.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Early Intervention and Resilience		
R03	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Partners to explore delivery of a campaign to increase the awareness of parents and carers of the risks of exploitation and what steps they can take.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Youth services

- 3.2.14 A consistent theme arising from the evidence is the value of skilled, qualified professionals able to build positive relationships with young people, as well as spaces for young people to feel safe and engage with these professionals. Youth workers support young people to build resilience (by empowering young people to cope in difficult situations) but it also increases the opportunities for early identification and referral, if necessary.
- 3.2.15 The nature of youth work means that youth workers are often the first to notice key indicators of risk or abuse (such as behaviour and mood changes). The youth work relationship (one that centres on young people and is based on trust and reciprocity) means that youth workers may well be the first people that young people turn to when they are ready to disclose a safeguarding concern.¹¹
- 3.2.16 The Inquiry heard how Birmingham Youth Service (BYS) currently has 16 Safe Spaces across the city, and that during 2022-23, worked with 7,010 young people in an average of 13.9 attendances per young person. This also includes an increase in dedicated sessions for girls and specific work with boys to counter the negative impact of social media influencers. Tackling CCE is an integral part of their service offer, and staff receive training to deliver this. BYS outlined that part of their approach is to work with young people to build resilience, so they feel able to make the right choices. They also felt that through their relationships with young people, they are in a good place to become aware of any behaviour which may indicate a young person is at risk, and to respond proactively.
- 3.2.17 The Violence Reduction Partnership, funded primarily by the Home Office, and commissioned by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, brings together

¹¹ [National Youth Agency – How to fulfil your statutory duty: A toolkit for local authorities](#), 2023.

police and other criminal justice agencies, local government, health, education, community and voluntary sector to tackle serious violence and its causes. A range of early intervention activity has been commissioned including Red Thread with a team of specialist youth workers based in A&E departments and a street outreach programme, Step Together which saw chaperones on some of the routes students most commonly take to get home after school. Step Together chaperones were youth workers with training and expertise on how to de-escalate violence and provide guidance and support to children and young people whilst working closely with the relevant local schools and police to help identify and respond to risks.

- 3.2.18 The Inquiry heard from three youth sector organisations who despite delivering some great work with young people, shared a common frustration about funding models which forces them to compete against each other for small pots of funding and results in short term activity focused within communities, often delivering a specific and targeted youth offer. These issues are compounded by the detrimental effects on relationship building with young people and the inability to continue or sustain that relationship once the project had ended. This issue has also been highlighted by 2020 Youth Violence Commission which identified serious problems with the provision of youth services by voluntary youth sector organisations, writing that:

“An extraordinary number of third sector organisations are being forced to compete for small pots of short-term project funding leading to the closure of many organisations and a ‘toxic climate of inadequate and ineffective services.’”¹²

- 3.2.19 Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide a local youth offer for young people and, in line with the strengthened guidance published on 28 September 2023, are required to ensure that their local youth offer is responsive to the needs of young people.¹³

- 3.2.20 [‘Times Running Out: Youth Services under threat and lost opportunities for young people’](#)¹⁴ published by the National Youth Agency and the YMCA England and Wales recommended that funding for youth services should be prioritised and be long term and ringfenced:

‘Without a clear commitment by government, strengthened statutory guidance and significant investment in the spending review, with ring-fenced funding in grant settlements for local authorities, the youth sector will be decimated. Young people must be a priority and it is imperative that the government acts to prevent these missed

¹² 2020 Youth Violence Commission, <https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/YVC-Final-Report-July-2020.pdf>

¹³ National Youth Agency - <https://www.nya.org.uk/stat-duty/>

¹⁴ [Times running out: Youth services under threat and lost opportunities for young people](#), National Youth Agency and YMCA England & Wales, 2021

opportunities for young people to get the support they need, and from which we all benefit from as a society’.

3.2.21 **Key Finding:** The contribution that youth services make to young people’s lives is highly valued by stakeholders who recognise how effective youth work can be in addressing complex issues and preventing them from requiring more costly intervention. There needs to be a joined-up approach and existing services need to be utilised to strengthen the coordination and cohesion of youth support on the ground.

Key Finding: Early intervention and prevention are critical. [Section 507b of the Education Act \(1996\)](#) requires local authorities to, so far as reasonably practicable, secure access for all qualifying young people to a sufficient quantity of ‘youth services’. Given the loss of youth services in England, and the unprecedented financial pressures faced by local authorities, young people are struggling to find the services they need. To ensure sufficient provision of services for young people, funding for youth services should be prioritised, be long term and ringfenced. Youth services should be protected in statute and Government should commit to funding a statutory Youth Service.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Early Intervention and Resilience			
R04	Recommendation: Council asks the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to lobby Government (and any future change in government) to adequately fund the provision of youth services, with ring fenced funding and to protect this in statute with a Youth Service Bill.	Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Transitions and Preparations to Adulthood

3.2.22 This stage refers to the period for young people as they are approaching adulthood. This can be a particularly challenging time as the level of service need may remain the same while the nature and amount of service around the child is likely to reduce as they shift to become adult.

3.2.23 In Birmingham, the Transitions and Preparations for Adulthood Service was set up in early 2020 to help young people bridge this challenging period. This is an innovative

prevention and early intervention service for young people aged 18-25¹⁵ which focused upon identified goals and aspirations by empowering them to make positive changes in their lives. During February – August 2023, this service worked with 865 young people from all parts of Birmingham; 13.2% were aged 18 or under.

3.2.24 The service shared with the Inquiry that:

- They had identified a lot of young people referred were identified as at risk of, or involved with, exploitation.
- They wanted to ensure the right support was offered to these young people.
- They also wanted these young people to understand the signs of exploitation for themselves.

3.2.25 The Transitions and Preparations for Adulthood Service highlighted that although there are a number of services working within this field, many are over stretched. They found that they were very much embraced by other agencies who welcomed the additionality they provided.

3.2.26 They identified that around 70% of the young people they supported had either a diagnosis of autism or ADHD, or the service suspected it was un-diagnosed. They worked with young people to understand that the offers of gifts and money are techniques associated with grooming and ways of luring them in and how it is then very difficult to get out.

Increase reporting of young people at risk of CCE

3.2.27 All witnesses highlighted staff from their organisations have undertaken training in CCE. This training focused on what exploitation is; how to identify it and how to make a referral. Nevertheless, concerns were raised that there remains gaps in awareness, and this is leading to missed opportunities for referrals.

3.2.28 The coverage of services is inconsistent across the city. Some services have reduced, stopped or may not have been delivered in parts of the city. Given the evolving nature of CCE and its broader geographic spread, a geographic targeted approach may mean some children are not coming into contact with services who can then refer them to Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub.

3.2.29 However, witnesses also felt that some children who were at risk of, or involved with, exploitation, may not be referred even though they have come into contact with services.

¹⁵ At the time of providing evidence to the inquiry, the service supported young people aged 14-30 years old.

3.2.30 Reasons suggested for this include:

- Unconscious bias in decision making. For example, boys who are Black may not be seen as victims by some professionals due to ‘adultification’¹⁶, or alternatively, certain behaviour for girls which indicate they are victims of exploitation may not be understood in that way.
- As the child is offending, it may not be recognised that they may also be a victim of exploitation.
- Due to high turnover or staff moves in organisations, it may not mean that all staff are up to date with relevant training. This is exacerbated by the evolving nature of CCE.

3.2.31 The Inquiry was concerned that the National Social Work programme does not include specific training on Child Criminal Exploitation. Birmingham Children’s Trust highlighted that they are exploring this as part of their social worker induction package.

3.2.32 West Midlands Police described how they support their officers to deliver the right response at the right time. They ensure officers are trauma informed and use self-reflection to understand the context for each individual. They highlighted how they have the challenge to navigate their responsibilities to catch and convict for serious offences and early intervention. The Police and Crime Commissioner advised that well-resourced community policing is important for early intervention, prevention and diversion.

3.2.33 The Police and Crime Commissioner also highlighted that his team were developing a policy to address unconscious bias in decision making.

3.2.34 Proposed ways to improve this awareness raising for staff included:

- Helping professionals to understand CCE in real terms. For example, training which is delivered with practical examples, case studies and informed by lived experiences. Further this could be tailored to different organisations who will interface with young people in different contexts.
- Using language which recognises young people as victims rather than a lifestyle choice.
- Ensuring a training offer is provided at all touch points including GPs and Children’s Social Workers.
- Training is offered as part of a continuous professional development rather than as a one-off.

¹⁶ See footnote 3.

3.2.35 **Key Finding:** The Inquiry is concerned that young people at risk of, or involved with, CCE are not consistently being identified and referred at an early stage. There are different reasons for this including the availability of services as well as bias in decision making.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Early Intervention and Resilience			
R05	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to request the Contextual Safeguarding Board and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership work with organisations to review their mandatory training offer to better equip staff to recognise signs of Child Criminal Exploitation and minimise the risk of bias in decision making.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R06	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to work with Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Children's Trust to ensure all staff working directly with children receive mandatory training on Child Criminal Exploitation and this is part of a continuous professional development approach.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Missing Children

3.2.36 Councils have a responsibility for preventing children from going missing, and safeguarding and protecting them when they do. There should be an up-to-date local [Runaway and Missing from Home and Care Protocol](#) (RMFHC), and all children who go missing should be offered an independent return home interview. Analysis of these interviews should be considered by local safeguarding partners to identify any patterns or emerging issues. Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership particularly highlighted the need to maximise these interviews with young people to help to protect them in the future. Any child who appears to be a victim of exploitation should be supported through safeguarding arrangements.

3.2.37 For the West Midlands, the Violence Reduction Partnership co-ordinates the regional Exploitation and Missing Board, which is co-chaired by the Head of Service at Birmingham Childrens Trust's Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub. This Board

provides a platform to share good practice across the West Midlands region and has undertaken work such as the development of a core competency framework.

Education

- 3.2.38 All witnesses highlighted how the pastoral support provided by schools is a vital service to protect young people from exploitation. Together with families, schools are well placed to become aware of factors which indicate increased risks to exploitation or see behaviour changes from young people which may indicate exploitation.
- 3.2.39 Key areas where schools make a difference could include incorporating exploitation into Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum; training to staff; monitoring attendance; making referrals to the right agencies and to consider alternatives for exclusions for children. This does take place, but witnesses felt more could be done.
- 3.2.40 Witnesses recognised that this is a challenging role for schools. The following factors were identified by witnesses as contributing to this including:
- 3.2.41 **Strength of the school's pastoral team** – are they offering trauma and child centred approaches? Some witnesses indicated that while they understood the focus for schools is on teaching and learning, they felt that in some schools their pastoral offer did not consider challenges such as exploitation. There were questions about how exploitation features in schools' safeguarding policies.
- 3.2.42 **Delivering a consistent approach** – the varied and complicated nature of the education sector makes it difficult to ensure a consistent approach is undertaken across all schools in all parts of the city, and there are too many schools, where their students and staff are missing this opportunity. Particularly given how CCE has changed in recent years and reinforced by the expectation that a number of young people have not been identified as at risk, a more consistent approach is required. Witnesses did highlight pockets of good practice. For example, schools who had taken up the offer of Violence Reduction Partnership funded programmes. Birmingham Children's Trust Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub also advised that they had a dedicated schools' officer to deliver a more effective interface with schools. The Inquiry queried whether there was a role for Birmingham City Council to influence this.
- 3.2.43 **Resources** – as with many areas of the public sector, available resources are stretched. To deliver more, schools may need additional support and investment to deliver directly, or consideration for joint delivery with other services.

Awareness Raising

3.2.44 Witnesses recommended that campaigns need to start from Years 5 and 6 at primary school level right through to senior school. This needs to be a regular, evolving age appropriate package (not just a one off) and supplemented by sessions for staff and parents.

Exclusions

3.2.45 The risks between young people not in education and exploitation are well documented, and the Inquiry was already aware that Birmingham has too high a level of exclusions, both at secondary and primary level.

3.2.46 There are long term questions whether organisations and partnerships are fully considering and developing alternatives to exclusions. The approach should be 'inclusion not exclusion' to support all young people to succeed in school.

3.2.47 The Council outlined the range of panels to assist with this. However, they need to get the right preventative structures in place. There is a new duty for improving attendance that will give them the opportunity to do this. They provided the following summary of activity:

- An Exclusion Strategy is in development – there has been a step forward in the use of data to understand what is happening with exclusions. For example, who is getting excluded. It is important to understand the Head Teachers role in school exclusions and make sure the support is there. As part of the role of the strategy, they will need to monitor more effectively 'what works'.
- The Tackling Exclusions Group – chaired by Birmingham City Council, and which comprises schools, City of Birmingham School and Birmingham Children's Trust, as some of its members. This group is exploring how they work with schools; address risk factors (such as Children in Care) and base their activity on 'what works'.
- The Safe Taskforce is a Department for Education funded school led programme with c.£6m for 38 schools to assist with schools' exclusions in Birmingham. There is a re-focus around children with wraparound universal services.
- Birmingham Youth Service has been working with primary schools on 'from resilience to resolve' project. This has involved 690+ children.

Gaps in Delivery

3.2.48 Three areas were highlighted for potential gaps in delivery:

- Higher Education – Birmingham Children’s Trust felt that there was potential for further engagement.
- Home Schooling – the Inquiry was concerned that these young people (if at risk of, or involved with, exploitation) are invisible to services. Their concern is exacerbated as they understand there has been an increase since the pandemic in home schooling.
- Independent sector including faith schools – it was not clear to the Inquiry what activity took place in independent schools.

3.2.49 **Key Finding:** The pastoral offer in schools needs to be strengthened to reflect increasing challenges around exploitation and embedded in schools’ safeguarding policies including primary schools and for parents.

3.2.50 **Key Finding:** Delivering a consistent offer across all schools is complicated by the structure of the education sector together with resource levels. Partnerships should explore how to influence schools as well as support them to deliver more.

3.2.51 **Key Finding:** Alternatives to exclusions need to be fully explored and utilised. The use of data to inform the Exclusions strategy and Tackling Exclusions group is a step forward.

3.2.52 **Key Finding:** It is not clear how the Council is working with young people who are being home schooled to manage any risks to exploitation.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Early Intervention and Resilience			
R07	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to provide a report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the impact of the Council’s work with schools to address exploitation as part of their safeguarding policies. This should include academies and primary schools.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R08	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families		

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	to provide a timeline for the development and publication of an Exclusions strategy, engage with the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny in its development, and commit to providing regular reports on outcomes from the new strategy once in place.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	April 2025 (12 months after report has been published)
R09	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to report to the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on how the Council is monitoring the risk of exploitation with children and young people who receive Elective Home Education.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

3.3 Supporting Young People to Exit Exploitation

- 3.3.1 The [Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 2018](#) outlines the responsibilities of councils and partners in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The guidance applies to all organisations and agencies who have functions relating to children, including all councils, NHS, police, education, faith-based organisations and sports clubs.
- 3.3.2 Contextual Safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr Carlene Firmin while she was at the University of Bedfordshire's [Contextual Safeguarding Network](#), recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe. It is an approach

that has often been used to apply to adolescents, though the lessons can equally be applied to younger children, especially in today's changing world¹⁷.

- 3.3.3 Birmingham adopts the Contextual Safeguarding approach within this city.
- 3.3.4 The Inquiry heard about how following a referral, which is assessed using the [Joint Screening Tool](#), information is shared between different organisations to enable a joined up and coordinated approach to keeping the child safe.
- 3.3.5 The key mechanisms to share information were identified as:
- Co-location
 - Formal conversations
 - Digital platforms
- 3.3.6 **Co-location:** The Inquiry heard from witnesses about the formal structures in place to support information sharing between organisations. One of the key mechanisms for this is Birmingham Children's Trust Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub which contains multi-agency staff from both statutory and non-statutory services. The setting up and embedding in of this Hub is seen as a significant positive step.
- 3.3.7 **Formal Conversations:** There are also daily case conferences to discuss young people on an individual basis and co-ordinate responses within the city, as well as the Exploitation and Missing Board which is co-chaired by the Head of Service for Birmingham Children's Trust Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub.
- 3.3.8 As a practical example of the contextual approach, the Inquiry was also advised that community intelligence such as 'what is happening outside on the street or in the wider community,' is also informing approaches to young people. This further reinforces the need to establish the right partnerships within the community.
- 3.3.9 The Inquiry heard evidence from Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust who raised concerns that relevant statutory organisations may be missed in these case conferences. They provided examples where they had not been included in relevant discussions about young people and, as a result, they felt that the assessment of risk for CCE had been made on incomplete information and was assessed as lower than it should have been. They also highlighted how they had been working with vulnerable young people with complex mental health needs who had been involved with exploitation, and they had not been provided with all of the relevant information about this exploitation.
- 3.3.10 **Digital Platforms:** There is no current information IT platform in place to link different organisations; this would make it easier and quicker to share information. Birmingham

¹⁷ [Contextual Safeguarding: What is it and why does it matter?](#), NSPCC, accessed 1 March 2024.

Children's Trust highlighted there are discussions taking place to consider potential solutions for this.

- 3.3.11 CCE networks operate across intra-regional boundaries, the effective dissemination of intelligence across and beyond the region is also required. A digital solution may provide a more effective platform for this.

Third Sector

- 3.3.12 Both national and local third sector organisations are recognised by statutory partners as critical stakeholders with professional expertise; this is both in the early intervention and post assessment stage. They are often able to deliver in a more flexible, agile and bespoke way to the particular needs of young people. This may be more challenging for large public sector organisations with statutory responsibilities and operating across the whole city.
- 3.3.13 As third sector organisations do not have statutory responsibilities, it may be easier for them to build and maintain positive relationships with young people and families. Local third sector organisations are also often rooted in communities. This presents them with a distinct advantage, as their delivery can be informed by contextual knowledge about what is happening in the community, and which may be affecting individual young people.
- 3.3.14 Birmingham Children's Trust Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub has placed particular importance on developing strong relationships with community partners, and they see this as an area for continued growth.
- 3.3.15 Local community organisations acknowledged there has been progress in collaborative working in recent years since the setting up of Empower U Hub and the Violence Reduction Partnership. However, they also specifically highlighted how the current arrangements for information sharing does limit the effectiveness of this collaboration for young people. For example, they feel statutory services are risk averse to sharing information – to address this, third sector organisations have aimed to embed themselves in statutory organisations or partnerships groups to build trust and relationships. However, this may compromise their independence and flexibility in delivery.
- 3.3.16 The following gaps were highlighted:
- Birmingham Children's Trust has concerns that there needs to be more activity for young people who are trying to exit from exploitation.
 - They also highlighted that more work is required with parents and carers to help them support young people to process trauma.

- Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust felt that the system of interventions and in particular the non-statutory sector is not equipped to deal with young people with high mental health needs.

3.3.17 **Key Finding:** Communities themselves have a vital and essential role to tackle CCE. Communities and community based organisations often have valuable information and insight into what is happening. In recent years, community based organisations have played a greater role working alongside statutory organisations to address this issue. This needs to continue. There are more opportunities to better use the information within communities to keep young people safe.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
Supporting Young People to Exit Exploitation			
R10	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to consider how intelligence and information can be better shared with community partners and public sector organisations.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

3.4 Enforcement

- 3.4.1 The Inquiry heard how CCE is linked to organised crime. Young people involved with this exploitation are often the ‘foot soldiers’. Recruitment of young people by these gangs is often sophisticated and adapts to who they are targeting.
- 3.4.2 West Midlands Police outlined their operational model to address CCE. They also provided assurances that prosecutions are undertaken. They highlighted how when a young person commits a serious offence, it is difficult to determine who is the exploiter and who is the exploited.
- 3.4.3 Birmingham Children’s Trust advised they felt that there are more opportunities for enforcement action and in particular, to target the Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) themselves.
- 3.4.4 Further to this, they highlighted that there is a need for information campaigns to get communities behind efforts to prevent exploitation. This campaign should have a national focus to mobilise community opinion against exploitation and stigmatise exploiters, as it has worked in other campaigns previously. Successful prosecutions

will encourage communities to get involved. They described these exploiters as child abusers, and everyone needs to be framing their thinking in this way. They referred to the [Eyes Open](#)¹⁸ campaign – a regional campaign in Merseyside which has aimed to do this and delivered results. The campaign, championed by Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, asks the people of Merseyside to keep their 'Eyes Open' to the signs of drug gangs grooming the county's young people and provides information and resources to the community, to schools and to partner organisations¹⁹.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Enforcement		
R11	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities to lobby for a national and/or regional campaign to highlight enforcement action against Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) which are exploiting young people.	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	Oct 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

3.5 Strategy and Governance

- 3.5.1 The Birmingham Contextual Safeguarding Board published its Strategy and Delivery Plan for Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26 last year. This outlines progress over the past three years and its priorities for the next three years. The Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board is a multi-agency group. This Board acts on behalf of the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership and Birmingham Community Safety Partnership.
- 3.5.2 The diagram below outlines the governance arrangements in place for the Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26 strategy. The inquiry had concerns that there was not a clear and common understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities to hold the strategy and the Contextual Safeguarding Board to account, or how this would be done. As a result, this may arise in gaps in accountability or duplication of activity.

¹⁸ [Eyes Open: The Campaign to stop Child Criminal Exploitation](https://ourmerseyside.org/cce/) - <https://ourmerseyside.org/cce/>

¹⁹ Feedback received from the Birmingham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (BSCP) to the report also questioned whether there could be opportunities to question 'is drug use too socially acceptable with little thought to the exploitation that is supporting the supply of drugs'.



- 3.5.3 There is evidence of a public health approach informing this strategy. In essence, this means analysing information to identify what is causing exploitation and using this analysis to develop interventions to prevent further exploitation. It also involves multiple partners working together to implement these interventions and doing more of ‘what works’.
- 3.5.4 However, there is a challenge for the Board to build on this progress and work towards implementing a whole system approach. There remain gaps in education, health, justice and care systems and how they join up their services effectively, which leave children vulnerable to exploitation. There are also further improvements to be made on the analysis of data.
- 3.5.5 The financial context for Local Government and Birmingham City Council in particular raises concerns whether this strategy can be delivered.
- 3.5.6 There is also some confusion about how the strategy and its delivery will be scrutinised and held to account, and how this will be done compared to what is outlined in the strategy itself.
- 3.5.7 The Inquiry considered that there would be local benefits to address exploitation if national policy around young people is more joined up. A government minister for young people could enable a cross governmental strategy to be developed which offers a holistic and joined up approach, delivers a wide range of support and interventions that protects and supports young people, and is delivered by a professional workforce across education, the voluntary sector, and local authorities.
- 3.5.8 **Key Finding:** The introduction of a new specific strategy is welcomed and a needed step forward. Many of the Inquiry’s own findings concur with the priorities identified in the strategy. However, achieving the strategy’s ambitions will be even more

challenging in the current national and local financial context. Current funding envelopes limit the development of longer term programmes which deliver real benefit.

3.5.9 **Key Finding:** The governance of the strategy needs to be more robust and meaningful, so it is truly held to account. There is not a consistent view of who has accountability and whether this provides effective challenge.

3.5.10 **Key Finding:** To deliver a joined up approach locally, there needs to be a joined up approach nationally. A Minister for Young People could deliver real benefits around national policy making for young people.

Ref	Recommendations to Cabinet Members	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Governance and Strategy		
R12	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to report back on the progress, and outcomes achieved of the strategy and delivery plan: Tackling Exploitation of Children and Young People 2023-26	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R13	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to clarify the governance and accountability arrangements for this strategy.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)
R14	Recommendation: Council asks the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families to lobby Government (and future Government) for a Minister for Young People to enable joined up and holistic policy making in relation to young people.	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities	October 2024 (6 months after report has been published)

Appendix 1 – Inquiry Activities

Date	Session	Evidence
30 November 2022	Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham Children's Trust
17 May 2023	Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young People's Substance Misuse Service - Aquarius and Birmingham City Council - Public Health • Birmingham City Council - Youth Service, Children and Families Directorate
9 August 2023	Call for Evidence survey launched	
10 August 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham Children's Trust • Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub • West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner • Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)
18 August 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT)
25 August 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Midlands Police
30 August 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) • Birmingham City Council – Community Safety
5 September 2023	Call For Evidence survey closed	
26 September 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham City Council - Thriving Children and Families, Children and Families Directorate • Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)
20 November 2023	Task and Finish Group Evidence Gathering Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essence Youth Mentoring Service • First Class Foundation • Bringing Hope Charity

Appendix 2: Contributors

Below is a list of all contributors to this inquiry:

Aquarius

Aquarius Action Projects (part of the Richmond Fellowship) delivers the Young People's Substance Misuse Service. The key commissioning intentions are to minimise the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco, and reduce risk/vulnerabilities in a holistic approach.

Aquarius work with young people up to the age of 25 (previously 18), this aligns with other young people services, for example, Forward Thinking Birmingham.

Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust (BSMHFT)

BSMHFT work with young people with mental health difficulties who pose a serious risk of violence towards others and/or themselves. A high proportion of the young people they work with have experienced CCE. In their inpatient services, 44% report being exploited with in a gang, whilst 37% of their community referrals are known to be experiencing CCE.

Birmingham Children's Trust

Children's services in Birmingham are managed by Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham City Council. Birmingham Children's Trust was set up in 2018 by Birmingham City Council to create the conditions that enabled good social work and family support to flourish.²⁰

Birmingham City Council: Children and Families Directorate

The Children and Families Directorate delivers services such as:

- Early years support and education.
- Services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Travel for children and young people.
- Youth and career services.²¹

²⁰

https://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/news/article/164/celebrating_good_news_for_children_s_services_in_birmingham

²¹

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50320/working_with_children_young_people_and_families/2872/about_the_children_and_families_directorate

Birmingham City Council: Public Health

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 and associated regulations transferred the responsibility for public health from the NHS to local authorities from April 2013. Under the HSC Act 2012, local authorities have a legal duty to protect children from harm, reduce health inequalities and improve the health of their local population by ensuring that there are public health services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse and is a condition of the Public Health Grant that is received into the Council.

Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP)

The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) mandated all local authority areas to establish Crime and Disorder Partnerships. In Birmingham, this partnership is referred to as the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP).

The core membership of the BCSP includes all Responsible Authorities. These include Birmingham City Council; Birmingham Children's Trust; West Midlands Police; West Midlands Fire Service; National Probation Service; and Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board. Co-opted members are Birmingham Social Housing Partnership, West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP), Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for the West Midlands and the Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust.²²

The BCSP has responsibility for discharging the following statutory requirements:

- Work together to form and implement strategies to prevent and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, and the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse. This will include producing an annual plan.
- Produce plans to reduce re-offending by adults and young people.
- Commission Domestic Homicide Reviews. To work in partnership to reduce serious violence – new duty came into effect in January 2023 and involves the introduction of an Offensive Weapon Homicide Review.
- Consult and engage with the community.

In addition to the above, the BCSP will also support partner organisations to discharge their legal duties for Prevent, modern slavery, contextual safeguarding, domestic abuse and manage the anti-social behaviour case review.

Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) oversees how organisations work together to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Police, NHS Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board, working in close collaboration with Birmingham Children's Trust, have a shared statutory

²² BCSP Annual Report 2022/23

responsibility for leading safeguarding arrangements to ensure that safeguarding children is everyone's business.²³

Birmingham Childrens Trust: Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub

Birmingham Children's Trust Empower U Exploitation and Missing Hub is a partnership team which takes a contextual approach to protecting children and keeping them safe and free from exploitation with a coordinated and proactive response from prevention through to safeguarding and prosecution.

It is funded by Birmingham Children's Trust and Birmingham City Council with co-location and/or virtual representation from:

- West Midlands Police.
- Health (includes Red Thread & Sexual and Mental Health services).
- Education.
- West Midlands Police.
- Community Safety Partnership.
- Probation.
- Housing.

Bringing Hope Charity

Bringing Hope is a charity based in Birmingham that works in prisons and the community with those involved in serious violence and crime.²⁴

Essence Youth Mentoring Service Community Interest Company

Essence Youth Mentoring Service works with schools.

First Class Foundation

First Class Foundation is a charity that specialises in tackling youth violence, building mental health resilience and connecting families to positive outcomes. They have street outreach workers and youth mentors and work with other organisations and signpost young people.

Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)

The VRP is hosted by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The Commissioner chairs the VRP Strategic Board. It is funded through the Home Office Serious Violence Fund, which brings together local authorities, police, probation, fire, health, education,

²³ <https://lscpbirmingham.org.uk/about-us/who-we-are>

²⁴ <https://www.bringinghope.co.uk/>

voluntary and community sector agencies to deliver a whole system, preventative response to serious violence, including county lines activity.

West Midlands Police

West Midlands Police is the second largest police force in the country, covering an area of 348 square miles and serving a population of almost 2.8 million.²⁵

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner

The role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing. Under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, PCCs must:

- Secure efficient and effective police for their area.
- Appoint the Chief Constable, hold them to account for running the force, and if necessary, dismiss them.
- Set the police and crime objectives for their area through a police and crime plan.
- Set the force budget and determine the precept.
- Contribute to the national and international policing capabilities set out by the Home Secretary.
- Bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up.

²⁵ <https://www.west-midlands.police.uk/about-us/our-force>

Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Child Criminal Exploitation - Executive Commentary

We extend our gratitude to the Chair and members of the committee for their diligent work on the Scrutiny Inquiry Report on Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). Your commitment to understanding the challenges faced by vulnerable children in Birmingham is truly commendable, and your insights have aided our thinking on how to better protect our youth.

Your thorough examination of the issues surrounding CCE has provided us with invaluable insights, which I would like to highlight:

- The importance of effective partnership working, as mandated by legislative duties, in safeguarding children from harm.
- The reliance on regional definitions due to the absence of a national definition for CCE, emphasising the need for a shared understanding among partner organisations.
- The challenges in determining the scale of CCE in Birmingham, highlighting the need for nuanced understanding and data-driven strategies.
- The recognition of diverse environments influencing children's experiences and the emphasis on tailored interventions through contextual safeguarding.
- The link between CCE and organised crime, underscoring the need for robust enforcement measures.
- The strategic approach of the Birmingham Contextual Safeguarding Board, emphasising data-driven analysis to prevent exploitation.

Your detailed examination has laid a solid foundation for making tangible changes that will reduce the number of children at risk of CCE and improve partnership working.

We are committed to using the findings from the Scrutiny Inquiry Report to make a real difference. We will collaborate with stakeholders to implement the report's recommendations and provide regular updates to protect our children and young people from exploitation.

Councillor Karen McCarthy
**Cabinet Member for Children,
Young People and Families**

Councillor Nicky Brennan
**Cabinet Member for Social
Justice, Community, Safety & Equalities**

Birmingham City Council

City Council

16 April 2024



Subject: Audit Committee Annual Report
Report of: Councillor Fred Grindrod, Chair of the Audit Committee
Report author: Andrew Hardingham, Technical Advisor to the Audit Committee

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report contained in Appendix 1 summarises the work of the Audit Committee completed between September 2022 and March 2024.
- 1.2 It describes the purpose and core functions of the Council's Audit Committee and summarises the assurance activities undertaken; this includes:
 - Assurance Statements and Governance.
 - Risk Management.
 - Receiving reports from the Local Government Ombudsman.
 - Internal Audit and Counter Fraud.
 - Financial Reporting, External Audit, Inspection, and assurance.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That City Council:
 - 2.1.1 Receives and considers the annual report of the Audit Committee.
 - 2.1.2 Endorse the new approach to the production of the Annual Governance Statement ensuring that the Committee are able to fully contribute to its development and that the statement becomes the foundation upon which the work of the Committee is built.
 - 2.1.3 Support the ongoing development of the Committee recognising that this is not a quick fix but a journey of development.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Audit Committee is a key component of the Council's governance framework.
- 3.2 The role of the Audit Committee is set out within its terms of reference. Best practice guidelines published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommend that Audit Committees publish an annual report to maintain transparency and accountability, account for its performance, explain its work and set out the assurance that has been received.
- 3.3 The reporting period has been extended to bring the annual report into line with the Council's other key reporting periods, particularly the annual fiscal cycle.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report, however the work and functions of the Council's Audit Committee is prescribed in the Council's Constitution.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report, however the work and functions of the Audit Committee includes considering the external auditor's annual findings report and letter, including the annual Value for Money assessment and relevant reports, and approving the Council's audited Financial Statements.

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 None.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1: Annual Report of the Audit Committee.

Audit Committee Annual Report to Council

Foreword by the Chair

Audit Committees play an important role in the good governance of an authority. Best practice guidelines published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) recommend that Audit Committees publish an annual report to maintain transparency and accountability, account for its performance, explain its work and set out the assurance that has been received.

This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee completed between September 2022 and March 2024. The reporting period has been extended to bring the annual report into line with the Council's other key reporting periods, particularly the annual fiscal cycle. It describes the purpose and core functions of the Council's Audit Committee and summarises the assurance activities undertaken; this includes:

- Assurance Statements and Governance
- Risk Management
- Receiving reports from the Local Government Ombudsman
- Internal Audit and Counter Fraud
- Financial Reporting, External Audit, Inspection and assurance

During the year two exceptional items of business were reported to and discussed by the Committee. These related to the failed Oracle ERP system implementation and the Equal Pay claim.

The Purpose of the Audit Committee

The Audit Committee is a key component of the Council's governance framework. Its purpose is to provide an independent and high-level review and assurance role to support good governance, risk management, control arrangements and sound public financial management.

In November 2023 the Committee received a report setting out amendments to the Terms of Reference (ToR). The ToR ensures the Audit Committee is operating to the latest best practice and provides reference for both Members and Officers to ensure appropriate focus of reports for the Committee.

The Committee's purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk management and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control provides greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective. The Committee has an important role with respect of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability. The amended ToR of the Audit Committee are set out for reference in Appendix 1.

The purpose of the Committee is set out in the Terms of Reference under the heading purpose paragraph 14.1:

“The committee’s purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk management and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control provides greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective. The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability”.

In summary the Committee’s role is to challenge, assess and gather assurance from within the council and external agencies, on the level and quality of internal control and risk management processes in place to ensure that Council objectives are met.

Recommendations

1. That the Council are asked to endorse the new approach to the production of the Annual Governance Statement ensuring that the Committee are able to fully contribute to its development and that the statement becomes the foundation upon which the work of the Committee is built.
2. That the Council to support the ongoing development of the Committee recognising that this is not a quick fix but a journey of development.

Introduction

The period since the last annual report to Council has been one of the most difficult faced by the Committee in terms of seeking assurance regarding mitigating factors to the major risks faced by the Council alongside seeking assurance regarding good governance practices. However difficult the issues faced, the Committee has reached out to seek support and has now established a development programme to sit alongside refreshed terms of refence and a new governance group. The Committee is now well placed to move forward into the next period.

This report covers an extended 18-month period from September 2022 to March 2024 primarily to bring reporting into line with other annual fiscal reporting cycles. During this period the committee met on 15 occasions. Two of those meeting were extraordinary meetings. A further two meetings were cancelled.

Membership

The Audit Committee is made up of 8 non-executive councillors appointed to reflect the political balance of the Council. The Chair of the Committee is Councillor Fred Grindrod, and the Vice Chair is Councillor Paul Tilsley.

The table below sets out attendance details of those who are/have served as members of the Committee.

	20 Mar 2024	21 Feb	31 Jan	29 Nov 2023	18 Oct	6 Oct **	27 Sep	15 Sep **	19 Jul
Grindrod	POSTPONED	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Tilsley		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Perks		X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Hussain				X	X		X	X	X
Shah					X			X	
Jenkins		X	X		X		X	X	
Alden		X		X					
Lines									
Kurt-Elli									

	28 Jun	16 May 2023	25 Apr	28 Mar	14 Feb	13 Jan	22 Nov 2022	18 Oct
Grindrod	X	X	POSTPONED	X	X	X	X	X
Tilsley	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Perks	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Hussain		X			X		X	X
Shah	X			X	X		X	
Jenkins	X	X			X	X	X	X
Lines								X
Khan		X		X	X	X	X	

** DENOTES EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

The lack of and irregular attendance by some members has impacted on the breadth of perspectives and challenge. The Committee are keen for Full Council to support the ongoing development of the Committee recognising that this is not a quick fix but a journey of development.

Advisors to the Audit Committee

The Committee has appointed Andrew Hardingham, a former s151 Officer to be its technical advisor. Rob Milford of Milford Research and Consultancy Limited has been retained to provide training and development support to the Committee.

Training and Development

A structured programme of training and development has been provided for the Committee to complement its annual work plan. This has consisted of training sessions being scheduled to take place before each Committee Meeting. The Committee have also reviewed CIPFA's "Audit Committee Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2022" to complete a self-assessment to measure the impact and effectiveness of the Committee.

Assurance Statements and Governance

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) should be the cornerstone upon which the work of the Committee is based. Local authorities are required to prepare an annual governance statement to publicly report on the extent to which they comply with their own code of governance.

The process of preparing the AGS should in itself add value to the effectiveness of the governance and internal control framework. Due to a number of factors including the delay in presenting the statement of accounts for 2023/24 the Committee has not received and therefore not been able to comment on and influence the AGS. This has been recognised as a governance failure and is therefore an issue the Committee is seeking to remedy. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) highlighted this as an area of work that needed to be addressed.

At the meeting on 21 February 2024 the Committee received a report setting out the recommended approach to updating the AGS, including the internal audit plan methodology. This methodology recognised that the Audit Committee had not had opportunity to review an AGS, and consequently the local Code of Corporate Governance and its effectiveness, since 28th September 2022. The AGS presented at that time was a review reflecting the financial period of 2021/22. The next AGS needs to include the significant governance issues identified in the independent Governance Review conducted by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny during 2023 and the successful delivery of the Stabilisation Plan recommend by the Governance Review. It also needs to include the issues that led to the appointment of Commissioners, the publication of the statutory S114 and Section 5 Notices and the External Audit Statutory Recommendations. The AGS will also include output from the internal audit function, usually in the form of the Head of Internal Audit's annual opinion report, which will be informed by a risk-based internal audit plan.

It is proposed to separate the preparation of the AGS from the preparation of the annual statement of accounts to ensure that the AGS becomes the foundation of the Committees work and drives the agenda going forward. It is therefore recommended that the Council endorses the new approach to the production of the AGS ensuring that the Committee are able to fully contribute to its development and that the statement becomes the foundation upon which the work of the Committee is built.

Risk Management

The Committee's key risk management role is to provide assurance on the adequacy of the Council's Risk Management Framework (RMF) and the associated control environment by reviewing the mechanisms for assessing and managing risk. The Committee has received regular updates on the RMF (November 2022, February 2023, July 2023, October 2023 and January 2024).

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) reported that *"While the authority's corporate systems and approaches for assessing risk, and escalating concerns, have been poor, there has also been a lack of curiosity on the part of members on risk issues, and a lack of proactivity in articulating basic expectations of what members' strategic roles should be in respect of risk management."*

In January 2024 it was reported to the Committee that a programme of work had recently begun to address both the observed and reported shortcomings, and also some industry recognised improvements that will improve the risk management maturity and sophistication of Birmingham Council. This work has commenced against a backdrop of multiple significant events and external recommendations by both external and internal partners such as Milford Research & Consultancy, KPMG and the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny. Under the new Audit Committee Terms of Reference, there is a clear remit for the Committee to have oversight of both the overarching Risk Management system and systems to manage risks within directorates/service areas, but also those services that look to provide assurance over the mitigation strategies, actions and controls in place to manage those risks, e.g. Internal Audit.

The Committee welcomed the refresh and approved the risk management rebuild programme recognising that the work will need to bed in over the next twelve months as the three phases to the programme are implemented. The embedding of new processes and procedures is critical not just to the attitudinal, behavioural and cultural aspects of risk aware organisations but fundamentally essential to the development of the Committee. During this reporting period, the Committee found that the RMF was somewhat lacking in its timeliness thereby reducing the effectiveness. The Committee found deficiencies with the risk register with major risks (Equal Pay and Oracle) not being added until the “risks” had become “issues”.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman

In line with the original terms of reference the Audit Committee receive reports from the Ombudsman and monitor management responses. Complaints should be used to highlight areas where controls may be failing and therefore used to influence service improvement. Reports were received in January and March 2023, concerning assisted waste collection, temporary accommodation and respite support for disabled. In February the committee received the Local Government and social Care ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman annual review. The Committee noted the acceptance of the Ombudsman’s recommendations and that a series of detailed actions had been carried out as a consequence.

Internal Audit and Counter Fraud

One of the Committees key roles is to review and monitor the work of Internal Audit. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) set out the requirements for internal audit. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 state that local authorities must undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance. In June 2023 the Assistant Director Audit and Risk Management was due to present the annual report but the Committee deferred until the next meeting. However, the report has not been scheduled since. During the reporting period the Committee received regular reports providing updates on the progress of delivering the Audit Plan. At times the Committee found it difficult to understand and follow the development of the Plan. To help improve the plan using a risk-based approach, and to improve monitoring and reporting the council have contracted with Dr Rob Milford and Associates.

Financial Reporting, External Audit, Inspection and assurance

This area of work covers external providers of assurance including external audit, which is the key external provider of assurance for financial stewardship and accountability. The Committee has a duty to scrutinise the Council's financial and non-financial performance, to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and the control environment and to oversee the financial reporting process.

During the year the committee received reports, written and verbal from the Councils external auditors (Grant Thornton), detailing their work plans and progress they have made. Updates were received in January 2023 regarding the 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts. It was noted that progress had been made on the audit of financial statements for both outstanding years.

In March 2023 Grant Thornton issued their Audit Findings report for both 2020/21 and 2021/22. It was reported that they were very close to issuing opinions on both years with items remaining that should not affect the opinion. The 2020/21 Audit was virtually complete but there were some outstanding issues with 2021/22. During the meeting there was some debate concerning the Oracle implementation and cost overruns. The External Auditors felt the Oracle Implementation and audit around this was not where it needed to be. In June 2023 reconsideration of the equal pay liability (alongside the AGS) was identified as one of two key reasons for preventing completion of the 2020/21 audit. Oracle impairment consideration and equal pay was preventing completion of the 2021/22 audit. Both matters were preventing the VFM opinion sign off for both years.

In January 2024 it was reported by Grant Thornton that the financial statements for both 2020/21 and 2021/22 remain open primarily due to Councils Equal Pay liability. The original reason for not closing and signing off the accounts was due to additional work required regarding infrastructure asset valuations which was a national issue. The Committee were advised that Grant Thornton had received a detailed calculation of the equal pay liability but had not concluded their work and that work would need to take place looking forward in terms of the Job Evaluation Methodology. The auditors were also reviewing the Financial Sustainability of the Council and impact of Oracle. The Committee were concerned that the 2024/25 budget was going to be set before the completion of the 2022/23 outturn and accounts and that financial monitoring was only available to mid-2023/24.

It must also be noted that the Committee have not received the Statement of Accounts for the period 2022/23.

Key Issues

During the reporting period two key issues have arisen that effectively undermined any confidence that the Committee held regarding good financial and operational governance. The first concerns the implementation of Oracle Cloud ERP and the second the revelation of the equal pay liability. Both these issues (combined with a budget overspend) were contributory factors leading to the S151 Officer issuing a notice under section 114(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

Oracle

In October 2022 the Council's Audit Committee were advised that the new Oracle Cloud ERP system had gone live following implementation in April 2022. It was acknowledged that there were still some areas being worked on, but it was considered that the Council was in the post-implementation period. The Committee was assured that the SAP system would still be supported until the final accounts [2021/22] were audited.

In March 2023, five months later, the Committee received a further update in response to the External Auditors Audit Findings Report for the year ending 31 March 2022 reassuring members that the outstanding issues were being dealt with. It was noted that the implementation of the new system would impact predominantly on 2022/23 going forward. Grant Thornton did not raise any concerns regarding the implementation at this point.

In May 2023 the position had substantially changed; the City Solicitor and Interim Director of Finance presented a report to the Committee to acknowledge a major failing with the implementation of the Oracle Cloud ERP system. The report advised that governance had been strengthened with a new task force being set up to focus on Oracle related issues. The Committee were advised that the External Auditors had offered to independently review the plans to get the implementation of Oracle back on track. In January 2024 Grant Thornton issued a draft value for money report in relation to the implementation of Oracle. A comprehensive series of recommendations covering all phases of the work (Finance Operations, Safe and Complaint Programme and Future Optimisation.) were included. There was a particular concern around Oracle expertise and building the capacity into the future. The Key Partner acknowledged that officers were working hard on this area however, the progress anticipated had not been made at this stage.

During this period the Committee has consistently tried to seek reassurance regarding the mitigation of the risks to the Council arising from the Oracle failure. Members are of the opinion that they were not being given the full facts. A full and frank discussion was held in private in May. The Committee was also concerned that although Internal Audit had been working alongside this project since its inception a full end to end audit had not taken place, instead areas of discrete work were investigated (highest risk at the time). Again, nothing was flagged to the Committee. It was not until July that the Committee received an updated risk register that included a new risk "Failure to address Oracle Implementation issues" rated as severe. A detailed discussion took place concerning the risks associated with DBS records and the risk that Oracle had exposed that the standard for DBS checks was not being adhered to leading to a culture issue around safeguarding. The Committee were advised that a management review was taking place and Internal Audit were working within this area to understand the impact. A new Compliance and Vetting Team was in place. This report was welcomed by the Committee.

The Committee noted that the programme was placing significant demands on staff and sought reassurances that all members of the Programmes and Finance Team currently engaged in the Oracle Implementation Recovery were supported in an appropriate way.

After a robust discussion the Committee noted the contents of the VFM report as set out by the External Auditors, noted that an update needed to be provided to the Committee regarding DBS checks and why the Safe and Complaint stage has not been achieved including the reasons for the delay; and noted a full response to the final report on Oracle from the External Auditors will be shared at the next meeting of the Committee. This was scheduled to be March, but this meeting was cancelled.

Equal Pay

The second issue that the Committee was seeking assurance concerned the equal pay claims, Appendix 2. The particular concern for the Committee was the quantum of the liability, the governance concerning the disclosure of the liability and the risk that posed to the Council's financial sustainability going forward.

The Committee became concerned because as far back as May 2022 the Committee was advised by Grant Thornton in their report on the 2020/21 accounts that following their risk-based procedures, they had not identified any weaknesses in the Council's arrangements during the 2020/21 financial year relating to equal pay claims.

In October 2022 the Committee was advised that

“The latest valuation of outstanding equal pay liability is £122.5m (March 2022 valuation) and provision has been made for this in the draft accounts for 2021/22 (still to be audited). As at March 2022, the Council's total expenditure as a result of settling equal pay claims issued under the Equality Act 2010 and preceding Equal Pay Act 1970 was £1.1 billion. When the outstanding liability of £122.5m quoted above is considered, then total expected expenditure is estimated to rise to around £1.3 billion. The revenue implications of equal pay settlements have been reflected in both the budget and the Council's medium-term financial plans in relation to later years.”

The debate took place in private session.

In March 2023 Grant Thornton reported in regard to 2020/21 that the estimate for the liability had been *“determined and recognised in accordance with accounting standards”*. Grant Thornton also requested that management document its consideration if there was any new information regarding the estimation of the liability and if any adjustment was required to the accounts. Grant Thornton stated that they would review the position. The position for 2021/22 was also reported as requiring review.

By July 2023 The Committee was advised that it was estimated that as of 31 March 2023, the Council's current potential equal pay liability could be in the region of £650m and £760m. The Committee held a lengthy debate in private session. The Committee were advised that Grant Thornton were undertaking a special review on Equal Pay. The External Auditor was concerned that the Council had not chosen a job evaluation option and was not making progress to closing this liability which was a significant concern for financial future. In September the council was issued with the S114 notice.

At the Audit Committee held on 27 September 2023, the External Auditor notified the Committee that they were informed of the potential liability in March 2023. The Committee raised a series of governance points including that although there was clear knowledge of an equal pay crisis the budget (2023/24) had been agreed in February 2023. Questions were raised why Equal Pay was not indicated on the risk register or budget. Members sought assurance concerning the mitigation of the risks and the timescales for determining the way forward to resolution.

The latest financial update received by the Committee was in January 2024. This focused on savings required to balance the budget but whilst the Committee understood the need for prudence the Committee was still concerned that the savings quantum was driven with regard to assumptions on the size of the equal pay liability rather than on a factually based calculation.

External support and reviews

Milford Research and Consultancy have been appointed to work with the Committee to provide relevant training and mentoring. The company, led by Dr Milford, are contracted to provide inter alia New Terms of Reference which have now been approved and introduced, re-establishment of the “three lines model” to ensure an appropriate and relevant assurance framework including the establishment of a risk-based approach to the Internal Audit Plan. The appointment has been welcomed and supported by the Committee particularly as the Committee seeks to respond to the recommendations of the independent review of governance undertaken by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS).

Their report stated that *“the Audit Committee should be an important mechanism for the Council to use to manage its exposure to financial risk. However, the committee lacks the capability and capacity to carry out its work properly. Members do not understand how to challenge the content of reports; reports themselves are generally of poor quality and are not drafted on the basis of an understanding of Audit’s regulatory role. There have been some recent attempts to address some of these challenges, but more needs to be done.”* The report further stated that *“The need for work to support the improvement of the Audit Committee is seen as urgent. Ongoing work by the Council’s external auditor will inform this activity.”*

The CfGS review also found that there is some evidence of forensic work being carried out by some members and by probing questions being asked in some spaces. However, crucially it found that difficulties in the access to and use of information by these bodies [the Audit Committee], minimises the impact of this important oversight, regulatory and scrutiny activity.

Whilst the Committee found these findings hard to accept, it recognises the need to upskill and be an effective governance tool for the Council. However, the Committee also felt that it has been operating in difficult circumstances and has not always been seen as a trusted partner seeking to provide the assurance in accordance with its Term of reference.

Conclusion

The review undertaken by CfGS has accurately captured the prevailing situation in relation to the Committees work. It is acknowledged that the Committee does lack the expertise and capacity (two of its members have not attended any of the meetings) to probe effectively into some of the more serious governance matters and has a limited grasp of risk management. However, this has not been helped by the inconsistent and at times missing and misleading information. The Committee were disappointed that representations (regarding the work programme being informed by the annual governance statement (AGS)) made as a response to the draft were not reflected in the final report.

External advisors are now working with the Committee to provide training. Support is being provided to Internal Audit to improve the audit planning, monitoring and reporting processes as well as developing risk management to ensure that internal audit plan is risk based.

Appendix 1

Audit committee Terms of Reference

B14. Audit Committee

14.1 Statement of purpose

The committee's purpose is to provide an independent and high-level focus on the adequacy of governance, risk management and control arrangements. Its role in ensuring there is sufficient assurance over governance, risk and control provides greater confidence to all those charged with governance that those arrangements are effective. The committee has oversight of both internal and external audit, together with the financial and governance reports, helping to ensure there are adequate arrangements in place for both internal challenge and public accountability.

14.2 Governance, risk and control

1. To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework, and consider the local code of governance.
2. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council.
3. To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
4. To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
5. To consider reports on the effectiveness of financial management arrangements, including compliance with Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Financial Management Code.
6. To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
7. To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
8. To monitor the counter fraud strategy, actions and resources.
9. To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.

14.3 Financial and governance reporting Governance reporting:

1. To review the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, including the head of internal audit's annual opinion.
2. To consider whether the annual evaluation for the AGS fairly concludes that governance arrangements are fit for purpose, supporting the achievement of the authority's objectives.

Financial reporting:

1. To monitor the arrangements and preparations for financial reporting to ensure that statutory requirements and professional standards can be met.
2. To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the council. To consider the external auditor's report

to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

14.4 Arrangements for audit and assurance: To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.

External audit:

1. To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) or the authority's auditor panel as appropriate.
2. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
3. To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
4. To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
5. To consider additional commissions of work from external audit.
5. To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.
6. To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the auditors, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

Internal Audit

1. To approve the internal audit charter.
2. To review proposals made in relation to the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
3. To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
4. To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
5. To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
6. To consider any impairments to the independence or objectivity of the head of internal audit arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing and to approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
7. To consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - a) updates on the work of internal audit, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
 - b) regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP)
 - c) reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Government Application Note (LGAN), considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
8. To consider the head of internal audit's annual report, including: a. the statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results

of the QAIP that support the statement (these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit) b. the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control, together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion (these will assist the committee in reviewing the AGS).

9. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
10. To receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
11. To contribute to the QAIP and in particular to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
12. To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the AGS where required to do so by the accounts and audit regulations.
13. To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the head of internal audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the committee.

14.5 Accountability arrangements

1. To report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
2. To report to full council on a regular basis on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.
3. To publish an annual report on the work of the committee, including a conclusion on the compliance with the CIPFA Position Statement 2022 (See below).

14.6 Membership

1. Members of the Audit Committee, and its Chair, are appointed by Full Council. There are eight members of the committee, and the quorum is three.
2. The Chair of Audit Committee should not be appointed to serve as a director on any of the City Council's wholly owned companies.
3. An Independent Technical Advisor should be appointed to support the Committee.

14.7 Conflicts of interest

1. If a Cabinet Adviser (or former Cabinet Adviser) is a member of the Audit Committee when it is considering matters to which their role relates, then that Councillor must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of such matter.
2. If the Audit Committee is considering items relating to the work of a relative of a member of the Committee, then that Councillor must withdraw from the meeting during the consideration of such matter.

14.8 Review of these Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference are to be reviewed annually to ensure they remain appropriate, reflect best practice and align to relevant standards and regulations.

Appendix 2

Audit Committee Meetings (with mention of Equal Pay)

Name of Report	Report For	Author	Date	Pages
Equal Pay Update January 2020	Corporate Director of Finance and Governance and the City Solicitor and Monitoring Office	Suzanne Dodd	28 th January 2020	141 in agenda document pack (Agenda Item 11)
Agenda Document Pack, throughout	Audit Committee	-	30 th June 2020	153, 169, 188,
External Audit Plan Year Ending 31 st March 2020	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	March 2020	9, 13, 21, 26
Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 st March 2020	Birmingham City Council	-	29 th September 2020	15, 17, 45, 49, 56, 60, 73, 74, 77, 79, 80, 85, 107, 108, 109, 110, 175, 207
Audit Progress Report and Sector Update	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	September 2020	280 in agenda document pack
Agenda Document Pack	Audit Committee	(Assurance Session- Leader's Portfolio and Statement of Accounts 2019-2020)	20 th October 2020	6,7
Agenda Document Pack, throughout	Audit Committee	-	25 th November 2020	7, 20, 113, 115, 143, 147, 154, 159, 172- 184, 206, 274, 306
The Audit Findings for Birmingham City Council Year Ended 31 st March 2020	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	November 2020	11, 16, 22, 33, 48, 90, 95, 96

Name of Report	Report For	Author	Date	Pages
Agenda Document Pack	Audit Committee	-	26 th January 2021	611,
The Audit Findings for Birmingham City Council Year Ended 31 March 2020 Updated December 2020	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	26 th January 2021	3, 13, 18, 24, 35, 51, 56,
The Annual Audit Letter Year Ended 31 March 2020	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	January 2021	8,11
Adoption of Accounting Policies for 2020/21, Item 10	Audit Committee	Interim Chief Finance Officer, Rebecca Hellard	30 th March 2021	137, 138. 158
Informing the Audit Risk Assessment For BCC 2020/21	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton	March 2021	195, 196, 211, 212, 220
Briefing on BCC approach to significant estimates in the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, Item 7	Audit Committee	Interim Chief Finance Officer, Rebecca Hellard	27 th April 2021	27, 33, 44, 45
Draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21 Short Accompanying Highlights Briefing	Audit Committee	Birmingham City Council	29 th June 2021	111
Equal Pay, August 2021, Item 10	Birmingham City Council	Suzzane Dodd, City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer (Acting)	30 th September 2021	1-5
Drafts Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2021, Agenda Document Pack	Audit Committee	Birmingham City Council	19 th October 2021	74, 78, 103, 104, 111, 115, 118, 129, 130, 134, 136, 161, 225, 280
Adoption of Accounting Policies for 2021/22	Audit Committee	Director of Council Management, Rebecca Hellard	29 th March 2022	27

Name of Report	Report For	Author	Date	Pages
Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2022	Audit Committee	Birmingham City Council	March 2022	19
Agenda Document Pack	Audit Committee	-	20 th May 2022	79
Equal Pay Update	Audit Committee	The City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Janie Berry	18 th October 2022	1-4
Public Sector Internal Audit Standards – External Quality Assessment	Audit Committee	Assistant Director, Audit and Risk Management, Sarah Dunlavy	31 st January 2023	43
Draft Accounts for the Year Ended 31 st March 2023/ Unaudited Draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21	Audit Committee	Birmingham City Council	28 th March 2023	59, 200, 204, 230-237, 245, 248, 259, 260, 264- 355, until end
Unaudited Draft Statement of Accounts 2020/21	Audit Committee	Birmingham City Council	28 th March 2023	14, 18, 43,
BCC Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March, Item 11	Birmingham City Council	Grant Thornton Ref	22 nd March 2023	4
Equal Pay Update	Audit Committee	The City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer. Robert Harris (Head of Law- permanent pay equity)	19 th July 2023	1-4
Risk Management Update	Audit Committee	Assistant Director, Audit and Risk Management, Sarah Dunlavy	19 TH July 2023	62, 67, 71
Section 114 Spend Control Manual, Item 7	Birmingham City Council	Section 151 Officer, Fiona Greenway (contributed by others)	15 th September 2023	33, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49,

Name of Report	Report For	Author	Date	Pages
Response to External Auditors Report	Audit Committee	Mohammed Sajid, Head of Financial Strategy	27 th September 2023	24, 25
Agenda Document Pack, Outstanding Minutes Item 12	Audit Committee	-	27 th September 2023	31,32
Agenda Document	Audit Committee	Delivered by Leader of Council	6 th October 2023	1
Internal Audit Update / Risk Management Update	Audit Committee	Assistant Director, Audit and Risk Management, Sarah Dunlavy	18 th October 2023	27, 31, 60, 70, 71
Response to Statutory Recommendations from External Auditors Grant Thornton	Audit Committee	Mohammed Sajid, Head of Financial Strategy/ Fiona Greenway, Section 151	18 th October 2023	83-94, 98, 100, 106, 108, 113
Agenda Document Pack, Outstanding Minutes Item 12	Audit Committee	-	18 th October 2023	120, 121
DRAFT - Birmingham City Council Audit Committee – Workplan for 2023/24	-	-	29 th November 2023	1-4
Finance Update	Audit Committee	Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	29 th November 2023	88,89
Agenda Document Pack, Outstanding Minutes Item 16	Audit Committee	-	29 th November 2023	119, 130, 131
Update to Statutory Recommendations from External Auditors Grant Thornton	Audit Committee	Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance and	31 st January 2024	56, 57, 66, 67,

Name of Report	Report For	Author	Date	Pages
		Section 151 Officer		
Section 151 Officer Update on the Financial Position of the Council – January 2024	Audit Committee	Fiona Greenway, Interim Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer	16 th January 2024	78, 81, 84,
Draft Treasury Management Strategy Item 11	Audit Committee	-	31 st January 2024	121, 128
Agenda Document Pack, Outstanding Minutes	Audit Committee	-	31 st January 2024	237, 238, 244,
Annual Governance and Internal Audit Processes	Audit Committee	Milford Research and Consultancy Limited Managing Director - Dr Robert Milford	21 st February 2024	36
Agenda Document Pack, Outstanding Minutes Item 10	Audit Committee	-	21 st February	67, 68, 71