

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 14 JULY 2023 AT 10:00 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA
SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

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

2 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

a) To highlight items on the agenda which officers have identified as containing exempt information within the meaning of Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.

b) To formally pass the following resolution:

RESOLVED – That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of those parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

5 - 14 5 **MINUTES – CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To confirm the public minutes from the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 June 2023.

15 - 16 6 **CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

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

17 - 50 7 **CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAMME TASK AND FINISH GROUP (TIME 10:10 – 10:30)**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the 9th December and supplementary 27th January report on the actions of the Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

51 - 104 8 **CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24 (TIME 10:30 – 10:50)**

To consider the draft work programme and agree updates / amendments.

105 - 114 9 **UPDATING THE SCRUTINY FRAMEWORK (TIME 10:50 – 11:00)**

To consider and agree the updated Scrutiny Framework.

10 **WEST MIDLANDS DEEPER DEVOLUTION DEAL (TIME 11:00 – 11:40)**

This report provides an overview of the background and next steps for the West Midlands Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal.

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

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

12 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

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

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting will take place on 15 September 2023 at 1000 hours.

14 **AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

Chair to move:-

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

15 **PRIVATE MINUTES – CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

- Information relating to any individual;
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

COORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Friday 16th June 2023, Committee Rooms 3 and 4,

Council House, Victoria Square, B1 1BB

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Albert Bore (Chair)

Councillors: Jack Deakin, Mick Brown, Mohammed Idrees, Lee Marsham, Ewan Mackey, Kerry Jenkins, Shabrina Hussain, Alex Yip, Morriam Jan.

Also Present:

Richard Brooks, Director (Strategy, Equality & Partnerships)

Paul Clarke, Assistant Director (Programmes, Performance and Improvement)

David Harris, Assistant Director (Inclusive Growth)

James Betjeman, Head of EZ & Curzon Delivery

Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny & Committee Services

Ed Brown, Committee Officer

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

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2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Akhlaq Ahmed and Darius Sandhu.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Bore and Mackey informed the Committee, in respect of Item 17. Private Minutes – Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity Overview and Scrutiny Committee – that they were Council-appointed Directors of B: Music.

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

During the meeting the following requests were made to go into private session:

- By Councillor Bore, regarding Item 17.
- By Councillor Yip, regarding Item 14.

5. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE AND CHAIR

RESOLVED:

- That the appointments of the Chair and Committee for the municipal year 2023/24 as agreed at the Annual Council meeting on 23 May 2023 be noted.

Labour (8):

Cllr Sir Albert Bore (Chair), Cllr Akhlaq Ahmed, Cllr Mick Brown, Cllr Jack Deakin, Cllr Shabrana Hussain, Cllr Mohamed Idrees, Cllr Kerry Jenkins and Cllr Lee Marsham

Conservative (3):

Cllr Ewan Mackey, Cllr Darius Sandhu and Cllr Alex Yip.

Liberal Democrats (1):

Cllr Morriam Jan

6. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Kerry Jenkins be elected as Deputy Chair, for the purposes of substitution for the Chair, if absent, for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2024.

7. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

That the Committee Terms of Reference be noted.

8. MINUTES – CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That the public minutes of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

9. MINUTES – COMMONWEALTH GAMES, CULTURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was noted that the only Councillor present at the meeting who had been a member of the Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity Overview and Scrutiny Committee was Councillor Deakin.

RESOLVED:

That the public minutes of the Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

10. CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

Councillor Deakin requested that the Scrutiny Office remind newly appointed Cabinet members of the actions in the tracker.

RESOLVED:

- That the Scrutiny Office remind newly appointed Cabinet members of the actions in the tracker.
- That the Action Tracker was noted.

11. DELIVERING FLEXIBLE AND EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY

(See Document No. 1)

The Chair presented a report to consider how the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee would develop a flexible and effective work programme for 2023/24 and highlighted the following points:

- The report considered how scrutiny could move on to a more flexible programme for 2023/24.
- Within the pack there was a document circulated on the more flexible function of Scrutiny. This had been considered on an all-party basis by the previous

Committee and endorsed. It had been to all Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- The Chair had met with the Leader and Deputy Leader, and they were discussing the matter with Cabinet members. Additionally, the Chief Executive was aware of the plans and as such they were on course to move forward.

During the discussion the following issues were raised:

- It was requested that the Scrutiny Office explicitly remind all Cabinet members going forwards that all relevant Cabinet reports needed to be given to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny (OSC) Chairs. The Chair clarified that this was within the document and had been brought to the attention of the Leader and Deputy Leader. It was added that this would foster a better relationship between Scrutiny and the Executive. OSC Chairs were encouraged to inform the Head of Scrutiny & Committee Services if they did not think they were receiving the reports that they should.
- Regarding the process for proposing items at Council Business Management Committee, it was noted that the Chair of Coordinating OSC attended the Council Business Management Committee to assist with agenda planning for meetings of Council. As such it was highlighted that this provided opportunities for Coordinating OSC to raise scrutiny matters for consideration by Council.
- To reflect the cultural shift in Council workings, the Committee added that the information set out in the papers presented should be endorsed as well as noted.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note and endorse the development of a flexible and effective work programme for 2023/24 as developed by members of the Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the last Municipal year 2022/23 (ref: Appendix 1).

12. DEVELOPING THE CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

(See Document. No 2)

The Chair introduced the report and made the following points:

- A summary report had been provided and the Committee was asked to note the information and identify a menu of topics for the municipal year.
- The Committee was also asked to consider which issues might come to the next meeting of the Committee on 14 July 2022 and beyond.
- The attention of the Committee was drawn to issues carried forward from the 2022/23 municipal year. It was noted that the Customer Services programme was continuing, and Councillor Jan had been engaged to take over from Councillor Harmer on the Task and Finish Group. The group had met three times in the past two weeks and had considered the issues of housing repairs, waste management and bereavement services. A further report on the current situation was in preparation. It was intended for an item on the Customer Services programme to come to the meeting of Coordination OSC on 14 July 2023.
- The issue of Highways would not be picked up until 7 July 2023. It was the intention to bring the recommendations to the meeting of Coordination OSC on 14 July 2023. This would mean putting out a paper on housing repairs, waste management and bereavement services with a supplementary report on highways. It was intended that issues in relation to Customer Services would then be passed over to the respective OSC (i.e. waste management and bereavement to Neighbourhoods OSC, highways to Sustainability and Transport OSC and housing repairs to Homes OSC). These Committees would then follow the issues through.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and the Chief Executive had been engaged regarding the recommendations on Homes for Ukraine. The Chair had indicated to them that he wished to bring a response to the Coordinating OSC in September to see if the lessons learned on the issue had been taken onboard.
- The Trailblazer Devolution Deal was due to be signed-off and Published in March 2023, however this had not happened. The Chair had been advised that it would likely be considered at Cabinet in September. If this was the case, then it would be desirable to conduct pre-scrutiny on the issue in July. Whilst some elements would not be completed in time for the September Cabinet meetings, the devolution deal text itself was available and could be provided for pre-scrutiny in July. What came to the meeting would depend on what was available in terms of external information, as such a draft cabinet report might not be available.
- The Elections Act would need to be considered later in the year to consider lessons learned from other Authorities who held elections in May and to consider what

measures might be needed in future elections. The Assistant Director for Legal and Governance would be engaged to establish the best time for it to be considered. December was currently thought to be best.

- In response to a request for the Committee to consider contracts and agreements regarding Birmingham Museums Trust and what involvement the Committee could have, the Chair agreed to consider it and discuss with Cllr Deakin and the Committee as to the best way to take it forward.
- Cabinet Member Priorities had been set out in the document and all Scrutiny Committees had been given sight of it. Questions had been raised over how helpful the documents produced had been in terms of how much steer they gave on priorities. It was suggested that it had been difficult to pick out issues that might be of interest to the Committees. The Leader and Deputy Leader had been asked to look again at the documents and it had been agreed by them that the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees should meet regularly with their Cabinet counterparts regarding issues to take forward. Issues coming forward from these meetings could go on the menu of issues. The Leader and Deputy Leader had agreed to this. Further to this it had been agreed that there should be a quarterly meeting between all Scrutiny Chairs and all Cabinet members so that collectively they could look at the programme. The Assistant Director (Programmes, Performance and Improvement) agreed to raise this with the Cabinet Secretariat.
- Regarding a request to add the issue of employment to the Work Programme, the Chair explained that the matter had arisen at the Customer Services Task and Finish group when it considered recruitment in Bereavement Services. The Chair had intended to leave this matter until it had been reported in July and use what had arisen in the recommendations as a lever to bring things in. There was also a need to note that in terms of remit, Human Resources issues sat with the Finance and Resources OSC.
- Regarding Performance and Improvement, each OSC had a respective report appropriate to their remit. This was a high-level information pack, and the format and structure was bespoke to each Committee. The document summarised and reminded the Committee on strategic environment and contextual issues to keep in mind when considering on the Work Programme. It also highlighted some of the external environment contextual issues. Some issues had not been listed such as the imminent launch of the Office for Local Government (OFLOG) which aimed to improve the transparency of local government and performance and might have an impact on the Council. Additionally, the Local Government Association (LGA) were doing work on assurance frameworks for Local Authorities. Ways of joining this information up were being considered.

- Other performance and improvement points included flagged changes to the regulatory framework, a new social housing framework from next year, corporate performance and delivery information, and delivery priorities for the next year. Improvement and change activity known to be going on had been picked out, this was helpful in terms of the principles of the paper such as flexible scrutiny and avoiding duplication.
- Regarding evaluating the delivery of the Cost-of-Living Emergency Response Programme, lessons learnt and developing options for longer term actions, the Chair suggested that this could be something that the Committee could assist on. The idea of considering lessons learned tied in with the approach that had been taken towards Homes for Ukraine. It was suggested that a small Task and Finish group looking at this in terms of the Cost-of-Living Emergency Response could be useful and the experiences from the Homes for Ukraine Task and Finish group could be brought to it. Councillors Jan and Deakin expressed interest in being part of it, and it was suggested that a member of the Conservative group would join.
- A short briefing note on OFLOG and its functions and powers would be produced once more was known about it.
- Whilst duplication was generally avoided, it was necessary to recognise that the separation of scrutiny and the executive meant that similar work might need to take place as part of the oversight function adding value. In such situations the work was complementing rather than duplicating.

Summarising, the Chair noted that the Customer Services progress report from the Task and Finish Group, the Trailblazer Devolution Deal and a report on the OSC Programmes including updates from all Overview and Scrutiny Committees as well as the current position from this Committee would come to the meeting of Coordination OSC on 14 July 2023. The Cost-of-Living Task and Finish Group would be organised in July. The feedback from the Homes for Ukraine task and Finish Group would come back in September and an update on the Elections Act would provisionally be seen in December.

In response to questions, it was highlighted that the Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services and the Director of Strategy, Equality & Partnerships were working together to develop a dashboard of Committees to balance resources which would help with the Committee with its Coordination role.

RESOLVED:

- That a short briefing note on OFLOG and its functions and powers be produced once more was known about it.

- That a small Task and Finish group on the Cost-of-Living Emergency Response be convened. With the draft Terms of Reference to come to the Committee in July 2023.
- That an item on the Customer Services programme be considered at the meeting of Coordination OSC on 14 July 2023.
- That pre-scrutiny of the Trailblazer Devolution Deal be conducted at the meeting of the Coordinating OSC on 14 July 2023.
- That the Committee note the information set out in Appendices 1-3.
- That Homes for Ukraine be considered at the meeting of Coordination OSC on 15 September 2023.
- That the Election Act be considered at the meeting of Coordination OSC on 15 December 2023
- That the Committee notes that a draft work programme will be presented to the Committee meeting in July for consideration and approval.
- That the Committee notes that proposed work programmes from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be submitted to the Co-ordinating O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year

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

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

14. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Councillor Yip requested that a matter be discussed in Private session due to its sensitivity. Concerning whistleblowing and safeguarding.

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

The following schedule of dates for upcoming meetings was noted:

<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
14 July	26 January
15 September	23 February
13 October	15 March
17 November	19 April

15 December

16. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED: -

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

17. PRIVATE MINUTES – COMMONWEALTH GAMES, CULTURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair advised that the private minutes at Agenda item 17 along with the request from Councillor Yip contained exempt information within the meaning of Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of those parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.
- That the private minutes of the Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 April 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

The meeting ended at 11:10

CO-ORDINATING OSC
ACTION TRACKER 2023/24

	Date	Agenda Item	Action	Notes
1	23 September 2022	Cost of Living Crisis	The Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships to provide information on the groups of people who have receive payments and further analysis of this is available.	COMPLETED Information circulated to Committee members on 5 th July including a link to the City Observatory where the dashboard would be published.
2	27 January 2023	Cabinet Member Social Justice, Community Safety & Equalities	The Cabinet Member agreed to meet with the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council and will confirm if the letter was sent to the MPs when the definition was adopted and restate the message	IN PROGRESS Information Requested (update as of 4 July) The Leader, who was Cabinet Member at the time, is to discuss this request with the new Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community and Equalities.
3	27 January 2023	Cabinet Member Social Justice, Community Safety & Equalities	The Cabinet Member will follow up the issues regarding building capacity of holiday schemes with Cllr. Harmer	IN PROGRESS Information Requested (update as of 4 July) The Leader, who was Cabinet Member at the time, is to discuss this request with the new Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community and Equalities.
4	16 June 2023	Co-ordinating OSC Action Tracker	That the Scrutiny Office remind newly appointed Cabinet Members of the actions in the tracker	COMPLETED The notes above (under actions 1, 2 and 3) reflect progress on the outstanding actions following the request that was made at the June meeting.

5	16 June 2023	Developing the Co-ordinating OSC Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24	A short briefing note on OFLOG, and its functions and powers, to be produced once more is known about it.	IN PROGRESS The Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services will liaise with the AD Programmes, Performance and Improvement on this.
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Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Friday 14th July 2023



Subject: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group
Report of: Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Chair Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny
Report author: Nikki Spencer
Lead Delivery Manager, Digital & Technology Services
Nikki.Spencer@birmingham.gov.uk
07766 924234

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the 9th December and supplementary 27th January report on the actions of the Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

2. Recommendations

Co-ordinating O&S Committee:

- 2.1. Notes that the Task & Finish Group has completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads for Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highway Repairs
- 2.2. Agrees that the Task & Finish Group should ask service owner Committees to follow up any further action required to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.
- **Neighbourhoods:** Waste and Bereavement Services
 - **Sustainability & Transport:** Highway Repairs
 - **Homes:** Housing Repairs
- 2.4. Supports the further work of the Task & Finish Group to scrutinise how senior managers are responding to feedback from the Customer Standards Workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following approval of the Customer Service Strategy by Cabinet in December 2021, the Customer Service Programme was established in January 2021 for an initial 12-month period, to implement the Strategy deliverables and 'Fix the Basics'.
- 3.2. Phase 1 saw the programme deliver a number of customer benefits' from the creation of an [easy-read Customer Service Strategy](#), co-creating Our [Customer Charter](#), establishing the Customer Panel; to the cleanse and improvement of 948 web pages and counting; roll out of products such as the Landlord's Portal and features for automated advanced payments.
- 3.3. The user research the programme conducted of four high volume, high priority service areas for the Council resulted in a set of service improvement recommendations which highlighted opportunities for services to improve the customer experience and increase customer satisfaction.
- 3.4. This report follows the Task & Finish Group's first review of the recommendations submitted to the Highways, Waste, Bereavement Services and Housing Repairs service leads, reported to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2023; and the further action to ensure the identified end-to-end customer service improvement are implemented.
- 3.5. This round of Task & Finish Groups was also attended by Committee Chairs for Neighbourhoods, Homes and Sustainability and Transport to enable an effective transition of the responsibility of these committees and provide continuity in what we've done, where we've got to, and what is outstanding and still needs to be done.

4. Update on Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

- 4.1. Appendix A provides the outcomes of all Task & Finish Group meetings with the service area sponsor/leads for improving the customer experience and details the recommended opportunities for improvement.
- 4.2. Feedback was previously submitted to the committee (9 December 2022) on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management; and a supplementary update (27 January) on Highway Repairs.
- 4.3. In this second review, it was noted the overall positive progress has been achieved in implementation by service leads of the Customer Service Programme service improvement recommendations but more still needs to be done to achieve 'Best in Class' customer service and ensure the best customer journey for our users to improve satisfaction levels and reduce complaints.

4.4. Highway Repairs

- 4.4.1. The Task & Finish Group is due to meet on 7th July 2023 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth also to be attended by Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Delivery Manager. A supplementary report will be issued following the meeting on the review of previous recommendations and a status update provided.
- 4.4.2. In summary, a total of 10 service improvement recommendations were presented to Highway Repairs, and all 10 retain an implementation status of 'to do'.

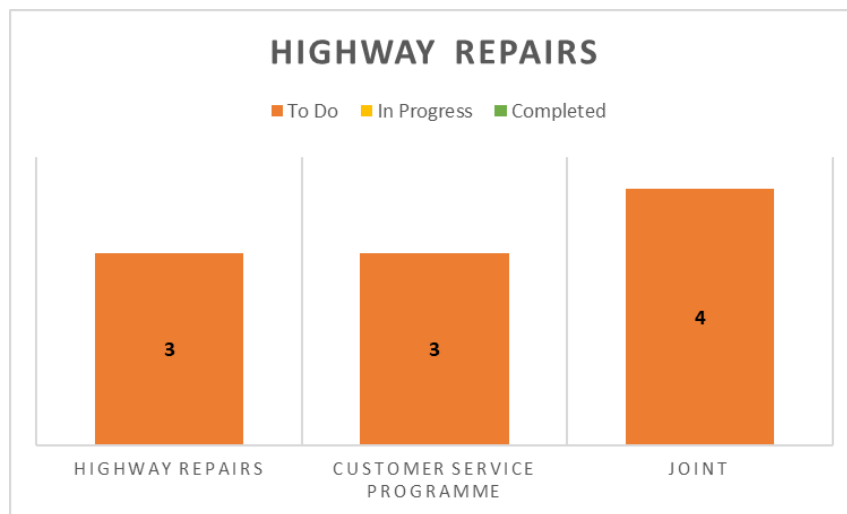


Figure 1 - Highway Repairs Status Overview

4.5. Bereavement Services

- 4.5.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 12th June 2023 with Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement, Head of Bereavement Services, Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor and Strategic Product Manager, Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.
- 4.5.2. Clear guidance has been created and improved content published on 'What to do when someone dies', and also clearly communicating to relatives' grave ownership and responsibilities in grave maintenance. Further work is required to include Coroners Service in online guidance and progress a small print run of the offline guidance.
- 4.5.3. A review of all onsite signage will be completed.
- 4.5.4. The top 20 paper forms have been prioritised for redesign and digitisation and will include automated advanced payment features, eliminating manual paperwork and enabling customers to complete requests in an easy and efficient way.
- 4.5.5. Exploration of technical options is underway to inform user need requirements for a new bereavement system / funeral directors' portal to support online

burial bookings, giving Funeral Directors' the ability to view, book and be updated.

- 4.5.6. A partial manual/mechanical back fill option is available to relatives on request where the resources to enable this are available. Resources to increase availability will be considered as part of any future operating model.
- 4.5.7. There are standardised processes, based upon best practice, in place across all sites. There are also individual standardised processes for particular sites which are based upon the specific needs of the site.
- 4.5.8. Recruitment of staff remains an issue within the service. There also needs to be a corporate response to more easily recruit agency staff as permanent staff.
- 4.5.9. In summary, a total of 28 service improvement recommendations were presented to Bereavement Services, and to date 10 have been implemented and 18 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

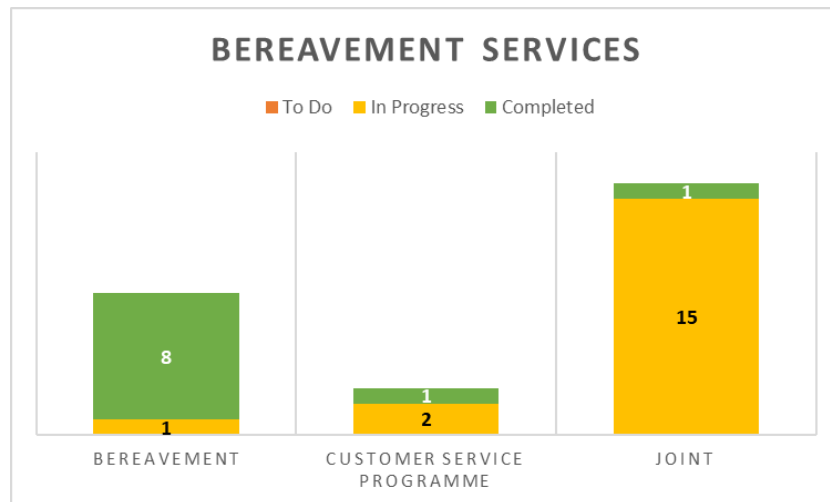


Figure 2 - Bereavement Services Status Overview

4.6. Waste Management

- 4.6.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 9th June 2023 with the Assistant Director, Street Scene and the Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor and Strategic Product Manager, Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.
- 4.6.2. The in-cab technology has been in place and in use in all vehicles since late January 2023 and addresses a number of the recommendations, although there are separate issues regarding provision of in-cab technology in rented vehicles. Work was undertaken to cleanse the data and the crews are monitored on their usage and reports are produced showing any problems; and work can be reallocated in real time to minimise missed collections, which is monitored by Service Managers.

- 4.6.3. A session with Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny is being planned to provide a more in-depth view of the in-cab technology.
- 4.6.4. Missed collections are tracked, monitored and reported on a daily and weekly basis. The reports are showing an improvement in missed collections (alongside a significant reduction in missed collection complaints - down by 41% this April compared to April 2022). However, it is fully accepted that things are still not right, and more work is needed - particularly for the now vacated Montague Street (relocated to new Atlas depot in May 2023), and Lifford Lane depots where missed collections remain off target.
- 4.6.5. HMO's / Exempt accommodation continue to be an issue but work is underway to ensure that, where these properties are licenced, the appropriate bins are provided and the correct use of bins is monitored.
- 4.6.6. The service has a stable workforce (previously, the level of agency staff covering full time posts was approximately 30%). The service still operates with 23% agency cover for sickness and leave but teams are kept together where possible.
- 4.6.7. Over 70 of the older vehicles have been replaced, providing a more reliable service with a planned procurement to replace the remaining vehicles.
- 4.6.8. Working with Corporate Communications to develop simple comms for residents when there has been a need to remove their broken bin or pod.
- 4.6.9. In summary, a total of 12 service improvement recommendations were presented to Waste Management, and to date 6 have been implemented, 3 are 'in progress', and 1 retains an implementation status of 'to do'.

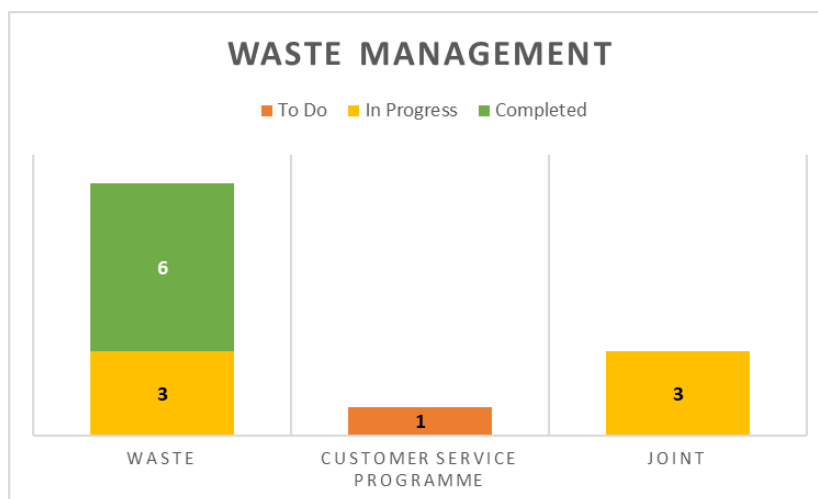


Figure 3 - Waste Management Status Overview

4.7. Housing Repairs

- 4.7.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 14th June with the Director, Asset Management Housing, Interim Head, Housing Repairs with the Customer

Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.

- 4.7.2. The BRUM account process to report 'track a repair' has been end to end tested and issues highlighted, for example, some of the information submitted was not getting passed on to the contractor. The new functionality is now confidently expected for end August / early Sept. The delay was due to a dependency on the pending NEC (Housing Management software) Upgrade. Work is also in process into the quality of repairs and repeat calls about the same issue.
- 4.7.3. An option for tenants to book / manage their own repair appointments will be delivered as part of the changes to the Brum account. There is also ongoing work by repairs teams to look into and maximise appointment availability which has diminished. This work is expected to conclude by the end of September 2023.
- 4.7.4. Live updates to keep customers informed about changes regarding a repair, for example notifying a tenant that a contractor is running late, has been included in the Repairs Contract 2024, allowing text communication between operative and customer and live tracking.
- 4.7.5. Analysis of missed appointments due to no access is being carried out, to identify trends / customer profiles and check if our comms processes are working or need improvement. Findings to date are that process are not always being followed. Many customers say they were not aware of appointments, so focus is on the evidence around text and phone ahead which is part of the current process. This analysis is expected to conclude by December 2023.
- 4.7.6. Customer satisfaction on call handling is measured for randomly sampled calls – satisfaction levels are routinely around 80% for the way the agent handled call. Feedback is provided to service area and agents as appropriate.
- 4.7.7. The [Birmingham Choice](#) site is currently being reviewed and updated to make information more available to our customers. In addition there is a link on the front page of Birmingham Choice to a '[Housing Advice Pack](#)'. This gives customers information on numbers on the Housing Register, numbers of lets completed, waiting times, other housing options, etc.
- 4.7.8. The online information, advice and guidance on damp, condensation and mould has been reviewed and was updated 27 February on birmingham.gov.uk.
- 4.7.9. In summary, a total of 13 service improvement recommendations were presented to Housing Repairs, and to date 4 have been implemented and 9 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

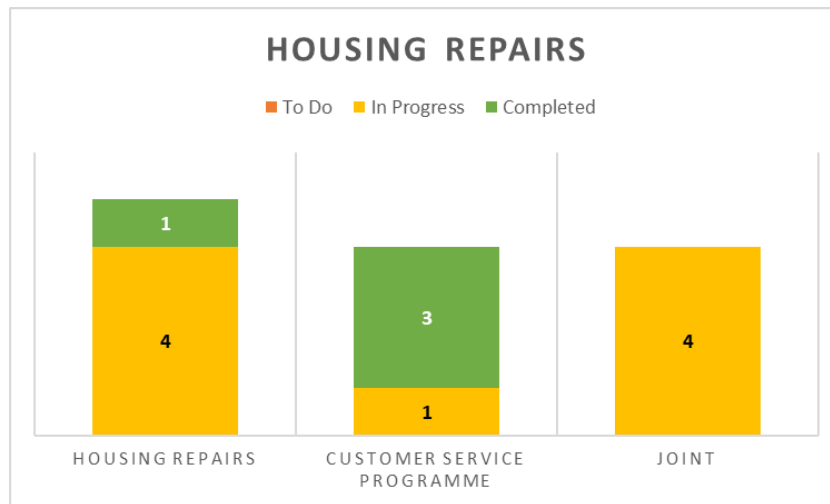


Figure 4 - Housing Repairs Status Overview

5. Any Financial Implications

- 5.1. The original Enhanced Business Case sought and approved total funding of £1.7m for Year 1 in December 2021. The Customer Service resource profile forecasts budget spend at the identified £ 1.7m costs allocated to the programme in final Quarter of 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 5.2. The savings that are currently set out in the MTFP increase by £600k in 2023/2024, and phase 2 of the programme will help to deliver these and also identify future potential savings of over the next 2 years.
- 5.3. There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

6. Any Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Council is under a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 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.
- 6.2. The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

7. Any Equalities Implications

- 7.1. Overall, implementation of the Customer Service Strategy and therefore the activities of the Task and Finish Group may impact a number of the nine protected characteristics (specifically Age, Disability and Race) with the channel shift to self-serve; however the vision of the Strategy is clear and will endeavour to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient approach to the customer journey across all channels by ensuring our customers access the right information at the right time and content is accurate and up to date regardless of the channel.

8. Background Documents

8.1. [Customer Service Strategy](#)

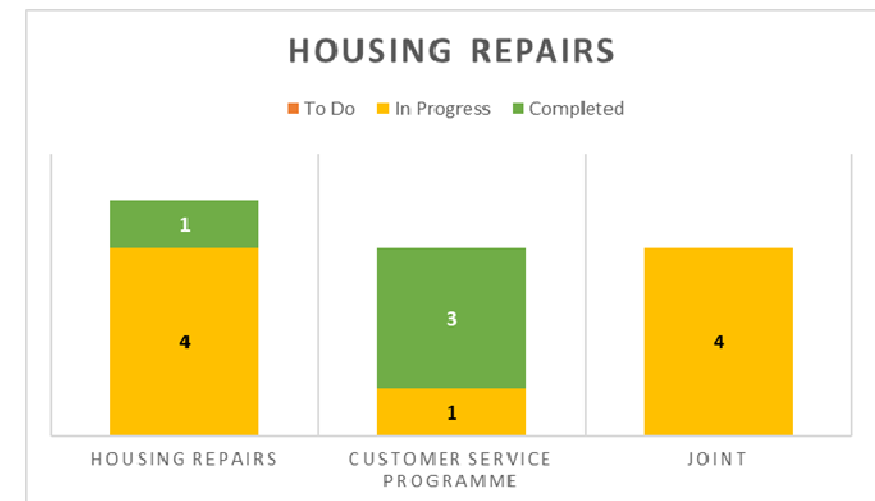
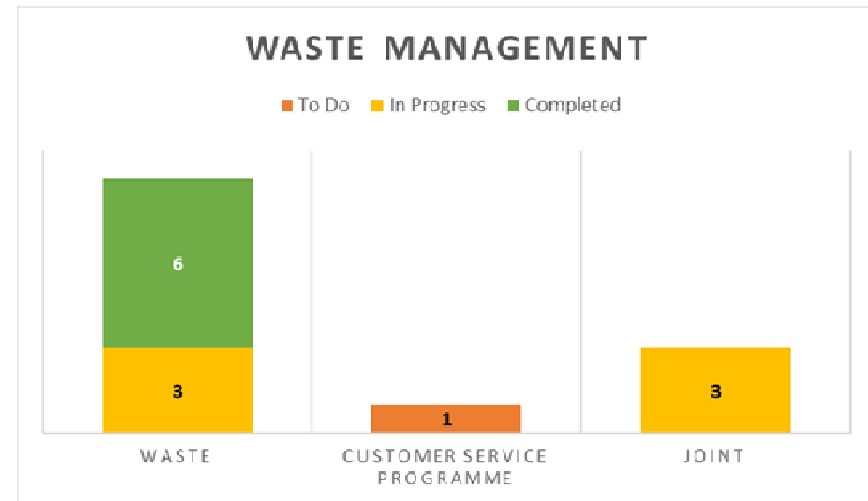
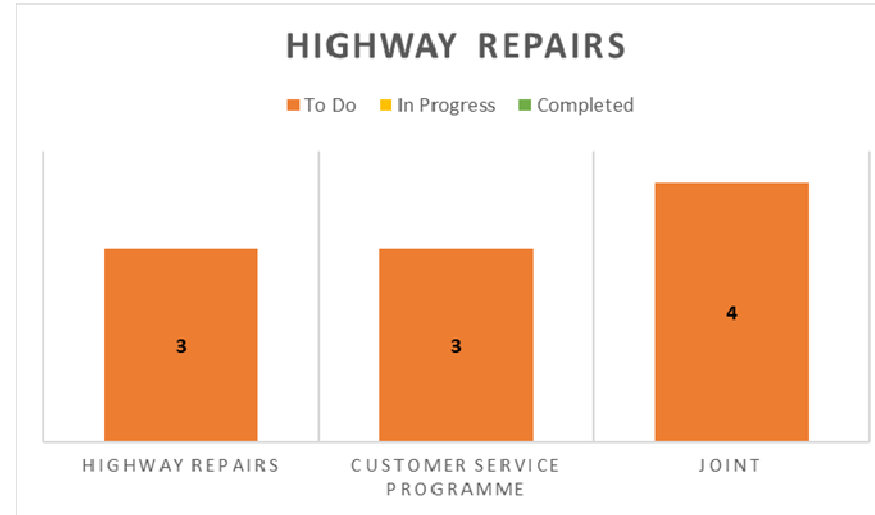
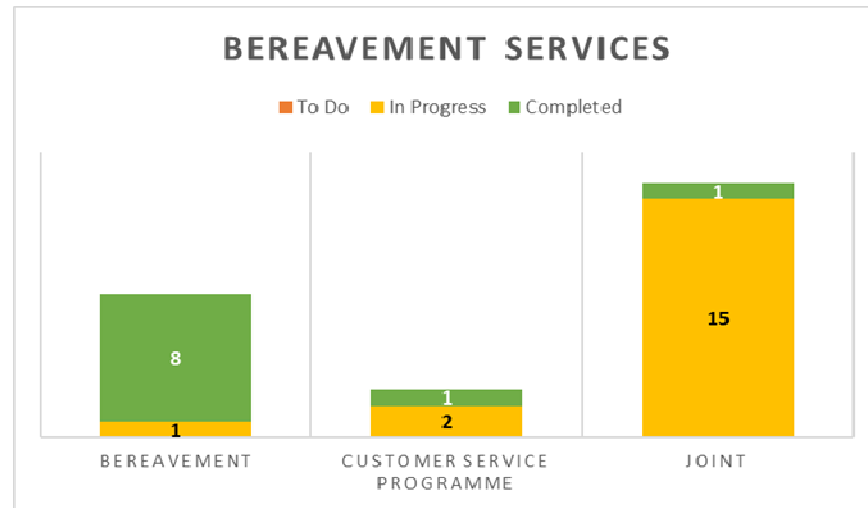
8.2. [Our Customer Charter](#)

9. Appendices

9.1. A: Status overview of the Customer Service Programme recommendations

Customer Service Programme Discovery#1

Directorate	Service	Recommendations	Accountability		
			Customer Programme	Service	Service with CSP support
Regulation & Enforcement	Bereavement	28	3	9	16
Highways & Infrastructure	Highway Repairs	10	3	3	4
Regulation & Enforcement	Waste Management	13	1	9	3
Housing Management	Housing Repairs	13	4	5	4
	Grand Total	64	10	41	13



BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

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

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation - summary	Original Recommendation - detail Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
A	Citizens find the process of laying their loved one to rest complicated and confusing, at an already difficult time. There is a lack of clarity over what choices a family has, who does what and when. Relatives call sites as they don't trust the accuracy of the information on the website, but note our website page view analysis does demonstrate that citizens are visiting the BCC web site pages for the bereavement service guidance and information on the service offerings.	Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options	Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options, detailing who is involved and who is responsible for what, approximate timelines and costs (including BCC service fees and what is/not included), documentation requirements, what to expect and what to do if these expectations are not met. Consider including recommended suppliers. This guidance should start from the point of death and include registering a death. It should include the process if relatives are not using a funeral director. Conduct an audit of the current guidance available online and understand how we can tailor/expand this. This guidance should be available both online and in paper format. Distribute to partners to reach customers as soon as they need that information. Ensure it is available in a range of formats and languages. Status Update 17 Jan: Clear online guidance has now been developed and published: 'What to do after someone dies', A guidance booklet has been produced and is awaiting sign off. From April 2023, a medical examiner will investigate and authorise all Medical Certificates of Cause of Death. This will result in a further change to the documentation being required which will impact all services. Hold print run until after update to ensure accuracy. Status update 7 June: Improved content has been published. The introduction of the requirement for Medical Certificates of Cause of Death issues by GPs (non hospital deaths) to be authorised by a Medical Examiner (a national directive providing an additional layer of governance) has now been delayed until April 2024. Therefore more detailed information regarding Coroners Service is to be included in online guidance and a small print run of the offline guidance (along with posters and QR code) will now proceed ahead of an update and reprint for April 2024 when the Medical Examiner requirement is expected.	Medium	Programme Work in progress
B	Wildlife can have a negative impact on grave sites, which can be distressing for the family.	Communicate with relatives that wildlife can be an issue in graveyards	Communicate with relatives that this can be an issue and recommend particular plants and flowers that wildlife will not disturb (e.g. deer and rabbit resistant herbaceous plants) Status Update 17 Jan: Damage caused by wildlife is an on-going issue across a number of sites and is being managed by the service - adding information to information boards and signage with QR codes (linking to webpage information on wildlife); community meeting in Yardley Chapel to involve local Cllrs to educate public regarding badger activity. Online content around types of wildlife and impact on the sites - Content Manager to pick up requirements with Activities Manager and capture positive aspects of the wildlife (e.g. Bham SpringWatch Trailcams / webcams). Status update 7 June: Website content has been updated. A review of all signage is to be completed - see update against insight / recommendation Q. ACTION COMPLETED	Medium	Service - with support from Programme COMPLETED
C	Some grave sites are not well maintained over time.	Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave	Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave, including the rules/requirements around plastic flowers. Recommend ways of establishing a low maintenance grave and the grave maintenance service offering. Status Update 17 Jan: Work in progress to articulate clear guidelines for people, e.g.; plastic fading flowers, look at signage in the graveyards etc. Activities Manager reviewed signage at all sites to prioritise replacements and noticeboard - website needs to be aligned, Content Manager to work with Activities Manager to promote existing grave maintenance service from April 2023 when service is likely to be fully staffed. Status update 7 June: "Looking after a Grave" page on website updated in March 2023. A review of all signage is to be completed - see update against insight / recommendation Q. BCC also has a responsibility for maintaining sites (grass cutting). Grass cutting is currently based on a city wide contract managed by Parks. The grass cutting schedule for each site will be reviewed with Parks to and supported by clear communication back to customers.	Low	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
D	Documentation is often paper based and time consuming to manage for bereavement staff and partners. There is often duplication of forms, missing information and the need to scan in documents or manually input details.	Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible as part of the new system	Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible by ensuring the new bereavement system has capability to upload, share and view documentation for all partners, as well as input data via forms directly and make use of digital signatures. Ensure this is possible for all types of funerals. Offer support to those partners that need it to adopt new system. Note: Can only build online forms for non-statutory docs, all statutory docs need to remain on paper with the new system having ability to upload a scanned version / attachment to support digital record. Status Update 17 Jan: Need to establish the timeline for this BACAS replacement and full digitised applications. Soft market testing is underway to produce an analysis of options for new system. A lot of paperwork printing has already been eliminated but manual entry still being carried out where necessary. Digitisation of Bereavement forms in progress (a true copy of signature that complies with the e-signature requirements is needed). This activity may link to Register Office digitisation of records (DRS) Limited trials are in place in another Registration Authority before wider roll out for full replacement of Registration Online (RON) and NHS Digital (EMCD element - no physical medical certificates required no scanning/printing). All Register Officer digitisation is out of scope for this programme. Status update 7 June: Ongoing - The programme and service have currently prioritised the top 20 paper forms which have now been re-designed to digital forms including advanced payment features. The forms have now been tested by the service and all budget codes have been configured into solution. In line with the new forms the programme has reviewed all information, advice and guidance for these forms which have all been signed off. The remaining activities include configuration of the payments into the right fund codes in Oracle (awaiting a timeline for completion) and back office training for the new system to action any requests. Once the Oracle configuration is completed shortly, there will be a phased go-live of the forms on birmingham.gov.uk. The forms will allow customers to complete their request in a simple and easy way, allow them to add additional documents, status updates and pay for the service. The forms should improve the customer experience, reduce some admin in processing times and reduce delays in delivery due to lapse time for payments to be made.	High	Programme Work in progress

E	Burials are complex and have many variations, so bookings need to be taken via phone currently. This is time consuming for bereavement staff and funeral directors, and limits when bookings can be made.	Review the process for booking burials to understand how we could simplify the service	Review the process for booking burials (including statutory and non-statutory requirements) to understand how we could simplify the service. Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to take bookings for burials online. There is an opportunity to learn from Solihull Council about their system that allows for this. Status Update 17 Jan: Process for booking burials, looking at putting this all online. Research with Solihull MBC to review their system for burials (parameters that control bookings), links to BACAS replacement and potential RPA options and ensure scope to include faith/religious burials can be accommodated. Requires support from the programme for soft market testing and maybe some support for implementation. Status update 7 June: The intention is to put the process for booking burials online. The demonstration of the Funeral Directors portal used at Solihull MBC has been completed. Positive user feedback was provided on the portal. A further meeting with Solihull MBC is scheduled for 15th June to view the back end of the system. Once this has taken place, the service / programme will explore further options with DTS on how to progress. A specification of requirements will be developed over the following three months, ahead of procurement.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
F	In some cultures back filling graves (i.e. by hand) after the burial is a tradition and a sign of respect. Often a back fill is a lengthy process, and requires a staff member to stay on site at the grave whilst this is being done. Currently relatives can only choose to back fill themselves or have a manual fill using a digger, and are not always aware that they can change their minds part way through.	Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill option for relatives	Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill option for relatives, so they can honour their loved ones in this way, but relieve the burden of time spent by the staff overseeing the process. Consider different charging options to accommodate these traditions. Ensure relatives are aware of what their choice entails before the funeral (e.g. the average time it takes for 2 people to fill an adult grave). Status Update 17 Jan: The service has always provided a manual backfill option but some bereaved families wish to have a partial backfill option. A partial backfill has risks associated with it relating to potential accidents on site with both mourners and heavy plant machinery operating in close proximity, which is increased where there are large numbers of mourners. The service has now overcome this by offering barriers for crowd control, but this is time intensive and requires additional resources to provide this level of service, which may impact upon scheduling of other funerals if partial backfill is required and the machines are requested (H&S and timing issues). Where resources are available this service will be available upon request. Resolution in place to offer partial backfill where the access and resources are available. Status update 7 Jun: The service recognises and is sensitive to the requirements in some cultures around backfilling of graves. A partial manual/mechanical back fill option is available to relatives on request where the resources to enable this are available. Resources to increase availability will be considered as part of any future operating model.	Medium	Service: COMPLETED (but work in progress to increase availability as resources permit)
G	Some funerals run over time, which has a knock on impact for later bookings and for staff.	Communicate to citizens the overrun charge, ensure they are aware of where responsibility lies	Communicate to citizens the overrun charge and ensure they are aware of where responsibility for this penalty lies (i.e. funeral directors) Status Update 17 Jan: All Funeral Directors are advised when an additional charge for the overrunning of the funeral is being applied, which has been in place for many years. Status update 7 Jun: Mitigating circumstances will always be considered before any charge is applied. An interval exists between cremations / burials in the event of an overrun. Any instance of an overrun will be looked at on a case by case basis.	Medium	Service COMPLETED
H	Some burials are well attended by mourners. This can mean that graves already in use in the vicinity are stood on by mourners. This is viewed as disrespectful by some.	Clearly demarcate graves , ask ministers to request mourners are mindful of where they stand	Clearly demarcate where graves are, create narrow paths between rows of graves to help show where citizens should stand. Ask ministers to request that mourners are mindful of where they are standing at the start of graveside ceremonies. Status Update 17 Jan: Graves that are being opened are demarcated by boarding and matting around the grave. Traditional type graves, with kerb sets, are also demarcated when a memorial is placed. Grave owners are permitted to lay slabs between the graves if they wish. It is not feasible to demarcate a lawn type section without a significant increase in grounds maintenance costs due to the obstacles created by pathways preventing the ride on mowers from cutting the lawns.	Low	Service COMPLETED
I	The current system is unable to notify funeral directors of updates and changes to their bookings.	Ensure the new digital system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated	Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated without having to make manual checks on the system. Status Update 17 Jan: as rows - E, H, J & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings Status update 7 June: See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
J	The current system has no high-level view of all bookings a particular funeral director has with BCC. Currently in order to get this view, the funeral director needs to click through to 'cancel' all bookings.	Ensure the new system can provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings	Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings with the council. Status Update 17 Jan: as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system. FDs will have access to own bookings Status update 7 June: See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
K	The process for delivering a burial or cremation differs across BCC's bereavement sites. This creates additional confusion for funeral directors and staff that may work across multiple sites.	Consider which sites are most streamlined and effective and how to standardise across all sites	Consider which sites are most streamlined and effective. Consider how to standardise the process across all sites based on best practice. Status Update 17 Jan: The service has merged teams in response to business continuity issues. There will always be some differences as not every site offers the same services as another. There are standardised processes, based upon best practice, in place across all sites. There are also individual standardised processes for particular sites which are based upon the specific needs of the site.	Low	Service COMPLETED
L	Some funeral directors give incorrect information to citizens about BCC's availability to conduct funerals.	Have online view of ceremony availability across all sites for citizens	Host an online view of ceremony availability across all sites so citizens are able to book the slot that works best for them. Ensure this view reflects when sites are expected to be temporarily closed down due to short staffing, due to annual leave for example. Ideally this would be additional functionality as part of the new bereavement system. Status Update 17 Jan: as rows - E, H, I & L. Soft market testing underway and feature to be incorporated into functionality of new system for online and digitisation, better guidance. Status update 7 June: See Update against insight / recommendation E. This feature will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress

M	The process of reassigning ownership of a grave is complicated, lengthy, and requires a lot of time from staff to support customers through this process. Often customers lose copies of deeds.	Review the current process of reassigning grave ownership	Review the current process of reassigning grave ownership. Consider how to better inform citizens about the process and what is needed at each stage - this could be written guidance, or something more interactive like a video. Status Update 17 Jan: Process has been streamlined and information will be developed to provide more details relating to the process on the BCC website as part of the work currently being carried out by the web content team and Bereavement Services. Status update 7 June: Overview details have been updated on the BCC website. More detailed information required to explain the process will be made available over the next 3 months.	Low	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
N	There is some disconnection between the various bodies that need to be made aware of a death, both within BCC and across the system. This results in citizens having to tell multiple agencies that someone has died and repeat information to different parts of the same organisation.	Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars	Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars. Consider the 'Tell us once' scheme and how we can bolster existing information, advice and guidance. Establish an open dialogue between other partners across the system (e.g. coroner, funeral directors etc) to explore opportunities to become more joined up. Status Update 17 Jan: National 'Tell us once' function, the service is also in the process of appointing a HOS for both Bereavement and Registrars which will join the process up better. Some information may not be available to share due to legislative restrictions so need to review the use of TUO. Status update 7 June: The Head of Bereavement and Registration Service was appointed 1 May 2023. A review of working processes is being carried out to develop a more joined up approach where possible and where BCC holds responsibility. It is expected that this review will conclude within 3 months.	Medium	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
O	The process of applying for a permit for a headstone is lengthy and time consuming for bereavement staff, stone masons and relatives.	Review the process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised	Review the current process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised. Provide access to the new bereavement system for stone masons and use that portal for all documentation. Provide guidance on the process and timelines to relatives. Status Update 17 Jan: Process and timelines have improved since new recruits have started within the service. Further improvements will include considering an automated checking process and improved information on website as part of the work being carried out with the web content team and Bereavement Services. Customers need to know what to deal with, what to do and when - support users through the process with simple online guidance. Status update 7 June: The backlog for approval of memorial permits has been cleared. The online portal for memorial permit applications is still to be developed. It is anticipated that the specification for this will be developed within the next 3 months. The possibility of automation will be explored.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
P	Stone masons are often posted invoices from BCC for each individual permit, which creates a lot of manual paperwork for both parties.	Explore possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system	Explore the possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system or using the new finance system for this. Investigate if an integration can be added between the current / new finance system and the new Bereavement system to output the invoice. Status Update 17 Jan: Service is raising invoices via Oracle and will process in batches instead of individual invoices. Full integration of automated invoices will be included in specification for new system. Also investigating option for online payment at point of request for service. Status update 7 June: Integration of automated invoices is not available using current system as this raises invoices to the appropriate funeral director recorded on the funeral record. The monumental mason is usually a different company, hence this is not possible at present. The requirement for invoices to be raised to both funeral directors and masons where these are different companies will be incorporated into the specifications for the new bereavement system / funeral directors portal (see update against insight / recommendation E). There will be a dependency on the interface with Oracle.	Medium	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
Q	Some sites are confusing to get around, for example finding appropriate parking and the right location for ceremonies. Some locations have names that are similar to other local sites, meaning citizens go to the wrong site. All of this adds to the stress on the day of a funeral.	Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps	Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps. Consider how we could name sites in a way that removes confusion for visitors. Consider including all site information on the BCC service web site pages and new system. Could it be included as part of the booking confirmation for funeral directors that they could send on to relatives, or could relatives view this information on the system. Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed that website is useful but signage could be better, so reviewing all signage across sites and also including better information for users on the website as part of the review that is currently taking place by the web content team and Bereavement Services. Dependency of the new bereavement system for some website changes. Status update 7 June: Service to commission a review of signage across all sites. Contact to made with the Comms team to identify company to deliver. Identification of an appropriate company and procurement route to be made in next 2 months. All contents and directories for each site have been updated on the website.	Low	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
R	The service generally operates during core hours (Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm). Sutton New Hall does operate seven days a week. In some cases, partners need to contact Bereavement services outside of these hours, but are unable to (e.g. Muslim burials over the weekend in other areas of the city).	Consider establishing an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace	Where there is appropriate lighting, services could be conducted into the early evening in the winter. Consider if there is demand to establish an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace across the whole of Birmingham, for example could we offer an out of hours service for Muslim burials that cannot wait at a premium charge? Status Update 17 Jan: The service already provides a very successful out of hours emergency burial service at Sutton New Hall Cemetery. Floodlighting has also been introduced to enable later burials up to 6pm through the darker winter months, which has been welcomed by the communities that utilise the later burial times. A planning restriction restricts the use of lighting after 8pm. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this will increase the options and a similar approach may be adopted at that site too. The booking service operates every day except Christmas day to accept short notice bookings both during the week and at weekends. Status update 7 June: The service monitors demand and is currently providing burials for short notice funerals within 24 hours of request. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this could increase the options and demand will be reviewed when the extension is completed. However, this is not expected to be completed until 2025.	Medium	Service COMPLETED

S	The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the local staffing issue. Some of the staff working in the service long term are agency staff, which carries a higher cost than permanent staff.	Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent staff	Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent members of staff, reducing costs and the negative impact of short notice periods on the service. Consider how to make the service (and wider council) attractive as a career path. Update and improve guidance documentation for new staff, ensure staff have online access to remain connected to their colleagues across sites. Status Update 17 Jan: Three new office staff and three cemetery operatives have been recruited to vacant posts and more cemetery operatives interviews are taking place from 1st Feb. If the required amount of new starters are not identified in this round of interviews, then the post will be readvertised for a third time. There are another four vacancies that have occurred since the previous update. Following a wider advertising campaign, more interest has been shown following the more recent job advertisement. Staff have access to e-mails via smartphones and access to laptops in offices. Status update 7 June: 2 rounds of recruitment have now taken place since the original insight and recommendation. 5 permanent staff have been recruited. However, vacancies remain. Recruitment remains an issue within the service with a lack of suitable candidates coming through the recruitment process and hence a lack of appropriate applicants to fill the vacancies that have been advertised. Some of those recruited to permanent posts were previously long term agency staff working in the service. There is no corporate process / strategy to make temporary agency staff permanent, therefore effectively any of these staff who become permanent are interviewed twice. There needs to be a corporate response to provide a process to more easily recruit agency to permanent. This has been fed back to corporate HR as a matter to consider when reviewing processes, given the impact on services. The Customer Service Programme will also raise through its governance.	Medium	Service - Recruitment of long term agency staff to permanent staff - COMPLETED People Services - Corporate Temp to Perm HR policy - OUTSTANDING
T	There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses that the service must manage	Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries - opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre	Move to one main service contact number and mailbox. There is an opportunity in the Customer Services Programme for this service to use the corporate contact centre to help log, triage, track and report all enquires received, in one place. This would help to reduce the volume of enquiries the Bereavement service receive via the triage process, leveraging best practice technologies for voice, IVR, routing of calls & omni handling of non-voice contacts like email, chat, social media all managed via a single process & technology. This would support the single phone number/email strategy. Status Update 17 Jan: Bereavement Services now has one published telephone number and e-mail address. Further programme work is required in the background, but the customer now has one point of contact. Customer also has an online contact form that they can complete for enquiries. The forms are directed through to the appropriate service area for action/response. Status update 7 June: One single email address and one telephone number are now being used across the service. Menus on the telephone system have been updated (6th June) to direct calls to the most appropriate teams within Bereavement Services. The very early indication is that this has introduced further improvements with calls being managed more effectively and queue times being reduced and in target. This will be monitored over time.	High	Programme COMPLETED
U	No key performance indicators available	Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries - opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre	Identify key service operational and financial KPIs so that the service can get an overview of how the service is performing on a regular basis. Consider using power BI to report from BACAS data to create visual, dynamic dashboards. The dashboards can also be used to setup service KPIs. Status Update 17 Jan: Service is using Outlook and not omni-mail, so some work remains outstanding for the IT to be developed by the team to support the service to produce BI data. In addition, the programme team is working with Bereavement Services to review and re-introduce the Service User Questionnaire that was in place prior to the pandemic and sent to every service user following a funeral. The responses were used to shape service improvements within the service to meet customer needs. Status update 7 June: As per the update for the recommendation against code T, one single email address and one telephone number is now published and being used across the service. We have allowed some time to embed the telephony solution and analyse the data and contact themes before we look to implement the Omni channel technology / capability within the service to handle all non-voice contacts (email, webchat etc) via a single process & technology. The next step will be a "Go" decision to stand up a delivery team to bring in this Omni Channel capability within the service as it will result in operational changes, as did the telephony implementation. Omni will produce BI data for performance measures for all non-voice channels.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
V	Citizens make general enquires about the condition of cemeteries and ask for help in completing deed replacements and transfers. Some of these calls can take a long time and can result in repeated calls from the same citizens.	Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries	Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries. Work with existing Friends groups to spread awareness including the benefits of having a Friends group can make by raising funds or applying for government funding to improve the condition of cemeteries. Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed - work already ongoing - Bereavement Services Activities Manager working with numerous volunteer groups to organise activities across cemeteries. Since working with the service in July, a number of attempts have been made to gain interest in developing a Friends group at Handsworth Cemetery, but the interest has been low to date, so will keep trying. There is more interest in the ad-hoc volunteer task groups for litter picks etc. Status update 7 June: There are now Cemetery Friends groups for Handworth, Keyhill, Warstone Lane and Brandwood End cemeteries. The website has been updated to inform people about how they can become involved and communication will also be reviewed under update against insight / recommendation Q, relating to review of signage. An activity manager to support the coordination and organising involved in establishing Cemetery Friends groups at other sites will be considered as part of any future operating model.	Low	Service COMPLETED

W	User feedback is not available – this was suspended during the pandemic to enable the service to prioritise core services (funerals and memorials).	Consider restarting service customer feedback (make available in online and offline) - opportunity to use corporate solution to measure satisfaction levels already in place	Restart capturing customer feedback in both online and offline formats. There is an opportunity to work with the Customer Service Programme to repurpose the corporate solution for customer satisfaction to log, monitor, review and report. Signposting to service feedback, could also be added to the existing service web pages and form part of a service request in the new Bereavement system. This will ensure we have a consistent measure of satisfaction and will allow us to benchmark/measure at intervals of the end-to-end journey. Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed - Linked with item U. Assistance needed from the programme on what the service can do - need to scope activity and identify points at which customer gives feedback end2end and build in satisfaction form based on corporate model. Questionnaire under review, customer complaints through corporate system being monitored. Customer contact form now available on website to enable service users to make request for assistance directly to the service as an alternative to phoning. Status update 7 June: The programme has supported by providing project management resources to review and develop the customer satisfaction questionnaire, Quality assurance has been completed by the programme to ensure it meets best practice and design principles. The service can implement the satisfaction survey offline to customers now. Further work is needed on the technical implementation of the questionnaire and digital solution capability is to be identified as the next step, anticipated within the next 8 months. If a go decision is "given to stand up a delivery team to bring in Omni Channel capability within the service (see update against insight / recommendation U), then customer satisfaction can be 'plugged in' as part of this. The need to be sensitive to the customer's situation when gathering feedback is paramount and recognised.	High	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
X	The complaints data shows the most common root cause problems to be: 'Not the quality or standard expected' 'Failure to deliver a service' 'Disagree with policy or procedure'	Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends	Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends. Work with the complaints leads to see how they can be avoided through service improvement plans. Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed - work started/ongoing. The service area has no access to complaint data. Programme supporting the service with obtaining raw data and providing a summary report to inform the service's action plan. Status update 7 June: The Customer Service Programme is currently working with the corporate complaints team to put the summary reports together for the Bereavement Service to have access to all the complaints data to inform the service action plan. This should be in place for July 2023. The most common theme for complaints raised to the service for 22/23 was Service Quality at 74%. The top three problem categories were Not to the quality or standard expected at 47%, efficiency of Service at 29% and failure to deliver a service at 18%. There is still some further work to do in this area which - the Programme will be working with the corporate complaints team and the service to take a deeper dive approach in reviewing some of the themes. A meeting will be scheduled between the Programme, the complaints team and the service area in the month of July to support Bereavement services accessing the data and understanding root cause reasons for complaints to form part of their service action plan.	Medium	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
Y	The complaints data shows the response target for stage 1 citizen complaints was 73% in 2019, 69% in 2020 and 41% in 2021. This shows a gradual decline in responses provided to citizens within 14 working days and could be attributed to the level of demand experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. It could also be down to the complaint leads prioritising waste management complaints.	Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays.	Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays. This will ensure the team have enough time to investigate complaints and provide a response within the set number of working days. Request regular reports from the complaint leads to check for the team is improving their stage 1 response times. Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed - work started/ongoing using root cause analysis to improve, complaint volumes very low. All complaints are to be sent to Bereavement.Services@birmingham.gov.uk and not to individual officers to remove the risk of them not being picked up when the person is away from the office. Status update 7 June: Some improvement in the response rates for complaints is being seen. Year to date performance for 22/23 is 52% which is an increase from 41% for 21/22. The Customer Service Programme will be working with the corporate complaints team and the service area to identify any further opportunities for improvement and to review the end to end process on how complaints are assigned and to who (if its an officer or the generic mailbox). A meeting will be scheduled between the programme, the complaints team and the service in the month of July.	Medium	Service - with support from programme Work in progress
Z	Additional income generation opportunities	a. Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue b. Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services	Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue, to understand how the service can maximise income Status Update 17 Jan: Agreed - work already ongoing to review income generation opportunities. There is a review of fees, charges and usage conducted with Finance when reviewing fees and charges each year - completed November 2022. Status update 7 June: Cabinet and Cabinet Member reviewed the fee proposals and it was decided that no increase in fees for 2023/24 would be made. Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services, e.g. maintenance or borders for graves Status Update 17 Jan: Subject to Rules and Regulations. An increase in current staffing levels will be needed through recruitment to vacant posts ahead of any new packages being considered. A grave maintenance scheme was introduced many years ago but has not been popular and is very resource intensive. The service will work with the Content Manager to promote existing grave maintenance service from April 2023 when the service is likely to be fully staffed. Status update 7 June: The recruitment process has had limited success and the service is still operating with vacancies and absences, impacting upon the ability to identify the resources that would be necessary to consider providing new packages. Resources required for new packages to be provided will be considered as part of any future operating model. Offer longer lease lengths or renewal options for grave leases to generate additional income Status Update 17 Jan: The option to extend a lease from 75 years up to 99 years has been available for a number of years but there has been very limited demand for this. The wording on the fees and charges document is: Exclusive Right of Burial (ERB). NB. An extended lease of 99 years is available upon request - POA	Medium High Medium	Service COMPLETED Service - with support from programme Work in progress Service COMPLETED

WASTE MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

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

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation presented to service leads in April 2022 Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
31	Slab in the cab is currently used at the driver's/team leader's discretion n.b. <i>Note correction - it is a planned/structured pilot to ensure any issues are fully addressed before going live, taking into account lessons learned from earlier less successful roll-outs.</i>	<p>With the early success of the current soft pilot of slab in the cab, the service should-ensure more drivers to adopt this system to ensure consistency in quality and reporting across the service.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: A new Transformation Director has been employed to drive this forward and ensure all technology (Kit -Krew In-cab Technology) is in place and fully operational by end of Dec22, which includes a robust staff training programme which is fully supported by all Trade Unions. The Business Support Team have worked closely with Assistant Service Managers and crews to ensure all round data is up to date and accurately reflects day-to-day collection routes; and the kit will also flag Assisted Collections to avoid them being missed. All crews will be mandated to use the in-cab technology to report anomalies such as broken bins, contamination or bins that have not been presented which will feed back real time to the Managers of the service who will be monitoring daily collections; and taking proactive action to address any missed collections in the event of vehicle breakdowns, road blocks, etc. The technology will free up manager time to better support the crews; and the real time data visibility will be available for the Contact Centre to better equip Agents to respond factually and accurately to customer enquiries, which in turn should reduce customer complaints.</p> <p>Status Update June: <i>All the in cab technology is now in place and being used. The in-cab technology has been in place and in use in all vehicles since late January. Cradles for the tablets are fixed - the tablets themselves can be removed. Work has also been undertaken to cleanse the data as information provided to crews during the early stage of the roll out was inaccurate. Crews are monitored on the usage and reports are produced showing any problems. The reports produced by the system are being sent directly to the right person for action. Work can be reallocated in real time to minimise missed collections. This includes those as a result of vehicle breakdowns. Reports from the system are enabling service managers to understand real time failure and either make changes there and then or identify trends for more detailed investigations. The service is stabilising the usage and data produced but also looking at ways the system can be developed such as using the cameras on the vehicle to send images of issues to the contact centre or the relevant officer for action. Spare tablets are available where technical issues are encountered (e.g. problem with tablets in cabs in cold weather). The option to revert to manual systems also remains available for business continuity where there are issues. Where other issues are encountered these are worked through with TU's for resolution e.g. absence of cradle in hire vehicles and windscreen mounting presenting a potential Health and Safety issue. A session with Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny is being planned to provide a more in-depth view of the technology.</i></p>	High	Service COMPLETED

32	At some depots, the rate of missed bins can be high. Customers do not always get their missed bins resolved in a timely manner, with some getting their bin emptied at the next scheduled collection. This means that in some areas public trust can be low in the service.	<p>Make use of slab in the cab across the service to reduce the rate of missed bins across the service, reducing complaints and additional work for back office staff. Review the current policy in place for collecting missed bins within 48 hours to ensure it is achievable for the service and change this target if not, to better manage customer expectations.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: Currently the process of crews reporting missed collections happens at the end of each shift, the new in-cab technology will enable real time reporting of bins that have been missed for a variety of reasons such as road blocks, parked cars, bin not presented. This data will be captured and held in a single system so the Contact Centre will have visibility of missed bins so in the event of a customer contact, accurate data can be relayed. As well as this, managers will proactively follow up any multi-service issues causing regular repeat missed collections such as parking enforcements, illegal skips on highways, etc. that may prevent collection. Also because managers will be able to see crew performance in real time if a vehicle breaks down and can not complete a round, the work can be allocated to other crews who may have capacity on the same day to pick this up, however this will require proper engagement and agreed processes with Trade Unions for managers to follow. As part of the customer programme activity, in the Brum Account, citizens are able to report a missed bin at another property by entering the property address in the location field of the form. Whole road reporting was removed as the service found this was being inappropriately used as it was thought it would expedite a missed bin collection. Accuracy of reporting missed collections should be improved as a result.</p> <p>Status update June: Missed collections are tracked, monitored and reported on a daily and weekly basis.. The reports are showing an improvement in missed collections (alongside a significant reduction in missed collection complaints - down by 41% this April compared to April 2022). However, it is fully accepted that things still aren't right and more work is needed - particularly for Montague Street and Lifford Lane depots where missed collections remain out of target</p> <p>Reports can show the individual rounds and where and what the problem is e.g. staffing issues, access issues etc. This level of reporting enables managers to undertake a review and put in some long term solutions to prevent future service failure. Members advised that they can help resolve local issues causing service failures if they are kept informed.</p> <p>Whilst the service area advise any missed collections are reallocated either in real time or collected the next day, members advised that this is not always the experience for their constituents. Delays of 4-6 weeks were reported. Also some depots don't pick up missed collections on weekends so if a collection is missed on a Friday, it will be Monday at the earliest before the collection is made. Consistency and trust that missed collections will be collected no later than the end of the next day is needed. This will help reduce complaints. Where black sacks (rather than wheelie bins) are missed, feedback was provided that these should be prioritised. The Instruction to local managers is for crews to go back and collect what they dropped the previous day before starting their round for the day but this needs to be enforced.</p> <p>it is imperative also that quality of service provision is improved and maintained. As missed collection / service failure complaints have reduced, the proportion of complaints relating to service quality has increased. Depot Managers have been instructed to balance analysis of the data with going</p>	High	Service COMPLETED
33	The waste service is currently using the 'task and finish' approach, which means crews often go home earlier than their official finish time. This means managers are unable to reallocate dropped work, so that it can be done on the same day.	<p>Use slab in the cab to reallocate dropped work before crews return to the depot.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: see row 32</p> <p>Status Update June: Managers are able to reallocate work in real time. This is happening on a daily basis and service managers are monitoring this.</p>	High	Service COMPLETED
34	Team leaders want to have a consistent and reliable team. However, they are not always informed of who will be in their team ahead of time, creating confusion and frustration. In addition, team leaders are not always told if their truck is going to be out of action due to an MOT or repairs ahead of time.	<p>Consider how to improve the line of communication between team leaders and management. Ensure there is a feedback loop in place for waste crews to feedback on their issues day to day</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: Large recruitment process underway to fill all permanent vacancies. However the service will retain 23% of agency cover for sickness, annual leave, etc. to enable permanency of each round to improve consistency of collections. In the event of planned vehicle maintenance alternative vehicles should be sourced in advance and if not possible the work reallocated between other crews with capacity.</p> <p>Status Update June: There are currently only 9 full time positions vacant in refuse collections. Therefore the service has a stable workforce (previously, the level of agency staff covering full time posts was approximately 30%). The service still operates with 23% agency cover for sickness and leave but teams are kept together where possible. Over 70 of the older vehicles have been replaced, providing a more reliable service and a planned procurement to replace the remaining vehicles will take place soon.</p>	High	Service work started / ongoing

35	The way complaints are dealt with is inconsistent across the service. The waste service still receive iCasework, rather than these complaints going directly to the complaints team.	<p>Review the complaints process and ensure alignment across all teams, agreeing who should deal with complaints. Consider having an overflow route, should volume become too high.</p> <p>Status Update 05-Dec: The new Complaints process was launched April 2021 and City Operations which includes Waste Services now have a dedicated complaints handling team which is embedded and sits alongside the operational teams at each depot. This improves the turnaround time for complaints and although this is a high volume area the SLA of 90% is now consistently achieved. The in-cab technology will further enhance complaints responses and will enable the team to provide more personalised responses. If volumes reduce, efficiencies in administrative activities will be made.</p> <p>Status Update June: Complaints continue to be monitored centrally and reported back to Senior Management and are reducing. Trends are tracked and root cause analysis is taking place, enabling the service to develop improvement plans to address issues. Further work is needed to ensure that enquires / first requests are categorised accordingly (rather than as complaints) and dealt with with the appropriate level of urgency. Auto responses are disjointed from the issue at hand when requests are incorrectly categorised. The AD for Customer Services and Business Support is due to brief the Deputy leader on this shortly and a working group is proposed to address and resolve this.</p>	High	Service COMPLETED
36	Customers don't always following guidance around disposing of their waste correctly as well as the kerbside policy. This leads to missed bin collections and therefore additional customer traffic to BCC and sometimes complaints. BCC don't often communicate why a bin hasn't been collected, which leads to confusion and frustration with customers.	<p>Review current guidance for how the public should correctly recycle and what should not be put into refuse bins. Ensure all guidance and policies are easy to read and accessible in a range of languages and formats. Establish a live update system that is connected to slab in the cab, so customers know when and why their bins have not been collected.</p> <p>Status Update 05-Dec: Review current guidance for how the public should correctly recycle and what should be put into refuse bins working with 'Keep Britain Tidy' to try and define and find a way of telling residents they've done something wrong. Options being explored are: Tag & Flag new guidance - you've received a tag; tag and flag to resident what they did wrong; what they can and can not put into bins; tagged bins will automatically re-routed to residual waste - don't want to move into a removal of bin situation but we do want to review the communications and consider video clips of residents putting the right rubbish in the right bin instead of leaflets. Education and bin stickers to clearly show what can be placed in bins. HMO team are reassessing the Landlord responsibilities and ensure there is enough literature and information contained and landlords are suitably educated on their duties and responsibility to inform tenants of requirements - reinforcement at a regular basis. The current bin specification, which is 25-pages long needs to be reviewed, improved and simplified.</p> <p>Status Update June: The service continues to work with Keep Britain Tidy and ReLondon to review best practice from around the UK. This will result in a new set of information which will be produced with comms and marketing and then shared with residents. Targeted campaigns will also take place. The service is currently monitoring the Environment Act for changes in legislation and seeking clarity where necessary before anything is implemented.</p> <p>Stickers on bins have been trialled to advise residents when they have done something wrong and to advise what can and can't be put into bins. Where, for example, cardboard is contaminated but other recycling isn't, the other items should still be taken for recycling and the contaminated items should be moved to the residual round using the in cab technology. Where this isn't happening, it is a quality issue (see update against insight / recommendation 32).</p> <p>HMOs/exempt properties continues to be an issue. Where these properties are licensed, waste services are working with the licensing / enforcement teams to ensure that these properties have the right bins and that correct use of the bins is monitored. However, not all the properties are licensed. Intelligence is being gathered on where properties are being used as HMOs and are unlicensed.</p> <p>Assessments on whether properties have wheelie bins rather than continue to use bags / sacks we carried out in 2013/14. These can be reviewed on request and where it's possible to get a bin on a property, a bin is issued. However, the current policy is that bins can't be stored on pavements. The bins policy will be reviewed, alongside any changes required as a result of the Environment Act (such as segregation of waste).</p>	High	Service -with support from programme Work started/ongoing
37	Sometimes crews need to take a broken bin away. There is nothing for them to provide to the customer telling them what has happened and when the new bin will arrive.	<p>Develop some simple comms in a range of languages and formats for crews to have in the trucks, to post through a customer's front door in this instance.</p> <p>Status Update 05-Dec: In-cab technology allows driver to report broken bin and locations in real time to organise a repair or replacement bin. The service are reviewing the current bin procurement approach, and are exploring an Amazon -type procurement approach to enable the despatch of bins directly to residents homes as opposed to bulk order and storing of bins in depots. This will enable a much more proactive and faster response time to replacement bin requests.</p> <p>Status Update: June: Waste Services are working with the corporate comms team to develop a postcard / leaflet for residents when there has been a need to remove their broken bin or pod.</p>	High	Service -with support from programme Work started/ongoing

38	Sometimes rubbish is accidentally dropped during rounds. The public can at times become aggressive and there are road rage incidents towards the crews.	<p>Review the training crews get to better equip them to deal with difficult members of the public and to ensure they clear up any rubbish that is dropped during the process of collecting bins.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: It is mandatory for all crews to pick up any dropped refuse or spillage that fall from the bins at the point of collection when being lifted into the truck. Any reports of non-compliance will be monitored and performance managed by depot managers. The street cleaning rounds now follow the black bag collection crews. Any residual waste that has been fly-tipped or black bags that have been opened by pests can now be reported by crews with a pinned location using the In-cab technology; requests will be automatically assigned to the appropriate service to resolve to avoid multiple reports of the same issue and customer complaints.</p> <p>Status Update June: Steps are being taken to improve quality and ensure that mandatory instructions such as clearing up dropped refuse / spillages are always carried out. In addition, one of the vehicle checks to be conducted before each round is to ensure the tools to clear up dropped refuse / spillages (e.g. brush and shovel) are on board.</p> <p>All vehicles are equipped with CCTV and the service works with WM Police who have stated that they will prioritise instances of aggression / road rage towards crews.</p>	High	Service COMPLETED
39	Staff highlighted that due to traffic issues on their rounds they miss around 15 streets a day resulting in many missed bins.	<p>Consider how to leverage slab in the cab to reallocate dropped work as efficiently as possible and how this information is relayed back to the customer both digitally and non-digitally.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: The in-cab technology will be able to record if there is vehicle or access issues or the crew is stuck in traffic; *using the technology so that we can communicate to residents and Members access issues have resulted in collection not being able to take place. Being made aware in real time will allow depot managers to reschedule asap</p> <p>*what mechanisms will be used to communicate issues to residents and Members (e.g. Brum Account, Waste alpha options)??</p> <p>Status Update June: Rounds have been reviewed. Dropped work is reallocated on a daily basis. Traffic issues are rarely now a cause for missed collections.</p>	High	Service COMPLETED
40	Not all streets are included on the digital form when reporting a missed bin collection, making this a painful process for some customers.	<p>Review the current maps in use. Consider moving to a live version of maps in the missed bin/recycling form to ensure that all roads are current. Enable a customer feedback loop when maps are not up to date.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: Dependency on LLPG data between the mapping solution and the line of business application which needs to be in sync in order for the report to be submitted and actioned by the service. Taking this approach could lead to an increase in failure rate and we will need to understand how much of an issue this is considering we are using local and national LLPG data.</p> <p>Status update June: Planners are now providing data for new estates and developments. More regular data provision is sought - particularly on smaller developments and on when residents are moving into properties.</p>	High	Service Work started / ongoing
41	Customers have expressed that paying for garden waste is not value for money especially when this type of waste is missed or not collected.	<p>Note: We understand legislation around garden waste has recently changed and local authorities may no longer be able to charge for garden waste.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: We are looking to introduce reoccurring payments (direct debits) for residents to pay for their garden waste collections, this will mean that they will be automatically subscribed to the service each year without the need to renew annually which is resource intensive. When we move to automatic subscription this will enable the service to effectively plan the routes for the year ahead as opposed to being reactive every month and making manual adjustments which increases the potential for dropped work. We are aware that there are pending changes to the Environment Act which may impact on the type of service offered to residents however no decisions have yet been made/communicated.</p> <p>O&S - recommends a move to an automatic renewal system; once residents sign up we tend to retain them (very few cancel)</p> <p>Status Update June: Waste Services is in ongoing conversations with DEFRA to gain clarification on the Environment Act and its implications for garden waste (it's already known that food waste will need to be collected weekly but clarity around garden waste is outstanding). Ahead of any legislative changes, an autorenewal process will be introduced. Development costs for this will be looked at.</p>	High	Programme but pending legislation
42	For some customers waste collections have been missed multiple weeks in a row with no explanation or update about when their waste will be taken away.	<p>Consider reviewing the current mechanism for informing a customer their collection will not be done on a single occasion or for multiple occasions.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: See Row 32 - Covered by KIT implementation - pulls all the repeats together to be provided with a hotspot of issues.</p> <p>Status Update June: See Update against insight / recommendation 32</p>	High	Service Work started / ongoing

43	<p>Customers are unsure how to use bins correctly. For example the pod should host cardboard, but is often too small for the cardboard customers need to recycle. Some people swap their recycling round so the cardboard goes into the main bin. In addition, customers aren't always clear what to do to manage a missed bin (especially if it's a bag) without creating additional issues such as rodent infestation.</p>	<p>Review current guidance and comms in place informing customers how their bins can be used, including what to do whilst waiting for missed bins to be collected.</p> <p>Status update 05-Dec: See Row 36 - Keep Britain Tidy and HMO engagement</p> <p>Status Update: June: See update against insight / recommendation 36. Work continues to learn from best practices across the UK.</p> <p><i>In addition, A contamination project has been launched in the Perry Barr depot to collect extra data. Bin Stickers have been introduced in Lifford's area and the service area is working on a pilot with its paper contractor to trial an extra wheelie bin. Changes introduced by the Environment Act around food waste and deposit schemes could reduce the amount of waste in residual and other recycled collections respectively.</i></p>	Medium	<p>Service -with support from programme Work started/ongoing</p>
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HOUSING REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

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

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation - detail Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
19	Customers find it difficult to explain what the issue is online. They are unsure if their issue qualifies as an emergency or not, so often they find it easier to ring up and speak to someone. Staff find that some customers believe everything is urgent, meaning there is a gap in expectations and a lack of common understanding.	Review the BRUM account reporting process and content to understand how we might clearly communicate the different levels of severity of repairs. Make it easier for customers to tell us what the issue is, improve triaging and reduce the need to ring. Test these changes with users and iterate based on feedback. BCC might should explore implementing a simple decision tree, diagnostic tool for customers to use. Status Update 29-Nov: new functionality available enabling customers to report, diagnose and track a repair, end2end view of the repair request and timelines. Target go-live Mar23 for online capability and automation. <i>Link to Rows 20 & 22</i> Update 09-June23: BRUM account end to end testing highlighted issues with function / process (some of the information submitted was not getting passed on to contractor). The new functionality (enabling customers to report, diagnose and track a repair, end2end view of the repair request and timelines) is now confidently expected end August / early Sept due to having to wait till an NEC (Housing Management software) Upgrade. Extensive user testing will take place to ensure the solution is fit for purpose. The service has been attending weekly meetings since Jun-23 to ensure links to Ombudsman recommendations and Para 49 (further investigation by the Ombudsman to establish whether any presenting evidence is indicative of a systemic failing).	Medium	Programme Work started / ongoing
20	Customers believe that BCC aren't proactively maintaining housing stock due to a lack of funding, which causes things to become worse over time, resulting in more expensive repairs. Sometimes the wrong people are sent to do the repairs work. Customers experience varying standards of quality of repair, some of which is poor. This results in the need for repeated contact about the same issue.	Improved triaging will help ensuring the right tradesperson is sent to a job. Service level agreements detail the agreed standards of quality and timeframes expected. These are known, documented and publicly available in an accessible format. Customers are served information about the SLA and expectations appropriately, through the service, and don't have to hunt through the website for them. BCC and its partners consistently meet agreed standards. BCC are already exploring how they could make use of smart technology to track and maintain its infrastructure and assets e.g. in housing and highways. This will enable the council to proactively address issues as they arise, often before they become a major problem that is expensive to fix. Status Update 29-Nov: Housing stock maintenance will reduce demand by modernising Housing stock and Housing Revenue Review also in progress. Increase of capital spend by £ 50m by Apr23 (inc. retrofit, reprocurement will facilitate adoption of new KPI 'right first time' to ensure cases are reviewed accordingly; currently at 40% decency level of housing stock which is not acceptable and service is increasing the level of stock surveys completed, as a result. <i>Link to Rows 19 & 22</i> Update 09-June23: Work in progress following Ombudsman Para 49 investigation / response to drill into quality of repairs and repeat calls about same issue. Also, additional resource looking at current end to end process and linking to complaints. Further analysis at service failure level on correct trade and success of triage is also in progress. The action plan should have the majority of the short term actions completed by December 2023. As well as monitoring through overview and scrutiny, there is further assurance from the Ombudsman who will test and check that these actions have been completed and are embedded. This will happen around January 2024. The Ombudsman has been positive about the quality and content of the plan commenting that it is a "robust plan" with targeted actions. Separately, works on asset management strategy and investment programmes as a result of additional funds being invested are taking place to proactively maintain housing stock and bring stock up to a Decent Homes standard. The impact of these on demand will be longer term. The strategy will focus on key themes of Safe, Warm and Sustainable with works covering thermal efficiency improvements as well as the more traditional elemental works.	Medium	Service Work started/ongoing
21	Some tenants don't look after their properties to an appropriate standard, resulting in the need for additional repair work, putting added pressure on the department.	Review existing tenancy agreements and communication materials detailing expectations of both BCC and the tenant, as well as the escalation process if a either party is found not to be meeting the agreement. Ensure clear documentation is readily available on line in a range of accessible formats and languages. Status Update 29-Nov: Tenancy conditions require lengthy process and is currently under review with consultants Campbell & Tickell as part of the Housing TOM - review outcome target: Dec22, implementation kick-off Jan23 - recommendation in scope so will be picked up and output communicated to tenants. Tenancy conditions are robust however visibility of diagnostic trees and customer journey could be better, e.g. tenancies currently end on a Friday and begin on a Monday (other LAs adopt a more flexible approach) setting customer expectations would be key to improving customer satisfaction. Voids end2end review also in progress. Strongly supported by O&S as current process results in lost tenancy days/revenue loss and this opportunity presents potential financial gain for BCC. Update 09-June23: The consultant review referenced against the November update for this insight / recommendation has now concluded and a draft of the Housing TOM has been completed but this is still to be delivered. <Timeline/ summary of next steps needed> There is additional recognition on the need to maximise tenancy visits for both new and existing tenants, to collect photos, regular condition updates and data when on site. This work is part of the digital enablement strand of the TOM covering identification of the type of visits needed, the level of information to be collected and maximising data collected in each visit. In addition to this, processes are also in place for contractor operatives to feed back on properties as part of safeguarding protocols.	High	Service/Programme Work started/ongoing

22	For some customers it is a lengthy process scheduling in an appointment via the contact centre. Some customers wish to be able to self serve and book/manage their own appointments.	<p>BCC is already developing an online booking system showing available appointments that customers can self book in Housing. Use the user stories developed as part of this work to ensure this system is user need led and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: In scope for Housing Online - communication module is an element within the configuration capability of the portal enabling self-service and customer appointment scheduling.</p> <p>Link to Rows 19 & 20</p> <p>Update 09-June23: A self serve option for tenants to book / manage their own appointments will be delivered as part of the changes to the Brum account (see status update against insight / recommendation 19). Self serve will not be mandated. Other means to raise repairs will remain open. There is also ongoing work by repairs teams to look into and maximise appointment availability which has diminished. This work is expected to conclude by the end of September.</p>	High	Inform new solution spec
23	Customers are asked for feedback twice, by both BCC and contractor partners. BCC's request typically comes via SMS and a contractor's request comes via PDAs (personal digital assistants). Feedback is crucial for both BCC and contractors to understand how they can improve service delivery. Contractors want to work more closely with the council, to increase shared understanding of ways of working and processes, for example Northgate systems only track repair activity to measure workload, and cannot track conversations. Some customers receive a request for feedback from BCC for a repair that hasn't yet been carried out.	<p>More joined up/partnership working between the council and contractors, so customers don't feel the organisational boundaries. Make use of a single point of feedback that can be shared with our repair partners. Ensure contractors do not ask customers for feedback whilst still in their home.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: Housing Satisfaction Measures end2end process asking for feedback based on the service being delivered (enquiry type); New regulations require specific questions to be asked of tenants via a survey and an associated action plan put in place for resolution.</p> <p>Wider tenant satisfaction measures - Apr23 and target publication Jun/Jul23. *(Joint delivery by Service and Programme)</p> <p>Feedback via contractors - Steve Wilson leading on service improvement work for City Housing programme and has shared the recommendations and our customer charter principles to aid the partnership relationship.</p> <p>Update 09-June23: Work is ongoing as part of Tenant Satisfaction Measure activity (due to be delivered by end August 2023) and the Ombudsman Para 49 response to ensure we get the best out of the communications to and from our customers. Automated messaging and text surveys are being looked at as a better alternative to emails to capture satisfaction data following repairs being completed. NEC is being reviewed for capability. All intelligence and information requirements will also be built into the future Repairs and Maintenance contract from April 2024.</p>	Medium	Service/Programme Work started/ongoing
24	Sometimes customers are not informed if a contractor will not be attending as planned, meaning they may stay at home all day waiting for someone to come who never arrives. Conversely, sometimes contractors arrive without an appointment being booked in, and the customer is not aware of the visit.	<p>Keeping customers informed about changes to their case, particularly when it directly affects them is fundamental. The appointment notification system will help with this if it has the functionality to provide live updates - for example notifying a tenant that a contractor is running late and they will now arrive at 4pm instead of 2pm.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: 'As-is' functionality customers receive and SMS text appointment confirmation from contractors and an 24-hr reminder from the contractor. Functionality to track engineer to the doorstep and notify customers of any delays is not yet implemented. This needs to be 2-way functionality for customer and contractor and although may already have the capability; implementation approach will be key. To be noted: Demonstrates the benefits of the programme, as this user need was not part of the original procurement detail but as a result of the user research conducted by the programme, this functional requirement will now be incorporated in the new tender process.</p> <p>Strongly supported by O&S - if we get this right, it will revolutionise the service; timeline for activity required.</p> <p>Link to Row 25</p> <p>Update 09-June23: This requirement has been included in the Repairs Contract 2024, allowing text between operative and customer and live tracking.</p>	Medium	<p>Inform new solution spec COMPLETED</p> <p>Implementation In Progress</p>
25	Customers sometimes miss repair appointments, which is costly to the service.	<p>The service are currently in the process of trying to implement an automated reminder system that will remind the customer 48 hours and 2 hours before the scheduled appointment. Ensure this process is fit for purpose through user testing. Track the impact on rates of missed appointments.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: due to 'cost per property' model, costs would remain the same (i.e. no reduction in contractor costs) but increased contractor efficiency would improve the customer experience and satisfaction. Service exploring the use of the communications module within the Northgate solution to support 'getting this right first time' and improving the customer journey (review of volume of missed appointments will be key).</p> <p>Link to Row 24</p> <p>Update 09-June23: Analysis of missed appointments due to no access is being carried out, to identify trends / customer profiles and check if our comms processes are working or need improvement. Findings to date are that process not always being followed. Many customers say they were not aware of appointments so focus is on the evidence around text and phone ahead which is part of the current process. Also anecdotal evidence that language is an issue with some tenants and contact information is changing but repairs service not always being updated. Analysis expected to conclude by December 2023. Future 2 way communication functionality (see update against insight / recommendation 24) will support with reducing missed appointments. Preferred language functionality also to be looked at for inclusion in new system specifications, it is expected the language functionality will be a longer term aspiration.</p>	Medium	Service Work started/ongoing
26	Customers are able to place multiple requests for a repair, which can result in duplication within BCC. In one case 22 jobs were booked for the same property, on different dates. Reference numbers are provided over the phone, but customers don't necessarily take a record of these. Customers are given a separate reference number for each issue in a house.	<p>Explore how BCC can manage cases without using reference numbers, for example assigning a case to a household or customer - this could reduce the possibility for duplication and would improve the customer experience of the service.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: scope of user need, tenants with multiple repairs to be assigned a property-based rather than job-based unique reference number enabling a customer and contractor view of multiple/outstanding jobs under one reference.</p> <p>Housing Management review as part of potential failure demand and repeat jobs; need to properly analyse the Northgate data on all outstanding jobs and top 50 reporters. If stock decency can be increased then the volume of repairs will reduce.</p> <p>O&S: long term repairs data may highlight fundamental issues and enable a more proactive approach using the insights to requirements and a long term view for planned maintenance.</p> <p>Update 09-June23: Further analysis of repeat jobs is ongoing. Contact centre script and agents do check history and raise recall, This needs some more work with the service to accurately identify the root cause, the work links in with the Para 49 work and will be ongoing through to December 2023.</p>	High	Service with support from Programme Work started / ongoing

27	Contractor colleagues are unable to manage information on the housing repairs system. For example, to update details such as phone numbers, or to include a warning about a tenant they must contact BCC directly to get this changed.	<p>More effective working closely with partners, sharing data and systems, to improve efficiencies and the experience customers have of the service.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: Data sharing dependency and how we capture contractor data and feed this back into the single customer record; potential use of the comms module to push our reminders across City Housing. Link to Tenant Satisfaction Measures</p> <p>O&S: Proactive approach required to address this recommendation and plug the tenant data gaps.</p> <p>Update 09-June23: Correct to ensure BCC have control over updates for warnings for example. Investigation needed to determine capability of interface for contractor to highlight the issue via PDA whilst on job, information comes into NEC but BCC validate / approve the addition of a warning before records are updated.</p>	High	Service with support from Programme Work started / ongoing
28	Customers are sometimes promised that a manager will be in touch to discuss their case, but this never happens. For some customers, conversations feel scripted and unnatural.	<p>Customer centricity training for the contact centre will help to ensure staff have the training and skills to effectively manage cases and support customers, delivering a high quality of customer experience.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: Customer Standards Workshops to embed principles of our customer charter 'putting customers first all the time, every time'.</p> <p>O&S: require an update on the issues coming out of the workshops and O&S attendance as part of Phase 2</p> <p>Update 09-June23 : Closer partnership work taking place between service area, contractors and complaints team when complaints are raised. Repairs service area is getting involved in back office comms and looking at recording contacts by Manager / Senior Manager etc. Contact centre does need to follow scripts to ensure correct diagnosis of repairs. Soft skills training is deployed to all agents to ensure that calls are not 'robotic'. Customer satisfaction on call handling is measured for random sample of calls - routinely around 80% for way agent has handled call. Feedback provided to service area and agents as appropriate. We also have an opportunity to review the contractors Out of Hours responses to ensure the quality of the responses are consistent. Improvements have been identified for inclusion in the Repairs and Maintenance contract in April 2024.</p>	Medium	Programme COMPLETED
29	Data shows that there were over 70,000 calls related to housing applications	<p>The website states there's high demand for housing within Birmingham but doesn't give any example or average waiting times based on typical applications. This would help set customers expectations in believing they will get accommodation relatively quickly. It also doesn't let the customer know how many applications are currently on the council housing waiting list. Providing this information may be useful to customers or creating a quick assessment questionnaire asking basic information to provide an estimate of the time it may take to get accommodation would be useful.</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: administration of the process if the issue due to capacity/vacancies, was reduced to 4,000 applications; new allocations policy and new functionality development within the system will assist but need to get backlog figures reduced (average 6-week waiting period) - service to provide figures and report back.</p> <p>Automation being led by Jamie Harrison - greater visibility will negate the 70,000 calls received for application updates; as well as managing expectations on timelines.</p> <p>Choice-based lettings requires a content review - is the guidance meaningful for the customer and aligns to the customer journey, the 'as is' not providing the information customers require at the time they need. Proactive engagement with tenants to downsize is in progress.</p> <p>Regular update notes to Cllrs on current status - Average Waiting Calculator available https://www.birminghamchoice.co.uk/ but how this is communicated needs addressing e.g. cascade link on the Members' page.</p> <p>O&S: historical levels are far too high; escalation to Housing O&S for visibility</p> <p>Update 09-June23 : there are currently 7,400 applications waiting to be assessed of which 2,800 are within the 6 week target. Numbers began to rise after the dedicated 'Backlog team' was disbanded and the backlog of applications returned to Business As Usual (BAU). Currently the average time taken to assess an application is 8 weeks. Demand has increased with an average of 500 new applications received per week. BAU team has been running on reduced capacity with a vacancy rate of 27%, recruitment has recently taken place to fill the vacancies and onboarding is in progress.</p> <p>A Service Review has recently been completed by the Corporate Special Projects and Delivery Unit. This has resulted in the compilation of a detailed action plan based on the recommendations from the review. A section of the Action Plan is around the customer journey and making information more visible to our customers, as such the BirminghamChoice web page is currently being reviewed and updated to make information more available to our customers. In addition there is a link on the front page of BirminghamChoice to a 'Housing Advice Pack' This gives customers information on numbers on the Housing Register, numbers of lets completed, waiting times, other housing options etc.</p> <p>Volume of calls answered for 'Council Tax' during period 2022/23: 84.79% (329,378)</p> <p>Mar-23: 37,653 calls answered (78.70%) compared with Apr-22: 26,186 (76.76%).</p> <p>Volume of calls answered for 'Rents' during period 2022/23: 89.77% (93,269)</p> <p>Mar-23: 10,635 (87.81%) compared with Apr-22: 8,256 (93.82%) *peaks during Mar-23 due to Annual Rent Statements and Annual Billing.</p> <p>A bi-monthly update on stats etc. for the Portfolio Holder is in progress. This was previously shared with Councillor Thompson and will continue to be shared</p>	High	Programme COMPLETED
30	Data shows over 20,000 calls were made by customers checking their rent/council tax balance	<p>Ensure customers are made aware how they can view their balance online via the BRUM account</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: Online rent account , payments calculator, payment history and notifications all live in the Brum Account. Need shift to self serve to irradiate calls for simpler enquiries.</p> <p>Service provide 12-week support at the beginning of the tenancy journey, communicating the expectations of tenants.</p> <p>Update 09-June23 : Programme has met with the Letting teams and provided them with an overview of the BRUM account and Rents capabilities; providing guidance notes and screenshots by way of instructions to set up a BRUM Account and access the rents accounts. With effect from July 2023, officers will use this guidance to assist new tenants to setup their accounts and get access to their digital housing services during the 12 weeks letting suite process. Once work has been trialled with new tenants, the service will consider how to share with existing tenants also.</p> <p>Main root cause for 22/23 was Service Quality at 74% compared with previous fiscal year of 52% with the top three problem categories identified as:</p> <p>Not to the quality or standard expected 47%</p> <p>Efficiency of Service 29%</p> <p>Failure to deliver a service 18%</p>	Medium	Programme COMPLETED

		<p>Some contractors have a FLAG initiative in place as well as sending out leaflets to tenants on how to deal with damp for example, they are happy to share this information with the council</p> <p>Status Update 29-Nov: Contractor comms/leaflets can add value to tenant guidance and could be distributed via .gov.uk, tenant comms and newsletters. City Housing DMT to define approach and response</p> <p>Update 09-June23 : Programme has reviewed and updated the online content around damp on birmingham.gov.uk on 23-Feb https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20006/housing/2661/damp_condensation_and_mould.</p> <p>Proactive work has commenced to better understand and address root causes of damp. Three briefing and information sessions with members and MP's were held from November 2022 chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness. One of the actions was to proactively analyse damp repairs logged by customers over a 3 year period. For those properties where a number of visits had not eradicated the problem, we will be implementing a programme of specialist surveys on these homes to determine the root cause and establish more permanent solutions for the customer. The outcome would be less occurrences of damp and mould and better conditions for the customers. This programme of work is commencing in June 2023 and will continue until April 2024 where the approach is included in the new Repairs and Maintenance contract.</p>	Medium	Service COMPLETED
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HIGHWAY REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

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

Code	Insight	Recommendation	Initial Rating	Delivery Accountability
44	The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality.	<p>Explore how the service might establish a shared quality standard for responses to complaints, and how we can hold ourselves and our partners to that standard. Consider making adhoc checks of complaint responses to ensure quality standard is acceptable.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Customer Responses in general from the BCC Customer Services are not of sufficient quality in the view of the responsible service area (i.e. Highways). Whilst much of this issue can be resolved through improved wording in responses (particular automated responses), some quality improvements will require process and/or systems changes in conjunction with BHL/Kier as a our highways services provider. Outbound response from CXM shared with service, pair writing to commence. Identify any system changes front office/back office. Iterative content development i.e. released as signed off.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>At the moment systems don't talk to each other as well as they should do; systems need to be joined up and quality of responses needs improvement - needs to be clear on the request and timescale of outcome and aligned to contractor responses; part cultural piece with Keir - subscribed updates on the progress of repairs raised; new technology that can be embraced and a common approach/consistency between services e.g. Housing repairs. The PFI contract will be lever for alignment with contractors</i></p>	Medium	Programme
45	Councillors are not always using the form that has been created for them to submit their requests, instead using the highways or general complaints inboxes (resulting in delays in responding due to additional processing time and time spent on manually copying content from councillor's emails into iCasework)	<p>Reinforce messaging to councillors that they must use the correct process, and when they don't respond by asking them and making it very easy for them to do so - e.g. include link to the form and instructions on what to do</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: To deliver the recommendation Highway Service needs see a clearly defined set of outcomes and an agreed delivery plan from D&CS to address this issue. Comms & engagement piece to reinforce the process of Member enquiries. Review of current content, information, advice and guidance required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>Members are generally starting to use the systems in place but they won't use the forms as they don't have the time - use of the complaints teams is the corporate approach. 85% come through the complaints team exceptions for urgent/critical items that will go direct to services. Most Highways are enquiries and not complaints which takes time from the complaints team. New system/process - clarify the route to enable better processing of requests that are not complaints - narrative needs to better reflect the expectations of Members (members need to work out which complaints team to send their queries to); some requests need multiple services to be co-ordinated to resolve as a priority.</i></p>	High	Programme
46	In Highways there are two business support teams broadly doing similar work. They are working in silos and rely in 'middle people' to work effectively	<p>If our understanding of this situation is right, review the roles, responsibilities and function of these two teams and consolidate into one, redirecting freed up resource elsewhere in the service should it be found that there is duplication of effort.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: In Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) there are two teams doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints . They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively. Review of the current business support structure, policies and working practices in Digital and Customer Services on behalf of the Highway service required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>Need one team to own it and close the task down</i></p>	High	TBC should be DCS not programme
47	The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'.	<p>Consider how the service might establish more effective prioritisation processes. Test these with staff to ensure they will be effective and allow staff to focus on things that are a genuine priority.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service.</p> <p>Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>From a process perspective there is a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise work. Members need to be able to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge - it is a more difficult process to invoke highways enforcement (catching people in the act, capacity to resource), Section 184 Highways Act - letters are currently issued to the address. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity but resources are limited. Use of a transportation capital budget for rare instances where Members identify as a priority - requires further exploration</i></p>	Medium	Service with Programme support

48	The Clean Air Zone website is confusing, and it is unclear if zones are in the CAZ or not. CAZ charges are not clearly explained on the website. There is no pre-notification or warning of a CAZ fine. Fines come as a surprise to many customers, which can be confusing and distressing.	<p>Review the webpages and quality of communication about the CAZ. Use a content designer to ensure all written communication is clear and accessible. Test the new content with customers to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ensure zones and times are clearly indicated online so charges do not come as a surprise to customers. Should the development of a BRUM account app happen in the future, the service could consider making use of push notifications to alert customers that they have entered a CAZ and give them, for example 10 minutes to exit the zone should they have entered if unintentionally.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penalty charge notices if drivers do not want to pay the 'fine'. The CAZ charge and communications and messaging about payment of the charge is dealt with by the CAZ team. However staffing of customer frontline in Parking needs to be investigated.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Tell Us Once - single view of customer, if a citizen tells 'The Council' something they believe their data will be updated for every dept. Front end visibility and communication of CAZ</i></p> <p><i>Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend</i></p> <p><i>O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.</i></p>	Low	Rejected as CAZ does not sit with Highways
49	Complaints can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service.	<p>Consider how we can consolidate complaint routes and have one place that they are managed from to ensure there is only one version of the truth for the whole service.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Service Requests can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service. Customer Services to identify multiple service request routes and a plan for consolidation of these with the Highway Service.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available</i></p>	High	Business Support not programme
50	Customers want to be able to easily report issues on the go. Currently the reporting solution is clunky, customers find the map difficult to use and it doesn't work at all on some devices.	<p>Review the current reporting solution. Consider moving to a live version of Google maps to ensure that all road information is current. Consider using alternative solutions like what3words and coordinates for customers to report locations. Enable a customer feedback loop when location information is not up to date.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Understand user needs, review the current Brightly/Jadu technology and how we can use this to improve the user experience from a reporting perspective. Joint discovery with Data programme - Alpha (testing/prototyping) and Beta (live/implementation) may be delivered by Data Management programme.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available to automate the process</i></p>	High	Inflight with service programme to support customer elements
51	When the service area seeks to engage with service users, they typically use the same group of customers to represent the people of Birmingham.	<p>In line with customer engagement and user research best practice, seek to expand the existing group of customers, refreshing this either on a rolling basis or every six months. This will enable new voices to contribute to shaping the service, which is very important if the engagement is to be meaningful. Ensure that the group represents the diversity of Birmingham, particularly amongst young people and people of colour.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Leverage the use of the customer panel, gap maybe around Business customers. Best practice engagement process would sit with D&CS programme to share with Highways, The development/Ownership of the engagement plan will sit with the Highways leveraging on best practice.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: Positive that customer engagement happens in the service but need to expand this; detailed in PFI for contractors to work in alignment and ensure focus groups are reflective and representative. Strategic Equality Partnership also looking up public participation and citizen engagement and a new strategy developed as a result</i></p>	Medium	Programme
52	Customers found there is sometimes a lack of communication on why something has happened or why a decision has been made. This keeps customers in the dark about things they care about and isn't open or transparent.	<p>Openly share what decisions we have made and why. In line with the digital strategy theme 'Evidence based decision making', ensure we use data and evidence for our decisions and publish these to ensure customers are aware.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Review the "As Is" process and solution supporting this with a discovery (user research) phase; through user engagement identify pain points and opportunities to close the gap in sharing information online/offline with customers. Some outputs may be linked to PFI, integration with Brum Account to enable information flow to enable greater customer interaction - dependency on contractors to implement.</p> <p><i>Update 12-Dec: We miss opportunities to communicate the wider plan and the priorities and tailoring quality responses to customers - closer / joined up thinking about future view of strategies.</i></p>	Medium	Solution review inflight by Service, programme to support once finalised

53 Customers report that the quality of repairs is not always to a good standard. Ensure the SLA between us and partners is clear and known. Consider including information online about the expected quality of repairs, what qualifies for a repair and what repairs we will/will not make, e.g. why we only fill in a large pothole when there are other smaller potholes within the immediate area. This will help to better manage customer's expectations and will be information the contact centre and the service can refer customers to.

Refined 04-Nov: Understand the current performance standards are for the service, how these are raised and reported on. Do customers know these standards, how does this feed into the contractual agreements with Contractors and managed. Do we need to make this data visible and transparent. what is the mechanism of reporting defect quality issues? Opportunity to offer a commercial service offering through our suppliers/contractors to offer an enhanced service.

Update 12-Dec: Being taken forward as a performance measure discussion with the service provider and ensure repairs are conducted by contractors in a timely way; quality of responses reviewed to ensure they are meaningful and in plain language - how the data is managed and fed back to contractors and customers; providing visibility of the standard of performance. Member example to be provided as to where the system hasn't worked - stewards are not engineers they are customer service/engagement experts - test the process.

Medium Inflight by Service, Programme to advise

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Friday 14th July 2023



Subject: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group Supplementary Report (Highway Repairs)

Report of: Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Chair Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny

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1. Purpose

1.1. The purpose of this supplementary report is to provide an update to the 14th July report on the actions of the Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

2. Recommendations

Co-ordinating O&S Committee:

- 2.1. Notes that the Task & Finish Group has completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads for Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highway Repairs
- 2.2. Agrees that the Task & Finish Group should ask service owner Committees to follow up any further action required to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.
- **Neighbourhoods:** Waste and Bereavement Services
 - **Sustainability & Transport:** Highway Repairs
 - **Homes:** Housing Repairs
- 2.4. Supports the further work of the Task & Finish Group to scrutinise how senior managers are responding to feedback from the Customer Standards Workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy.

3. Update on Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

- 3.1. Appendix A and Appendix C provide the outcomes of all Task & Finish Group meetings with the service area sponsor/leads for improving the customer experience and details the recommended opportunities for improvement.
- 3.2. Feedback was previously submitted to the committee (9 December 2022) on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management; and a supplementary update (27 January) on Highway Repairs.
- 3.3. In this second review, it was noted the overall positive progress has been achieved in implementation by service leads of the Customer Service Programme service improvement recommendations but more still needs to be done to achieve 'Best in Class' customer service and ensure the best customer journey for our users to improve satisfaction levels and reduce complaints.

3.4. Highway Repairs

- 3.4.1. The Task & Finish Group met on 7th July 2023 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth also attended by Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Product Owner. This supplementary update to the report has been issued following the meeting to review the recommendations and provide an update to the 12th December status review previously provided.
- 3.4.2. There has been a change of Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure since the original insights were gathered and previous updates were made. The new AD has affirmed that he is passionate about the customer and will inject pace and effort into putting these recommendations, and additional measures to improve the customer experience, in place. A customer improvement group has been established with senior managers to develop a Highways Customer Improvement Plan which will look to address not only the existing insights but also any additional insight gathered through the course of this work and to drive that plan forward. The customer improvement group has been tasked with developing a draft Highways Customer Improvement plan by the end of September 2023.
 - 3.4.2.1. A detailed piece of work is underway with business support, to analyse the root cause of complaints which is scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2023.
 - 3.4.2.2. Work has also commenced to exploit the technology we now have and to maximise communication between internal systems, ensuring information can be accessed first hand, giving greater visibility and enabling quicker and more robust responses. It is envisaged this will be an ongoing, continuous exploitation and improvement process.

- 3.4.2.3. A series of engagement sessions have been held with the service contractor, Kier's customer and leadership teams - covering improvements to processes, quality of responses and the need for BCC values, attitudes and behaviours to be reflected in these.
- 3.4.3. Approximately 90% of member enquiries to the complaints teams are first time service requests, rather than complaints. The complaints teams are not sufficiently resourced to handle these enquiries. A working group has been established to address this issue. The first meeting of the group took place on 10th July (chaired by AD for Customer Services and Business Support). The group will map current access routes and identify how enquiries can be handled differently. The portfolio lead and informal cabinet have also been briefed on the issue and on the measures being taken to resolve it.
- 3.4.4. Business Support to the highways service is now operating as a single, amalgamated team to manage service enquiries and complaints, reducing duplicated effort.
- 3.4.5. An internal review is being carried out using insight that is now available into all Highway enforcement functions (including parking, permits and licences). The review will establish the current demand for these services, how these requests are reported and presented and how resources can then be prioritised and are deployed most appropriately. A bolder approach to enforcement will be taken. Messaging will also be improved - both in terms of communicating what is being done but also managing expectations where action is not taken. The draft from the internal review of Enforcement is scheduled for the end of October 2023.
- 3.4.6. In summary, a total of 10 service improvement recommendations were presented to Highway Repairs, and to date 2 have been implemented and 8 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

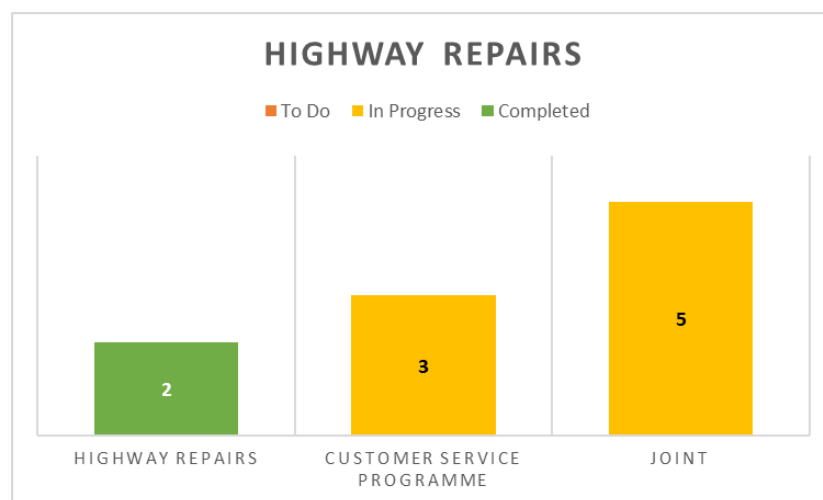


Figure 1 - Highway Repairs Status Overview

4. Any Financial Implications

- 4.1. The original Enhanced Business Case sought and approved total funding of £1.7m for Year 1 in December 2021. The Customer Service resource profile forecasts budget spend at the identified £ 1.7m costs allocated to the programme in final Quarter of 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 4.2. The savings that are currently set out in the MTFP increase by £600k in 2023/2024, and phase 2 of the programme will help to deliver these and also identify future potential savings of over the next 2 years.
- 4.3. There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

5. Any Legal Implications

- 5.1. The Council is under a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 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.
- 5.2. The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Any Equalities Implications

- 6.1. Overall, implementation of the Customer Service Strategy and therefore the activities of the Task and Finish Group may impact a number of the nine protected characteristics (specifically Age, Disability and Race) with the channel shift to self-serve; however the vision of the Strategy is clear and will endeavour to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient approach to the customer journey across all channels by ensuring our customers access the right information at the right time and content is accurate and up to date regardless of the channel.

7. Background Documents

- 7.1. [Customer Service Strategy](#)
- 7.2. [Our Customer Charter](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. C: Status overview of the Customer Service Programme recommendations (Highway Repairs)

HIGHWAY REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

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

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation - detail Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
44	The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality.	<p>Explore how the service might establish a shared quality standard for responses to complaints, and how we can hold ourselves and our partners to that standard. Consider making adhoc checks of complaint responses to ensure quality standard is acceptable.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Customer Responses in general from the BCC Customer Services are not of sufficient quality in the view of the responsible service area (i.e. Highways). Whilst much of this issue can be resolved through improved wording in responses (particular automated responses), some quality improvements will require process and/or systems changes in conjunction with BHL/Kier as a our highways services provider. Outbound response from CXM shared with service, pair writing to commence. Identify any system changes front office/back office. Iterative content development i.e. released as signed off.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: At the moment systems don't talk to each other as well as the should do; systems need to be joined up and quality of responses needs improvement - needs to be clear on the request and timescale of outcome and aligned to contractor responses; part cultural piece with Keir - subscribed updates on the progress of repairs raised; new technology that can be embraced and a common approach/consistency between services e.g. Housing repairs. The PFI contract will be lever for alignment with contractors.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: <i>There has been a change of Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure since the original insights were gathered and previous updates were made. The new AD has affirmed that he is passionate about the customer and will inject pace and effort into putting these recommendations, and additional measures to improve the customer experience, in place. A customer improvement group has been established with senior managers to develop a Highways Customer Improvement Plan which will look to address not only this insight but all those gathered below and any additional insight gathered through the course of this work and to drive that plan forward. A representative from Kier attends the group. The customer service programme also has a seat on the group. The group has been tasked with producing a draft Highways Customer Improvement plan by the end of September 2023</i></p> <p><i>A detailed piece of work is underway with business support, to analyse the root cause of complaints which is scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Work has also commenced to exploit the technology we now have and to maximise communication between internal systems, ensuring information can be accessed first hand, giving greater visibility and enabling quicker and more robust responses. It is envisaged this will be an ongoing, continuous exploitation and improvement process.</i></p> <p><i>A series of engagement sessions have been held with Kier's customer and leadership teams - covering improvements to processes, quality of responses and the need for BCC values, attitudes and behaviours to be reflected in these.</i></p> <p><i>An understanding is in place on the Customer Service strategy, behaviours and use of information and technology with bidders for the procurement of the remainder of the term of the PFI contract, to ensure that there is no further hiatus when the contract is awarded.</i></p>	Medium	Programme
45	Councillors are not always using the form that has been created for them to submit their requests, instead using the highways or general complaints inboxes (resulting in delays in responding due to additional processing time and time spent on manually copying content from councillor's emails into iCasework)	<p>Reinforce messaging to councillors that they must use the correct process, and when they don't respond by asking them and making it very easy for them to do so - e.g. include link to the form and instructions on what to do</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: To deliver the recommendation Highway Service needs see a clearly defined set of outcomes and an agreed delivery plan from D&CS to address this issue. Comms & engagement piece to reinforce the process of Member enquiries. Review of current content, information, advice and guidance required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Members are generally starting to use the systems in place but they won't use the forms as they don't have the time - use of the complaints teams is the corporate approach. 85% come through the complaints team exceptions for urgent/critical items that will go direct to services. Most Highways are enquiries and not complaints which takes time from the complaints team. New system/process - clarify the route to enable better processing of requests that are not complaints - narrative needs to better reflect the expectations of Members (members need to work out which complaints team to send their queries to); some requests need multiple services to be co-ordinated to resolve as a priority.</p> <p>Status Update 07-Jul: <i>Note, this insight applies across services and is not specific to highways. Approximately 90% of member enquiries to the complaints teams are first time service requests, rather than complaints. The complaints teams are not sufficiently resourced to handle these enquiries. A working group has been established to address this issue. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for 10th July (chaired by AD for Customer Services and Business Support). The group will map current access routes and identify how enquiries can be handled differently. The portfolio lead and informal cabinet have also been briefed on the issue and on the measures being taken to resolve it.</i></p>	High	Programme
46	In Highways there are two business support teams broadly doing similar work. They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively	<p>If our understanding of this situation is right, review the roles, responsibilities and function of these two teams and consolidate into one, redirecting freed up resource elsewhere in the service should it be found that there is duplication of effort.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: In Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) there are two teams doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints. They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively. Review of the current business support structure, policies and working practices in Digital and Customer Services on behalf of the Highway service required.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: <i>Need one team to own it and close the task down</i></p> <p>Status Update 07-July: <i>Business Support to the highways service is operating as a single, amalgamated team. Updated as complete.</i></p>	High	TBC should be DCS not programme COMPLETE

47	The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'.	<p>Consider how the service might establish more effective prioritisation processes. Test these with staff to ensure they will be effective and allow staff to focus on things that are a genuine priority.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service.</p> <p>Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: From a process perspective there is a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise work. Members need to be able to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge - it is a more difficult process to invoke highways enforcement (catching people in the act, capacity to resource), Section 184 Highways Act - letters are currently issued to the address. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity but resources are limited. Use of a transportation capital budget for rare instances where Members identify as a priority - requires further exploration</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: An internal review is being carried out using insight that is now available into all Highway enforcement functions (including parking, permits and licences). The review will establish the current demand for these services, how these requests are reported and presented and how resources can then be prioritised and are deployed most appropriately. A bolder approach to enforcement will be taken. Messaging will also be improved - both in terms of communicating what is being done but also managing expectations where action is not taken. The draft from the internal review of Enforcement is scheduled for the end of October 2023.</p>	Medium	Service with Programme support
48	The Clean Air Zone website is confusing, and it is unclear if zones are in the CAZ or not. CAZ charges are not clearly explained on the website. There is no pre-notification or warning of a CAZ fine. Fines come as a surprise to many customers, which can be confusing and distressing.	<p>Review the webpages and quality of communication about the CAZ. Use a content designer to ensure all written communication is clear and accessible. Test the new content with customers to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ensure zones and times are clearly indicated online so charges do not come as a surprise to customers. Should the development of a BRUM account app happen in the future, the service could consider making use of push notifications to alert customers that they have entered a CAZ and give them, for example 10 minutes to exit the zone should they have entered if unintentionally.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penalty charge notices if drivers do not want to pay the 'fine'. The CAZ charge and communications and messaging about payment of the charge is dealt with by the CAZ team. However staffing of customer frontline in Parking needs to be investigated.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Tell Us Once - single view of customer, if a citizen tells 'The Council' something they believe their data will be updated for every dept. Front end visibility and communication of CAZ</p> <p>Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend</p> <p>O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: CAZ and its communications (website, signage etc) sits with transportation. Highways are responsible for enforcement when drivers incur a CAZ penalty charge. Feedback has been provided to the CAZ team within transportation and web pages / Brum Breathes website content has been improved. A CAZ colleague was also invited to customer panel and feedback was provided by the Panel on improvements to the FAQs, to be issued with PCNs. Communications have therefore been refined with the customer in mind, albeit there are legal constraints around what must and can be said. Whilst the two teams sit in different directorates, they do not sit in silos and communications between the 2 teams are joined up.</p>	Low	COMPLETE
49	Complaints can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service.	<p>Status Update 07-July: Insights 49 to 51, as well as the recommendations and updates against these insights, are all interlinked.</p> <p>Contract variations to complete the delivery of new technological solutions are in progress. The service is looking at how it will exploit the new technology to get greater visibility and provide better access to services for customers. There will be a cost involved to exploit the new technology which will need to be agreed. When delivered and fully exploited, it will be possible to identify if a request has already been raised for the same service (e.g. pothole) and to opt in to receive updates against this request. It will also be possible to be more pro active (e.g. raise requests around broken streetlights before the customer has flagged the issue). This will help reduce duplication and avoidable contact. Principles including user centred design, accessibility, automation, harnessing and integrating available technology and pro active communication with customers and members will be embedded across service offerings to ensure that solutions provided meet user and stakeholder needs. Contract Variations are being discussed with Procurement and subject to approval will be followed by a 9-12 month project to deliver the revised customer offer.</p>	High	Highways and Business Support with programme support
50	Customers want to be able to easily report issues on the go. Currently the reporting solution is clunky, customers find the map difficult to use and it doesn't work at all on some devices.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	High	Inflight with service - programme to support customer elements
51	When the service area seeks to engage with service users, they typically use the same group of customers to represent the people of Birmingham.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Programme
52	Customers found there is sometimes a lack of communication on why something has happened or why a decision has been made. This keeps customers in the dark about things they care about and isn't open or transparent.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Solution review inflight by Service, programme to support once finalised

53	Customers report that the quality of repairs is not always to a good standard.	<p>Ensure the SLA between us and partners is clear and known. Consider including information online about the expected quality of repairs, what qualifies for a repair and what repairs we will/will not make, e.g. why we only fill in a large pothole when there are other smaller potholes within the immediate area. This will help to better manage customer's expectations and will be information the contact centre and the service can refer customers to.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Understand the current performance standards are for the service, how these are raised and reported on. Do customers know these standards, how does this feed into the contractual agreements with Contractors and managed. Do we need to make this data visible and transparent. what is the mechanism of reporting defect quality issues? Opportunity to offer a commercial service offering through our suppliers/contractors to offer an enhanced service.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Being taken forward as a performance measure discussion with the service provider and ensure repairs are conducted by contractors in a timely way; quality of responses reviewed to ensure they are meaningful and in plain language - how the data is managed and fed back to contractors and customers; providing visibility of the standard of performance. Member example to be provided as to where the system hasn't worked - stewards are not engineers they are customer service/engagement experts - test the process.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: As referenced under the update against insight / recommendation 44, there is an ongoing piece of work to analyse the root cause of complaints which is due to be completed by the end of August 2023. This root cause analysis will feed into the Highways Customer Improvement Plan also referenced which is due to be drafted by end of September 2023. This more pertinent information is also being fed back to contractors who are receptive to the messages that are being received. End to end satisfaction is not currently being measured but this will be possible with the updated technology solution which means the service will no longer be dependant on the contractor agreeing to provide information back to BCC, Member examples have been provided where the system hasn't worked.</p>	Medium	Inflight by Service, Programme to advise
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Birmingham City Council

Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 July 2023



Subject: Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

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

Report author: Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24, based on the Committee's meeting in June 2023. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives, while Appendix 2 sets out draft terms of reference for the Cost of Living Task and Finish Group.
- 1.2 The report also refers to other topics, which the Committee has identified, for future consideration, and this will be continuously updated during the year.
- 1.3 As agreed in June, the report includes (at Appendix 3) the proposed work programmes from each of the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees. This is to enable scrutiny work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
 - Notes the information set out in Appendix 1 and identifies if any further topics need to be added to the menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.
 - Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider during September – November 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
 - Notes, and agrees, the draft Terms of Reference / Work Outline for the Cost of Living Task and Finish Group set out in Appendix 2.

- Reviews the draft work programmes for the other 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees, set out in Appendix 3.

3 Background

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

3.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge.
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public.
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role.
- Drive improvements in public services.

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

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

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

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

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

Looking Ahead

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

Scrutiny Methods

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

Terms of Reference

- 3.9 The Committee's terms of reference, set out below, were approved at the Annual City Council meeting on 23 May 2023.

To plan and co-ordinate the work of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees. To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:

- *Structure and governance of the Council*
- *Communications, internal and external stakeholder engagement*
- *Efficiency and improvement of Council services (with Deputy Leader)*
- *Public policy development at local to international levels*

- WMCA
- Sports and events development (with Cabinet Members for Digital, Culture, Heritage & Tourism and Housing & Homelessness)
- Business Improvement Districts
- Business change programmes
- Efficiency and improvement of Council services (with Leader)
- Risk management
- Good governance on outside bodies, Council-owned companies and externalised services
- Customer services
- External scrutiny of the Council
- Whistleblowing and complaints
- Emergency planning
- Legal services
- Relationships with stakeholders
- Levelling-up, devolution and WMCA
- Early intervention and prevention
- Social cohesion and inclusion, equalities
- Third sector organisations and partner agencies contribution to social cohesion and equalities
- Refugees, migration and City of Sanctuary
- Open data
- Digital inclusion, data protection, cyber security
- Arts, museums and tourism
- Library of Birmingham and community library services
- Promotion of the city's heritage and investment in the city.

These functions include:

- a) giving such guidance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in any cases of uncertainty as to work which they should or should not be undertaking, as may be necessary to achieve such co-ordination, including the allocation of "call-in" to the appropriate Committee;
- b) determining, in any cases of uncertainty, the allocation of responsibility for specific tasks between the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- c) ensuring (by means, for example, of issuing appropriate guidance and/or instructions) that the Overview & Scrutiny Committees pay proper attention in

their work to the consideration of key cross cutting issues, in particular equalities, transparency and improvement;

d) overseeing the development and delivery of a balanced work programme of Scrutiny Committees using a range of scrutiny methodologies and reporting regularly to City Council;

e) considering Overview and Scrutiny development, working practices and constitutional arrangements.

4 Work Programme 2023-24

- 4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the topics the Committee will consider over the next few months, and also outlines future items for consideration.
- 4.2 Following the Committee's discussion in June Appendix 2 sets out the draft Terms of Reference / Work Outline for the Cost of Living Task and Finish Group.
- 4.3 The Committee may decide to add further items to the work programme during the course of the year. When considering this, the Committee is advised to consider where it can best add value through scrutiny, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in 3.5.
- 4.4 The Council's latest Forward Plan ([click here to view](#)) may assist Members in identifying future topics. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny Chairs are advised to maintain regular engagement with Cabinet Members to enable flexibility to be built into the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, so as to respond to the Council's policy priorities in a timely way.

5 Any Finance Implications

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

6 Any Legal Implications

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

7 Any Equalities Implications

- 7.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.
- 7.3 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 7.4 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

8 Appendices

- Appendix 1: Co-ordinating Work Programme
- Appendix 2: (Draft) Terms of Reference, Cost of Living Task & Finish Group
- Appendix 3: Other Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)
- 9.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework

DRAFT Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
14 July	Customer Service Programme Task and Finish Group	The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the December and supplementary January report on the actions of the Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.	Committee meeting – single item	Wendy X Griffiths, AD Customer Services and Business Support	None	Following the meeting in July, it's intended that issues in relation to Customer Services would be passed over to the respective OSC i.e. Waste Management and Bereavement Services to Neighbourhoods OSC; Highways to Sustainability and Transport OSC; and Housing Repairs to Homes OSC.
14 July	Updating the Scrutiny Framework	To consider the updated framework, to agree for further consultation on the draft with the Leader and Deputy Leader and to ask the Scrutiny Office to review and update the various scrutiny procedure notes.	Committee meeting – single item	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services		
14 July	West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal	To provide an overview of the West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal, with a focus on its implementation and next steps.	Committee meeting – single item (pre-decision scrutiny)	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships	Deputy Leader (TBC)	This pre-decision scrutiny item provides an opportunity for the OSC to provide comments before Cabinet meets in September.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Lead Officer	Cabinet Member / Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
14 July	Cost of Living – scoping	To set up, and confirm terms of reference, for a Task and Finish Group to learn lessons from the cost of living programme and to consider whether they have wider application across other council initiatives.	Task and Finish Group (scoping)	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships	TBC	
15 September	Homes for Ukraine	A response is required from the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and from the Chief Executive concerning recommendations made, in April 2023, following work carried out by the Task & Finish Group on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.	Committee meeting – single item (monitoring previous recommendations)	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships	Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities (TBC) Chief Executive (TBC)	The final report from the Task & Finish Group on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme was published in April. This can be found on CMIS via CMIS > Report while the minutes from this meeting can be found via CMIS > Minutes
13 October	Cost of Living – Reporting back	To consider the findings and recommendations from the Cost of Living Programme Task & Finish Group, which will be established by the Co-ordinating OSC in July.	Task and Finish Group (reporting back / agreeing recommendations)	Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships	TBC	
15 December	The Elections Act	To consider lessons learned from other local authorities who held elections in May and to consider what measures might be needed for future elections in Birmingham.	Committee meeting – single item	Robert Connelly, AD for Legal and Governance	TBC	

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

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Birmingham Museums Trust and B:Music	To consider the challenges faced by the cultural sector, including the Birmingham Museum Trust (BMT), and B:Music	TBC	This was suggested in July and the Chair agreed to discuss this with Cllr Deakin concerning options for scrutiny to add value
Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business	To consider an update / monitor the implementation of actions in relation to Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business	TBC	TBC

Scrutiny Method Options: Committee meeting - single item, Committee meeting - single theme, Committee meeting – standing item, Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings), On location, Other - (describe).



Appendix 2:

Work Outline / Terms of Reference

Cost of Living Programme Task & Finish Project

Reporting to Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<p>Our key question:</p>	<p>What lessons can be learned from Birmingham City Council's Cost of Living Programme?</p>
<p>1. How is O&S adding value through this work?</p>	<p>City Council in October 2022 agreed a Cost of Living Programme; governance arrangements; areas of focus for this work (food, warmth, energy, benefits, and our staff); and the allocation of £5m of funding to the programme.</p> <p>In April 2023, a progress report was presented to Cabinet, and an extension of the programme is now planned to come to Cabinet in September 2023.</p> <p>The involvement of O&S will help learn the lessons of this programme and consider whether they have wider application across other council initiatives.</p> <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the existing Cost of Living programme with a focus on its timeliness and value for money. • An assessment of the lessons learned as highlighted in the April 2022 Cabinet report, and consideration of how these can be applied. • A focus on the involvement of partners across the city, and the value to be gained from this approach. <p>Council therefore asks Scrutiny to bring in associated officers, external partners, and the City Observatory to provide evidence so that the issues can be properly investigated and understood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task and Finish Group will consider four main themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal processes and Cost of Living programme governance: Including the role of the Strategic Response Group, the effectiveness of the Officer Delegated Decision Making process, budget management and funding, grants allocation, the role of procurement and the evaluation methodology. The approach to partner relationship management will also be considered. Finally, the role of insight and intelligence in the programme. 2. The Warm Welcome network of warm spaces: The definition of a Warm Space and how they are networked together. The growth and development of the network, and the role of partners. The branding and communications. The view of users and how stigma is avoided. Future opportunities for the network. 3. Food Provision and the role of the Foodbanks in the City: Council support of the foodbanks, the issue of the cultural appropriateness of foodbanks. The challenge of sustaining foodbank provision in the longer term.



	<p>4. Information, advice, and Guidance: The difference from business as usual, the roles of the different agencies and how they work together. The impact of both reactive and proactive support. An analysis of the forms of additional benefits that have been identified.</p>
<p>2. What needs to be done?</p>	<p>The Task and Finish Group will receive evidence from officers and partners to consider the following key issues:</p> <p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lessons should be learned from the Cost of Living programme, and can they be applied more widely across the council’s activities? • What were the governance arrangements and how did this affect decision making and delivery? • How was the value for money and the capacity of the providers tested? • How did partners and users feedback on the programme? • How has co-production with partners been achieved? • How has grant funding been implemented, monitored, and evaluated? • Has the overall programme delivered value for money? • How did internal business partners support the process? • How is the programme linked to other council priorities? • How does the approach taken by Birmingham City council compare with other local authorities? • How can the City Council work with the Community and Voluntary sector to maintain and build the good will required to respond to continued Cost of Living pressures and future crises? • Could the overall activities from October 2022 to the present day have been improved? • How can the benefits of the programme be mainstreamed into the council’s ‘business as usual’ activity? • What was the role of the City Observatory? • What is the legacy and how does the council build on this legacy? <p>Themes</p> <p>The Warm Welcome network of warm spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the definition of a warm space? Why? • How are warm spaces registered for the Warm Welcome network? • How has equality and equity been considered? • Is there a fair geographic spread of spaces? • What activity takes place within the Warm Spaces and how are other services linked into the network? <p>Foodbanks and food provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the justification for supporting foodbanks? • How was the monthly level of support for foodbanks arrived at? • What options were considered in supporting the foodbanks? • Is a dependency culture being created? • Were other food initiatives undertaken and why?



	<p>Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the additionality over and above business as usual? • What sort of engagement worked best? • How effective has this service engaged with vulnerable households? • Why was support both in-house and outsourced? • What is the relationship with other services?
3. What timescale do we propose to do this in?	The Task and Finish Group will report to Co-ordinating OSC on 13 October 2023 (TBC).
4. What outcomes are we looking to achieve?	To review the Cost of Living programme and learn lessons regarding: the services and support that were provided; how the programme worked internally; how the programme worked with community and voluntary organisations; how the impact and value of this work can be improved.
5. What is the best way to achieve these outcomes and what routes will we use?	<p>The Task and Finish Group will meet several times. This will include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. initial scoping – to be completed by OSC on 14 July 2. an internal review of processes; primarily meeting with officers 3. meetings to cover Warm Welcome spaces, Foodbank support, and Information, Advice and Guidance; primarily meeting with external partners 4. a meeting to agree final recommendations <p>As part of its work, the Task and Finish Group will consider evidence from Officers, Partners, Guests, Users and Community Groups.</p>

Member / Officer Leads

Lead Member:	Chair: Cllr. Sir Albert Bore
Members of the Task and Finish Group:	TBC
Lead Officer and support:	<p>Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate will provide support for the Task and Finish Group. Support must be independent of those involved in awarding of grants and delivery of the programme.</p> <p>Support will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with members to agree meeting dates • Liaising with Scrutiny Office to book meeting room • Inviting people to give evidence • Agreeing the agenda with the Chair • Circulating agenda and papers in advance of the meeting • Producing a record of Task and Finish Group meetings that is agreed with the Chair / Task and Finish Group members • Producing the report for Co-ordinating O&SC

Appendix 3

DRAFT Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023 / 24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Regeneration across the City	How is regeneration and the benefits being spread across the city and what are the main regeneration programmes (not just those areas covered by the OFCP). Input to the OFCP consultation. Further information on the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 and plans for renewing including process and timescale to enable the Committee to schedule work in the work programme.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 12 July 23. Deadline for reports: 3 July 23 Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Phillip Nell, Director of Property and Investment Simon Delahunty-Forrest, Assistant Director, Inclusive Growth		When considering the timescales for the Birmingham Development Plan Members have identified further work on the impact of the night time economy. Report to Scrutiny Committee November 2021: Planning and Noise (cmis.uk.com)
July 23	Increasing the opportunities for employment and skills for young people through the Council's Social Value Procurement	What role does procurement have in delivering social value through Council contracts to increase employment and skills opportunities for young people? What data / information is available to demonstrate	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 12 July 23. Deadline for reports: 3 July 23	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director Procurement Shariat Rokneddin, Policy and Governance Manager		Issue identified during the Scrutiny Inquiry on Employment and Skills and recommended as issue for work programme for 2023/24)

		the difference this has made, including data available on number of apprenticeships created. How will the number of apprenticeships created through social value of procurement be monitored and what systems will be put in place to do this?	Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Amanda Lloyd, Principal Employment Officer		
September 23	Meeting with employers	To understand how Birmingham City Council can support local businesses To inform the discussion at the October Committee meeting on the Local Skills Improvement Plan	Task and Finish Group meeting (1 or 2 informal meeting)	TBC		With sector specific employers – construction, digital / creative industries and / or Small and Medium Enterprises that may not be represented through sector / business led organisations
October 23	Monitoring Recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry		Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 11 October 23. Deadline for reports: 2 October 23	TBC		

			Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2			
October 23	Local Skills Improvement Plan	To inform members of Local Skills Investment Plan, the implications for Birmingham and the role of Birmingham City Council and agree any recommendations to support the development of skills in the City.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 11 October 23. Deadline for reports: 2 October 23 Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	TBC	Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.	LSIP Employer designated representative body: Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce Data reported to June E&S OSC showed decrease in Level 2 Qualifications and increase in Level 4 Qualifications between 2019 – 21. Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)

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

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Meeting with Youth City Board	To understand the views of young people to inform the work of the Scrutiny Committee	Task and Finish Group (1 Meeting) Informal meeting at location with young people e.g. youth centre.	Issue identified during the Scrutiny Inquiry on Employment and Skills and

	To report back on the implementation of the recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry.		recommended as issue for work programme for 2023/24) Members of the Education and CYP OSC could be invited to attend.
CWG Employment Legacy			
Night time economy	Following consideration of the Birmingham Development Plan to consider the issues experienced by communities as a result of the night time economy and how these can be managed / mitigated in future developments.		
East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy	To update the Committee of the implementation of the East Birmingham Growth Strategy.		
Scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	To scrutinise the integration of the LEP functions into Birmingham City Council including administration of the legacy funds and Enterprise Zone.		The LEP Scrutiny function no longer exists and there is an expectation that individual local authority arrangements will scrutinise the LEP Integration. Link to Cabinet report 27 June on LEP Integration into Birmingham City Council: Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

DRAFT

DRAFT Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	<p>Assurance to the Committee and public that everything is on track for September.</p> <p>Overview of KPIs, performance and finance.</p> <p>Policy development including travel services for under statutory school age and over 16 year olds, including how decisions are made and what criteria is used.</p> <p>Independent travel training, including the views of young people, and how this has been informed and received by the children, parents and carers.</p> <p>Concerns that have been identified and how these will be addressed.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: 19 July 2023 at 10am</p> <p>Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House</p> <p>Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023</p>	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>Adrian Weissenbruch, AD, Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service</p> <p>Stephen Hughes, Interim Deputy Operations Manager</p> <p>Marie Nicely, Travel Assist Supervisor</p> <p>Abdulahadi Mehraj, PMO Manager</p> <p>John Wood, Change Manager</p> <p>Linda Sutton-Howard, IT Project Manager</p>	

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	SEND Tribunals	To update members to on the process for SEND tribunals including data on delays and trends. Feedback on how the role of legal services contribute and makes risk informed decisions The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting single item: 19 July 2023 at 10am Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023	Kate Harvey, SEND Resolution Operational Lead Helen Ellis, Director for SEND and Inclusion	Anne Tyson, Senior Solicitor, Finance & Governance	Agreed at Committee meeting October 2022 (CMIS Link).
July	Performance Update	Report on Children's Services Improvement Plan and data. The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting standing item: 19 July 2023 at 10am. Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House. Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families		
September	Hidden Children	To update the Committee on hidden children including exclusions, suspensions, part time timetables, elective home education, findings of the Inquiry	Committee meeting - single theme item: 6 Sep 2023 at 10am.	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	Razia Butt, Director, Children and Families	

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		<p>on period poverty regarding attendance during their periods, and information on children that have and have not returned following the pandemic.</p> <p>To consider information and data on the equalities implications of hidden children.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House.</p> <p>Paper/Presentation Deadline: 25 August 2023.</p>		<p>Steve Howell, Head Teacher, City of Birmingham School</p> <p>Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP) – in person or written</p>	
September	Performance Update	<p>Report on Children’s Services Improvement Plan and data.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting - standing item at 10am.</p> <p>Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House.</p> <p>Paper/Presentation Deadline: 25 August 2023.</p>	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families		
October	Update on the review of short breaks when it has been completed (TBC)	<p>To provide an update on the review of short breaks</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting single item: 18 October 2023.</p>	Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children’s Trust		

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
			<p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 9 Oct 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am</p>			
October	Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP) Annual Report (TBC)	<p>To update the Committee on the children's safeguarding arrangements in the city.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting single item: 18 October 2023.</p> <p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 9 Oct 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am</p>	Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP	Simon Cross, Business Manager, BSCP	
October	Performance Update	<p>Report on Children's Services Improvement Plan and data.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting standing item: 18 October 2023.</p> <p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 9 Oct 2023</p>			

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
			Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am			

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

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

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Item/Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Early Years			
Child Poverty			
Regular update on SEND			
TBC: Visit for Committee to a school to inform future work.			

Scrutiny Method Options: Committee meeting - single item, Committee meeting - single theme, Committee meeting – standing item, Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings), On location, Other - (describe).

DRAFT Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023 / 24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July 23	Financial Monitoring	To consider the financial monitoring for Quarter 1 and consider the implications of the Oracle finance management system stabilisation. The Committee to make any recommendations.	Committee meeting - single item 27 July 2023 Council House Committee Room 6 Deadline for reports: 18 July	Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance (\$151 Officer)	TBC	
July 23	Planned Procurement Activities Report	To consider the Planned Procurement Activities report and scrutinise the governance and spend of Council contracts. The Committee to make any recommendations.	Committee meeting - single item 27 July 2023 Council House Committee Room 6 Deadline for reports: 18 July	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Head of Procurement		

<p>July 23</p>	<p>Update on Stabilisation of the Oracle Financial and HR Management system</p>	<p>To provide the Committee with: Update on the background to the issues with the Oracle system and current challenges Work to address the challenges including governance, risk and timescales Work to learn lessons including governance, risk and timescales Progress on End of Year Accounts including timescales and risks. The Committee to make any recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting - single item 27 July 2023 Council House Committee Room 6 Deadline for reports: 18 July</p>	<p>Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance (S151 Officer)</p>		
<p>July 23</p>	<p>Implication of Equal Pay</p>	<p>To provide background to the Equal Pay liabilities for the Council To report on the values work that will underpin the budget recovery plan. Update on the Budget Recovery Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Learning from Local Authority Best Value Intervention Reports The Committee to make any recommendations.</p>	<p>Committee meeting - single item 27 July 2023 Council House Committee Room 6 Deadline for reports: 18 July</p>	<p>Fiona Greenway, Director of Finance (S151 Officer)</p>		

	Work Programme	To review the Committee’s work programme agree work to be undertaken during August – November and issues for future consideration To consider the Council’s Corporate Risk Register to inform the Committee’s work programme.	Committee meeting - single item 27 July 2023 Council House Committee Room 6 Deadline for reports: 18 July	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
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Menu of Issues for Consideration

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Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Monitoring recommendations of the Procurement Governance Scrutiny Report	To receive an update on the new Procurement and Contract Governance rules	Committee meeting - single item	
Progress Report on Implementation: Council-owned Assets	To track progress on implementation of the recommendations R01 and R02.	Committee meeting - single item	Recommendations R03-R06 were signed off as completed in November 2022.
Diversity and Inclusion Dashboard	Role for O&S in looking at specific aspects of the data and monitoring progress including:	TBC	Possible key questions: How do we acquire new talent? How do we ensure we’re attractive to potential new

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work force planning in relation to age profile of staff. • Disability disclosure and reasonable adjustments • Governance of Everyone’s Battle, Everyone’s Business (EBEB) and what impact this has made. 		employees? Are we open, accessible, inclusive and do our job descriptions and requirements reflect the needs of the business, but also the reality of life and experience of work for applicants? When is it appropriate to use consultants and how are these decisions made?
Working from Home	To understand the impact on productivity and workforce costs.	TBC	This may be looked at flexibly. Important to note that this item isn’t about stopping working from home, but looking at where it is appropriate and whether it works for the needs of the council and its residents.
Visits to inform the work of the Committee			

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023 / 24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	CQC Pilot Inspection	<p>To update the Scrutiny Committee on the pilot CQC Inspection of Adult Social Care Services including Adult Social Care performance.</p> <p>To enable the Committee to provide assurance / recommendations to inform the preparation for the pilot inspection.</p> <p>To understand how the performance of adult social care will be overseen in future and how the role of the HASC relates to the work of the CQC to inform the Committee's work programme</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 4 July 2023. 10.00am</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 23 June</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4</p>	Professor Graeme Betts CBE Strategic Director Adult Social Care	Andy Cave, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Birmingham	
July 23	Integrated Care System Governance: Place Committee and decision making powers	To inform the Committee of the Governance arrangements if the ICS and the role and responsibilities of the Birmingham Place Board.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 4 July 2023. 10.00am	Professor Graeme Betts CBE Strategic Director Adult Social Care	Andy Cave, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Birmingham	

		<p>This will include how the principle of subsidiarity will be implemented in practice, the governance arrangements and how this links with Primary Care Networks and Local Authority locality working.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations</p>	<p>Deadline for reports: 23 June</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4</p>			
July 23	Inquiry: Children and young people's mental health	Review evidence and develop draft recommendations	Task and Finish Group meeting w/c 10 July or w/c 17 July	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
July 23	Inquiry: Children and young people's mental health	Meeting with key partners to discuss draft recommendations	Task and Finish Group meeting w/c 24 July	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
September 23	Inquiry: Children and young people's mental health	Sign off draft Inquiry report	Task and Finish Group meeting w/c 4 September	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		
September 23	Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR)	To update members on the implementation of BLACHIR actions and enable the Committee inform the implementation of the Review recommendations	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 19 September 10.00am	Monika Rosanski, Service Lead, Inequalities		Theme in BLACHIR report on maternity, parenthood and early years. Link with work of Joint HOSC on UHB maternity services.

		<p>including what impact the programme has had to date and how the medium / long term impact will be measured.</p> <p>Enable the Committee to use the evidence from the report to inform the Scrutiny of issues across the work programme of the HASC and Joint HOSCs during 2023/24.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations</p>	<p>Deadline for reports: 8 September</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4</p>			<p>Corporate Performance and Delivery Plan milestones: Public Health</p> <p>a) produce forward plan of activity - Jun 23</p> <p>b) hold three task and finish groups focused on cultural competency and better data - Sep 23</p> <p>c) share learning and build on success through annual conference - Dec 23</p>
September 23	Work Programme report to include Health and Adult Social Care OSC and Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee role in NHS quality assurance	<p>To agree a 2-3 year schedule of reports from NHS Trust based in / serving Birmingham and Joint HOSC areas including:</p> <p>CQC report</p> <p>Quality Account</p> <p>Analysis of complaints and how this has driven service improvement</p> <p>Key risks / issues for the Trust and plans to address these.</p>	<p>Agenda at HASC OSC Committee Meeting 19 September 10.00am</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 8 September</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4</p>	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		<p>NHS Trusts based in / serving Birmingham:</p> <p>UHB</p> <p>BWCT NHS FT</p> <p>Sandwell and West Birmingham</p> <p>Birmingham CHT</p> <p>BSMHFT</p> <p>Royal Orthopaedic NHS FT</p> <p>WMAS</p>

		The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations				
October 23	Inquiry: Children and young people's mental health	Task and Finish Group to agree consider comments received on draft report	Task and Finish Group meeting w/c 2 October	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager		All Members of the Committee will be invited to this meeting to be informed of issues and recommendations.
October 23	Day Opportunities	To update the Committee on the policy development on the Day Opportunities Service to enable Scrutiny to inform the Cabinet decision. The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda at HASC OSC Committee 17 October 2023 10.00am Deadline for reports: 6 October Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4	Dr Temitope Ademosu Assistant Director - Adult Social Care (Community services and EDI)	Red Quadrant (TBC)	City Observatory : Request demographics information to understand future demand for services.
October 23	Monitoring implementation recommendation R01 from Scrutiny Inquiry on Legacy of Commonwealth Games	To update on the development of the inclusive Sports Strategy and the Physical Activity Strategy. The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations		Dave Wagg Head of Sport & Physical Activity Lynda Bradford, Interim Service Lead, Physical Activity.		Inquiry report available from: Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com) Recommendations to be completed by October 2024 R01: b) Provide an outline of how the insight and experience of disabled

						<p>citizens will inform the new Sport and Physical Activity strategies.</p> <p>d) Continue to build upon the new partnerships developed through the CWG, and work with the Birmingham Disability Sports Forum to maximise the impact of the strategy and understanding the range of activity on-going in the city</p> <p>Corporate Performance and Delivery Plan milestones City Operations Sport Strategy to be concluded by Mar 24. Public Health Physical Activity milestone delivery date of Dec 23</p>
October / November 23	Access to dental services and need	To receive a report from the ICS to understand the issues relating to access to dental services in Birmingham and the impact this has on oral health. Based on this information the Committee may	Committee Meeting single item : Agenda at HASC OSC Committee Meeting 17 October, 10.00am	TBC		<p>This is regional service and timescale dependent on ongoing work at BSOL and regional level.</p> <p>Link to Healthwatch report on accessing dentistry services: Impact report: Changes to accessing NHS</p>

		decide to undertake further work through a Task and Finish Group. The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations	Deadline for reports: 6 October Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4			dentistry in Birmingham and Solihull - Healthwatch Birmingham Following this report the Committee may wish to undertake further work through a Task and Finish Group.
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*Outcome: This will be populated once the item/topic has been completed. It will identify the added value and impact.

Birmingham and Sandwell Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
TBC	Midland Metropolitan Hospital: Emergency and Urgent Patient Care	TBC				
TBC	Midland Metropolitan Hospital: Models of care across the Trust	TBC				
TBC	Midland Metropolitan Hospital: Primary Care Services	TBC				
TBC	Scrutiny and Quality Assurance	To agree a 2-3 year schedule of reports from NHS Trust serving Birmingham and Joint HOSC areas including: CQC report				

		Quality Account Analysis of complaints and how this has driven service improvement Key risks / issues for the Trust.				
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*Outcome: This will be populated once the item/topic has been completed. It will identify the added value and impact.

Birmingham and Solihull Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July 23	Report on 3 Independent Reviews of University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust: Patient Safety Review Culture Review Well Led Review of Leadership and Governance	To provide assurance to the Committee on the outcome of the Well Led and progress on the Culture review and timescales and implementation of the recommendations of the Patient Safety Review. To consider the Healthwatch ground rules for the 3 Reviews and if these have been met.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item at Joint HOSC meeting 25 July 23 Deadline for reports 14 July 23 Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4	David Melbourne, BSOL ICB Chief Executive		Information requested at April 23 Joint HOSC: To receive a copy of the ICS analysis of the UHB Trust's <i>Standardised Hospital Mortality Ratio</i> (SHMR); To receive an annual summary of the learning that had taken place over the course of the year across UHB be brought forward and submitted to the JHOSC in future; To receive a roadmap for the remaining reviews in terms

						of how they will report, expected dates/timescales/milestones.
July 23	BSol ICS update on performance against finance and recovery plans	To update the members on the ICS financial position and recovery of healthcare services following the impact of the covid pandemic.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item at Joint HOSC meeting 25 July 23 Deadline for reports 14 July 23 Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4	Paul Athey, BSOL ICS Chief Finance Officer		
	Maternity Services at UHB	To consider the CQC report findings and actions to be taken by the Trust.				
	Birmingham and Solihull ICS Joint Forward Plan					To be published at the end of June 2023
	ICS Work Force Planning					
	Scrutiny and Quality Assurance	To agree a 2-3 year schedule of reports from NHS Trust serving Birmingham and Joint HOSC areas including: CQC report Quality Account				

		Analysis of complaints and how this has driven service improvement Key risks / issues for the Trust.				
	Monitoring of implementation of Recommendations from UHB Reviews	The ICS and UHB to report on the implementation of the recommendations from the UHB reviews.				
	Update on post-covid syndrome / Long covid and rehabilitation	To understand the impact of post covid syndrome / long covid and the services / support that is available.				

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

Menu of Issues for Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Immunisation and vaccinations	Immunisations and vaccinations for children under 5 Implications of covid immunisations rates for health and care staff	Task and Finish Group	This work could commence following the completion of the CYP mental health Inquiry.
Primary Care Access	TBC		Link to National GP recovery plan

			Suggested timescales to update on plan November – December 23
ICS 10 year strategy	TBC		Annual review of key strategic priorities. Suggested timescale April 24
Birmingham City Council Commissioned Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham Sexual Health Services • Birmingham Substance Misuse Services • Forward Thinking Birmingham 	Report to come to Health and Adult Care OSC prior to recommissioning of the service to enable the Committee to inform Cabinet decisions.		Members may wish to agree comments / recommendations based on the report to the February 2023 Committee meeting to inform the re-tendering process for sexual health services.
Birmingham Safeguarding Adult Board (SAB) Annual Report 2022/23	To update the Committee on the work of the work of the Birmingham SAB Implementation of Strategic Priorities Adult Safeguarding Data Learning from Safeguarding Adult Reviews Adult Safeguarding Issues related to Domestic Abuse		Recommendation from Co-ordinating OSC that OSCs consider relevant aspects of Domestic Abuse in the work programme. The Neighbourhoods OSC work programme includes: Informing the development of the new Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy
Engaging with Third Sector providers of Adult Social Care	TBC		
Obesity and Food Strategy	What actions have been implemented as part of the Food Strategy and what impact have these had? How will the medium and long terms impact be demonstrated? How has the strategy helped to reduce inequalities and food poverty?		Link to Food Strategy: Birmingham Food System Strategy Birmingham City Council
Population health and inequalities		Task and Finish Group	

HASC OSC

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

DRAFT Homes Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

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

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

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

Menu of Options for Future Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

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

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
		discussions by the O&S Committee	

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

DRAFT

DRAFT Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Fly-tipping Enforcement	<p>Outline the current position in relation to fly-tipping with specific regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying dedicated resources and which wards they are deployed in; Enforcement approach and how this is developing; How cameras are being used, and the specific impact of Grimewatch. <p>Understand if/ how this approach is making a difference to reduce fly tipping.</p> <p>Outline progress towards Cleaner Streets recommendations</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: 5 July 2023 at 2pm</p> <p>Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House</p> <p>Deadline for Papers: 22 June 2023</p>	Darren Share, Director, Street Scene		<p>The Committee will review this information with a view to considering whether they wish to undertake a more detailed inquiry.</p> <p>Related work from 2022-23: Reducing Fly tipping (April 2023) Cleaner Streets (April 2023) Performance Information (presented to Neighbourhoods O&S Committee, June 2023 by Programmes, Performance and Improvement) Co-ordinating O&S Customer Services (waste)</p>
July	Community Safety Localities Approach	<p>Inform the development of a new localities approach with particular focus on how ward councillors can contribute towards identifying local priorities, problem solving and reviewing impact</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: 5 July 2023 at 2pm</p> <p>Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House</p>	Pamela, Acting Head of Partnership Community Safety Team		<p>This refers to the Local Partnership Delivery Groups which operate across the city.</p> <p>An all-day partnership event took place on 22 May 2023 to inform this new approach. Members were invited to attend.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
			Deadline for Papers: 22 June 2023			<p>The Neighbourhoods O&S Committee is the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for Birmingham. This will contribute towards discharging its duties.</p> <p>The statutory requirements, as Crime and Disorder Committee, are outlined here.</p>
August	Youth Justice	Inform the annual Youth Justice Plan	<p>Other - Briefing: Date/Time TBC</p> <p>Venue: TBC</p>	Janine Saleh, Head of Birmingham Youth Offending Service, Birmingham Children's Trust	Dionne McAndrew, Assistant Director Vulnerable Young People, Birmingham Children's Trust	<p>This is an annual report. The most recent report was approved by Council in October 2022.</p> <p>A Cabinet Report for the Youth Justice Plan is currently scheduled for September 23, and then will be presented to Council. The intention is to bring this report to pre-decision Scrutiny in early August when the draft of the report is available. Date to be confirmed.</p> <p>As there are no Committee meetings scheduled at this time, the Chair has requested a hybrid briefing. Members of the Education, Children and Young People's O&S Committee will also be invited.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
September	Cleaner Streets	Outline progress towards the Cleaner Streets recommendations Understand any impact of recommendations	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda at Neighbourhoods OSC Committee Meeting on 6 September 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 25 August 2023	Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Majid Mahmood	Darren Share, Director Street Scene	In February 2023, the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee agreed key findings and recommendations for Cleaner Streets. This had followed informal best practice sessions with Derby, Rochdale and Wigan Local Authorities. In April 2023, Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Majid Mahmood attended O&S Committee to provide a formal response to the recommendations, and agreed to report progress to future committees.
September	Localisation	To be confirmed following discussion at July O&S Committee	To be confirmed following discussion at July O&S Committee	To be confirmed following discussion at July O&S Committee	To be confirmed following discussion at July O&S Committee	The Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee discussed this item in April 2023. Related strategies, policies and plans can be found here .
October	Delays in Births and Deaths registrations	Provide an overview of, and demonstrate the impact of, the current engagement and work undertaken with the Coroner, partners and communities on steps to eliminate delays within the service.	Committee Meeting single item: 4 October 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House	Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement	None identified	Following Council Resolution on 14 June, a report responding to the Motion was presented to Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee on 26 September. A summary of the discussion is here . The Committee requested a further update in 4-6 months' time.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		Outline the current progress towards developing a new mortuary facility for the city, including a permanent digital autopsy scanner.	Deadline: 25 September 2023			
December	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Annual Report	Review the annual Birmingham Community Safety Partnership annual report **The Committee may identify specific areas they wish to consider at future meetings**	Committee Meeting single item: 6 December 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 27 November 2023	To be confirmed following BCSP Executive Board July	To be confirmed following BCSP Executive Board July	The Neighbourhoods O&S Committee is the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for Birmingham. The statutory requirements, as Crime and Disorder Committee, are outlined here .
December	Domestic Abuse	Consider the proposed Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy	Committee Meeting single item: 6 December 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 27 November 2023	Kalvinder Kaur, Assistant Director	Shirin Marashi, Senior Commissioning Officer	A new Domestic Abuse Strategy is scheduled to be discussed at Cabinet for approval in January-February 2024. This had initially been earmarked for December, but this will be too late as the strategy will be nearly complete. Therefore, the proposed timeline to present to O&S Committee is September – October 23. Co-ordinating O&S Committee held a single theme meeting in February to review the previous strategy and

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						input in the early stages of this strategy's development. A summary is provided here . A roundtable with service providers had also taken place to inform this review.

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

Menu of Options for Future Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Customer Services –Bereavement Services	To be confirmed following July's Co-ordinating O&S Committee. Currently: Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme	To be confirmed	Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Bereavement Services. A final Task and Finish group took place on 12 June 2023, and report will be presented to Co-ordinating O&S in July. Following this, it is intended that Neighbourhoods O&S Committee takes forward this work for Bereavement Services in the future. This had initially been earmarked to be considered in October, however the Committee may wish to consider

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
			this further following July's Co-ordinating O&S Committee.
Customer Services – Waste	To be confirmed following July's Co-ordinating O&S Committee. Currently: Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme	To be confirmed.	<p>Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Waste.</p> <p>A final Task and Finish group took place on 9 June 2023, and report will be presented to Co-ordinating O&S in July. Following this, it is intended that Neighbourhoods O&S Committee takes forward this work for Waste in the future.</p> <p>Neighbourhoods O&S Committee will need to determine how they will carry out this work.</p>

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

DRAFT Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
August	Highways PFI	Inform the development of the proposed Highways PFI contract	Other – Briefing outside of Committee	PFI Contract Manager - Domenic De Bechi		This has been scheduled in advance of a decision by the Sponsorship Board and then Cabinet. An additional written briefing will be shared with members in advance and will follow on from information provided in all member briefings earlier in 2023. Date/ time to be confirmed.
July – October (to be confirmed at the July Committee)	Active Travel Schemes	To be confirmed at July Committee.	Task and Finish Group	Head of Transport Planning and Network Strategy - Mel Jones Transport Planning Manager, Streetscape - Martin Rowe	To be confirmed at July Committee	An outline Terms of Reference will be discussed and confirmed at July's Committee. The work will contribute towards the broader road safety work. Report with recommendations to October's Committee.
September-December	Road Safety	To be confirmed at September's Committee.	Task and Finish Group	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	A new Road safety Strategy is under development. A presentation was delivered to last year's Committee here . Members for the Task and Group will be agreed at July's Committee.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						<p>The work will be complemented by the active travel scheme work. Potential stakeholders to engage include WMCA and WMP/PCC.</p> <p>This work will follow on from the Active Travel schemes.</p>

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

Menu of Options for Future Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Bus Network	To be confirmed following further discussion at July Committee	To be confirmed. However, could consider on location and a visit to a bus garage	To involve multiple providers of bus services within the city
Customer Services – Highways Repairs	To be confirmed following July's Co-ordinating O&S Committee. Currently: Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme	To be confirmed	<p>Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Highways.</p> <p>A final Task and Finish group took place on 14 June 2023, and a report will be presented to Co-ordinating</p>

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
			O&S in July. Following this, it is intended that Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee takes forward this work for Highways in the future and will discuss how to do this at its July Committee.
Flooding	Understand the work undertaken to mitigate against flooding within the city over the past 12 months	To be confirmed	This is an annual report. Latest report to the Committee is here . Previously this item has been scheduled for March.
Parking Enforcement	To be confirmed following further discussion at July Committee	To be confirmed. However this could consider on location visits.	No further information at this time
Rail	To be confirmed following further discussion at July Committee	To be confirmed. However, could consider on location including visits to stations under development	To involve other stakeholders, for example, WMCA.
Recycling and Waste Reduction	To be confirmed following further discussion at July Committee	To be confirmed	No further information at this time
Route to Net Zero	Consider how the Council is supporting community leadership	To be confirmed	If this is an in-depth piece of work, to be scheduled following the completion of the Road Safety topic.

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

S&T OSC

Other - (describe)

DRAFT

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date 14 July 2023



Subject: Updating the Scrutiny Framework
Report of: Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services
Report author: Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager, 0739584487

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider the updated Scrutiny Framework

2 Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1. Agrees the draft Scrutiny Framework attached as Appendix 1 for further consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.
- 2.2 Agrees that the Scrutiny Procedure Notes are reviewed and updated as set out in Section 3.3.

3 Scrutiny Framework

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Framework was originally agreed in 2021 and has been updated to reflect the new flexible and effective approach that has been considered at all the Scrutiny Committees in June 2023.
- 3.2 The updates reflect the renewed focus on ensuring Scrutiny adds value and Committees develop a work programme that provides the flexibility to respond to issues as they arise and use the most appropriate Scrutiny methods.
- 3.3 The related Scrutiny Procedure Notes will be reviewed and updated prioritising Note 1: Overview and Scrutiny Work, Note 3: Role in Scrutinising Partners and Partnership Working, Note 5: Request for Call In, Note 10: Regional Scrutiny.

4 Any Finance Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

5 Any Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

6 Any Equalities Implications

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.
- 6.3 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 6.4 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix: DRAFT Scrutiny Framework July 2023



Overview & Scrutiny Framework July 2023

DRAFT



Vision for Overview & Scrutiny in Birmingham

To ensure effective democratic accountability and oversight of the Council's executive. This will be achieved by a Member-led Scrutiny function which is held in high regard by its many stakeholders and which adds value for the people of Birmingham.

This vision recognises that Scrutiny is a core component of the governance structures of the Council, and that Scrutiny Members, the Executive and senior officers will all work to create the right culture and lead the way in making the vision a reality. Ensuring good Scrutiny in Birmingham is a common endeavour across the council.

To achieve this Scrutiny will follow the nationally agreed 'Four Principles of Good Scrutiny';

- a. Amplify public voice and concerns;
- b. Drives improvement in public services;
- c. Provides constructive "critical friend" challenge;
- d. Be led by 'independent minded people' who take responsibility for their role.¹

During January – May 2023 a review was undertaken to ensure that Scrutiny continues to innovate and operates in a flexible and effective way that makes a difference for the people of Birmingham. The principles of this review are embedded in this updated version of the Scrutiny Framework which was originally approved in 2021.

Conditions for Success

To succeed, the Council recognises that the following conditions need to be present:

1. Addressing the Concerns of Citizens

Scrutiny should focus on issues that reflect concerns of citizens, and where they can add value and make an impact. Where possible, Scrutiny will ensure that the public's (and/or specific stakeholders) voice is heard in the way that decision-makers design and deliver services. This may include, if appropriate and at the discretion of the Chair, speaking at a formal meeting of a Committee.

The views and ideas of citizens, service providers and other agencies with an interest in the subject under review are all valuable in effective Scrutiny. Scrutiny should involve stakeholders and take account of views of service users and the public, with particular efforts to engage groups that are harder to reach. Constructive engagement and clear lines of communication should enable a two-way flow of information between Scrutiny and all those involved, including feedback of results.

¹ <https://www.cfqs.org.uk/revisiting-the-four-principles-of-good-scrutiny/> - re-ordered and slight re-worded to reflect priorities in Birmingham

Addressing citizens' concerns will entail Scrutiny taking a wider view than Council policies and services. In particular, Scrutiny has a legitimate interest in scrutinising organisations and projects that receive public funding to deliver goods and services. This should be recognised by the Council and, where relevant, consider the need to provide assistance to Scrutiny Members to obtain information from organisations the Council has contracted to deliver services. When agreeing contracts with these bodies, the Council should consider whether it would be appropriate to include a requirement for them to supply information to or appear before Scrutiny Committees.

Scrutiny activities should be thorough and undertaken in a timely manner and be responsive to the issues as they arise. At the start of the municipal year Committees will develop a work programme that enables members to identify a 'menu' of issues as the potential work programme of that committee. The committee would regularly review the 'menu' and decide which issues need to be examined further and how that work would be undertaken.

As part of the work programme planning process all Scrutiny Committees will set out the objectives they want to achieve through their work and the outcomes that have been achieved to benefit citizens.

2. Parity of Esteem between the Executive and Scrutiny

We all have a collective responsibility to support high quality decision-making and policy development. Creating a strong organisational culture that recognises the critical role of an independent Scrutiny in the governance process is essential to adding value and creating efficient and effective services. Without recognition of this, Members and officers involved in Scrutiny are not empowered to exercise their duties as they should, resulting in poor accountability.

In recognising the responsibility that comes with parity of esteem, Scrutiny Committees must use every opportunity to add value to the work of the Council. In developing the Committee work programmes members will consider the at what point in the policy or service development their work can have most influence on service and outcomes across the city.

3. Member Leadership and Engagement

Members have a unique perspective to bring to the Scrutiny process, a different point of view which brings something distinct to both policy development and scrutiny. Members set their own work programmes and can look at things from angles that might not be apparent to Cabinet Members or senior officers. To be successful, Members and officers must engage with Scrutiny in a positive way.

4. Mutual Respect and Good Faith

While Scrutiny should be constructive and challenging, it will only be successful if all partners work together considerately, within a climate of non-partisan working.

Scrutiny must be forensic and challenging but Members must also collaborate to support decision-makers to do their work better. Members must listen and engage constructively, irrespective of political group, putting the values of Scrutiny into practice.

Decision-makers have to be open to scrutiny and create a culture which enables effective scrutiny to happen.

5. Clear Purpose and Focus

Scrutiny activities should be well planned and timely. There must be clarity on what Scrutiny wants to do, confident it can add value and make an impact, and be clear on what it hopes to achieve. Scrutiny Committees will consider which method of Scrutiny will best enable them to add value.

Task and Finish Group work that takes place outside a Scrutiny Committee must have a terms of reference, setting out aims, methodology and timescales. These should be developed with the participation of the Executive and agreed by the relevant Committee.

Work programmes are developed in collaboration with Members and with the participation of the Executive. Scrutiny is in charge of its own work programme and there will occasionally be times when Scrutiny and the Executive do not agree but with meaningful engagement such occasions will be rare. Scrutiny Committees must review work programmes to identify a clear order of priority for all topics being considered. This may mean that it is not possible for Scrutiny to look at all items, and it is important that committees do not overreach. Once the work programme is established it must be published and shared with internal and external organisations, so they are clear on upcoming topics.

Procedure notes will set out further detail on work programming, scrutiny methodologies and call-ins.

6. Evidence Based Conclusions and Recommendations that Add Value

The Scrutiny process should be impartial, driven by the evidence rather than by a particular standpoint. When developing the work programme a Scrutiny Committee will consider relevant Corporate Performance and City Observatory information to inform the issues that will be considered. Recommendations should be clear, feasible, deliverable, providing value for money by securing benefits that outweigh the costs of implementation. It should be noted that the Scrutiny process is not meant to be an "expert" review.

When Scrutiny is making recommendations, it must consider the impact that they will have and the resource implications, obtaining advice from relevant Cabinet Members and officers.

Scrutiny must add value and not duplicate the other forms of performance management, review or inspection. Equally, decision-makers must seek to ensure that Scrutiny is involved in a timely manner, at a point where the outcome can be influenced, to ensure involvement is meaningful. They should also give meaningful consideration to Scrutiny recommendations.

It may be appropriate for a Scrutiny report of significant importance to be reported directly to Council. Scrutiny Committee's may also make recommendations to be considered by Cabinet Members and senior officers. The response to recommendations will be monitored by the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

Measuring the impact of Scrutiny is notoriously difficult to do, but we will make steps to improve the tracking process to take more account of outcomes.

7. Clear Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

To facilitate good Scrutiny, the roles of all participants in the scrutiny process must be clear and understood by all. In summary:

Overview & Scrutiny Chairs are responsible for leading and co-ordinating the work of the Scrutiny Committee so that Scrutiny functions in a positive, constructive and non-partisan manner which provides a good environment for the constructive challenge of decision-makers.

Overview & Scrutiny Members must contribute time and effort to both the development and the carrying out of the Scrutiny work programme by attending and contributing to committee meetings and inquiries; they must be independent minded and not pre-judge issues coming to Scrutiny nor use the meeting to promote narrow or parochial interests.

The senior political leadership of the Council set the tone of how successfully Scrutiny will be able to work. Cabinet Members should act as a champion for Scrutiny's work within and outside the organisation, creating a culture which enables effective Scrutiny to happen, and ensuring that the views of a Scrutiny Committee put forward to the Executive are reflected in decision and policy-making.

Regular dialogue between the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and relevant Cabinet Members will facilitate effective relationships between Scrutiny and the Executive and ensure that Scrutiny Committees have the opportunity to add value to policy, strategy and service development in a timely manner. It is incumbent on a Cabinet Member to advise a Scrutiny Chair, in a timely manner, of a report being taken to Cabinet when the Scrutiny Chair is listed as the relevant Scrutiny Chair, or of a report being placed on the Forward Plan.

Scrutiny will make effective use of the time Cabinet Member's attendance at Scrutiny Committee meetings. Cabinet Members should only be in formal attendance when deemed necessary by the relevant Scrutiny Chair.

Officers should provide impartial and high quality advice and evidence to Scrutiny Committees and may be asked to attend O&S Committees to explain policies or to answer questions on service delivery. Overview and Scrutiny Committees should always bear in mind that when officers appear to answer questions their evidence should, as far as possible, be about questions of fact and explanation relating to policies and decisions.

All Members are expected to act in accordance with the highest standards of probity and public life, in all matters relating to the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, related protocols and supporting guidance.

Details of roles and responsibilities of key participants is set out in Procedure Note 2.

8. Transparency of the Scrutiny Process and Access to Information

Scrutiny should be a transparent process and encourage open and honest discussion. Processes and reports should be clear and accessible to the public.

This framework and supporting documents will be published on the Scrutiny website.

All formal Committee meetings are web-streamed, and the agendas published on the Council's website. Work programmes will be published on each O&S Committee's agenda. Committees may sometimes hold informal meetings or briefings, but any outcomes and recommendations will always be reported in public.

A Scrutiny Business Report will be presented three times a year to Full Council, outlining Scrutiny activity at that time.

To be effective, a Scrutiny Committee must receive relevant information in a timely manner. This is supported by legislation which gives the Committee rights to access information that relates to Scrutiny work, even where information is exempt from publication.

9. Co-operation with Partners, Professional Bodies and Providers

Increasingly services are provided jointly or as the result of partnerships between the Council and other public sector organisations or other partners. And improvement in service delivery can often best be achieved through partnerships between the Council and other service providers and professional bodies.

Procedure Notes

Note 1: Overview & Scrutiny Work (Update prioritised)

A summary of the remit of O&S work and how it should be planned, including processes for work-programming, and for following up on actions.

Note 2: Roles and Responsibilities

This note sets out the key roles involved in supporting Scrutiny: Scrutiny Chairs and Deputy Chairs, Scrutiny Members, Cabinet Members and officers.

Note 3: Role in Scrutinising Partners and Partnership Work (Update prioritised)

This note sets out the powers of Scrutiny to look at the work of partners including health; crime and disorder partnerships and flood risk management authorities.

Note 4: Policy Framework Plans

An outline of the role Scrutiny can play in respect of policy framework plans.

Note 5: Request for Call in (Update prioritised)

A detailed note on the call-in process (to be revised post Constitution change)

Note 6: Councillor Call for Action

A detailed note on the councillor call for action process

Note 7: Responding to Petitions

A detailed note on the process for Scrutiny to respond to petitions.

Note 8: Conducting Inquiries

This note sets out the stages of conducting an inquiry and makes suggestions for activity based on good practice.

Note 9: Tracking Recommendations

A detailed note on the process for tracking Scrutiny recommendations.

Note 10: Regional Scrutiny (Update prioritised)

A note setting out regional Scrutiny arrangements.

Procedure Notes are available on request from the Scrutiny Office

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 July 2023



Subject: West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal

Report of: Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equality and Partnerships

Report author: Jake Sumner, Policy Adviser to the Chief Executive

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The West Midlands Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal (DDD) was published by the government on 15 March 2023 alongside the Budget. Prior to the publication on 10 March there had been an in-principle agreement by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to the deal. There is now a need to formalise the agreement by each constituent authority and by the Combined Authority. Birmingham's Cabinet is due to consider this on 5 September 2023 with the WMCA expected to take the decision at its Board Meeting on 13 October 2023.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the background to deal, main elements, implementation and next steps.
- 1.3 The implementation of the DDD is a WMCA process, which will take place over the next 12-18 months. Various elements of the deal will pass through the various structures at the WMCA. There may be occasions ahead, after the overall agreement to the DDD, where constituent authorities may need to make decisions related to deal elements or draw up propositions on specific elements. Where this is the case, these would come through City Council decision-making in the normal way.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The recommendation for the Cabinet on 5 September will be for the Cabinet to agree the DDD and specifically to agree the devolution of the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG). This is in line with the city council leadership's expressed support for the DDD at the time of its publication in March 2023.
- 2.2 This report is an opportunity for the OSC to provide comments before the Cabinet meets in September.

3 Background to the devolution deal

- 3.1 The process to commence a 'Trailblazer Devolution Deal' for the West Midlands and for Greater Manchester was announced as part of the Levelling Up White Paper on 2 February 2022.
- 3.2 Following this, the WMCA, working with constituent authorities, instituted a complex programme with multiple workstreams to develop proposals for the deal, which were taken through various working groups and engagement with the constituent authorities and other partners such as the Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner. Alongside were ongoing negotiations with government. The constituent authorities were involved at various levels including Chief Executives, Finance Directors, the Senior Local Authority Officers Group, forums with subject leads (for example transport or public health), and the political leadership including the Met Leaders and Portfolios holders and WMCA Board.
- 3.3 The devolution deal process had some challenges as government priorities and positions shifted during the year of negotiations, and there were two changes of national government with different Ministers.
- 3.4 At the start of the process there was an agreement with the constituent authorities and Mayor that there should be double devolution with powers going to local authorities and powers should not go from local authorities to the WMCA.
- 3.5 Birmingham City Council's Deputy Leader took on the WMCA portfolio for devolution as the process got underway.
- 3.6 In June 2022, during the early stages of the development of the deal, Birmingham City Council wrote to the West Midlands Mayor seeking a whole place approach in East Birmingham as a centrepiece of the deal. This reflected the significant levels of deprivation and the scale of the challenges such as poor connectivity within the area, and which a deal should help to address. Following this, Birmingham agreed to come together with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and the WMCA to work up a programme for East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS). The two areas have a functional economic geography and similar challenges such as poor connectivity. Levelling Up Zones with business rate growth retention, was developed as a core part of the EBNS approach and was secured through the deal.
- 3.7 The devolution deal was agreed in principle by the Mayor and Portfolio Leaders on 10 March 2023 and announced in the Chancellor's Budget on 15 March (with the Trailblazer Devolution Deal rebadged as the Deeper Devolution Deal). The health duty provisions in the deal were not agreed in-principle at this time and it was determined that these would be subject to further assessment and discussion between the constituent authorities and WMCA and come back to a future meeting.

- 3.8 Following the publication of the deal the in-principle agreement (bar the health duty) was reaffirmed by the Mayor and Portfolio Leaders alongside the need for a more detailed implementation plan. The development of this is now underway.
- 3.9 The deal has around 190 paragraphs with different elements and activity mostly enhancing the existing functions of the WMCA, setting up new partnerships and unlocking around £1bn new funds for the region. Almost all elements require further work to determine how these will be implemented, including double devolution and local delivery arrangements. Some elements require further negotiation with government, with the deal setting a headline aim and the detailed policy requiring further in-depth discussion and agreement.
- 3.10 The implementation is guided by a set of principles:
- The most should be made of every commitment in the deal, to derive as much value from the deal commitments ahead of the next general election and spending review
 - Local and regional engagement and collaboration is maximised through the implementation process, ensuring that delivery is driven at the most effective level with reporting on progress
 - Activity in different workstreams is integrated within mainstream work programmes so that devolved powers become business-as-usual for regional partners
 - A clear focus is retained on the need for more inclusive growth in the region in all aspects of deal implementation
- 3.11 The deal elements are being monitored and progressed by the WMCA through a detailed 'tracker system'. In more general terms, the implementation plan is being structured around more than 20 different workstreams and looking at:
- How is implementation or further negotiations being conducted for the workstream i.e. which WMCA structure / group / local authority leads are determining this
 - How it is envisaged that the deal provisions will be administered, delivered and decided upon (where this is needed)
 - Key milestones and deliverables
 - Outstanding issues and questions
 - The implementation plan will also look at what the key outputs and outcomes that the deal elements should secure
- 3.12 Commitments in the deal are varied in scope and size. For some there are deliverables or activities with set deadlines, which means the implementation plan can be relatively definitive. For others, particularly those that commit to further development of policy, the outputs and deadlines are less tightly defined. Some aspects of the deal also require a more cross-cutting approach.
- 3.13 More significant areas of the deal include:

- Levelling Up Zones (aka Growth Zones) provision to establish up to six Levelling Up Zones with business rate growth retention for 25 years to fund infrastructure and other priorities
- Up to £400m affordable homes funding to 2026 and £100m brownfield regeneration funding
- Investment Zones - these were not technically part of the deal but were announced at the same time and are applicable to other Mayoral Combined Authority areas. The LUZ/IZ process is being developed in an interconnected way as they both cover growth and tax incentives for specific sites in the West Midlands
- Business rate retention for 10 years
- Measures to tackle digital exclusion including greater influence over high-speed broadband investment across the region and a £4 million fund for devices and data to get more people online
- Greater local responsibility for developing and delivering careers advice and a partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions to target employment support
- Devolution of the bus service operators grant and a new partnership with Great British Railways to offer greater local oversight and control of public transport services
- The UK's first formally designated transport sandbox to deliver cleaner and safer vehicles and innovative transport services and supporting new jobs and investment
- Single departmental-style settlement for the WMCA from 2025 at the next spending providing multi-year period covering five pillars: local growth & place; local transport; housing and regeneration; adult skills; and retrofit. The single settlement corresponds with new accountability arrangements and a single outcomes framework. This is the most significant reform with wider implications including how the WMCA may operate ahead.
- Within the single settlement is a commitment to devolve retrofit funding from 2025, to allow the WMCA, and partners, to set priorities for investment in insulation and green energy for homes.

3.14 A streamlined, overarching single accountability framework coordinated by DLHUC rather than multiple frameworks administered by different government departments is being developed. This will include the data sets used to monitor and chart outcomes. The WMCA will be held to account for delivering outcomes using the settlement funding and areas associated with devolved functions set out in the DDD and previous devolution deals.

3.15 The deal made provision for enhanced accountability arrangements, including the development of a 'scrutiny protocol' and Mayoral scrutiny by MPs. The WMCA governance team is looking at these and engaging with the WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee members with any changes brought to the WMCA Board for approval.

3.16 Following the publication of the DDD, and as agreed by the Met Leaders and Portfolio leads and Mayor, further discussions took place on the potential adoption of the WMCA public health duties within the deal. The decision was that these duties were not to be pursued and these are now no longer part of the deal.

- 3.17 The devolution of the Bus Service Operators Grant to the WMCA is considered to be a public authority function, which can be dealt with under section 105B of the Local Democracy, Economic and Construction Act 2009 but require a scheme, governance review and the consent of the constituent authorities to the laying of the order by the government. This will form part of the agreement of the DDD taken to the Cabinet on 5 September.

4 Any Finance Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications that arise through this report. Any financial implications flowing from elements of the DDD will be reported to and approved through the governance structures of the WMCA and where necessary via the Cabinets of constituent authorities.

5 Any Legal Implications

- 5.1 Birmingham City Council is one of seven constituent metropolitan local authority members of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Each local authority member (including Birmingham) has two votes, and the Metro Mayor has one, for a total of 15 votes on the Board.
- 5.2 The WMCA advice is that the new powers in relation to the Bus Service Operators Grant are considered to be public authority functions, which can be dealt with under section 105B of the Local Democracy, Economic and Construction Act 2009 but require a scheme, governance review and the consent of the Constituent Authorities to the laying of the order by the government. This will form part of the agreement of the DDD taken to the Cabinet on 5 September.

6 Any Equalities Implications

- 6.1 The WMCA advice is that the development of the DDD has been undertaken with reference to an equalities lens and reflects a range of WMCA goals and commitments including to inclusive growth. WMCA officers have reviewed provisions and recommended alternative approaches to, or reinforcement of key aspects, which were incorporated. Ahead, through the implementation of the deal, there will an opportunity to further assess deal elements and their delivery in relation to equalities.

7 Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Slides on the DDD – Appendix 1
- 8.2 DDD text published 15 March 2023 – Appendix 2



Deeper Devolution Deal

Richard Brooks, Director Strategy, Equalities and Partnerships

Context to the devolution deal and how we got here

- Levelling Up White Paper published Feb 22 announcing 'Trailblazer Devolution Deal' for West Midlands and Greater Manchester
- WMCA oversaw negotiations with Mets and government, policy development and deal text
- BCC and other Mets involved through a complex process with multiple engagements and at various levels
- BCC Deputy Leader took on portfolio lead for devolution deal at the WMCA
- **Agreed principles that no powers should go up from local authorities to WMCA and need for double devolution through the deal**
- Devolution deals for East Midlands and North East announced during devolution deal negotiation process
- Changes in government during negotiations shifted priorities and processes
- West Midlands 'Deeper Devolution Deal' (DDD) text published 15 Mar at Budget 23





Levelling up zones and EBNS:

- BCC wrote to Mayor June 2022 seeking a whole place approach in East Birmingham as a centrepiece of a deal
- Agreed to work with Solihull and WMCA on a 'levelling up zone/plan' for East Birmingham North Solihull (EBNS)
- Investment zones process announced under Truss premiership so recalibrated EBNS
- Sunak scrapped Truss process and BCC/SMBC/WMCA reverted to original EBNS approach
- Levelling up zones secured in DDD

Overview of deeper devolution deal (DDD)

- DDD can help deliver BCC priorities e.g. corporate plan, transport plan, levelling up, affordable house building
- DDD brings **significant extra funding over next two years** for WMCA particularly affordable housing (£400m) - opportunities for BCC
- **Significant ability to advance EBNS** proposition - levelling up (growth zone) enables business rate growth retention
- Deal provides **WMCA with a greater remit and powers in many policy areas**
- **Significant implications from 2025 with single settlement to WMCA** - likely to shape how WMCA operates and settlement can help meet WMCA goals and those of local authorities
- Within the **deal are opportunities for further discussion with government on devolution and elements** that were not fully formed in deal - further negotiations will take place
- **Implementation** now key and will require further work to secure the benefits

Principles for implementation

WMCA principles	BCC approach
Use every commitment and ‘hook’ to maximise value ahead of next general election and spending review	 Opportunity to advance BCC priority areas that were not secured in DDD but it provides discussion hooks
Empower colleagues to implement their own deal provisions and integrate changes into mainstream work programmes	 Mainstream into BCC and need for double devolution to local authorities
Maximise regional collaboration ensuring delivery at most effective level with regular reporting on progress and delivery	 Reflect Mets views on delivery and double devolution
Focus on inclusive growth to ensure provisions support CA’s vision to be the fairest, greenest, best connected city region rather than growth for growth’s sake	 Devo deal can help deliver many BCC goals and strategies

Agreed further negotiations with government (e.g. single settlement) need an agreed shared position with WMCA/Mets

Implementation, coordination and next steps

- **WMCA developing implementation programme:**
 - WMCA tracker of implementation of 190 elements
 - 20+ works streams covering a set of elements covering co-creation mechanism with WMCA/Mets on each element; administration, delivery and decision making around the elements; double devolution; milestones and deliverables; and any outstanding issues
 - Senior local authority officers group (SLAOG) continues as coordination and reference body
 - Formal agreement of deal by Mets and WMCA to take place ahead including Bus Service Operators Grant
 - Public health duties for WMCA within deal not being taken forward
- **Timetable:**
 - WMCA engaging stakeholders and public on the deal over the summer
 - September - Ratification of deal by constituent authorities
 - Oct 13 - WMCA Board ratifies deal
 - Post 13 October - government lays orders
 - Autumn 2023 and Spring 2024 fiscal events likely to include announcements on deal e.g. funding arrangements
 - Negotiations with government and developing implementation plan 2023/2024

BCC approach

- BCC maintaining a co-ordinating structure for the deal implementation to ensure that we:
 - Engage fully with the WMCA and engagement structures
 - Shape the implementation plan
 - Shape the negotiations positions with government and are involved where relevant
 - Secure the funding opportunities
 - Co-ordinate approach within BCC as multiple deal elements interconnected
 - Mainstream the deal delivery within BCC
- Significant role for PPS directorate - many new powers and funding within directorate
- Refreshed structure and delivery for EBNS levelling up zone. EBNS is additional complexity as:
 - It is a specific element of the deal *and* a place for application of the other deal measures
 - Work is jointly undertaken with Solihull whereas other levelling up zones are within a single council
 - Context of linking to existing East Birmingham programme

Key areas of deal: LUZ - Levelling Up Zones (aka growth zones)

- **Benefit:** business rate retention for 25 years can unlock funding for transport infrastructure and development sites
- Negotiation with government ahead on LUZs such as sites with business rate growth retention
- WMCA process to develop following LUZs
 - EBNS
 - Metro extension corridor (Dudley and Sandwell)
 - Walsall central
 - Wolverhampton green innovation corridor
- Coventry Giga Park previously part of LUZ programme but now part of investment zone (IZ) programme
- Seeking linking of LUZ and IZ timetables (government moving fasting with IZs)
- Programme for EBNS LUZ being mobilised - structures, goals, sites, timeframes, delivery mechanisms, governance (and transitional) and decision-making

Key areas of deal: Investment Zones

- **Benefit:** Business rates retention and cash and tax incentives can accelerate development sites, support advancement of key economic sectors for city and region and attract investment
- **Context:** Announced Mar 23 alongside DDD; not technically part of DDD but treated as such given link to LUZ and site incentives
- IZ principles set by government in IZ Policy Prospectus and propositions expected to be led by combined authorities, co-developed with local authorities and research institutions and DLUHC
- **Geography:** The West Midlands IZ covers the whole WMCA geography with specific tax sites
- **Sector:** Must focus on primary economic sector which aligns with a government defined priority sector, but opportunity to define broadly a genuine economic logic/intersection – WCMA proposed focus is on advanced manufacturing, broadly defined
- IZ must be innovation and R&D focussed with links to universities
- **Sites:** Large 3 x 200 ha, strategic, underdeveloped sites, avoiding displacement, demonstrating private sector investment, and meeting 'levelling up' to accommodate significant development/growth opportunities and where funding and tax incentives applied
- **Incentives:** £80m funding over five years flexibly applied between spending and five-year tax incentives - up to £80m spending split 40:60 RDEL:CDEL if no tax incentives or down to £35m if full tax incentives taken on max 3 x 200 ha sites (Stamp Duty Land Tax relief for land and buildings bought/developed for commercial use; business rates 100% relief on newly occupied business premises; Enhanced 100% first year Capital Allowance; Enhanced Structures & Buildings Allowance Accelerated relief; Employer NIC)
- 100% business rates retention for two sites for 25 years above baseline, free from resets, to be reinvested in primary sector
- IZ likely to benefit from other government support – trade and investment, planning, and skills
- **Timetable:** gateway process - submission on sector/sites; announcement Autumn Statement; funding likely in Spring Budget

Key areas of deal: Single departmental-style settlement

- Benefit: consolidated funding for WMCA ceasing need to bid for funds and giving flexibility and certainty on spending envelope
- Consisting of five funding pillars from 2025 (a) local growth & place (b) transport (c) housing and regeneration (d) adult skills (e) retrofit
- MoU with government by Jan 2024 - calculation/inclusion of funds, accountability and spending controls
- Negotiations with government to include:
 - What settlement should include - such as all existing grants within any particular devolved function plus any relevant new programmes planned by the relevant department; number of pillars and transfer between them
 - What department-style controls on spending, contingency measures for HMG and long-term WMCA programmes (e.g. CRSTS) remaining intact
 - Allocation to WMCA - such as a funding formula and reflecting 'levelling-up', nil detriment to existing funds and reflecting government/WMCA priorities
 - Period - such as full spending review period and whether a transition period
 - Context- recognising wider need for a sustainable Local Government Financial Settlement; the challenges facing WMCA transport funding; and need for further fiscal devolution
 - Process for negotiation and role of departments, WMCA and HMT in agreeing and overseeing the settlement
 - Accountability, performance assessment, single outcomes framework, reporting and scrutiny
- How funding allocated at a WMCA level
- WMCA reserves right not to agree the MOU should it be deemed to be detrimental to WMCA

Key areas of deal

- **Affordable homes funding (£400m) and brownfield funding (£100m)**
 - Significant funding with more flexibility to drive brownfield regeneration and affordable housing delivery at pace
 - Strategic partnership of WMCA-Homes England and WMCA taking on elements of Homes England's role
- **Fiscal devolution**
 - Including through new and longer-term funding agreements including 100% business rates retention for 10 years
- **Transport**
 - Devolution of the bus service operators grant and strengthened responsibilities for bus bye laws
 - New partnership with Great British Railways to offer greater local oversight and control of public transport services
 - UK's first formally designated transport sandbox to deliver faster cleaner and safer vehicles and innovative transport services
- **Digital**
 - Measures to tackle digital exclusion including greater influence over high-speed broadband investment across the region and a £4 million fund for devices and data to get more people online
- **Employment and skills**
 - More local responsibility for developing and delivering careers advice and a partnership with DWP to target employment support
- **Retrofit**
 - Commitment to devolve retrofit funding from 2025, to allow the WMCA and partners, to set priorities for this investment



West Midlands Combined Authority Trailblazer deeper devolution deal

Subject to ratification of the deal by all partners and the statutory requirements referred to within this document, including public consultation, the consent of the West Midlands Combined Authority and its constituent local authorities, parliamentary approval of the secondary legislation implementing the provisions of this deal, and accompanying accountability arrangements.

15 March 2023

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Introduction

1. The West Midlands has been a hub of innovation and creativity for hundreds of years. The West Midlands was the site of Britain's first bicycle factory, manufacturing the penny farthing; the birthplace of the first fuel-burning engine; and the home of world-famous chocolatier, Cadbury. Today, the region covered by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) represents 2.9 million people across seven constituent authorities with a combined gross value added of over £70 billion. Prior to the pandemic, the West Midlands was the fastest growing city region outside London. It is home to world-leading businesses and sectors across advanced manufacturing, future mobility and life sciences, with key regional assets, including leading universities, on which to build.
2. The West Midlands has also been at the forefront of devolution in England. In November 2015, the government and WMCA agreed an ambitious devolution deal, including a directly elected mayor and powers to improve transport, skills, housing and to drive growth in the region. In 2017, devolution was deepened, and new funding agreed, including significant further investment in transport.
3. The West Midlands has seized these opportunities, demonstrating what local leaders can achieve when empowered with the tools they need. Local leaders have increased investment in transport from £38 million in 2016/17 to £363 million in 2021/22, pioneered new approaches to brownfield development and net zero homes and delivered the c. £130 million Adult Education Budget, securing an over 10% increase in 2020 alone in the portion of the population with Level 3 skills.
4. However, up to now, WMCA has lacked key levers and flexibilities to fully unleash the potential of devolution. Despite being home to the UK's second city, the West Midlands' economy continues to lag against international comparators in terms of productivity. The productivity of the region has remained at 90% of the national average for the past decade. Lifting the productivity of the West Midlands to just the UK average would deliver an estimated £7.8 billion per annum to the UK economy. Unleashing the potential of the people, entrepreneurs and businesses of the West Midlands requires a step change in our approach to realising local and regional economic growth.
5. That is why, in the Levelling Up White Paper, the government committed to open negotiations on trailblazer deeper devolution deals with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities, acting as a blueprint for other areas to follow.

6. This document sets out the terms of the deal agreed between the government and WMCA. The deal sets out a landmark new approach to devolution in England, devolving responsibility for a clear set of policies to WMCA to support economic growth, alongside enhanced accountability with clear outcomes for delivery. This will be underpinned – from the next Spending Review – by a single funding settlement to invest in local priorities. Altogether, this will release WMCA to get on and deliver for its area, to try innovative new policy approaches, to drive forward the local economy and to be better held to account for delivery.

Summary of the deal

The ‘trailblazer’ deeper devolution deal is between the UK Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

7. The government and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) are minded to agree a trailblazer deeper devolution deal, which marks a step change in WMCA’s devolution settlement and the governance of England. Together, we have agreed new levers, functions and responsibilities for WMCA, underpinned by an enhanced approach to accountability.
8. This trailblazing deal provides WMCA with greater control than ever before over the levers of economic prosperity and will create job opportunities and increase productivity across the West Midlands. It demonstrates levelling up in action: empowering local leadership to make the right decisions to stimulate growth and inclusion across the towns and cities of the West Midlands. This deal takes WMCA’s ability to coordinate and locally-tailor devolved action to a new level, with commitments in policy areas previously untouched by English devolution and a deal that is unprecedented in both breadth and depth.
9. The sections of this deal document detail the specific agreements reached across a range of functions and policy levers. These include:
 - New arrangements for **accountability** to recognise the enhanced powers and responsibilities provided for by this deal. There is also a summary of the **governance** procedures in place to explain how WMCA will exercise its responsibilities and make decisions effectively.
 - A new Data Partnership and commitments to boost WMCA’s **data** capacity and capability, to underpin and support local decision-making, as well as to develop and evaluate policies and programmes with greater impact.
 - Delivering **fiscal devolution** by extending WMCA’s 100% business rates retention pilot for 10 years.
 - Providing a series of tools across the deal that will support WMCA’s vision to deliver **Levelling Up Zones** across the West Midlands.

- A consolidated, long-term budget for WMCA. This **single settlement** will be designed in the mould of government departments' budgets: set at Spending Reviews and based on thematic functions.
- A new **rail** partnership with Great British Railways, devolution of the payment of the bus service operators grant, and establishment of the West Midlands as a 'sandbox' for transport innovation.
- On **housing and regeneration**, a new, wide-ranging Strategic Place Partnership between Homes England and WMCA and local leadership of the Affordable Homes Programme for the first time outside of London – worth at least £200 million to the West Midlands – with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million and with greater powers and flexibilities over time. The deal also commits to devolution of £100 million brownfield land funding, joint working between the government and WMCA through the West Midlands Public Land Taskforce, and £3.8 million to support homeless families. The deal also includes the provision of essential infrastructure especially public transport connectivity to give communities access to essential services, facilities and opportunities, including £60 million of investment in the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.
- Devolution of non-apprenticeship adult **skills** functions and grant funding in the next Spending Review, local flexibilities, which will increase over time, over Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps during this Spending Review, and establishment of a strong joint governance board to provide oversight of post-16 technical education and of WMCA as the central convenor of careers provision in the city region.
- A co-design approach to all future contracted **employment support** programmes and commitments to explore data sharing, supported by a new joint board.
- Building on the Innovation Accelerator programme, a Strategic Innovation Partnership to give WMCA a new and influential role informing the national **research and innovation** ecosystem, a knowledge transfer programme focused on local strengths and a pilot to boost innovation adoption and diffusion by local businesses, transferring more autonomy to the West Midlands' developing regional innovation ecosystem.
- Boosting **business productivity** through a new Strategic Productivity Partnership, enabling WMCA to raise local priorities for future **business support** and advisory services and ensuring complementarity between national and local commissioning activities, alongside a new role for WMCA in the governance of the next generation of British Business Bank UK funds in the Midlands and stronger strategic and operational relationships with the UK Infrastructure Bank.
- Stronger partnership between the government and WMCA across a range of **international trade** activities.

- Piloting the devolution of **net zero** funding, including for buildings' retrofit, through allocation rather than competition in the period from 2025 onwards, which will form part of WMCA's single department-style settlement, recognition of WMCA's roles and activity across the energy system and further work on standards, green finance and advice to increase household energy efficiency.
 - To support the **environment**, WMCA leadership of the West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy and government support to help build lasting capacity and capability to support natural environment financing.
 - A Regional Culture and Heritage Framework to support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration between **cultural** arm's length bodies and WMCA, development of a Social Economy Accelerator Programme and Growth Fund and work by the West Midlands Growth Company to become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership.
 - A new Digital Infrastructure Leadership Group to accelerate the roll out and take up of high-speed **digital** connectivity, alongside engagement in Project Gigabit and on digital inclusion.
 - A new formal duty on WMCA to improve the public's **health**.
10. In exercising existing and newly devolved functions, as well as in general decision-making and spending, WMCA (and the government when supporting implementation of the deal, where relevant) will continue to adhere to their public sector equality duties, subsidy control legislation, and relevant guidance set by HM Treasury for spending public money.
11. When referring to WMCA as the decision-making body in this deal, it means those members appointed by the seven constituent councils and the Mayor. When referring to the constituent councils, it means the councils for the local government areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

Governance and accountability

Governance

12. WMCA was created under provisions in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and was formally established in June 2016. The first WMCA mayoral election was held in May 2017.
13. There have been a series of devolution deals between WMCA and the government. The deals have led to number of functions being devolved to WMCA via secondary legislation, including transport, housing, and adult education budget functions. These previous devolution deals mean WMCA already has a wide-ranging functionality so is able to take on many of the new areas contained within this deal without the additional conferral of functions.
14. The new functions contained in this deal will be devolved to WMCA by the government. Under WMCA's constitution, the conferral of new powers onto WMCA will require the unanimous agreement of all the constituent members and a simple majority of all other members entitled to vote on the matter.
15. The default position for decision-making in relation to all new functions devolved is that they will require the agreement of the Mayor, two thirds of the constituent members, and a simple majority of any other members who are subsequently given a vote on the matter by WMCA; anywhere this differs is set out below. Where new functions are designated as functions exercisable only by the Mayor, all decisions will be taken by the Mayor or under his delegation without reference to WMCA.
16. The government will devolve to WMCA the following functions:
 - a. Adult education and skills functions, including non-apprenticeship adult skills and funding, and delegated delivery of contracted employment programmes; decisions taken with agreement of the mayor and a two-thirds majority of constituent members of WMCA.
 - b. Transport functions: payment of the bus service operators grant; a function to be exercised by the Mayor, with decisions from WMCA inputting into the allocation taken by a two-thirds majority.

- c. A public health duty concurrent with local authorities; decisions taken on the basis of agreement of the Mayor and a two-thirds majority of WMCA.
 - d. Any other functions which are identified as necessary to implement the deal.
17. Unless otherwise stated in this deal, functions will be conferred through regulations created under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and are subject to:
- a. The ratification of the deal by WMCA and the agreement of its constituent councils.
 - b. WMCA undertaking a governance review, the development of and consultation on a scheme, and the submission of the results of the consultation to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, following agreement of WMCA and constituent councils.
 - c. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction 2009.
 - d. Consents from the necessary parties locally to and parliamentary approval of the required secondary legislation.
18. The government will work with WMCA to determine how these functions apply within a framework of fiscal responsibility and accountability.
19. Subject to receiving Royal Assent and coming into force, the devolution provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will facilitate the deepening of devolution for existing mayoral combined authorities, including WMCA. Reforms include:
- a. Changes to statutory consents – to simplify the requirements for combined authority expansion and for mayors to take on new public authority functions.
 - b. Financial remuneration – the ability for mayoral combined authorities to financially remunerate their Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee members to ensure constituent authority councillors are compensated for their roles on the committees, strengthening local scrutiny and accountability.
 - c. Alternative mayoral titles – flexibility around mayoral titles so that the area can choose an alternative title to mayor - such as “governor” or “directly elected leader”, if desired.

Accountability

20. The WMCA will, through this deal, be subject to three levels of accountability:
- a. As a local authority it is subject to the requirements of the Local Government Accountability Framework.
 - b. As an institution with devolved powers, WMCA will be subject to the English Devolution Accountability Framework which details additional accountability processes for all institutions with devolved powers and highlights those requirements of the Local Government Accountability Framework which are of particular significance for such institutions, including the decisions that mayoral combined authorities are responsible for and the recourse available to the government.
 - c. In light of the specific new powers being agreed in this trailblazer deeper devolution deal, including the single settlement, and in the spirit of greater power requiring greater accountability, WMCA commits to building a culture of greater scrutiny and accountability through the proposals set out in this section.

Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committees

21. The WMCA and Mayor will also continue to be subject to their existing scrutiny arrangements in place. These currently comprise of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.
22. To facilitate the building of a culture of scrutiny, government will legislate through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, subject to receiving Royal Assent and coming into force, to allow combined authorities to financially remunerate their Overview and Scrutiny Committee and audit committee members. This will ensure combined authorities are able to compensate constituent authority councillors for their roles on the committees, strengthening local scrutiny and accountability.
23. The government will, in the English Devolution Accountability Framework, also develop the scrutiny protocol for all institutions with devolved functions, which will set out the relationship between the mayor/elected leader, the institution and its scrutiny and audit functions. The scrutiny protocol will focus on ensuring that each institution has a sustained culture of scrutiny. In advance of its publication in summer 2023, WMCA will engage in the development of the protocol and then adhere to its proposals.
24. The scrutiny protocol will be designed to ensure that all areas with devolution deals, but especially those which manage single settlements, should have best in class scrutiny functions. Membership on committees and in particular the role of chair should be prized and competed for. Retention of members for several years should be common. Members should be able to devote the time to the role. The committees should have

the profile and cache to ensure that their findings are brought to the attention of the public wherever necessary.

25. The protocol will also look at the question of how to ensure that overview and scrutiny and audit committees are politically and geographically representative, so that as many different viewpoints as possible can be applied to scrutinising the performance, judgment and conduct of the mayor and combined authority.
26. In developing the scrutiny protocol, government will apply learning from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Independent Review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. WMCA will consider the recommendations from the Independent Review of GMCA when reviewing its own overview and scrutiny arrangements and consider which recommendations might be appropriate for delivering its own culture of scrutiny, including:
 - a. A single Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
 - b. The chair and deputy chair, who must be from opposition parties to the Mayor of the WMCA, to have clear job descriptions.
 - c. Compensating members of scrutiny committees.
 - d. Requesting constituent local authorities appoint members based on their interests and skills and if possible, for two-year terms, enabling substitute members to take part in task and finish exercises.
 - e. New rules about how information will be shared with members between meetings, informed by members' existing rights of access to information.
 - f. A renewed commitment by WMCA officers to give committees the time to feed into the decision-making process.
 - g. Feedback from senior officers on where formal recommendations by committees have led to a change in the approach of WMCA; and
 - h. The scrutiny function itself should take the lead on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the new system, through on-going reflections and a formal review after one year of the new arrangements.
27. WMCA commits to reviewing their overview and scrutiny arrangements and reporting on the measures taken to strengthen them by March 2024.
28. In addition, in recognition of the new functions and funding being agreed through this devolution deal, WMCA commits to the following further actions to enhance the scrutiny and audit committees' resources and prestige:

- a. To provide reasonable resources sufficient for committees to be able to ask for ambitious research and analysis either through officers or external sources, such as local universities.
 - b. As a measure to ensure quoracy, members of the scrutiny committee are clear through their role description as to their responsibilities, including attendance at all meetings; and
 - c. To provide reasonable communications support to help ensure that the chairs of the committees and the reports they develop are able to get suitable profile. As part of this support, consideration will be made to what branding (including, if necessary, name changes) and communication techniques can help the media and public understand the role of the committees.
29. Government will also look to raise the profile of the chairs of the committees and will explore different options such as ensuring that they are able to get regular meetings with Ministers of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and are empowered to report any concerns they have to appropriate teams in the Department.
30. As a condition of this deal, the chair of WMCA (the Mayor) and other portfolio leads, appointed by the Mayor at the annual meeting of the WMCA each year, commit, where appropriate, to arranging and attending the following events to allow greater scrutiny by key local and national stakeholders:
- a. Full council meetings – up to one a year for each constituent council, if requested by the council.
 - b. ‘Mayors question time’, where the Mayor visits all parts of the city region to take questions from the public, chaired by an independent person – a local journalist or businessperson, for example.
 - c. Parliamentary select committees, when invited to do so by a select committee; and
 - d. WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to present reports within their portfolio area on a regular basis.
31. In addition, the government and WMCA have agreed through this deal that WMCA will arrange with the Members of Parliament (MPs) representing West Midlands parliamentary constituencies for public, broadcasted sessions where MPs will be able to scrutinise the Mayor and other portfolio leads to aid and strengthen local scrutiny of WMCA. The sessions will allow for questions to be posed which cover at least the performance and strategic direction of WMCA and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

32. The government and the WMCA agree that implementation of these arrangements, and adherence to the scrutiny protocol, is a vital part of the implementation of the full range of commitments in the deal. Implementation of commitments from the government in this deal will be conditional upon consistent best and full efforts to delivering these improved arrangements.
33. The terms of reference for these MP sessions will be agreed between the government and the WMCA following engagement with West Midlands MPs by summer 2023, and consider questions of appropriate chairs, schedules, papers and the contribution of the chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee. The sessions will occur four times a year and will focus solely on the responsibilities of WMCA not those of the government or the constituent council. The government will also explore if these can be hosted as Grand Committees by Parliament. WMCA will then agree a resolution to introduce these with a commitment to review them and identify improvements at the end of the first spending review period for the single department-style settlement.

Publicising WMCA's role and performance

34. WMCA will engage with the government, along with other areas with a devolution deal, in developing the outcomes and metrics that all English institutions with devolved powers will report against. This process will also inform the development of the outcomes framework which will be used to assess performance against the single mayoral settlements. The outcomes framework will be developed with WMCA based on a national set of objectives.
35. WMCA will engage in the development of the plain English guidance and support its dissemination to increase awareness across the city region of the roles of the Mayor, WMCA, local authorities and the government.

Accountability arrangements for the single settlement

36. WMCA will agree with the government a streamlined, overarching single accountability process for the settlement. This will build on, and will be incorporated into future editions of, the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This process will include the assurance framework coordinated by DLUHC, the specific outcomes WMCA will achieve over the spending review period or funding period and appropriate spending control processes.
37. The government will work with WMCA to agree the more detailed elements of the settlement design ahead of the next Spending Review, including on spending control, the approach to managing financial and delivery risks, the outcomes framework and accountability arrangements.

Data

38. The government acknowledges the value WMCA can add at the local level by undertaking strategic analysis of city region-wide data. The government will work with WMCA to continue to explore options, legislative and otherwise, to safely streamline the sharing of data between the government, the wider public sector and WMCA and its constituent local authorities for this purpose. A range of options to establish a legal gateway will be considered, potentially including amending the Digital Economy Act 2017, subject to sufficient Parliamentary availability. Any and all potential options will respect the provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation in order to achieve compliance in design, the common law duty of confidentiality and the requirement for local authority consent to any future data sharing arrangements.
39. The government will agree a new Data Partnership with WMCA. The Data Partnership will establish principles for the legal, safe and secure sharing of data between the government and WMCA. The principles will aim to support and streamline WMCA's negotiations with individual government departments over access to specific datasets. This will, in turn, support the delivery of the accountability framework and broader policy commitments set out in this deeper devolution deal. The Data Partnership will be designed with particular regard to the roles and relationships between the parties in accordance with the controller and processor definitions in the data protection legislation and underpinned by the legal powers each of those parties may rely upon. A data protection impact assessment will be produced to underpin the design of the Data Partnership.
40. To support the development and delivery of the Data Partnership, and to facilitate discussions with the relevant government departments, WMCA will be invited to participate in the government's Chief Data Officers' Council. In addition, the government will explore establishing a new Local Chief Data Officers' Council, to facilitate data sharing, share learning and maximise the value of local data and statistics for local decision-making.
41. The Spatial Data Unit will help to increase WMCA's data capability, including in data science, and will engage with WMCA to further understand its needs and priorities. In addition, WMCA will convene a symposium with the relevant government departments and agencies, including the Central Digital and Data Office, Spatial Data Unit, Office for National Statistics, Alan Turing Institute, National Innovation Centre for Data and data

science and machine learning experts in the region, to leverage the benefits of data science capability to local policymaking and service delivery.

42. The government notes WMCA's initial priorities are to have timely access to data at the right local geographical level relating to skills and training, careers, employability and labour markets, business support, transport, trade and investment, energy use and climate resilience; and data held by the government pertaining to WMCA's devolved functions. WMCA will use the Data Partnership as the basis of negotiations to access datasets in these policy areas where appropriate and practicable. Any personal data sharing between the government and WMCA and its constituent local authorities will only be possible if compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018, where applicable the common law duty of confidentiality, UK General Data Protection Regulation and all other relevant legislation and guidance; and will be underpinned by appropriate technical and organisational measures to implement the data protection principles therein to safeguard individual rights.
43. The WMCA and its constituent local authorities commit, in return, to share data and evidence with the government to support the monitoring and evaluation of government programmes in line with the direction of travel towards a single outcomes' accountability framework, to improve the efficiency of public services, and to support the activities of the forthcoming Office for Local Government.
44. The government will work with committees and bodies, such as the local health and wellbeing boards in constituent local authority areas, integrated care boards and integrated care partnerships, and WMCA to explore secure and appropriate ways to share data across the public sector, including examining existing best practice, to help WMCA embed a 'health in all policies' approach to public health, with any improvements in data access being appropriate, safe and legal, and which improves and safeguards public trust in how data is used.

Fiscal devolution

45. Through this trailblazer deal, the government commits to further fiscal devolution through allowing WMCA's constituent local authorities to retain 100% of their business rates for 10 years.
46. As with the existing model, adjustments will need to be made to ensure cost neutrality. The ability for local authorities to retain business rates over the 10-year term is conditional upon arrangements concerning the WMCA share remaining in place.
47. The government has already confirmed a reset of accumulated business rates growth will not happen until 2025/26 at the earliest. Any move to reset business rates growth would be accompanied by national consultation including with combined authorities. While the current pilot arrangements are in place, the current "no detriment" arrangement will continue until any new local arrangements, for example those proposed in this deal, come online. WMCA and its constituent local authorities and the government will need to work through further detail, including the right balance of risk and reward, ahead of the next Local Government Finance Settlement to enable this next phase of 100% business rates retention to be implemented. The government recognises that WMCA and its constituent local authorities would only sign up to arrangements where the balance of rewards outweighs the risks of being inside the scheme.
48. In addition, the government will work with WMCA and its constituent bodies towards the designation of a number of specific growth zones within which 100% of business rates growth above an agreed baseline will be retained for 25 years. Retained rates would not be subject to reset at any national reset of business rates within this period. The location of these sites will be determined locally – subject to criteria set out in a framework, to be developed by government with consultation with WMCA, and final business cases – provided the model can be sustainably delivered alongside the measures set out in paragraph 45.
49. Paragraph 45 and 48 above would be in addition to existing Enterprise Zone arrangements which would remain and would not limit WMCA from potentially participating in any new national 'incentive area' arrangements, such as the Investment Zones programme which is currently being developed.
50. The government will work with WMCA to agree the detail of these proposals, but noting that arrangements must:

- a. Be consistent with the sustainability and affordability of the overall local government finance position, fair to other local authorities across England and replicable with others.
- b. Be subject to technical design and not jeopardise the operations of the wider local government finance system.
- c. Strengthen accountability to local taxpayers; and
- d. Empower the Mayor as the accountable figure for promoting economic growth in the region working with WMCA constituent bodies.

Levelling Up Zones

51. Devolution means providing local leaders with the tools to make their economies grow, drive levelling up and improve the lives and opportunities of residents.
52. WMCA and its constituent authorities have identified six key corridors across the region on the basis of their potential for growth and levelling up. These 'Levelling Up Zones' include East Birmingham-North Solihull corridor; Wolverhampton Corridor; Walsall Growth Corridor; Dudley Metro Corridors (including the Wednesbury to Brierly Hill link); and the Coventry and Warwickshire gigafactory zone.
53. The government recognises the WMCA's vision for these places across the region and envisages that the following tools made available in this trailblazer devolution deal will help WMCA to deliver its vision to catalyse growth and levelling up:
 - a. **Fiscal devolution and investment.** WMCA will be able to work with the government towards designation of specific, targeted "growth zones", in which 100% of business rate growth above an agreed baseline could be retained for 25 years. As set out in paragraph 48 a selection of these areas will be determined locally, subject to criteria set out in a framework, to be developed by the government with consultation with WMCA, and final business cases.
 - b. **The single settlement**, which will support WMCA to align funding provided to the region, can be prioritised to further support these sites, as per their own regional objectives for investment and growth.
 - c. **Investment in regeneration.** The government has committed to devolve £100 million brownfield funding to WMCA, subject to a final business case, to deploy across the region to drive placemaking including Levelling Up Zones, housing and urban regeneration. The government will also invest £60 million in the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.
 - d. **A trailblazing approach to affordable housing.** The government has committed that the WMCA will set the strategic direction of the Affordable Homes Programme, including strategic priorities for spend, worth at least £200 million to the West Midlands with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million. In any relevant successor programme, the government has committed to go further, with the WMCA able to select sites, providers, and standards. This will enable the WMCA to ensure

Affordable Homes Programme delivery is aligned with its strategic objectives, and those of its constituent authority partners, such as Levelling Up Zones.

- e. **Post-19 skills funding.** The government has committed to provide local flexibilities, which will increase over time, over Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps and devolve non-apprenticeship adult skills functions and grant funding in the next Spending Review. This will support WMCA to better align adult skills provision with priority growth sectors, such as the sectors WMCA may wish to catalyse through Levelling Up Zones.

54. It will be for the WMCA to determine how to use these tools, subject to the conditions and requirements set out throughout this deal.

55. When used in collaboration with a range of partners – including local government, central government, businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector – these tools should impact positively on delivery of new homes, jobs, and opportunities for local people, turning levelling up into a reality.

Single settlement

56. The government and WMCA recognise that the current system of funding for mayoral combined authorities is fragmented, overly reliant on centrally administered funds and lacks clear, lean and proportionate accountability structures.
57. The government therefore commits to give WMCA single capital and revenue funding settlements at the next Spending Review, agreed directly through a single process with the government. This will include the establishment of a streamlined, overarching, single accountability framework coordinated by DLUHC, rather than multiple frameworks administered by different departments. This settlement will increase WMCA's autonomy, ability to prioritise decisions locally, and ability to reprioritise across its own budgets. WMCA will no longer access certain funds. As part of the Spending Review, the government will set out how the settlement has been calculated and which funds WMCA will not be able to access during the Spending Review period. WMCA will receive the same level of long-term certainty over funding as government departments receive. Longer term fiscal arrangements, such as the Investment Funds, also referred to as Gainshare or Earnback, are not covered by the single settlement, and continue to be fully devolved to WMCA as per the existing devolution deal.
58. The government will work with WMCA to design these settlements, based on the principles that the funding settlement will:
 - a. Cover an entire Spending Review period.
 - b. Replace individual grant funding streams from across government departments and therefore mean mayoral combined authorities with single settlements would be exempt from bidding into certain national budgets.
 - c. Be the default mechanism through which WMCA receives its relevant share of additional funding for new national budgets or programmes announced during a Spending Review period associated with the functions that are devolved to WMCA. This includes any increases to relevant competitive pots that WMCA has been excluded from. WMCA will retain the right to bid into new competitive programmes which are not set out as funds WMCA will not be able to access during the Spending Review period. The government will retain the ability to direct some funding centrally.

- d. Give WMCA greater flexibility to plan and fund local priorities over the longer-term. The level of flexibility across the settlement will be agreed between the government and WMCA before the next Spending Review and will give WMCA greater funding flexibility across the pillars of the single settlement listed in paragraph 59 below for activity outside of that pillar in order to achieve the outcomes agreed with the government.
 - e. Be contingent on WMCA agreeing with the government a single, streamlined accountability framework for the settlement. This will build on, and will be incorporated into future editions of, the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This English Devolution Accountability Framework will include the assurance framework administered by DLUHC, the specific outcomes WMCA will achieve over the Spending Review period or funding period and appropriate spending control processes.
 - f. Represent a change to the wiring, nature and flexibility of funding from central government rather than the quantum. The quantum of funding will be decided by an agreed process between the government and WMCA.
59. WMCA will be held to account for delivering outcomes, using the settlement funding and relevant local resources, across areas associated with devolved functions set out in this and previous devolution deals. A single reporting framework across the single settlement against those outcomes will be agreed with the government. The government and WMCA anticipate that the single settlement will be structured around responsibility and accountability for five functions which will now be devolved through this or previous deals, or are already carried out by WMCA and its constituent bodies, with an appropriate split between capital and revenue funding:
- a. local growth and place.
 - b. local transport.
 - c. housing and regeneration.
 - d. adult skills.
 - e. buildings' retrofit for decarbonisation matters covered by the pilot agreement to devolve retrofit funding set out at paragraphs 208 – 214.
60. WMCA will be empowered to use funding under these devolved functions to invest in any lawful way associated with achievement of the outcomes agreed with the government. Where functions have not been devolved through this or other devolution deals, the government retains the right to direct specific funding programmes, and WMCA retains the right to continue to bid into competitive programmes. Funding for major infrastructure projects may be agreed in addition to the settlement.

61. Single settlements will be implemented at the next Spending Review and based on a methodology agreed between the government and WMCA. Therefore, their precise scope of the single settlement will be subject to Spending Review decisions. However, were single settlements to have been in place during this spending review period, the government and WMCA agree that they would have supported outcomes associated with the following budgets:
- a. Local growth and place: the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Fund.
 - b. Local transport: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements which consolidate highways maintenance and integrated transport block funding for small scale renewals as well as transformational funding for local transport. In addition, the settlement would also have included revenue funding for buses, active travel funds and electric vehicle funds.
 - c. Housing and regeneration: the Brownfield Housing Fund and the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land fund.
 - d. Adult skills: the Adult Education Budget and Free Courses for Jobs.
62. The government will work with WMCA to agree the more detailed elements of the settlement design ahead of the next Spending Review, including around spending control; approach to managing financial and delivery risks; transitional arrangements; the outcomes framework; accounting arrangements; and accountability arrangements. The government will work with WMCA to agree a memorandum of understanding outlining how single settlements will work by the end of January 2024. WMCA will reserve the right to not agree the memorandum of understanding should it be deemed to be detrimental to WMCA. This timescale will be reviewed when the timing of the next Spending Review is confirmed, if this happens before January 2024. Outcomes agreed as part of existing programmes which span into the next Spending Review, such as City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, will be maintained.
63. Single settlements represent an ambitious step on the road to greater simplification of the funding mayoral combined authorities receive from the government. This programme will continue to progress through each spending review, drawing on lessons learnt from engagement with local partners, deepened strategic relationships with arm's length bodies, and the closer alignment with national government programmes set out in this deal.
64. The government and WMCA anticipate that single settlements will become a permanent feature of the landscape for financing WMCA. Nevertheless, it is recognised that this is a novel approach to financing WMCA, and so following the next Spending Review, the government and WMCA will review the approach.

Transport

65. WMCA has significant transport powers and funding from the previous two devolution deals. The commitments set out below build on them and are intended to provide further autonomy to the WMCA to establish itself as a leader in transport innovation in the UK and improve the transport offer to its citizens.

Transport planning

66. Transport is a critical element of place-making and has a huge impact on people's lives and communities. Well planned and supported transport improves quality of life, ensuring that the needs of all users are considered. Getting transport right is also critical to the government's efforts to achieve net zero and overall approach to safeguarding the environment.
67. The government recognises that every place is unique and has different transport needs. That is why an area's local transport plan is so crucial to ensuring good transport outcomes for the area. An area's local transport plan is both a process and public facing document that brings together evidence and aspirations to shape the future transport in a local area. local transport plans should be kept updated to make a stronger strategic case for transport investment in an area and provide a platform for accountability needed to support further devolution and funding simplification.
68. WMCA has developed its Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands local transport plan core strategy, and the government is committed to supporting WMCA as it looks to build on its success so far. The government will provide new guidance to assist WMCA in developing its local transport plan, including meeting defined environmental and decarbonisation standards and fully adopting planned new guidance on quantifying carbon reductions. The WMCA will act as a trailblazer with the government to ensure that quantifying carbon reductions are embedded as part of WMCA's local transport plan area strategies by the end of 2023.
69. A key feature of transport planning in WMCA is developing an inclusive economy where anyone, including disabled people, can access travel and play an active role in local economies. This means delivering inclusive local transport plans that support accessibility and reduce health, economic and social inequalities.

70. WMCA will work closely and collaboratively with local authorities to ensure better join up between strategic land use planning and transport planning, from the earliest stages of the funding and planning process. WMCA, along with its constituent local authorities, should provide an integrated system that unlocks homes while enabling more sustainable transport journeys by provision of public, sustainable and active travel, effectively densifies well-connected areas and ensures communities have access to employment, leisure and other opportunities they need. WMCA should work to ensure the benefits transport can provide to leverage regeneration and growth are realised.
71. As WMCA develops its local transport plan, it will host a complementary new trailblazing approach to collaborative research and learning programme. This programme will be coordinated through an influencing transport lab. The government is exploring sponsorship of the influencing transport lab. This approach will seek to better understand how to support the development and design of changes to the transport system that can more readily enable more sustainable choices.
72. The commitments set out below are intended to support and enable WMCA to ensure that it has the tools necessary to achieve the outcomes set out in their local transport plan.

Funding

73. The government recognises the importance of a consolidated, devolved and long-term approach to transport funding and has provided a £1.05 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to the WMCA area running until 2027. Clarity and certainty of funding are important to help areas plan appropriately to deliver the government's ambition to level-up local transport connectivity across the country to become significantly closer to the standards of London by 2030.

Transport innovation

74. WMCA was the government's first future transport zone and will continue to be a leader in transport innovation in the UK. The WMCA will establish itself as a 'sandbox' to create economic benefits by attracting new global investment, catalysing additional growth in high-value clusters and boosting private sector confidence to deliver new transport services in the WMCA, with learning that can be applied across the UK. This will help the WMCA build on its excellence in the automotive and transport sector, such as TfWM Connected and Automated Mobility programme, and remain a leader in innovation.
75. WMCA and the government will form an ongoing relationship to accelerate and drive forward innovations that are priorities for the WMCA and match the government's policy priorities, including the future of transport regulatory review, transport decarbonisation plan and future of freight plan.

76. The sandbox will aim to exploit new transport service opportunities including challenging regulatory barriers where appropriate to provide a safe and secure space to test innovative products and services with private industry. To improve the user experience for travellers, the sandbox will look to modernise practices through digitising services and processes and identify smarter and quicker ways of working within existing regulatory frameworks.
77. New services and business models enabled by digitisation and advances in technology should provide opportunities for all and be designed from the outset on an inclusive and equitable basis, accounting for the needs of a diverse community including disabled people.
78. From spring 2023, the government and WMCA will begin conversations on a range of issues aimed at unlocking innovation. This will involve WMCA working closely with government across the Future of Transport programme on projects that will deliver shared outcomes. The government and WMCA will:
- a. Discuss how to best enable low speed zero emission and automated vehicle trials, with consideration for operational and regulatory challenges.
 - b. Explore the regulatory challenges facing demand responsive transport in the WMCA.
 - c. Explore the use of dynamic traffic management and digitising street spaces.
79. Additionally, the government is exploring a number of further projects that would support innovation and delivery of a safe, efficient, and reliable transport network within the WMCA:
- a. The government is exploring the implications of, and options for, introducing simplified side road zebra crossings, and recognises WMCA's ambitions to introduce these. The WMCA and the constituent authorities will support the government in developing a robust evidence case.
 - b. The government intends to introduce legislation, when parliamentary time allows, that will create a new low speed zero emission vehicle category which is distinct from the cycle and motor vehicle categories. Supported by evidence from trials in the WMCA, new powers would enable government to set proportionate rules for specific micromobility vehicles. The proposed legislation would also enable the creation of a licensing framework for rental micromobility operations, providing consistent powers for local transport authorities such as WMCA to shape rental operations to their local priorities.
 - c. Following the great success of Birmingham and the WMCA hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the government will work with the WMCA to develop a

proposal for the West Midlands to bid to host the 2027 World Intelligent Transport Systems Congress.

- d. WMCA also intends to develop a local, last mile freight and logistics programme to support the area's growing high value logistics and distribution cluster, as identified in the WMCA's Plan for Growth.

Buses

- 80. In line with the commitment in the National Bus Strategy, the government is working on the reform of the bus service operators grant. This will enable the bus service operators grant to support the governments and West Midlands' shared priorities to support important local bus services and reduce environmental impacts through facilitating the transition to zero emission buses.
- 81. The government will devolve powers for the payment of the bus service operators grant to the Mayor. WMCA will provide support to identify the funding for bus services entirely within the WMCA boundary that is paid to commercial operators and would be suitable to be devolved to WMCA, both currently and following national reform.
- 82. The government will work with WMCA and other key local authority stakeholders to finalise the design of a national reform package for the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant. The government will support WMCA by devolving the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant for services entirely within the WMCA boundary. The government and WMCA will work together to agree an ambitious timeline to implement the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant reforms in the West Midlands, by 2025.
- 83. WMCA has introduced bus bye laws to help improve passenger safety, increase bus patronage and reduce anti-social behaviour on public transport. The government shares this ambition and will work with WMCA to ensure TfWM has appropriate enforcement powers to enforce these existing bye laws and can introduce further byelaws, where necessary.

Rail

- 84. The government will support the West Midlands Rail Executive, which represents the rail interests of WMCA and other local transport authorities in the region, and is chaired by the Mayor, in seeking a new rail partnership with Great British Railways. This will form part of the journey towards greater local accountability for the West Midlands rail network, in the context of Great British Railways' ultimate overall accountability for the national rail network. This will enable West Midlands Rail Executive to further embed itself as a central part of the rail industry in the region and, by extension, allow their priorities to drive future decisions regarding the local network. Local priorities will need

to be coordinated and compatible with the needs of the national network and surrounding areas.

85. This should build on the collaboration and successful joint working already in place on the WMCA's rail network demonstrated through the collaboration agreement with government and the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration. Delivery of rail reform in the WMCA will enable opportunities for enhanced local accountability, scrutiny, responsibility and influence that West Midlands Rail Executive will be at the forefront of due to their prior experience. Enhanced local accountability for the WMCA will be in the context of, and will not override, Great British Railways' ultimate accountability to the Secretary of State for Transport.
86. Partnerships between Great British Railways and mayoral combined authorities will be a key driver in progressing the levelling up transport mission for local public transport connectivity to be significantly closer to the standards of London with improved services, simpler fares, and integrated ticketing by 2030.
87. Reflecting WMCA's position with a trailblazer deal, and with a view to evolving today's successful collaboration agreement with government, the Great British Railways Transition Team is working with West Midlands Rail Executive to discuss local priorities for a partnership. The existing agreement, and the West Midlands Separable Business Unit, will act as a baseline for the future partnership with Great British Railways. The government is supportive of these discussions continuing and of exploring whether aspects of new local partnership working can be piloted ahead of Great British Railways operation.
88. West Midlands Rail Executive will continue to jointly oversee the delivery of rail services within the West Midlands Separable Business Unit and work with Great British Railways Transition Team and government on shared objectives and future outcomes. Partnership working will enable West Midlands Rail Executive to feed in their views regarding optimum services for WMCA's travel to work area, including their ambition for a separate contract for these WMCA services which will be considered within the context of the national network. Progress here will be subject to development of wider reform of the railways and industry processes that support this.
89. As steps to develop the existing agreement ahead of Great British Railways being operational, the government commits to:
 - a. Supporting West Midlands Rail Executive and TfWM to explore a fully integrated multi modal fares and ticketing structure, through the region's already existing Swift platform. In collaboration with West Midlands Rail Executive and TfWM, the government will initially progress pay as you go ticketing infrastructure pilots, to be developed and agreed by the end of 2023. These pilots will be revenue neutral and align with government's wider fares, ticketing and retail programme. Collaboration will allow Great British Railways Transition Team, government, West Midlands Rail Executive, TfWM and train operators to test the technology,

explore and agree potential options for rail fare simplification, and test the revenue raising potential of a genuinely integrated public transport offer. Subject to funding, this will include trialling agreed approaches within the WMCA. Great British Railways Transition Team is already discussing how pay as you go ticketing on rail could work with West Midlands Rail Executive aspirations for local pay as you go and simplifying fares for passengers.

- b. Supporting development of multimodal transport integration by working with West Midlands Rail Executive to co-develop a brand proposition that is compatible with the Plan for Rail's ambition for a single, national rail brand, while also retaining and strengthening the West Midlands Railway brand within the wider TfWM network.
 - c. Working collaboratively with Great British Railways Transition Team, and subject to discussions with Network Rail and train operating companies, to support West Midlands Rail Executive to better integrate local stations into the local public transport network and wider community. This will include exploring the local branding proposition across rail stations, provide opportunities to shape station design and drive-up standards to improve and simplify the customer experience.
 - d. Working closely with Great British Railways Transition Team and West Midlands Rail Executive, taking current responsibilities as a baseline, to ensure they continue to play a full role in future processes and are committed to exploring where that role can be enhanced in areas of rail delivery to enable greater local influence.
 - e. Providing greater access to local rail data to West Midlands Rail Executive, to improve local scrutiny of performance.
 - f. Continuing to engage with WMCA, so that local input is actively considered and exploring whether aspects of the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy could be incorporated in developing a long-term strategy for rail.
 - g. Giving West Midlands Rail Executive opportunities to promote infrastructure and service enhancement schemes by West Midlands Rail Executive, Network Rail and the government on the options for funding, timing and delivery given existing network challenges.
 - h. Supporting West Midlands Rail Executive in leading and distributing funding for community rail activity in the region. Such engagement can enable rail to connect communities in addition to offering social value and economic impact.
90. The details and progress on the above, including determining appropriate locations for trials of pay as you go ticketing, is subject to further discussions between government, Great British Railways Transition Team, and West Midlands Rail Executive.

Mass transit delivery

91. The WMCA is driving forward the delivery of a comprehensive transport infrastructure programme including an extension of the Metro network in Birmingham and the Black Country. The government commits to consider solutions to be developed by the WMCA to resolve the pressures on the WMCA's capital programme.
92. WMCA and Coventry City Council are developing proposals for very light rail in Coventry (and tested in Dudley). The aim is to develop a new more cost-effective alternative to conventional light rail which could be deployed in major urban areas and exported globally. If this aim is realised, it could potentially create a reliable, frequent, battery-driven, hop-on hop-off transport system which provides an alternative to a traditional tram system.
93. The proposals for very light rail in Coventry are subject to ministerial approval at key business case stages. At each stage, the government will work with local partners to help ensure that the plans are best formulated to deliver benefits and improvements for the transport system. WMCA and Coventry City Council will provide feedback to the government on the very light rail experience of Transport and Works Act order processes to help inform potential reforms. Government will provide advice to WMCA on future Transport and Works Act order applications to ensure it can be processed as quickly as possible (without prejudice to what any final decision on such application might be).

Roads

94. Building on the WMCA's flagship, multi-agency Regional Transport Coordination Centre, the government will work with the WMCA to explore whether opportunities exist for traffic officers on the WMCA's key route network to support management of periods of planned and unplanned disruptions.
95. The government is considering options for tackling pavement parking, and we will work with WMCA to explore appropriate powers for mayoral combined authorities and their constituent authorities in this area, once any decisions relating to the national framework are made.

Housing and regeneration

96. WMCA has a history of success in leading housing delivery, land repurposing, urban renewal and brownfield regeneration across the West Midlands, leveraging private sector investment, driving new innovation in areas like modular construction and delivering high quality brownfield regeneration projects. This deal will build on the success of WMCA's previous devolution deals, and WMCA's track record to date, to be ambitious in delivering high quality regeneration schemes and policy innovation in areas like design quality and affordable housing.
97. This deal will support WMCA's continuing development of brownfield land and the building of new homes and will help the WMCA better manage a portfolio of housing and land funds which the Government and WMCA will continue to make sure is as efficient and effective as possible as we proceed to implementation. It will support the creation of new jobs and commercial floorspace, and repurposing of town and city centres. We will ensure that public sector land is better used, designed and developed as a result of this deal, supporting WMCA's ambitions on housing supply, including the supply of new social and affordable housing, and maximising the ability of the WMCA to continue to lead the way in brownfield development, public land disposals and urban renewal nationally.
98. We will also create a revolutionary new model of delivering affordable housing for the people of the West Midlands, putting WMCA at the centre of the key strategic decisions on how and where this new affordable housing should be delivered – providing the tools and mechanisms to support new affordable housing products, investors and suppliers.
99. At the next Spending Review, we will implement the new single settlement which seeks to better align housing policies alongside other key levers for local economic growth.

Regeneration funding

100. The government will devolve £100 million brownfield funding to WMCA to drive placemaking, housing and urban regeneration across the region. This will be deployed within this spending review period, supporting WMCA to deliver 4,000 homes. From the next Spending Review, WMCA will receive a simplified single department-style settlement. This will better align housing policies alongside other key levers for local economic growth.

101. Subject to further discussions to refine the business case, WMCA intends that it will be deployed at scale and pace to de-risk stalled and challenging housing, urban and commercial development sites across the West Midlands, which include sites in the city of Wolverhampton, which was identified as a priority in the Levelling Up White Paper, in city centres like Coventry and Birmingham, in town centres (e.g. Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell) and along major transport corridors (e.g. East Birmingham to North Solihull)
102. This investment will support progression and delivery of emerging and adopted local plans, support brownfield first and town centre regeneration policy, and provide WMCA with the critical flexibility and strategic funding, and barrier-busting abilities necessary to tackle the most pertinent development issues for the region and the specific barriers facing individual sites.
103. This funding would have robust reporting and accountability provisions, which satisfy the Single Assurance Framework and the outcomes of which are aligned with the West Midlands Outcomes Framework, as agreed with the government and focussed on enabling placemaking and supporting conditions for growth.
104. There is untapped regeneration and development potential in parts of the WMCA area. As part of the trailblazing commitment to funding simplification, DLUHC commits to provide £60 million of additional funding towards the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, subject to a subsidy control assessment and business case approval. All further costs for the scheme will be met locally.

High street rental auctions

105. The government is committed to tackling high vacancy rates which can impact the economic prosperity and pride in place felt across our high streets. As such, the government commits to work closely with WMCA to empower them to take a role in convening its constituent authorities to implement new powers for high street rental auctions following the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
106. We want the West Midlands to be a first mover in the use of these new powers once the programme commences in autumn 2023.
107. We expect WMCA to identify areas on their patch which would benefit most from HSRA powers, and where the required capacity and capability lies to deliver them. WMCA should then oversee the delivery of high street rental auctions and act as a champion for the programme to encourage and support other areas to maximise take up high street rental auctions.

Strategic Place Partnership

108. Government commits to working with the WMCA through a strategic place partnership with its housing delivery agency Homes England. Homes England commit to working in partnership with WMCA from the outset of this Deal to bring new housing supply and regeneration sites forward. To do so Homes England will be establishing a new wide-ranging Strategic Place Partnership with WMCA, to support the WMCA with their ambitious plans on housing supply, investment, and urban regeneration. Homes England will work with WMCA and its constituent local authorities to agree a set of place-making outcomes, focused on delivering transformational change across the West Midlands. The Strategic Place Partnership will align expertise, funding and other relevant assets to support the delivery of these outcomes, and other strategic priorities at combined authority level. A part of this new Strategic Place Partnership will include a joint pipeline and delivery plan to bring forward additional affordable homes, land and assets formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding and a future delivery plan.

Affordable housing provision

109. The government commits to a new trailblazer approach to the delivery of affordable housing within the West Midlands. This will be centred on a new approach to the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 being piloted with the WMCA. The Affordable Homes Programme is the government's flagship programme for delivering affordable housing in England. It provides grant funding towards the supply of new social and affordable housing. This agreement relates to funding within the existing Affordable Homes Programme envelope.
110. The trailblazer approach means that the WMCA will set the overall strategic direction, strategy, objectives and local leadership for the deployment of the Affordable Homes Programme in its region. Operational management and administration of the programme will remain within Homes England and hence a strong partnership and collaboration, through the Strategic Place Partnership, will be important from the outset.
111. This provides for local leadership, direction and strategic oversight over the Affordable Homes Programme for the first time by the West Midlands, while retaining Homes England's delivery expertise, administration and operational management, ensuring the Affordable Homes Programme business case objectives are delivered and existing local authority arrangements are maintained.
112. The trailblazer approach will be delivered in two stages, allowing for an evolving picture that increases WMCA involvement, leadership, decision making and direction at each stage. This approach will protect in-flight delivery of the current Affordable Homes Programme, existing investment commitments and strategic partnerships, ensure the fund's business case objectives are met and provide the necessary accountability

arrangements. It will still ensure a trailblazing approach, with WMCA central to key decisions on the Affordable Homes Programme deployment in the West Midlands.

Current Affordable Homes Programme

113. Within the first phase of the trailblazer approach (with timings aligned to the current Affordable Homes Programme):

- a. WMCA will be central to decisions on the Affordable Homes Programme in the region, responsible for setting the strategic direction, leadership and strategy of the Affordable Homes Programme, priorities for investment and strategic oversight within the WMCA area. WMCA will continue to work closely with its local authority partners on Affordable Homes Programme delivery, and work with Homes England, who will continue to lead on day-to-day management, monitoring, grant allocation and administration of the Affordable Homes Programme in the region during this pilot phase.
- b. Through the Strategic Place Partnership, WMCA will work with local authorities, the government and its agencies, namely Home England, to jointly identify projects for affordable housing. This will be, in line with the strategic direction and policy framework for the Affordable Homes Programme set by WMCA in alignment with the overarching business case for the Affordable Homes Programme. Homes England, the WMCA and its local authorities will develop an effective pipeline of projects across the region within the strategic framework set by WMCA.
- c. WMCA, local authorities and Homes England will work in close partnership to ensure effective delivery of Affordable Homes Programme funding. WMCA and Homes England will work together in formulating the necessary governance to help ensure strong partnership working and collaboration and support regional decision making on investments and spend of the Affordable Homes Programme. This will sit underneath the existing programme governance structure.
- d. Where any funding decisions are not acceptable to the WMCA the mayor, as chair of the WMCA board, will have the right to challenge and escalate the decision to DLUHC before any final funding decisions are taken.

114. This represents the first time that decisions on local affordable housing priorities have been devolved, outside of London. Overall funding decisions will need to be aligned and consistent with the national targets set for the current Affordable Homes Programme, but, recognising the trailblazer nature of the deal, more flexibility may be granted to take greater account of regional priorities.

115. The specific arrangement will depend on the provider and/or whether funding has been allocated already and the approach will be formalised through a memorandum of understanding, signed between WMCA, DLUHC and Homes England.
116. Homes England will invest at least £200 million of AHP funding within the WMCA area by March 2026 with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million to build more social and affordable homes by 2026. This will be dependent on appetite from providers alongside the ongoing work to develop a joint pipeline and delivery plan, developed as part of the Strategic Place Partnership. WMCA will work collaboratively with Homes England, constituent local authorities and local delivery partners to develop a joint pipeline and delivery plan which alongside the other elements set out in this trailblazer approach will help bring forward additional funding opportunities beyond the minimum level, through the identification and development of pipeline projects by Homes England and WMCA.

Future affordable homes provision

117. In the second phase of the trailblazer approach (to begin in any successor programme), WMCA will be responsible for adopting a strategic role on affordable housing, including in some decisions currently taken by Homes England, namely agreeing sites and providers and identifying standards, working in partnership with its local authorities. This will be subject to securing appropriate value for money and considering the risks of different standards across the country.
118. This would be subject to any relevant successor programme being agreed in the next Spending Review, the delivery of outcomes to be agreed at the start of any successor programme with the government, set out in a formal settlement including an expectation for the amount of funding to be delivered over the programme within the WMCA. This initial agreement will include the number of homes to be delivered over the programme, annual trajectories of delivery and possible interventions on the event of non-delivery.
119. In this new 'trailblazing' model of delivery, the WMCA will make the key strategic decisions over local investment and spend of Affordable Homes Programme in the WMCA area in line with its strategic framework. The WMCA will be held accountable for delivery through the new accountability framework, which is set out in the Governance and Accountability section of this deal. Day to day administration of the Affordable Homes Programme in the West Midlands will continue to be undertaken by Homes England working to the strategy, objectives and framework set by WMCA, with Homes England reporting to the WMCA on delivery of the agreed outcomes and outputs. Homes England will continue to provide its expertise were called upon, building on the partnership working set out in the Strategic Place Partnership.
120. The development of such an approach for a potential successor programme, including the nature of the relationship between WMCA and Homes England and whether this can be included in WMCA's single settlement, will consider how to maintain the

benefits of nation-wide competitive bidding and long-term contracting with national housing providers, alongside those arising from greater local control and place-led strategic delivery, innovation and objectives for some areas.

121. DLUHC will attempt to pilot this more flexible approach during the current programme, subject to protection of delivery of the existing programme, business cases and appropriate finance becoming available, and will apply the lessons learnt when designing the simplified single department-style settlement for the next Spending Review.

Land reform and public land in the WMCA area

122. The government recognises that repurposing and redeveloping publicly owned land can represent a significant opportunity to drive regeneration, unlock private investment, create new jobs, repurpose town and city centres and increase housing supply across the WMCA area. For the first time, a combined authority will be involved in decisions on major UK government land disposals and reconfiguration of the government estate in a region – the WMCA and the West Midlands being the national pathfinder of this approach.
123. It is important that departments and arm's length bodies apply Green Book guidance for all public authorities regarding asset sales when designing the sale, disposal and development of public land and buildings. This guidance sets out how estimates of social value should include wider social costs and benefits that may be affected by a sale. It is also important that disposal of public sector assets is done transparently and where a department disposes of assets below market price that the reduced income is properly accounted for and recognised and the social value resulting from this is quantified.
124. Equally we recognise that in terms of the national picture, the government (Treasury and Cabinet Office, DLUHC included) has a role to play in ensuring the right systems and incentives are in place to ensure local needs can be met with local solutions while at the same time delivering for the public purse.
125. The Cabinet Office will continue to champion social and public value as part of their property control function on behalf of the Treasury. Their first priority will be to making this commitment real within the context of delivery in the combined authority trailblazer areas.
126. The government and WMCA agree a number of areas to ensure the full implementation of the West Midlands Public Land Charter and support the work of WMCA and its West Midlands Public Land Taskforce and showcase the contribution of public land and buildings to levelling up and placemaking including:

- a. A formal public land reform partnership with the government led by Cabinet Office will be signed which provides WMCA with new strategic leadership and clarity on government department and agency land and buildings centring on decisions on disposals/development in the government estate in the region. The new land reform partnership with Cabinet Office will include a joint plan to anticipate where there may be potential upcoming disposals and reconfiguration of government land and buildings within the West Midlands.
- b. DLUHC and the Cabinet Office will support the WMCA to become a leader in public land policy and delivery including being the first region for the Cabinet Office's new "place pilots" programme.
- c. The West Midlands is a regional trailblazer for the measures and principles set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, with the WMCA, local authorities and DLUHC working together to explore and demonstrate the more flexible compulsory purchase and land assembly opportunities for regeneration.
- d. DLUHC, the WMCA and its constituent authorities, will undertake a review of the effectiveness of local development orders in the West Midlands, explore how local authorities could be supported in their application to accelerate regeneration delivery, growth and investment, and pilot resulting models in the region.
- e. DLUHC and Cabinet Office will, as part of the public land reform partnership between WMCA and Cabinet Office, commit to work with the WMCA to better understand issues around use and redevelopment of public land and buildings.

Housing quality

- 127. Homelessness.** The government will provide £3.8 million during financial year 2022/23 to WMCA on behalf of Birmingham City Council to lease good-quality private rented sector properties in the City for homeless families, supporting their ongoing work to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families
- 128. Live and Work.** The St Basil's 'Live and Work' model provides an excellent example of collaborative working to help young people enter employment and secure an affordable home. The Live and Work scheme was previously allocated funding for a pilot scheme in Sandwell, and DLUHC will work with Homes England, WMCA and suitable registered providers to consider how the Live and Work model may be expanded and tested in additional localities across the region to strengthen the evidence base for the proposed model.
- 129.** Such schemes would support young workers, and potentially others transitioning from supported housing or homelessness experience, to live, work and be benefit free.

130. DLUHC officials commit to continue to discuss with WMCA and Birmingham City Council what more can be done to increase the replacement of homes sold under the Right to Buy.

Skills

131. Both the government and WMCA are committed to creating the conditions for West Midland's people, communities, businesses and economy to thrive. Central to that commitment is ensuring that the education, skills, and employment support system is truly responsive to local needs, including those identified by employers in the local skills improvement plan.
132. This deal sets out further commitments towards a more devolved adult skills system. The deal extends existing devolved adult skills functions to include further areas of post-19 education and skills activity; and provides greater oversight of post-16 technical education and skills and careers. In this Spending Review period, the deal proposes increased flexibility on adult skills programmes. The deal also proposes exploring pilots of new local skills and careers initiatives as well as increasing partnership between national government and WMCA.
133. The government recognises that there are distinct labour market challenges faced in the West Midlands to upskill the population, generate inclusive growth, and assist employers in filling vacancies requiring advanced and higher skills. Central to this deal is greater oversight of the local skills system and increasing alignment of careers provision. As a result, WMCA will play a crucial role in the region to ensure the local skills system responds to the local skills improvement plan.
134. This deal is underpinned by the enhanced accountability measures, outlined in the Accountability section of this deal. As a milestone to that devolution, WMCA commit to stretching but achievable targets, as set out in this deal, in the current Spending Review period in return for the greater flexibility and path to devolution that it creates. This will be underpinned by the English Devolution Accountability Framework. Further accountability arrangements as they relate to the single settlement are set out in the single settlement section of this deal. The government will also continue to work with WMCA to simplify the funding landscape for skills provision in the area.

A new partnership for post-16 technical education and skills

135. The government recognises the critical role that mayoral combined authorities play in supporting education and skills and their alignment to regional economic growth. This is particularly true of technical education and skills up to and including Level 3, which draw their primary purpose from the workplace and employer need and have a line of

sight to occupations and occupational areas. Both WMCA and the government are committed to delivering a simplified technical education and skills system which is more closely aligned to employers' needs, connects people to high quality jobs, and harnesses opportunities to attract investment.

136. A strong joint governance board will be established to provide oversight of post 16 technical education and skills in West Midlands. It will ensure the link between the technical education offer within West Midlands and real time labour market intelligence about the needs of the West Midlands labour market.
137. The board would have four main roles:
- a. **Responsiveness.** Creating a strong strategic partnership between commissioners/funders (with senior representatives from WMCA and the government), the demand side (the designated employer representative body) and supply side (providers), to utilise all available levers and resources to secure a post 16 technical and vocational offer that is aligned to local skills needs. This should ensure sufficiency, capacity, capability and curriculum relevance and pathways.
 - b. **Local skills improvement plan implementation.** As part of this responsiveness, the board will have strategic oversight (i.e., facilitating alignment and addressing issues) of relevant post-16 technical education or training offer linked to delivering the local skills improvement plan, including a role in signing off the local skills improvement fund application from the lead college to ensure alignment of local skills improvement fund-funded projects and wider labour market strategies.
 - c. **Data sharing.** The board will commit to lawful and relevant data sharing to support effective planning functions linked to both sufficiency and alignment between the technical education offer and local labour market needs. This will include considering ways to join up on data collection to avoid placing avoidable burdens on providers.
 - d. **Careers.** Responsibility to develop an all-age careers strategy for West Midlands that responds to the local skills improvement plan and reflects the skills ambition for the city-region. The board will help align the needs of business, the careers ambitions of our residents and the services and providers with the remit to support residents to develop their careers (see careers section of the deal
138. The government envisages that the role of the board will evolve as it becomes established. We will explore, in the next Spending Review, how to better reflect the board's views in relation to place-based capital investment.

Adult skills

139. The government is committed to ensuring that adult skills functions and funding support people to access the skills they and the economy need, increasing productivity, supporting growth industries, and giving people the opportunity to progress. To ensure this happens at a national and local level, the government commits to devolving non-apprenticeship adult skills functions and grant funding to WMCA in the next Spending Review period.
140. However, there will be specific instances when the national government needs to direct the design of adult skills provision or allocation of adult skills funding – as such, the Secretary of State for Education will retain the ability to do so in next Spending Review period and beyond. However, this will be the exception rather than the rule, where the scale or urgency are such that a national response is judged required to deliver the required outcomes or where there are national skills priorities that the government believes are not being met sufficiently by the skills system. The government will work with the WMCA to ensure that any such direction can be aligned with the existing skills landscape.
141. In this current Spending Review period, the government commits to increasing the local flexibility for MCAs on Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps – providing greater flexibility and a path to devolution in the next Spending Review. This will allow them to expand eligibility and select courses and subjects that best respond to the needs of WMCA’s residents, employers and the local labour market.

Free Courses for Jobs

142. On Free Courses for Jobs, the government plans to remove the ringfence on this programme from the beginning of the next Spending Review by full devolution within WMCA’s single settlement, subject to WMCA demonstrating effective use of its budget that has been allocated for Level 3 provision. This will ensure we deliver more of these high value Level 3 skills, which the country needs, but with greater focus on ensuring resonance with local labour market needs including those identified in local skills improvement plans.
143. From financial years 23-24 the government commits to increasing the flexibility of Free Courses for Jobs funding by enabling WMCA to spend up to 50% on any Level 3 adult qualifications deemed necessary by WMCA to meet local skills needs – this is significantly more flexibility than currently available and will support them to meet their delivery targets.
144. In recognition of their trailblazer status, the government commits to fully devolving and removing all ringfences on Free Courses for Jobs for WMCA, subject to and once WMCA have delivered 80% of their available Free Courses for Jobs funding across an academic year by increasing the amount of delivery.

Skills Bootcamps

145. Skills Bootcamps will retain the core purpose, policy intent and branding consistent with the national model, and maintain the focus on delivering employment outcomes which respond to local and national skills needs.
146. Commencing in financial years 23-24, to ensure ongoing value for money and guard against duplication, the government commits to sharing relevant commissioning activity, performance information and data with WMCA on Skills Bootcamps provision that will, or is likely to, include delivery to local residents or employers. In turn, WMCA commits to share relevant commissioning activity, performance information and data about local delivery.
147. In 2023-24, the government commits to increasing the flexibility mayoral combined authorities have to spend up to 30% of the available budget to develop bootcamps that meet local labour market/skills needs in any sector.
148. From 2024-25, in recognition of their trailblazer status, the government commits to then further increasing this flexibility for WMCA – to spend up to 100% of the available budget to develop bootcamps that meet local labour market and skills needs in any sector. WMCA will have the ability to flex the Skills Bootcamp model to meet local needs, subject to agreement from DfE about the nature and substance of these changes. This will allow WMCA the discretion to build on the core model, sharing and applying lessons learned to date around the most effective delivery models, tailored to each sector. We expect this provision to be aligned with priorities identified via the relevant local skills improvement plan.
149. As early as possible in the next Spending Review the government plans to provide WMCA with an un-ringfenced, devolved allocation of funding for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps that is representative of their national share of the total amount of funding allocated for Skills Bootcamps delivery, and subject to conditions that ensure that (where funding is used for Bootcamps) the core model and branding is protected.¹ The government will ensure that funding for Bootcamps is added to the single settlement once the activity is fully devolved.

Careers: joint, place-based governance arrangements

150. With a mandate from the Secretary of State for Education, the government will work with WMCA to take forward the recommendations of the Holman review of careers education by offering a more place-based approach to careers education and develop joint governance arrangements for the delivery of careers services in the West Midlands. This will establish WMCA as the central convenor of careers provision in the

¹ For any funding above this amount, national criteria will determine the remaining funding share and will be ringfenced for spend on Skills Bootcamps delivery.

region; facilitating more effective and joined up delivery between the National Careers Service and local careers hubs and ensuring greater regional tailoring of careers provision, including through locally agreed key performance indicators.

151. As part of this joint governance, WMCA will join DfE at the quarterly performance monitoring of the relevant National Careers Service regional contractor, allowing them to evaluate the impact of the programme locally and enable the Service to better respond to local need.
152. The government also commits to working with WMCA in shaping the design of future careers provision for all ages in the region, to ensure services more clearly reflect local priorities from the outset. Through this government will establish the WMCA's role in shaping the specification for future contracts and ongoing performance management of future regional careers services
153. The government will pilot a new strategic fund to respond to careers priorities for young people in the West Midlands, including to support those who are not in education, employment or training or at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training.

Employment support

Regional labour market governance

154. The DWP Secretary of State will ask WMCA to convene a new Regional Labour Market Partnership Board, which builds on the current collaborative structure that is already in place. The board will oversee the development and implementation of a strategy to tackle regional labour market challenges and move people back into the labour market and into work. This board will include senior representation from DWP, and, where relevant, other government departments, as well as key regional stakeholders.
155. To ensure a rapid and effective response to the actions agreed by the Partnership Board, regular engagement on both a strategic and operational working level between WMCA and DWP, including policy and Jobcentre Plus colleagues as necessary, will continue. This engagement will oversee the development and implementation of these actions.
156. By taking this approach WMCA and DWP will work together to ensure value for money, better use of public funding and achieving the best possible outcomes for clients locally and nationally.

Contracted employment programmes

157. WMCA and DWP are both committed to ensuring the best employment outcomes and support for WMCA residents; to do this requires working towards alignment of national and locally funded public services, integration of public services so they can deliver to best effect for residents and reducing gaps or duplication. In turn, this requires strengthened partnership working and planning to ensure better value for money and achieve a more targeted approach nationally and locally is achieved. DWP is accountable for paying benefits to people who are out of work, and therefore needs to be sure employment provision is effective.
158. Both government and WMCA recognise that, whilst the core national Jobcentre Plus offer works well for many people, contracted employment programmes are a more impactful way of supporting those with more complex needs with more tailored support that addresses multiple barriers to work. Similarly, WMCA's local authorities are responsible for many public services, like public health and housing, which are crucial

in tackling the barriers that often prevent people moving into good, sustainable employment and which see the wider social consequences of unemployment and inactivity resulting in increased demand and poor outcomes. WMCA also has access to significant funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is intended to support people furthest from the labour market.

159. In all circumstances, WMCA and DWP commit to formalised joint working as the basis of ensuring the best value for money and outcomes for residents on all new and future employment programme provision. DWP and WMCA will:

- a. Commit to a co-design approach to all future contracted employment support programmes, for young people and adults. This means understanding and agreeing the shared policy intent, pooling relevant data and evidence bases to identify gaps and identifying local need, circumstances, assets, and value-add when constructing the specification for the West Midlands contract package area. DWP and WMCA will reach joint agreement around the high-level design and objectives (purpose, outcomes and accountability), so that target cohorts, payment models, routes to market and referrals meet local need.
- b. This co-design needs to recognise that the programmes sit within the framework agreed between DWP and HMT when the funding is secured and ensure that any minimum standards or requirements that would exist in comparable national contracted employment programmes are met or exceeded.
- c. DWP's Secretary of State will have final sign-off of contracted employment programme design, procurement and delivery mechanisms, given the Annual Managed Expenditure implications, using written advice from the DWP Accounting Officer based on DWP and WMCA assurances.
- d. Agree that, in recognition of the special status of the trailblazers, any contracted employment programme activity within WMCA will start from the assumption of a delegated delivery model, but subject to WMCA satisfying conditions which provide assurance on readiness to deliver a value for money programme, including strengthened accountability arrangements, which are yet to be decided. WMCA will then commission on behalf of DWP on a WMCA footprint.

160. In exceptional circumstances, DWP does however reserve the right to adopt a national approach to new employment programmes, as they did in response to the rise in unemployment during the pandemic. DWP commits to exploring options with WMCA prior to reaching any such decision, and to setting out these circumstances in writing where this is the case. Even in these circumstances, recognising the importance of integrating any new interventions into the existing place-based employment support system which encompasses both national and local services, DWP will commit to actively engaging on the purpose of the national approach and attempt, wherever and as far as reasonably possible, to incorporate WMCA's views on the design and

implementation of the programme to ensure maximum alignment with the wider programmes, optimise value for money, and avoid any unnecessary duplication.

Data sharing: labour market and skills

161. Alongside these new levers, which will ensure a stronger link between skills and jobs in the local labour market, the government and the WMCA will work together to develop an appropriate data sharing framework that promotes information and data sharing between national government and WMCA to aid the effectiveness of skills planning and delivery, as set out in the data section of this deal.
162. Dependent on the requisite legal gateway being defined, DWP and WMCA will work together to explore feasibility and potential for proportionate data sharing arrangements for programmes and services operating in the region to reduce duplication and facilitate better targeting and efficiency of an integrated employment and skills offer, and an immediate scoping exercise to identify additional areas for reforming data access arrangements. This will test how data can be lawfully shared to better target services and manage the experience of customers with the aim of improving impact and value for money.

Innovation

163. The government has set itself an ambitious goal: for the UK to become a top global hub of innovation as part of our science superpower mission. But to achieve this, we need to support the research and development clusters all around the UK to ensure more places are able to harness the innovation economy. This is vital if we are to ensure that the industries of the future bring benefits to everyone – as growth and jobs boost productivity, opportunity, and prosperity for all.
164. The Levelling Up White Paper set out clear steps for making this ambition a reality. In it, the government committed to maximising the contribution of innovation to levelling up, by building on existing and emerging research and development strengths across our country’s diverse economic landscape. It set out a new mission, led by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT): to increase domestic public investment in research and development outside the Greater Southeast by at least 40% by 2030, and by at least one third over this Spending Review period. This should result in an increase in public research and development investment in the West Midlands.
165. DSIT has set up a new unit to lead on mapping, and supporting clusters, and is working with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) on inward investment.
166. As the UK’s largest public funder of research and innovation, UK Research and Innovation has made ‘world-class places’ a key objective in its 2022 – 2027 strategy, with a core commitment to drive levelling up by delivering impact in all parts of the UK, and to support the research and development cluster agenda.

Innovation Accelerators: empowering local leaders

167. Home to the city of a thousand trades, the West Midlands has a long tradition of industrial innovation. The West Midlands is one of three areas selected as an Innovation Accelerator, in recognition of its research and development strengths, robust private and public innovation governance, and strong local leadership.
168. The Innovation Accelerator programme is pioneering a new model of research and development decision-making. The West Midlands Innovation Board, involving business and university leaders alongside the WMCA, has developed a plan for growing the city region’s innovation ecosystem, and is taking the lead in allocating a

share of £100 million funding to transformative research and development projects, working closely with Innovate UK, to strengthen local clusters and attract investment. This plan puts local leaders at the very centre of decision-making, enabling them to harness innovation to local growth and align research and development investments with local economic strategy.

169. The whole of the government is backing the West Midlands Innovation Board and WMCA in its mission to create a globally competitive innovation cluster with access to dedicated support from DSIT, UK Research and Innovation and DLUHC over the lifetime of the Innovation Accelerator programme. This will help the board to attract vital private research and development investment and overcome barriers on the road to cluster growth.
170. Together, the Innovation Accelerators form part of a pilot programme. The government will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach as we work to empower local leaders in research and development decision-making. Depending on the outcome of the programme and future funding decisions, this will include the government and WMCA working together through the strategic innovation partnership to identify further mechanisms for accelerating innovation in the West Midlands and transferring more autonomy to the West Midlands' developing regional innovation ecosystem. In return, the West Midlands will need to demonstrate that their innovation evidence base, decision making capacity, and ability to generate private sector co-investment is sufficiently robust and mature.

A Strategic Innovation Partnership

171. Alongside the Innovation Accelerator ways of working, this deeper devolution deal will give the WMCA a new and influential role informing the national research and innovation ecosystem at the strategic level. This will maintain progress towards delivering the commitments set out in this devolution deal. This will be achieved through:
- a. Formally and periodically inviting the WMCA to articulate its research and development priorities to UK Research and Innovation. This will enable local leaders to shape decisions about regional funding priorities and ensure that local priority sectors, technologies, and clusters are fully understood by key decision-making bodies. In return, the WMCA will demonstrate that these priorities are informed by local research and development ecosystem stakeholders in a well governed and inclusive manner.
 - b. Consulting the WMCA on the development of future UK Research and Innovation strategies where appropriate and inviting the WMCA to work with the government research divisions on their respective research and development strategies and programmes. This includes engagement on any long-term alternatives to Horizon programmes, should the UK not be able to associate.

- c. Annually inviting the WMCA to set out their regional research and innovation priorities to the government science ministers. This will ensure that local innovation priorities are understood at the highest level of the government; and provide the WMCA with a means to escalate and address barriers to realising innovation-led growth. Where possible and subject to ministerial agreement, this will include involving the WMCA in inter-Ministerial information sharing structures and fora.
- d. UK Research and Innovation working with the WMCA to support the identification of regional comparative innovation advantages, helping to identify corresponding funding opportunities. UK Research and Innovation will provide their publicly available data to the WMCA annually on UK Research and Innovation investment in the West Midlands including changes in investment levels over time in support of the research and development levelling up mission.

172. In progressing the above, the government remains committed to an impartial funding decision-making process for UK-wide open R&D competitions.

Working in partnership to grow innovation clusters

- 173. Alongside the Innovation Accelerators programme and strategic innovation partnership, Innovate UK and DSIT will work in partnership with the WMCA to grow the city region's innovation ecosystem.
- 174. Innovate UK will co-develop regional action plans with the WMCA to identify and bolster regional innovation strengths.
- 175. The government and Innovate UK will work with WMCA to pilot new approaches to boost innovation adoption and diffusion across the local business base. This will include the pilot Innovate UK further education innovation fund, which will fund further education colleges to pursue innovation activities. The WMCA will work closely with Innovate UK to embed Innovate UK Edge as part of its business support ecosystem to drive productivity improvements across the region.
- 176. Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Network will work with the WMCA to co-design locally led place-based knowledge transfer programmes focused on regional innovation strengths. These programmes will generate new ideas partnerships, enabling innovation to flourish at a local level.
- 177. Subject to the Procurement Bill receiving Royal Assent, the government encourages the WMCA to become a trailblazer for use of the new, more flexible public procurement procedures, empowering all contracting authorities to use procurement as a tool to drive innovation and bring early-stage innovations to market. The Cabinet Office will support the WMCA to make full use of the provisions in the Procurement Bill.

Business productivity

178. The Levelling Up White Paper sets a target to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in places where they are lagging. However, UK productivity growth, which is the bedrock of higher living standards, has slowed since the global financial crisis and lags behind comparative economies.
179. The commitments included in this deal will empower the WMCA to affect the drivers of productivity at a local level, from skills to infrastructure, to innovation and trade. The end goal of our joint efforts is ultimately to boost enterprise, business growth and jobs – the pathway to a stronger economy nationally and in the West Midlands.
180. At the firm-level, the uptake of business support is one of the key determinants of productivity, and businesses that seek external advice are more likely to experience high growth. The proportion of businesses in the UK accessing support and particularly for growth, however, is low compared to other countries, which evidence suggests is partly due to the complexity and fragmentation of the business support landscape. External finance, and particularly growth finance, can also help companies to achieve their entrepreneurial potential.
181. The government welcomes and will support WMCA's desire to bring greater coherence to the business support and finance landscape. This will be a key part of our joint efforts to boost local growth, and to raising living standards across the city region.

Business support

182. The government recognises the WMCA as the lead institution for integrating business productivity interventions at the city region level. The WMCA will develop a service, working in conjunction with private sector providers, to make it much easier for enterprises to access programmes to boost productivity. The WMCA will, through this deeper devolution deal, have a new, empowered role in integrating, promoting and overseeing access to business support and advisory services, small and medium-sized enterprise finance and the broader commitments agreed as part of the deal. This will strip inefficiencies out of the system and increase small and medium-sized enterprise access to support.

183. The government – DBT, DLUHC and DCMS – and WMCA will establish a new Strategic Productivity Partnership, beginning immediately. Through this regular, at least biannual, initiative:
- a. The government and WMCA will share information and intelligence on live and upcoming business support and advisory services, with the aim of ensuring complementarity between national and local commissioning activities to maximise value for money.
 - b. The WMCA will have the opportunity to raise local priorities for future business support and advisory services to inform and influence government's future commissioning priorities, including as part of the next Spending Review. The government recognises the advantages of locally delivered business support programmes and will work pro-actively with the WMCA to put in place the structures and mechanisms for the devolution or co-commissioning of future business support where it makes sense to do so, as part of preparations for the next spending review. This means that business support may form part of the WMCA's simplified funding settlement in the future.
 - c. WMCA will work with the government and its delivery partners to encourage relevant businesses to engage with and take part in the help to growth management programme. WMCA will also work with the Chartered Association of Business Schools to co-design regional help to grow alumni events for businesses and entrepreneurs in the West Midlands and to improve the signposting of support for local businesses. This will help to ensure that when local business leaders and entrepreneurs 'graduate' from the programme, they are able to access additional follow-on support from across the local public and private sectors to further boost productivity.
184. The government will work with WMCA (plus Warwickshire County Council for former Coventry and Warwickshire local enterprise partnership functions) on the future of growth hubs to inform a refreshed approach to the service, which will be progressed quickly. The government and the WMCA will work together to ensure that as much as possible future delivery models enable effective join-up and co-ordination at the local level and complement business support services being delivered by the WMCA and its partners. This builds upon local decisions to invest over £40m of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support local businesses and local growth initiatives.

Small and medium-sized enterprise finance

185. WMCA will have a new, empowered role in the provision of finance to small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, the WMCA will have a role in the governance of the next generation of British Business Bank UK funds in the West Midlands. In addition:

- a. The referral network between the WMCA's, commercial lenders and the British Business Bank UK funds will be strengthened to make it easier for more local businesses to access the finance they need.
- b. Partnership working and collaboration between the WMCA and the British Business Bank's UK network representatives for the relevant area will be strengthened to stimulate informed demand for finance among businesses. This could involve joint events and initiatives, as well as knowledge sharing.
- c. The WMCA and British Business Bank will work together to bring cohesion to the supply of investment across multiple programmes and institutions. This will include working together with the private sector on a shared understanding of business finance conditions in the West Midlands and priorities and activities, so businesses are financed to grow.

UK Infrastructure Bank

186. The UK Infrastructure Bank is already working with local authorities, combined authorities, other public sector bodies and the private sector to increase investment in infrastructure across the UK. The bank has already supported WMCA with the transition to greener transport through financing infrastructure for sprint bus services. The bank will continue to strengthen its strategic and operational relationships with WMCA, including by engaging when the WMCA is at the outset of designing the commercial arrangements for infrastructure projects which aim to leverage greater investment locally.

Trade and investment

187. The Commonwealth Games were an outstanding success and transformed the image of Birmingham across the globe. WMCA and the DBT have worked together to deliver the highly successful Commonwealth Games business and tourism programme to maximise the economic benefits of the games. This work is ongoing. The WMCA worked together with DBT in the Midlands and India to deliver a joint mission to India in early November and further missions are planned as part of the legacy of the games.
188. This document proposes how the WMCA and DBT should strengthen and deepen their successful partnership.

Strengthening our partnership

189. Upon the West Midlands Growth Company obtaining agreement with all local stakeholders (including WMCA and its local authority members and respective local enterprise partnerships), DBT will:
- a. recognise the West Midlands Growth Company as the lead agency for trade and investment on behalf of the WMCA.
 - b. adopt the WMCA economic geography as the frame of reference for related DBT trade and investment matters for the WMCA area.
190. DBT and WMCA will:
- a. Formalise their engagement at the city region level through:
 - i. Co-development of a West Midlands international strategy and delivery plan spanning both trade and investment.
 - ii. Shared accountability for strategy and delivery; and
 - iii. West Midlands Growth Company board membership subject to formal approval from both sides and standard due diligence.
 - b. Work with local partners including WMCA to gain a holistic view of the UK business environment's competitiveness vis a vis peers specific to our ability to attract regional investment.

- c. Support West Midlands Growth Company in their bid for an extension of the business and tourism programme to secure more trade and investment to the region and the rest of the UK. West Midlands Growth Company will jointly develop the trade and investment business case with DBT and ensure that the programme is scoped in line with the priorities of the international strategy and to deliver the best return in the current macroeconomic environment based on evaluation of the business and tourism programme.
- d. Further to any wider data partnership between the government and WMCA, work jointly to better enable the sharing of intelligence and data owned by each party, to better inform mutual planning and strategy, within the requirements of UK General Data Protection Regulation or other data protection obligations. Note, however, that legally the decision on disclosure for much of the relevant data is for the Commissioners of His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- e. Jointly seek to maximise the engagement of appropriate businesses and stakeholders in the WMCA area so that global trade opportunities and activity are created and identified as a result of this deeper devolution agreement.
- f. Maximise the opportunity for WMCA, businesses and stakeholders within the WMCA area to contribute to national policy consultations, including the development of new free trade agreements, for example by responding to Calls for Input that inform the mandate for free trade agreements.
- g. DBT and WMCA to each nominate an official as the single point of contact at operational level to discuss joint plans and delivery on an ongoing basis.
- h. WMCA and West Midlands Growth Company to provide referrals of potential DBT investment and export champions from the WMCA region. DBT will agree to make appointments based on intake capacity and selection criteria.
- i. DBT and overseas international trade representatives for the Midlands Engine to continue to work together, which will in turn directly support WMCA.

Investment

191. The WMCA will have support from the Office for Investment at regional level for transformation investment opportunities (i.e., those in excess of £100m). This will concentrate around two core elements – capital investment and traditional foreign direct investment. Both parties will work together through a long-term partnership with the aim of maximising large-scale inward investment – utilising WMCA's knowledge of capital investment propositions and opportunities, priority sites, innovation and sector/clustering opportunities. WMCA will provide/signpost to public support to help land inward investment and the Office for Investment will engage with high-value

projects and provide a cross-government convening role, working together to increase the profile of the WMCA area internationally as an investment destination.

192. DBT will continue to work in partnership in co-designing and developing operational support for investors in the city region:
- a. DBT will undertake a review of key account management working with WMCA/ West Midlands Growth Company to consider various options e.g., delivery models which may include better leveraging West Midlands Growth Company's regional delivery capacity.
 - b. Where account management relationships with companies with a presence or interest in the WMCA area are held by DBT, the WMCA will support that relationship with access to information, local support and facilitation as needed to retain and attract high-profile companies in the UK. Likewise, DBT will provide business intelligence from such relationships to enable the WMCA to respond appropriately. Sharing of information will be within the requirements of UK General Data Protection Regulation or other data protection obligations.
 - c. DBT will seek to provide a longer-term commitment to this account management programme, to ensure stability- pending procurement approval from Treasury and business planning outcomes.
193. Future high potential opportunities that are strong UK offers for the WMCA area will continue to be jointly agreed between DBT and WMCA. DBT is currently reviewing the marketing and campaign approach across all local areas and will work with West Midlands Growth Company on promoting investment opportunities.
194. DBT will seek to co-develop a West Midlands city region-specific investment plan, which includes events and other promotional activity - including international visits; access to national marketing campaigns; sector themed inward visits; focus on supply chain opportunities etc – setting out where both parties will lead and or provide support to deliver this plan, which will support and the WMCA international strategy. DBT will work with WMCA to investigate capability/capacity required to reach the goals of the shared plan.
195. DBT will work with WMCA to explore creating a more formal network of local investment promotion agencies. With the aim of:
- a. Increasing collaboration with investment promotion agencies across the United Kingdom to promote foreign direct investment to the UK and decreasing complexity for foreign investors.
 - b. Leveraging the benefits of the partnership between the Office for Investment and the WMCA at a local level, alongside the broader activities proposed as part of this devolution deal.

- c. Improving communication on policy and strategy.
- d. Sharing best practice and training to help build consistency of quality support, knowledge and understanding around how to effectively land investment, how to work with investors and how to work effectively with DBT.
- e. Improving knowledge and communication of local strengths and opportunities within the DBT network and externally.

Exports

196. DBT will:

- a. Support the recruitment and management of business focussed trade mission delegations to accompany mayor-led market visits, such as the mayoral visit to India in November 2022.
- b. Seek to improve the take up of significant WMCA based companies in ministerial, and other high profile trade missions, in order to provide high value and high-profile opportunities for them to increase exports in strategic markets.
- c. Agree for a UK export academy representative to work with WMCA to enhance the offer based on needs of WMCA businesses.
- d. Seek to jointly develop WMCA-specific events and other activity such as sector themed workshops, sub-regional initiatives and supply chain projects.

WMCA's commitments to the government

197. WMCA will utilise its devolved functions, particularly in relation to skills, housing and transport, to respond to investors' needs and smooth the path to landing greater levels of inward investment in the UK.
198. The WMCA will provide suitable match funding for programmes that are co-financed by DBT, such as the key account management programme.

Net zero and the environment

Strategic energy system planning

199. The government recognises the strategic role WMCA can play in planning our future energy system for net zero, with its ability to convene local authorities, the strategic transport authority, energy infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders, and is committed to ensuring that devolved regional institutions such as combined authorities have a meaningful role in planning our future energy system for net zero.
200. The government is considering the role of local area energy planning in delivering net zero and supporting efficient network planning, working closely with Ofgem and its review of local energy institutions and governance. The government is supportive of WMCA developing local area energy plans across the WMCA area. As part of their on-going work, the government and Ofgem will explore how local area energy plans can support local action, investment and delivery by energy system stakeholders.
201. As outlined in Ofgem's review, there is a need to look further at roles and responsibilities at a sub-national level, particularly to address known issues around co-ordination and accountability. WMCA is encouraged to engage both with this discussion and the future systems and network regulation workstream, which looks specifically at network investment.

Networks

202. To overcome the energy crisis and meet our future needs, it is more important than ever that we rapidly develop a smarter, more integrated, low carbon energy system. Investment by network operators is central to achieving this, as is having the right input from stakeholders to inform it.
203. As part of the next electricity distribution price control framework starting from 1 April 2024, Ofgem required National Grid electricity distribution to engage with WMCA and other local stakeholders to inform its business plans. Where additional allowances are granted during the period, Ofgem expects National Grid electricity distribution to engage with WMCA and other local stakeholders to provide them with confidence that their proposed investment will meet local needs and enable the delivery of net zero and green growth objectives.

204. Ofgem welcomes WMCA's interest in innovation zones and the trialling of novel approaches to inform investment planning. Any decisions on future innovation zones will be considered through the price control review process or as part of wider Ofgem innovation work.

Local plans

205. As per existing arrangements, local area energy plans can provide valid material evidence to justify planning policies related to energy efficiency and infrastructure. The government welcomes continuing to work with WMCA to explore how local area energy plans and spatial planning could be meaningfully integrated, and to understand implications for planning policy and local planning authorities' capacity and skills needs.

Clean heat

206. The government has confirmed its intention to establish heat network zoning in England. Under the zoning proposals, zoning coordinators within local government will be able to designate areas as heat network zones where heat networks are going to be the most cost-effective way to decarbonise heating and hot water within the zone. This will enable WMCA or its constituent local authorities to assume the role of heat network zoning coordinator and play a key role in the delivery of heat decarbonisation infrastructure. This includes requiring certain buildings to connect to heat networks within the zones. Government is committed to have heat network zoning in place by 2025.

Industrial decarbonisation

207. Industrial decarbonisation in the West Midlands is key to the economic competitiveness of the region, particularly in the Black Country and Birmingham, and energy-exposed businesses are an important provider of local jobs. Businesses in these areas often supply critical components into strategic national supply chains (defence, aerospace, energy, automotive) that export globally. The government is keen to explore new approaches to facilitating the net zero transition in the sector with WMCA and will explore a range of potential funding options to pilot a new approach to transitioning businesses and clusters to a net zero energy system, subject to business planning.

Energy efficiency

Retrofit

208. The government will pilot the devolution of net zero funding through allocation rather than competition in the period from 2025 onwards to WMCA, subject to confirmation of funding and policy design. The allocation methodology will be agreed between the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Chancellor, after discussion with WMCA. This pilot will include, but is not necessarily limited to, funding for buildings' retrofit. WMCA's funding allocation will form part of its single department-style settlement.
209. The agreement to pilot devolution of funding is subject to legally binding conditions set by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, including agreeing outcomes and accountability frameworks so that the local and combined authorities involved demonstrate they are meeting the needs of the relevant schemes operated by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to the level required. These conditions are expected to include, but are not necessarily limited to, requirements related to:
- a. the type and level of greenhouse gas emission reductions that must be achieved.
 - b. fuel poverty targets.
 - c. the primary objective of the devolved scheme.
 - d. value for money.
 - e. match-funding or private-sector leverage requirements.
 - f. quality standards for the work performed, and
 - g. monitoring, evaluation and audit requirements.
210. The agreement to pilot devolution of funding will also need to take into account work done through the local net zero forum with representative local government organisations and involving WMCA.
211. In addition:
- a. WMCA and its constituent local authorities will not be eligible to bid for funding from competitive national energy efficiency retrofit schemes from which funding has been devolved to them.
 - b. The government reserves the right to pursue non-devolved, non-allocative approaches to the delivery of energy efficiency retrofit schemes; and

c. The release of funding is subject to business case approval.

212. The government will facilitate work ahead of the 2025 period to develop a business case, design a pilot and evaluation approach and harness relevant events for sharing of best practice between local authorities where they are already taking innovative approaches on retrofit delivery. The government will identify and look to utilise opportunities for early activity.
213. During the current spending review period, WMCA can already submit applications to competitive energy efficiency schemes on behalf of its constituent local authorities with their consent.
214. After the pilot, the government and WMCA will undertake a review of the effectiveness of this approach for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Chancellor to consider and agree whether to continue it, and if so in what form, as part of future multi-year spending review periods.

Minimum energy efficiency standards

215. The government plans to consult on the potential for a national minimum energy efficiency standard for social housing properties. The government will engage WMCA via a bi-annual, official-level forum to understand the extent to which any national standard meets the energy efficiency requirements of social housing properties in the WMCA area. The government is open to considering the case for enabling local areas to exceed any national standard, if there would be delivery advantages to doing so and subject to the resolution of regulatory and legislative pre-requisites. The government will, as part of the forthcoming consultation, seek views on the advantages of local approaches to energy efficiency in the social rented sector. Over the near-term, the government is open to exploring ways to support any voluntary efforts by WMCA to boost standards across the city region.
216. The government is open to considering the case for WMCA and its constituent local authorities to set minimum energy efficiency standards, which exceed the national standards, for properties in the private rented sector in their local areas. The implementation of any higher standards would be subject to appropriate legislation being in place and WMCA modelling the possible impact on landlord behaviour and supporting local housing markets to transition to any higher standard. The government will engage with WMCA via a bi-annual, official-level forum to explore this further.

Finance

217. The government supports WMCA in wanting to leverage greater private investment to support the delivery of retrofit and energy efficiency measures. The government will engage with WMCA on the development of appropriate financial instruments and innovative funding models, underpinned by existing legislative frameworks and non-legislative options, to increase the number of energy efficiency upgrades.

Advice

218. The government will work with WMCA to explore how more detailed advice can be provided to households on structural energy efficiency upgrades. This will involve looking at non-legislative options as well as considering potential future legislative options to identify the most effective route to increasing consumer choice within the retrofit market.
219. The government is enhancing its impartial consumer advice and information offer to support consumers with a more personalised advice service on retrofit. This provision includes an online 'MOT-style' checklist, providing clear direction on the structural changes they can make, including installing insulation and heating controls. The government will be launching an enhanced national phoneline shortly, to support those consumers unable to use the website or in need of further support. In addition, the government is working with the local net zero hubs to engage local and combined authorities and other local actors, on a series of regional in-person advice services. This will provide grants for innovative ideas to better support people locally. WMCA is encouraged to work with the local net zero hubs to promote these services in the most effective way.
220. The government and WMCA will continue to engage on proposals through the bi-annual official level forum proposed below, and through representative local government bodies represented on the local net zero forum.

Climate adaptation

221. WMCA and its local partners are already demonstrating leadership in their work on climate adaptation through a new multi-stakeholder group, focusing on measures that will increase the region's resilience. Just as sub-national plans for net zero will support the government's 2050 plans, the WMCA and its local partners are committed to supporting delivery of adaptation measures across the regional, local and community level. Depending on the outcomes of the plans being developed by the multi-stakeholder group, the government could liaise with WMCA and its local partners to assist them, where possible, to develop and potentially publish a case study in the national adaptation programme, as an example of good adaptation practice.

Natural environment financing

222. WMCA has been acting as the provisional responsible authority for the preparation of the local nature recovery strategy in the area to date. The intention is that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will formally appointment the Mayor of WMCA as the responsible authority, who will work closely with the WMCA to develop the local nature recovery strategy. Formal appointments will be made following the publication of local nature recovery strategy regulations and guidance. Funding to

cover new burdens will be agreed at that point. The local nature recovery strategy will: map the most valuable existing habitat for nature; map proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals; and agree priorities for nature's recovery, making an important contribution to the government's environmental targets.

223. To deliver national, regional and local ambitions that support nature's recovery and the implementation of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, there is a need to establish an appropriate investment mechanism for nature. Natural environment solutions come with financing challenges, particularly around return on investment and the offer of accreditation required to secure finance.
224. The WMCA region brings scale to this challenge and the opportunity to provide attractive strategic projects that are suitable for a blended finance approach. The government, which is committed to increasing private investment in nature's recovery across England, will support WMCA in the development of an investment mechanism for nature. This support may include a proportion of revenue funding specialist expertise; co-ordination of peer support and networking; and/or local partnership working with the Defra's arm's length bodies, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Any funding provided will be subject to further agreement and approvals and conditional on participation in a programme of evaluation and shared learning.
225. The government's support will aim to build lasting capacity and capability within WMCA to continue to support natural environment financing in the longer term, moving away from working on a project-by-project basis. It will also support WMCA to take an integrated approach to delivering its place-based natural environment and climate adaptation ambitions.

Air quality

226. The government recognises the work WMCA, and its constituent councils are already doing to improve air quality, and in particular towards developing a regional air quality framework, which aims to enhance local monitoring capability. This work will evaluate and inform air quality policy to ensure objectives and targets are met, especially in relation to particulates.

Digital

Infrastructure

227. DSIT will work with WMCA via a new Digital Infrastructure Leadership Group, to explore ways to accelerate the roll-out and take-up of high-speed connectivity in accordance with the agreed terms of reference.
228. The group will seek to align and refine place-based opportunities and interventions to create the best possible conditions to deliver competitive high speed fixed, mobile and smart digital connectivity and accelerate take-up and adoption by consumers, businesses and public services to increase productivity and prosperity across the WMCA.
229. In addition, WMCA and its constituent local authorities commit to use the levers at their disposal – pertaining to street works, planning and provisions under the electronic communications code – in support of the aim of the group.
230. Building digital UK will engage with WMCA alongside other local bodies to discuss the design of interventions and procurement lots for investment in digital infrastructure, at various points in the project gigabit process including but not limited to interrogation of open market review data, design of procurement lots and appraisal of social value elements of tenders.

Inclusion

231. DSIT notes WMCA's commitment to ensuring the benefits of digital technologies are inclusively available to all residents. DSIT will continue to engage with WMCA to understand the work it is undertaking in this area and how this might interact with the development and future delivery of digital inclusion programmes and support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration in the region, to maximise the overall benefit of local, regional and national initiatives that drive local economic growth and support wellbeing.
232. DSIT supports WMCA's efforts to engage with operators and the private sector to provide affordable broadband access and will continue to work with local partners to maximise the reach, awareness and promotion of social tariffs.

233. WMCA has provisionally been awarded £4 million funding to support 20,000 residents with access to data and devices. This capital funding will be targeted at disadvantaged communities, to ensure they can benefit from wider services.

Culture and tourism

Culture

234. Both the government and WMCA recognise the crucial role that culture, heritage and sport can play in supporting levelling up, through giving people pride in the places they live, supporting a vibrant local economy and promoting wellbeing. In the West Midlands, the government recognises the opportunity to build on the recent success of the Commonwealth Games 2022 and Coventry UK City of Culture 2021, and to embed their cultural and sporting legacy. As such, the government has made available £70 million of contingency underspends from the Commonwealth Games to support the WMCA to capitalise on these opportunities.
235. To maximise the impact of this investment, and to explore new ways in which culture, heritage and sport can deliver on wider levelling up outcomes like health and wellbeing, the government will work with WMCA to support an ambitious regional culture and heritage framework.
236. As part of this, the government and arm's length bodies of the DCMS, including Arts Council England, Historic England, Sport England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Lottery Community Fund and the British Tourist Association (trading as Visit England / Visit Britain), will work with WMCA to support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration in the region, to maximise the overall benefit of local, regional and national initiatives that drive local economic growth, support wellbeing and build pride in place. Following agreement of this deal, WMCA will work with DCMS and the relevant arm's length bodies in spring 2023 to establish a terms of reference for the regional culture and heritage framework and agree a forward plan over the coming year, before finalising the framework in 2024.
237. This work could include increased alignment around funding, and programmes including Commonwealth Games legacy funding, heritage action zones, and the rollout of a new accreditation system for local destination management organisations. Investment decisions should consider strategic priorities, such as Arts Council priority places and levelling up for culture places, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy plans and other policies to develop identified cultural and heritage hubs and support skills, health and wellbeing.

Social economy

238. WMCA is committed to doubling the size of the social economy in ten years, as set out in the plan, growing the social economy in the WMCA area. Recognising this, the government will work closely with the WMCA to develop a pioneering social economy accelerator programme and growth fund and local social economy clusters. There is potential to use dormant assets funding to support community and voluntary sector organisations to make a difference in their places.

Tourism

239. West Midlands Growth Company is working with VisitEngland to become a local visitor economy partnership. Priorities for the West Midlands local visitor economy partnership will include a focus on the deliverables in the West Midlands tourism strategy and recovery plan and major event legacy, to raise awareness and improve perceptions of domestic and international visitors, using our strong cultural and heritage offer, hero themes, and business and major sporting event pipeline to drive visitors to the WMCA's destinations.

240. West Midlands Growth Company currently operates beyond local visitor economy partnership boundaries, in a similar way to a destination development partnership. Subject to confirmation of West Midlands Growth Company's Commonwealth Games legacy funding, and governance and delivery sign-off with VisitEngland and DCMS, WMCA proposes that West Midlands Growth Company works to achieve a second pilot destination development partnership status, an approach endorsed by VisitEngland, to work at a strategic level across the region to strengthen the visitor economy. WMCA will engage with DCMS and VisitEngland on the development and evaluation of their destination development partnership to demonstrate impact and return on investment of the approach, to ensure that ongoing and final learnings are captured. Additional activity will drive efficiencies across the wider destination development partnership area in research and insight, digital innovation, product development and business support.

Public service reform

Health

241. WMCA's Health of the Region report (2020) showed, at the time of publication, a disproportionate number of people in the West Midlands had worse health outcomes from preventable causes than the national average. In addition, two of the three integrated care systems areas in the West Midlands have a higher percentage of deprived neighbourhoods than anywhere else in the country. It is clear that health inequalities, poor health and economic inactivity cannot be tackled in isolation and require greater join up between local partners to improve outcomes for people in the WMCA region. The WMCA has a key role to play through exercising its transport, housing, skills and economic growth functions, which constitute the wider determinants of health and have a key impact on health outcomes.

Population health improvement

242. The region's constituent local authorities and NHS partners play a crucial role in the public health and addressing health inequalities. The Levelling Up White Paper acknowledges the supportive role mayoral combined authorities can play in improving the public health through devolution. This is why the government will support WMCA to work in partnership with local health and social care partners and integrated care systems on population health improvement.

243. The government and WMCA will agree a new formal duty on WMCA to improve the public's health, concurrent with local authorities as set out in the NHS Act 2006. This will neither supersede existing duties of partners nor be subservient to them, rather it will be a supportive addition to bring about systemic change and will enable WMCA to act to improve health through its wider responsibilities. We will also explore how the government and WMCA can use their collective resources and expertise to develop and test innovative solutions to shared prevention and population health priorities.

244. As part of the government's commitment to funding simplification, government will also support WMCA's ambition to explore innovative ways to improve population health, address health disparities and prevent ill-health, by exploring opportunities to better join-up funding related to population health improvement and prevention.

245. Where relevant new future, funding streams relating to population health improvement and prevention are under consideration, government will engage with WMCA and its

constituent local authorities to discuss whether the WMCA' allocation could be included as part of the department-style single settlement. New funding streams do not include new allocations from existing funds.

246. Under a new health improvement duty and through simplified funding streams, the WMCA can work with its constituent local authorities to enhance the provision of and access to a healthier food environment for children and young people, establish a regional tobacco alliance with local public health and integrated care boards and pilot vaping as a quit tool to reduce smoking rates in the region; and drive forward the ambition to be an exemplar region for disabled people through the development of a pan-disability needs assessment and a regional disability strategy in conjunction with the Cabinet Office, and in line with proposals in the emerging disability action plan.

Data and digital

247. As one of the first regions to develop a regional secure data environment for research and development, and as a trailblazer smart city region, the WMCA area is well-placed to build a more integrated, tech-enabled and population-based model of care. To support these ambitions, WMCA, and its local NHS partners, the government and NHS England will empower residents in the WMCA area through improving their understanding and use of health data through education and skills development within deprived areas and expanding patient access to data. WMCA will also work with NHS England to develop artificial intelligence lab(s) to support real-world research, working with local university partners and academic health science networks to provide patients with personalised and proactive care through predictive analytics and machine learning, encouraging early intervention and prevention through digital innovation.
248. In support of WMCA's new health improvement duty, the government will support the regional linkages of shared care records within the West Midlands integrated care boards, and work with WMCA to explore secure and appropriate ways within the existing legal framework to share data across the public sector, including examining existing best practice, with any improvements in data access being appropriate, safe and legal, and not damaging public trust in how data is used.

Workforce

249. The government supports the commitment of WMCA to work with integrated care boards and other partners to explore the use of aligned budgets along with its adult education budget, to help tackle workforce shortages in the NHS and the wider health and care system, including exploring workforce training and boosting capacity within the voluntary and community sector.

West Midlands Smart City Region

250. To improve public services, the WMCA will pioneer the extension of preventative healthcare, remote monitoring and community diagnosis. This will be delivered through

the Levelling Up: Smart City Region Health, Care and Connectivity programme which builds upon successful trials and complements government funding and priorities, including virtual wards and community diagnostics.

Early years

251. DfE remains open to discussing the further development of regional early years collaboration across the WMCA area, building on existing work, including exploring initiatives which could be piloted in the area provided they are consistent with the government's wider early years strategy and policies.

Homelessness

252. A newly established DWP and DLUHC Ministerial Housing Strategy Group will consider innovative approaches and piloting opportunities in partnership with WMCA, funded from within existing budgets and/or subject to consideration at the next Spending Review, to enable higher standards, improve outcomes for residents and communities and deliver better value for money.

253. DWP will continue working with WMCA to explore the development and implementation of a locally designed rent simplification pilot to enable young people in supported accommodation to transition into work whilst remaining, for an agreed period, in the supported environment that they require.

Antisocial behaviour

254. Addressing antisocial behaviour is a priority for the government, as well as for WMCA. The government is working to drive further action to tackle antisocial behaviour and will discuss its emerging proposals with WMCA and the police and crime commissioner.

255. In particular, the government recognises that there are specific challenges facing all constituent authorities regarding littering, graffiti, contravention of smokefree legislation and managing street traders, performers, and preachers.

Digital, cultural and environmental projects

256. The government will support WMCA with £25 million of additional capital funding during this spending review period for green and innovative projects, to drive economic growth, support businesses in the West Midlands to transition to net zero and improve public services through the Smart City Region project. The release of funding is subject to approval of a suitable business case.

Places for Growth

257. Through the places for growth programme, more than 2,100 roles will relocate to the West Midlands by 2025 from departments and public bodies including the DfT, DLUHC, Home Office, Homes England and DfE. As of December 2022, 1,400 roles have been relocated to the West Midlands campus locations, including Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry.
258. The government's ambition to support the development of specialist skills clusters will bring together organisations with a shared policy interest, to encourage collaboration and foster effective engagement with industry and external stakeholders. The relocation of civil and public service roles builds on the existing expertise within the WMCA, including Network Rail and High Speed 2, and the development of a transport and infrastructure cluster, providing deep career pathways and a range of opportunities locally.
259. The government will build on existing progress and meet the commitments set out in the Levelling Up White Paper by working with WMCA to explore further opportunities for programmes to develop skills and career pathways into the civil service and public services. A West Midlands fast stream pilot will set a blueprint for establishing long-term career pathways by delivering a pipeline of civil service talent and skills in the region. This investment in skills pipeline development and the formation of a transport and infrastructure cluster will accelerate the government's places for growth programme, enabling government departments to consider functions that could be located across the WMCA footprint as part of its commitment to levelling up.

THE END



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