BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2023 AT 09:30 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA
SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB**

A G E N D A

1   **NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST (9.30)**

The Chair to advise/meeting to note that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) 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.

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.

12   **<u>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u>**

To note the date of the next meeting is scheduled for 17 February 2023 at 10.00am

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

CO-ORDINATING O&S COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

10.00 hours on Friday, 9 December 2022, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,

Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Albert Bore (Chair)

Councillors: Akhlaq Ahmed, Jack Deakin, Mick Brown, Mohammed Idrees, Chaman Lal, Ewan Mackey, Saima Suleman, Alex Yip, Roger Harmer

Also Present:

Cllr. Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member Housing and Homelessness
Guy Chaundy, Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling
Janie Berry, City Solicitor
James Fox, Senior Enforcement Officer
Graeme Betts, Director Adult Social Care
Nikki Spencer, Digital Projects Manager
Sheraz Yaqub, Business Change Manager
Kalvinder Kohli, Assistant Director Early Intervention and Prevention
Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

1. **NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

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    The Chair gave notice of one item of urgent business he wanted to discuss with the Committee regarding the length of reports.

2. **APOLOGIES**

    Apologies were submitted on behalf of Cllr. Kerry Jenkins and Cllr. Saima Suleman.

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3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr. Yip declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6 as an owner of a House of Multiple Occupation in Birmingham.

4. ACTION NOTES –18 NOVEMBER 2022

The Action Notes of the meeting on the 14 October 2022 were agreed and the Action Tracker was noted. It was agreed that officers would be asked to attend the December meeting to provide updates on the actions from the September meeting if written updated are not provided.

RESOLVED:

- That the action notes of the formal meeting held on 18 November 2022 were agreed.

5. CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

It was noted that there were five actions to be completed. It was reported that four of these have been requested as part of the Cabinet Member's report to the meeting on the 27 January 2023.

RESOLVED:

- That Action Tracker was noted.

6. UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXEMPT ACCOMMMODATION SCRUTINY INQUIRY

During the discussion in this item Cllr. Yip declared an interest as an owner of a House of Multiple Occupation in Birmingham.

The Chair introduced the Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling who provided the update on the recommendations of the Exempt Accommodation Scrutiny Inquiry. The Committee was informed that Council continues to deliver the inspection and oversight activity which has been funded through the Council and a further 2 years of funding has been secured from the Department for Levelling Up and Communities for 2023 – 2025. This funding is slightly less than the current funding but the 'on the ground work' would be retained. At a national level the Parliamentary Select Committee report has been published and Bob Blackman is taking a Bill through parliament to address some of the gaps and create regulation,

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clearer standards, introducing licencing for exempt accommodation and a new planning class.

The Action Plan attached as appendix 2 to the report provided an update on the previous reports on the implementation of the recommendations and also the motions agreed at City Council in December 2021 and November 2022. The focus of the presentation was on the recommendations that have not been completed.

In relation to the recommendations regarding covenants on properties owned and sold the Council, Janie Berry, the City Solicitor set out that this was a complicated legal matter that will require a Council policy due to a number of issues including changes in the wording of covenants for right to buy properties over the last 30 years, there can be legal challenges so the most suitable directorate needs to be identified to give instruction, value for money, circumstances on a individual basis in most cases and the roles and responsibilities of other organisations.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the continued focus of the Committee on Exempt Accommodation as national changes may not happen quickly and she highlighted her concern regarding the number of out of city referrals for exempt accommodation. The Cabinet member noted the complexities regarding covenants on council properties and said that a briefing would be sent to all members on this issue.

During the subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- There are links with the community safety team The police are part of the inspection activity and the joint working enabled access to police intelligence. The police involvement also related to addressing issues of organised crime which is a local and national issue.
- Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling to provide statistics on prosecutions relating to organised crime and exempt accommodation.
- It was noted that the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the Adult Safeguarding Board Annual Report at the December meeting and can follow up this issue.
- The covenants on Council owned properties relates to future use of Exempt Accommodation only.
- The assessment of exempt accommodation claims does not consider community safety issues. It is not a commissioned service but is paid through housing benefit.
- There is no requirement for a provider to inform the Council if a person is moved from one property to another, so it is not always possible to ensure

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that support is being provided to individuals and that anti-social behaviour is not displaced to another area. Good providers will inform the Council but when they Council is not informed the only way to identify this is through housing benefit payment.

- There is an issue with the capacity of the current number of inspectors due to funding. It was noted that while the number of exempt accommodation properties continues to increase, even at a slower rate, this will mean it will take too long to inspect all properties. If members or residents have concerns about Exempt Accommodation they were encouraged to report these to enable the inspection team to prioritise.

- Any funding that is clawed back from exempt accommodation providers cannot be used by the Council to pay for more officers to inspect exempt accommodation properties.

- Different Council directorates are working together to tackle poor exempt accommodation through the multi-agency Exempt Accommodation Team including adult social care, housing, community safety, housing benefit and legal. Cllr. Thompson chairs the sponsor board that includes the Cabinet Members that cover these services within their portfolio.

- Landlords need to understand their responsibility to ensure that their property is being managed properly. The introduction of licencing as part of the Bill will enable checks to be carried out on Landlords as fit and proper persons.

- Inspections are reactive in response to information from members, the public and regulators but there is also a planned proactive approach including when providers go through the accreditation process which involved inspections. It was reported that currently 30 providers are going through the accreditation process. Members were concerned that at current capacity, inspecting 1,000 properties a year, it will take 8 ½ years to inspect all exempt accommodation units.

- The Exempt Accommodation work also links with the systematic work through the Customer Services Programme with Landlords of houses of multiple occupation.

- There are currently over 20,000 exempt accommodation units, however the needs assessment identified that there is a defined need for people in Birmingham for 9,000 units. The additional 11,000 units are potentially where there is a housing need but not a supported housing need. It was also recognised that the Probation Service and other agencies across the country refer people to Birmingham because the supply is available and that there is no financial incentive for providers to support residents to move to more appropriate accommodation.

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- The concentration of Exempt Accommodation in certain areas of the city is a result of the housing type which are lower valued houses that are large and easy to convert into units.

- The Health and Adult Care OSC identified the geographical correlation between areas with high numbers of exempt accommodation and high number of substance misuse service users. The level of care from exempt accommodation providers is not specified in the current legislation and it is recognised as a national issue that vulnerable people in exempt accommodation potentially may not get the support they need. The Housing Benefit process requires some evidence of care plans but not the provision of support. Where there are concerns regarding care provision in Birmingham this will be referred to the social worker in the multi-disciplinary team. The enhanced standards introduced by the Council are voluntary but will be assessed. Work will continue to develop links with substance misuse services.

- Members concerns regarding exempt accommodation should be raised through Icase so that this can be monitored. There is a dedicated mailbox so cases can be assessed to see if the property concerned is a House of Multiple Occupation or Exempt Accommodation. It was noted that an example was given of a case that took 3 weeks to get a response.

- Members of the public should use the usual complaints process and the contact centre will refer it on and information on the webpage is being improved to provide further information and signposting.

- When the Council places people in exempt accommodation assurance was given that this will be targeted at good providers that are going through the accreditation process.

- Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling to provide information on the numbers of people placed by the Council in exempt accommodation.

- There is further work to do to fully implement the recommendations and it was recognised that a lot of this depends on national legislation which will take time. Members were keen to see that work continues locally to address issues in the meantime and requested a further update to the March / April Co-ordinating OSC meeting.

RESOLVED: -

- That Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling provide statistics on the prosecutions relating to organised crime and exempt accommodation.

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- That Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling provide information on the numbers of people placed by the Council in exempt accommodation.
- A briefing is sent to all members on to update members on the work regarding covenants on Council properties.
- That the status for each of the recommendations R01-R08 updates in Appendix 2 were agreed and the report was noted.
- That an update report on Exempt Accommodation Scrutiny Recommendations request for Co-ordinating OSC meeting in March / April 2023.

7. UPDATE ON PLANNING ENFORCEMENT ISSUES FROM SCRUTINY INQUIRY

The Chair welcomed James Fox, Senior Enforcement Officer to the meeting to provide an update on Recommendation R05 from the Scrutiny Inquiry report to strengthen planning controls in relation to exempt accommodation and also address gaps in expectations regarding planning enforcement in this area.

The report to the Economy and Skills OSC in March 2022 addressed Recommendation R05 which has been completed.
The City-wide Article 4 limiting the number of Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) has no bearing on the growth of properties used for exempt accommodation.
A webpage has been set up to provide information to residents and providers to give guidance on Article 4 and further guidance on the assessment of supported accommodation from a planning perspective.
Legal advice on the assessment including consideration of the single household test was sought prior to the publication of the webpage.
The vast majority of the of supported accommodation has no more than 6 occupiers so in most cases planning permission is not required.
This has been recognised at a national level and planning reform is being considered as part of the Exempt Accommodation Bill.
Without change to planning legislation the action the Council can take is limited, however informal intervention has been undertaken to ensure properties meet the requirement of the single household test and formal action taken in extreme cases.
Planning enforcement investigated over 400 supported accommodation properties and it is intended that 2 further officers will be recruited in 2023.

During the discussion are range of issues are covered including:

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The due process for planning enforcement means that it is not a quick response to providers that 'play the system'. The timescales for an appeal process are set in legislation, however if an enforcement notice is served and not complied with and the provider continues to operate, where there is an ongoing breach, the Council can apply to the Courts for proceeds of crime and this has been used for Houses of Multiple Occupation.

There can be confusion between accommodation that is classed as a House of Multiple Occupation and exempt accommodation. If a property does not meet the requirements for an HMO, it may still be used to provide supported exempt accommodation which may have been an unintended consequence of Article 4. Solicitors test evidence on the balance of probabilities for lawful use.

The Senior Enforcement Officer to respond following the meeting to the request that applications and the supporting evidence for HMOs could be sent to ward members to consider and provide comment.

RESOLVED: -

- That the Senior Enforcement Officer respond following the meeting to the request that supporting evidence for HMOs could be sent to ward members for consideration and comment.
- That the report was noted.

8. **CUSTOMER SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE**

The Chair provided an overview of the work of the Task and Finish Group on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management and asked for endorsement for Phase 2 of the work on culture within the services. The Task and Finish Group on Highways will take place in December and report to the January meeting of Co-ordinating OSC. The focus of the discussion at the meeting was on the updates provided in Appendix 2 of the report which showed a change in direction, which if implemented will be transformational.

It was recognised that the scale of change required will take time and need leaderships. The role of the Task and Finish Group will be to provide ongoing scrutiny to ensure that the required changes are implemented. Specific points were made in relation to the waste management actions including:

- That the use of KIT Krew In Cab Technology will be mandatory and the information provided, including assisted collections, will be monitored by managers. This is being rolled out depot by depot.
- The KIT Krew In Cab Technology will be used by agents in the cab, not drivers and will be used to report issues and take photographs e.g. fly-tipping so this can be reported automatically to the fly-tipping team.

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- Analysis of the data will identify the route cause of missed collections.
- The implementation will be reviewed in early 2023.
- Training has been provided to crews and work with the Trades Unions to agree new methods of working.
- Members were concerned that assisted collections were being missed.
- The invitation for members of the Housing and Neighbourhood OSC is extended to all members of Co-ordinating OSC.

RESOLVED:

- That the Task and Finish Group continues to ensure the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.

- It was noted that the Task and Finish Group completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads to Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highways.

- That in a second phase of the work, the Task and Finish Group will meet with senior managers to scrutinise how their services have responded to feedback from the Customer Services workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy and drive-up standards

- That the Committee supports the implementation of the Customer Service Programme Phase 2 as outlined in the December 2022 Cabinet Report.

- The invitation for members of the Housing and Neighbourhood OSC is extended to all members of Co-ordinating OSC.

9. **EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME UPDATE**

    Kalvinder Kohli, Assistant Director Early Intervention and Prevention, set out that the programme is a key corporate programme which supports the Council from a transactional crisis response to up steam provision. Staff, residents and community and voluntary organisations have been engaged in developing the vision for the programme. The cost-of-living crisis and pandemic have exacerbated issues in the city around child poverty, life expectancy and unemployment which has normalised crisis.

    The Early Intervention and Prevention Programme sets out what this means for citizens, staff and the Council. Work started on the programme is 2020 and a report will go to Cabinet in 2023. Examples of early help support were provided e.g., Homes and Money Accelerator and Placed Based Approach with Shard End Library and ensuring this work is aligned with the cost-of-living crisis response. Work has started on the placed based approach for Erdington where a large number of assets have been identified which can be confusing for residents.

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The business case is being developed and the conclusion has been reached that a Directorate is needed but this will not operate in a silo as the programme involved culture change across services.

During the discussion members raise the following issues:

- That the programme needs to identify key performance indicators that sets out deliverables and the programme also needs to address emerging challenges as well and the current issues the city faces.

- The place-based / place shaping approach was supported in the examples given, however there are areas in the city that do not have as many assets. It was reported that residents with mobility issues will not have to travel to other parts of the city to access services, but the programme will broaden the channels through which residents can access council services.

- The use of locations for social worker drop-in session has increased but not as fast as had been hoped. The Assistant Director, Early Intervention and Prevention agreed to look at the use of St Chads Church as an asset.

RESOLVED:

- That members noted the EI&P Programme update.

- That members noted the recommendation to develop an Early Intervention and Prevention Directorate to deliver capabilities relating to EI&P in the future.

10. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 202/23

The Chair reported that following the motion at City Council on 6 December regarding the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, this will be included on the agenda for the Co-ordinating OSC meeting on 27 January when the Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities will attend. It was confirmed that a report will be circulated when the agenda is published.

Members agreed that the Co-ordinating OSC meeting on the 17 March will be amended to 10.30 to accommodate the Leader's availability to report on his priorities.

As discussed under Item 8 the work of the Customer Services Programme Task and Finish Group will continue including Phase 2 on the feedback from culture workshops.

The Chair will consider with Officers how members will be updated on the Elections Bill.

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RESOLVED:

- That a separate report on the issue of Homes for Ukraine, as agreed in the motion at City Council on the 6 December will come to the meeting of Co-ordinating OSC on 27 January.

- The time of the Co-ordinating OSC on 17 March change to 10.30 accommodate the Leader's availability.

- The Chair to consider with Officers how to update members on the Elections Bill.

- That the Scrutiny Committee work programmes be noted.

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

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

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair raised the issues of the length of reports to Scrutiny Committees and the time taken at meetings to present reports which reduces the time for discussion.

RESOLVED:

- That the Scrutiny Team to provide guidance to report authors on use of cover reports including use of links to documents instead of lengthy appendices.

- That the Chair discuss with the Scrutiny Team how to ensure that reports provided provide the relevant information in a succinct format.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that next meeting of the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be 27 January 2022 at 10.00

14. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

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

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The meeting ended at 12:16 hours.

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CO-ORDINATING OSC JANUARY 2022

ACTION TRACKER 2022/23

	Date	Agenda Item	Action	Notes
1	23 September 2022	Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business Action Plan	A report to be brought back to Committee towards the end of the year on implementation of EBEB Action Plan and consideration of audit or effectiveness of Equality Impact assessment.	Update from Cabinet Member 27.01.23 requested as part of Cabinet Member priorities report.
2	23 September 2022	Cost of Living Crisis	Director of Strategy, Equality and to provide an estimate of the number of unclaimed benefits and the financial value this represented.	Information Requested
3	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.	Information Requested
4	23 September 2022	Work Programme	Chair to consider an update on the Election Act to be reported to Co-ordinating OSC following report to Committee in December 2021.	Report requested after May 2023 to include learning from elections in other authorities. Included in Co-ordinating OSC Work Programme.
5	14 October 2022	Customer Services Programme Task and Finish Group Update	That the Customer Services Task and Finish Group will continue to meet to hold Directorates to account on how the customer strategy is being embedded with a view to driving up standards and	On going

			report to a future meeting of the Co-ordinating OSC	
6	18 November	Cabinet Member Priorities, Cllr. Francis, Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism	Director of Digital and Customer Services to send the Digital City and Digital Strategy Action Plans for circulation to the Committee	Completed Information circulate 22.12.22
7	18 November	Work Programme	Scrutiny officers to discuss with Chair of Co-ordinating OSC regarding on going scrutiny on the cost of living crisis.	Update from Cabinet Member 27.01.23 as part of Cabinet Member priorities report.
8	9 December	Exempt Accommodation	That the Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling provide statistics on the prosecutions relating to organised crime and exempt accommodation.	Information Requested and update provided: Since the pilot commenced in October 2020, there have been 37 arrests, and 19 Community Protection Warnings issued in connection to supported exempt properties. We have requested further information from WM Police, with regards to statistics on prosecutions or organised crime.
9	9 December	Exempt Accommodation	That the Acting Assistant Director, Housing Strategy and Enabling provide information on the numbers of people	Completed: Supported Exempt is not a category in its own right as far as placements are

			placed by the Council in exempt accommodation.	concerned therefore getting comprehensive data on placements is not straightforward. As a snapshot – over 500 placements were made by SIFA Fireside into SEA accommodation between January and November 2022, which is the primary space in which BCC is placing into SEA. This is around 20% of homeless placements overall. Each placement is followed up by a support worker to check on the placement, property and offer follow up support.
10	9 December	Exempt Accommodation	A briefing is sent to all members on to update members on the work regarding covenants on Council properties.	Information Requested and update provided: The issue about enforcement and restrictive covenants is likely to require significant policy development and external legal input in order to progress.

				There will need to be considerable input from CLT and legal will be taking a paper forward for consideration.
11	9 December	Exempt Accommodation	That an update report on Exempt Accommodation Scrutiny Recommendations request for Co-ordinating OSC meeting in March / April 2023.	Completed Included in Co-ordination OSC Work Programme for March 2023 with option to postpone to April.
12	9 December	Planning Enforcement	That the Senior Enforcement Officer respond following the meeting to the request that supporting evidence for HMOs could be sent to ward members for consideration and comment.	Information requested and update provided: Legal services and the Planning Area Teams have been consulted. Confirmation is being sought whether any process changes can be implemented around the consultation of LDCs with members.

13	9 December	Customer Services Programme Task and Finish Group	The invitation for members of the Housing and Neighbourhood OSC to see the Kit Krew In Cab Technology is extended to all members of Co-ordinating OSC.	Completed Invitation to be sent to all members to invite them to their local depot which will include demonstration of Kit Krew In Cab technology.
14	9 December	Work Programme	That a separate report on the issue of Homes for Ukraine, as agreed in the motion at City Council on the 6 December will come to the meeting of Co-ordinating OSC on 27 January.	Completed Report requested for Co-ordinating OSC 27.01.22
15	9 December	Work Programme	The time of the Co-ordinating OSC on 17 March change to 10.30 accommodate the Leader's availability.	Completed.

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27ᵗʰ January 2023

Subject:	Cabinet Member Priorities, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities
Report of:	Cllr John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities
Report author:	Richard Brooks, Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships

1 Purpose

1.1 To provide the Committee with an overview of current priorities and issues relating to the Cabinet Member's responsibilities covered by the Committee, specifically:

- Tackling Inequalities

- Equalities within the Community

- Social Cohesion and Inclusion

- Third Sector Partnership and Engagement

- External Challenge

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee consider the report and identify issues for further scrutiny as part of their future work programme, with possible examples including:

2.1.1 The activity and impact of the Cost of Living Response Programme.

2.1.2 The Warm Welcome initiative and/or the Food Aid Fund as examples of innovative approaches to third sector partnerships and engagement.

2.1.3 The Birmingham City Observatory as a new means of driving equality and inclusion through open data.

3   Report

3.1   This report focuses on two new areas of activity that have not previously benefited from scrutiny and which implicate many aspects of this portfolio. These are the Cost of Living Emergency Programme and the City Observatory. The report also covers some equalities and cohesion activities and comments briefly on domestic abuse.

3.2   Cost of Living

3.2.1   The City of Birmingham faces unprecedented challenges in supporting its communities through the Cost of Living Crisis. Inflation is now at 10.5%, the highest rate for decades, and has particularly affected essential goods including household energy, basic foods, and fuel. The price rises are exacerbating already serious challenges in fuel, food, and general poverty across the city. At the same time, overall public sector budgets are constrained by low overall economic growth and the recent exceptionally high costs of responding to Covid.

3.2.2   In the face of these challenges, on 6th September 2022, Birmingham City Council declared a Cost of Living Emergency. On 11th October, the announcement was followed up by a report encompassing a number of recommendations to Cabinet.

3.2.3   The recommendations, accepted by Cabinet, included:

- The allocation of up to £5m of the Financial Resilience Reserve to the Cost of Living Emergency programme.

- The approval of the delegation of expenditure to the Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships and the Section 151 officer, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members.

- The creation of a Cost-of-Living Strategic Response Group to oversee the Cost-of-Living delivery workstreams including the response to a set of immediate priority actions.

3.2.4   Over the past three months, the Council has moved at pace to deliver this programme. As detailed below, the Cost of Living programme, with a broad network of partners across the city, has built an extensive network of Warm Welcome Spaces; new capacity to offer advice on money and benefits; provided cash to support food banks and other food projects across the city; created a top up fund for fuel deprived households and progressed a comprehensive support scheme aimed at easing the cost of living burden for our own workforce.

3.2.5   Following the decision by Cabinet, the Strategic Response Group (SRG) was set up as part of robust governance arrangements for the programme. The group sets strategic direction and agrees key priorities. Chaired by the Director of Strategy, Equality and Partnerships, membership includes all the council's relevant senior departmental directors and legal representation. To provide an expert, external perspective, senior representatives of the NHS Integrated Care Partnership and the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council are also members of this senior group. The SRG maintains a critical overview of the council's responses, owns key risks and issues; signs off the communications strategy, and considers spending proposals and proposes them for Member decisions as appropriate

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The Five Immediate Cost of Living priorities

3.2.6   The Cabinet Paper of the 11th October 2022 stated that our Cost-of-Living response should align with and accelerate longer-term strategic work; for example, Early Intervention and Prevention, and Net Zero. It was further recommended in the report (and accepted by Cabinet) that the work focus on four broad themes:

1. People - Increase income and reduce costs
2. Public Sector and VCS – collaborate, rally, and support our partners
3. Business – Protect jobs and prevent bankruptcy
4. Places – Increase energy efficiency

3.2.7   Within these themes, there was some initial mapping of current and planned activity to form a view of what short, medium- and longer-term actions were required. This exercise identified the following areas as short-term priorities:

1. Ensuring the provision of a network of **warm spaces** across the city.
2. Improving the availability of **advice to residents**, with a focus on increasing benefit take up.
3. Increasing **energy efficiency**, with a focus on reducing fuel costs for vulnerable Birmingham households.
4. Increasing the **supply of food** through foodbanks across the city.
5. Supporting the Council's own workforce.

3.2.8   Over the past three months, the programme has progressed these immediate actions as detailed below:

3.2.8.1 **Warm Welcome:** a total of 202 Warm Welcome spaces have been registered on the council website, with 142 now up and running. These Warm Welcome spaces are intended to be friendly, social areas that do not stigmatise its users. A programme of activities is planned across the network and, where appropriate, the co-location of services such as money advice, legal aid, and support on health issues.

3.2.8.2 **The Warm Welcome** has produced remarkable levels of collaboration and civic contribution by city partners. Warm Spaces include pantries, cafes, museums, mosques, and other faith centres - and even a bowls club. The network of these spaces, convened by the council, is inspiring and capturing new innovation, volunteering, and corporate giving. We have offered a small grants programme to Warm Welcome network members, and plan to develop a subset of the network into larger Hubs offering a wider range of support.

3.2.8.3 **Foodbanks:** A package of support for the city's foodbanks and other emergency food projects has been advanced. Launched in December, 100 applications for cash grants of £800 per month (for six months) have by 15th January 2023 been approved. This will enable the foodbanks across the city to buy culturally appropriate food during the winter. These grants are essential because traditional sources of donations and food giving from supermarkets and individuals have diminished as the cost of living bites.

3.2.8.4 In addition, the Cost of Living programme supported Holiday Activities and Food for children during the school holidays. This involved matching DFE funding to produce 30,000 meals for children and families. Youth Centres have also been provided with small grants to buy new cooking equipment. This will enable the centres to serve 75,000 meals per year for young people.

3.2.8.5 **Advice and support on income maximisation** has been extended. The Council's Neighbourhood Offices have increased opening times by 5 1/2 hours per week, and the Customer Contact Centre phone lines are now open for an additional two hours in the evening (5-7pm). As a result, there has been additional income maximisation for citizens of at least £446,000 since November from the Neighbourhood Offices alone. A further increase in advice through community organisation grants is projected to create £2.5m in new benefits for vulnerable Birmingham residents.

3.2.8.6 **Energy measures** are also now ramping up. Additional energy vouchers have been approved for approximately 5,000 vulnerable homes, often with pre-payment meters. These are being distributed by the council's Local Welfare Provision team.

3.2.8.7 A comprehensive package of **Employee Support** is now available. This includes access to financial advice and, through the Citysave

Credit Union, information on regular savings and fair-priced loans. There is free confidential health and wellbeing support as well as access to warm workspaces across the city. These "warm" locations are across many libraries, leisure centres, and council buildings.

3.2.9   Over the last three months, and as approved by Cabinet, it was important for the SRG to focus on the immediate priorities. Next steps in the programme include the development of a business support package as well as new ideas for the evolution of the Warm Welcome Spaces, Foodbanks and the Money and Benefits programme.

3.2.10   As stated above, the Warm Welcome Spaces network offers new opportunities for providing advice, guidance, and wider community development. There are also embryonic plans to create new capacity at certain foodbanks for the creation of a sustainable food pantry model. This is where citizens can buy more affordable food in exchange for a small monthly fee. The extension of Money and Benefits advice has seen impressive returns and reveal an opportunity to grow this service further.

3.2.11   As the Cost of Living programme transitions from the immediate actions to wider capacity building and resilience, there are new proposals in the pipeline for harnessing corporate social responsibility and building a legacy from the Commonwealth Games volunteering.

3.2.12   In conclusion, the Cost of Living programme has afforded new opportunity for internal and external collaboration and the acceleration of delivery. The programme has catalysed innovative approaches to third sector partnerships and engagement. Learning from this initiative will be captured in an initial evaluation covering the first six months of the emergency and our response.

3.2.13   The Cost of Living programme has benefited greatly from an inclusive communications plan with communication in braille, deaf sign and in ten Birmingham languages. The Council's website has been developed to provide extensive information and access to support across the programme: Cost of living support | Birmingham City Council

3.2.14   The City Observatory discussed below, has provided robust data which has allowed the effective targeting of resources in vulnerable communities, not least through its Financial Resilience dashboard.

3.3   Birmingham City Observatory

3.3.1   The Birmingham City Observatory is a new public, open-source platform providing large quantities of data and insight, curated for Birmingham. It is run by the Insight, Policy & Strategy Team within the Strategy, Equality & Partnerships Directorate, and builds on the work of the council's Data Programme & Digital

Strategy. The Observatory was launched in November 2022 and is publicly accessible: www.cityobservatory.birmingham.gov.uk

3.3.2   The purpose of the Observatory is to improve outcomes for the citizens of Birmingham and improve equality across the city, through providing data and insight and facilitating collaboration and innovation. This includes:

- Improving access to good quality data and insight – providing a 'single source of the truth' about key issues for the city.

- Informing decision making, policy and strategy development.

- Supporting improved organisational performance, including by facilitating scrutiny.

- Allowing datasets to be combined to create new insights and new value.

- Enabling the sharing of data and supporting a community of data users across the city.

3.3.3   The Observatory is intended to embody modern principles of transparency, openness and good digital design. For example:

- The content is always available. There is no need to commission & retrieve data from owners, the Observatory platform is public and users access the content directly.

- Data sets are regularly and updated with automated processes to 'pull through' data from source, with regular and frequent additions to the site. In the longer term, the aim is to include true 'real-time' city data.

- The Observatory supports the ambition to use the same information for internal decision making within BCC as we share with external partners and the public.

- Data is published alongside insight that illuminates the issues and consequences, not just raw numbers.

- The Observatory team we will actively manage internal and external engagement, seek feedback and improve. The intention is to discover, develop, publish and promote partners' data and insight.

3.3.4   Equality and cohesion issues are central to the Observatory's mission, especially through illuminating the diversity and character of the city; highlighting the true pattern of outcomes and performance across the city; and driving better decision making and improved performance.

3.3.5   In relation to the Cost of Living crisis, the City Observatory has published a novel Financial Resilience Dashboard that highlights which wards are most exposed to financial pressures. The dashboard combines measures including fuel poverty, welfare benefits and unemployment, the index of multiple

deprivation, and children in vulnerable households. Observatory dashboards are accessible here: https://www.cityobservatory.birmingham.gov.uk/insights . The following map shows an overall summary of financial resilience by ward from the dashboard, and ward level summaries are available alongside this.
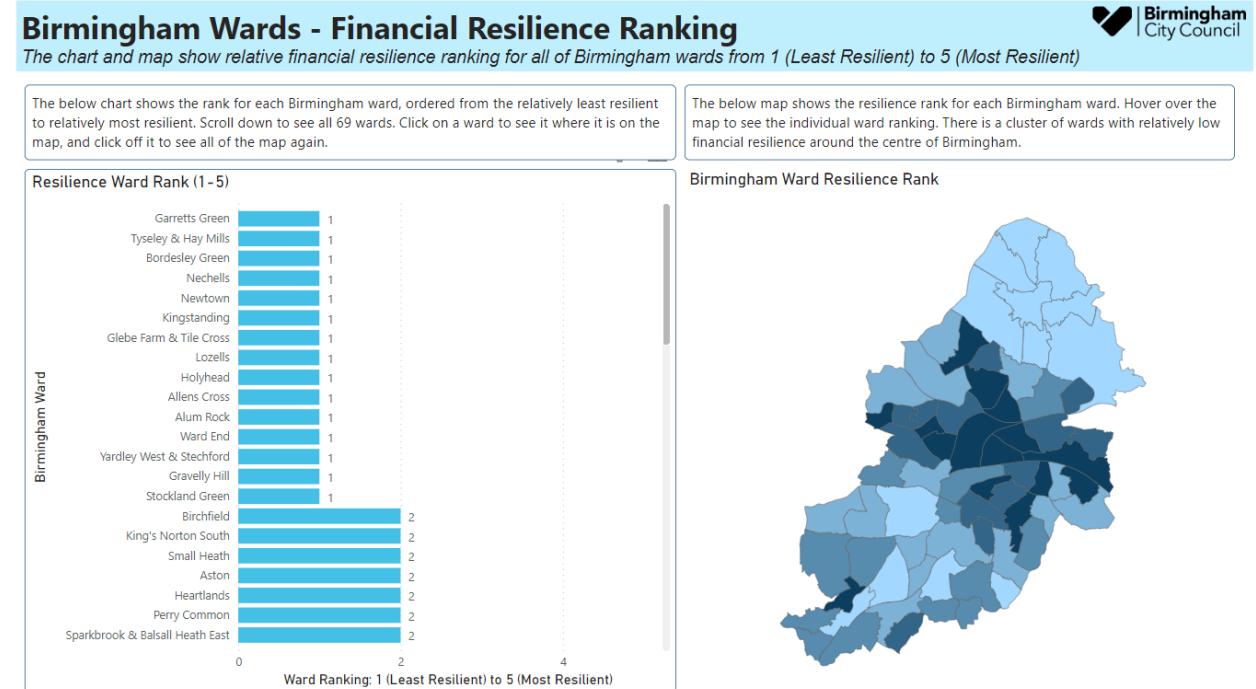
Source: Birmingham City Observatory, Financial Resilience Dashboard

3.3.6   The latest update to the City Observatory is a large dataset released from the 2021 Census Programme, which has been transformed into an interactive dashboard facilitating a detailed understanding of key aspects of the diversity of Birmingham and allowing comparison with other areas. The two screenshots below show a comparison of ethnicity between Birmingham and the other Core Cities, and Birmingham and the other members of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Both highlight our exceptional diversity:
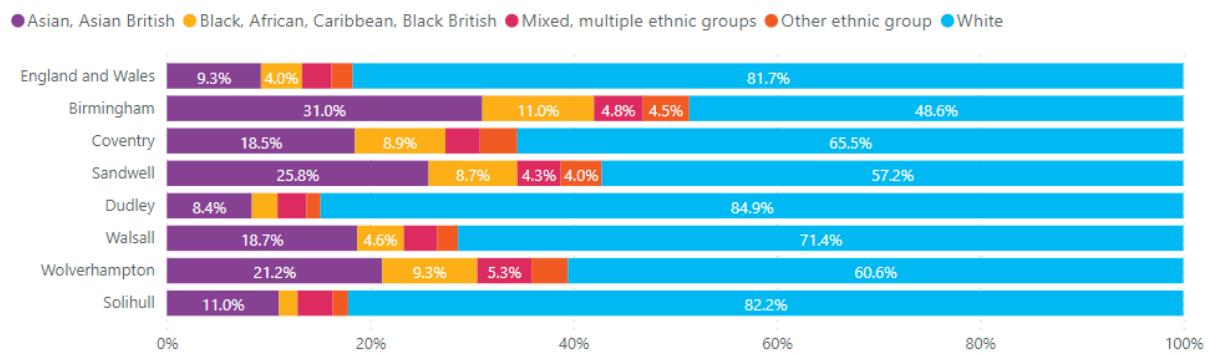
● Asian, Asian British	● Black, African, Caribbean, Black British	● Mixed, multiple ethnic groups	● Other ethnic group	● White

Birmingham: 31.0% | 11.0% | 4.8% | 4.5% | 48.6%
Leeds: 9.7% | 5.6% | 79.0%
Sheffield: 9.6% | 4.6% | 79.1%
Manchester: 20.9% | 11.9% | 5.3% | 5.1% | 56.8%
Liverpool: 5.7% | 84.0%
Bristol, City of: 6.6% | 5.9% | 4.5% | 81.1%
Cardiff: 9.7% | 4.0% | 79.2%
Nottingham: 14.9% | 10.0% | 5.9% | 65.9%
Newcastle upon Tyne: 11.4% | 80.0%
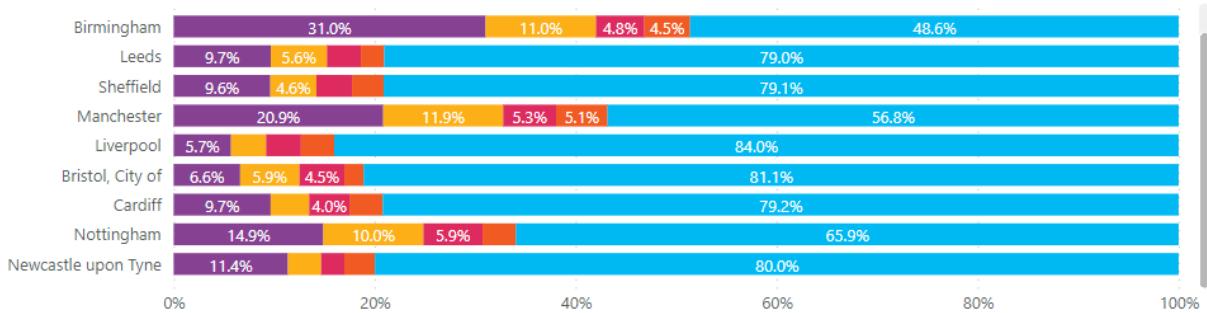
Source: Birmingham City Observatory, Census 2021 Dashboard

3.3.7   In addition, the Census dashboard allows micro-local level mapping of key issues, allowing the City Council to evaluate more easily whether services are being provided equitably to our diverse communities. The following three screen shots show the concentrations of different faith population of Birmingham, from left to right: Christian, Muslim and Sikh.
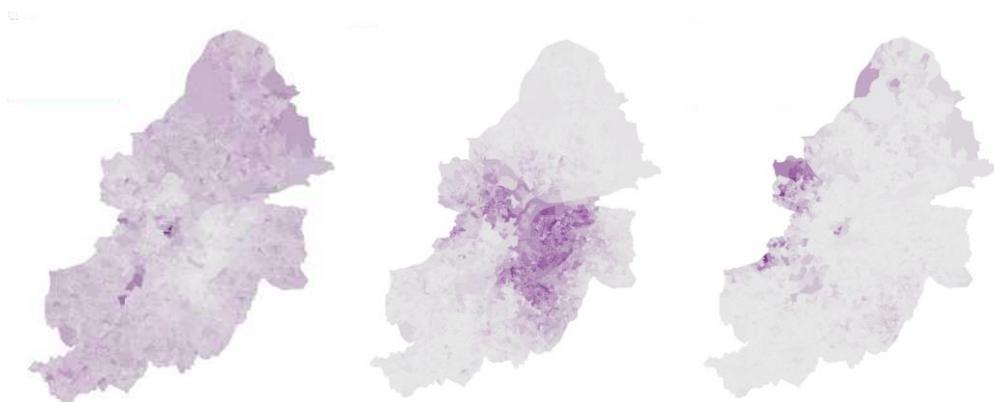
Source: Birmingham City Observatory, Census 2021 Dashboard

3.3.8   This City Observatory is a rapidly developing platform. Over the course of 2023 a key priority will be engagement with internal BCC directorates and services, to ensure that the value of the Observatory is maximised (for example by publishing the most important BCC data and providing insight that informs key policy and strategies). Wider engagement with the City Partnership is also key. At the public launch of the Observatory a wide range of organisations were represented and involved, including from the public, private, and voluntary and community sectors. Our city Universities are another key stakeholder group, and we have active partnerships with both Birmingham City University and with the University of Birmingham in relation to the Observatory.

3.4   Equalities and Cohesion within the Community

3.4.1   Since the approval of Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business (EBEB) Equality Action Plan, the Council has worked on delivery with communities,

stakeholders, and staff. To that end, a number of partnerships have been established. These include:

- **Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities Partnership.**
- **Proud Rainbow City Partnership** which considers community safety and engagement with LGBTQ+ communities.
- **Real Living Wage Partnership** brings together large employers and the voluntary and community sector to promote Birmingham as a Real Living Wage City. Its main aim is to increase the number of employers paying the real living wage. Encouragingly, a total of 133 employers have now signed up, an increase of 33 since 2021.
- **Community Stakeholder Panel** includes community champions, and the voluntary and public sectors. The panel was established to ensure that the city's diverse communities are fully represented. This forum oversees the CWG Stronger Communities programme and the delivery of EBEB actions.

3.4.2   In addition, representatives from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have sometimes fed back they were disengaged from council processes and funding opportunities**.** In response, the Council now has regular formal roundtable discussions with CEE organisations to discuss and respond to any issues of concern.

3.4.3   In promoting women's rights and safety, the Council also works with the voluntary and community sector to co-design and deliver the **Inform Women, Transform Lives - Carter award campaign work.** A City-wide media campaign, the focus is on supporting refuge and migrant women experiencing domestic and sexual violence.

3.4.4   The Council's approach to building and promoting community cohesion includes:

- The launch of Birmingham's refreshed **Faith Covenant** with Faith communities in November. The principles have been refreshed to reflect the vital role faith communities play across the city, not least, recently, in setting up the Warm Welcome spaces. A Faith Covenant Partnership will be established in 2023.

- To support our CWG community cohesion legacy commitments, this year the Council will co-deliver a number of community-led activities. These are designed to build an empowered community. In particular, there is a desire to understand more clearly, the patterns of migration and settlement and how they promote but can also disrupt cohesion.

3.4.5   A number of events to celebrate Birmingham's diversity also took place last year. These included:

- **Windrush Day 2022.** The New Street Station screening of the unveiling of the Windrush Day statues in London on 22nd June.

- **B2022 Commonwealth Games Community Engagement event** held in the summer.
- **Islamophobia Awareness Month** launch on 14th November at the Council House
- The co-designed **Heritage Trails** programme, funded by Birmingham City Council via our Commonwealth Games Community Fund celebration in December.

3.5 Domestic Abuse

3.5.1 An update on Domestic Abuse priorities was represented to Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2022. Progress towards reviewing the domestic abuse strategy is ongoing. A multi-agency working group has been established to review the strategy and feedback progress to the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership Board. Group membership includes representatives from West Midlands Police, BCT, CPS, NHS, specialist third sector, and Housing. The first meeting has been scheduled for January.

3.5.2 Officers have been liaising with Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding their input and involvement in the strategy review. A roundtable was held in December with Scrutiny members and key partners who have been delivering the strategy, to review the current strategy and discuss key issues going forward. A dedicated session on Domestic Abuse is due to take place on 17 February 2023.

3.5.3 Officers have met with partners drafting the Homeless Prevention Strategy, and partners in Community Safety drafting the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy to ensure cohesion and partnership across the strategies.

4 Any Finance Implications

4.1 Not applicable for this report.

5 Any Legal Implications

5.1 Not applicable for this report.

6 Any Equalities Implications

6.1 Equalities issues are addressed within the body of the report as one of its main subjects.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

Birmingham City Council
Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27ᵗʰ January 2023

Subject:	Ukraine Response
Report of:	Councillor Cotton - Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community, Safety, and Equalities
Report author:	Richard Brooks - Director for Strategy, Equality & Partnerships

1   Purpose

1.1   To provide an overview of the delivery of the Ukraine Response, setting out the key issues and performance of the programme and its providers; to respond to the motion passed and petition raised at the 6ᵗʰ December 2022 City Council meeting.

2   Recommendations

2.1   To note the contents of the report and the review of programme delivery, and consider if there are any further issues for scrutiny to address in relation to the programme.

3   Any Finance Implications

3.1   There are no financial implications directly relating to this report. The overall financial envelope for the programme was agreed at Cabinet on the 6ᵗʰ September 2022, which accounted for the provision of services by providers.

4   Any Legal Implications

4.1   There are no legal implications directly relating to this report. The Council's Ukraine response follows national guidance relating to the Homes for Ukraine programme, which is in addition to our statutory duties.

5   Any Equalities Implications

5.1   The Ukraine Response programme ensures the local authority can discharge its responsibilities under the Equality Act through the provision of resettlement support and co-ordination to arriving Ukrainian guests.

1

6   Appendices

6.1   Ukraine Response: Scrutiny Committee Report

APPENDIX

UKRAINE RESPONSE – SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

A. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

National Context

1. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the UK Government offered humanitarian support and sanctuary to Ukrainian families fleeing the war. The scale and approach to the Ukraine crisis was different to previous resettlement or other refugee schemes. The Government established visa entry routes into the UK for those fleeing the war which permitted Ukrainians a 3 year stay and the right to work, study and claim benefits in the UK. This was not the usual response to a humanitarian crisis, where typically refugee status would be granted.

2. The government established two main visa routes of entry into the country, the Family Visa Scheme, and the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.

3. The Ukraine Family Visa Scheme allowed applicants to join their family members or extend an existing stay in the UK. The onus was strongly on the family being the primary source of support for guests. The nature of the Homes for Ukraine scheme is completely novel for the UK, with private citizens hosting refugees ('guests') in their own homes, and national government placing a wide range of new requirements upon local authorities to administer the scheme.

4. The Family Visa Scheme was launched on the 4th March and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) was launched by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 14th March 2022.

5. Initially, the Family Visa Scheme was the main route of entry for Ukraine arrivals into the UK, however within three months this was surpassed by the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This pattern has since been maintained so that Homes for Ukraine now accounts for the large majority of Ukraine arrivals: a total of 111,000 nationally as of 12th January 2023 compared to 44,500 for the Family Visa Scheme.

Chart: Arrivals by Visa Scheme; Homes for Ukraine (yellow) and Family Visas (blue)
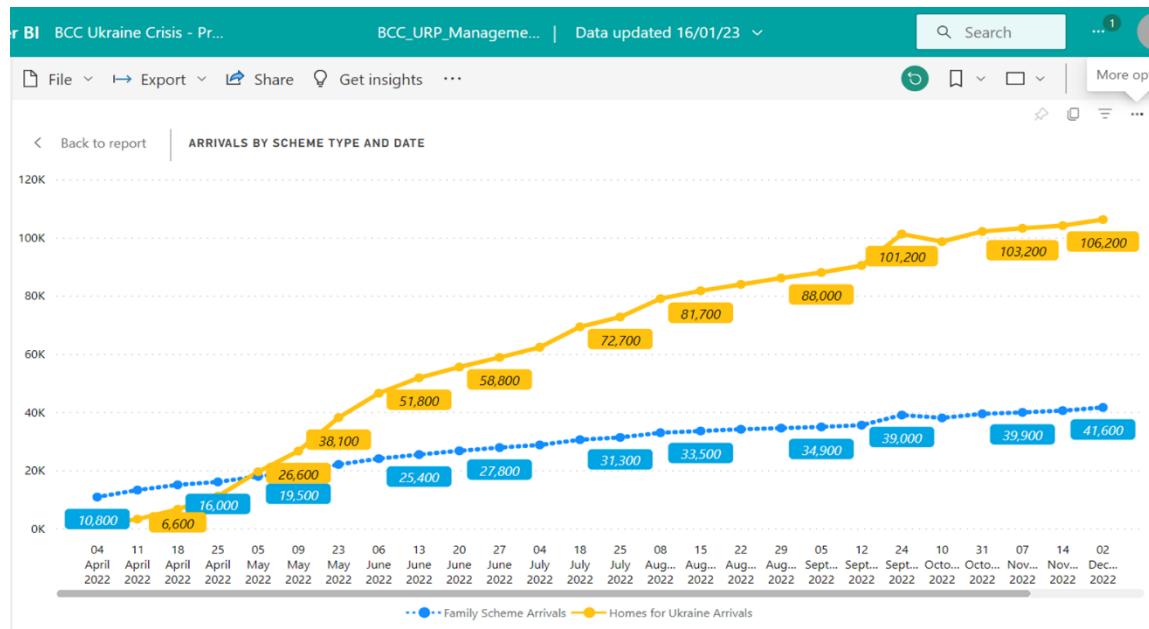
Source: BCC Refugee Resettlement Solution Management Dashboard

Note: chart does not show January data

Birmingham Context

6. Birmingham is a well-established City of Sanctuary, and a significant place of welcome to new arrivals and communities. Birmingham has a long history of supporting resettlement in response to a humanitarian crisis. Our UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Schemes (ACRS) are currently in operation welcoming new citizens into Birmingham.

7. Since 2015, Birmingham's approach to refugee resettlement has been to procure services to address the immediate needs of refugees fleeing war or persecution i.e. housing, health, welfare, orientation within the first year of the refugee's arrival. These are our Year 1 orientation, accommodation and support services that prepare individuals and families to integrate into Birmingham. From Year 2 onwards, smaller projects or additional services are commissioned over the lifetime of the resettlement scheme that address medium to longer term resettlement and integration goals utilising an approach that fosters settlement and promotes independence. These include employment, navigation, welfare /

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Tenancy and Mental Health services. These services will be in place for the duration of the funding window. Grants programmes augment these services by addressing specific gaps in services dependent on the presenting needs of the refugee group and communities supporting them. This allows greater flexibility to develop community assets and bespoke community led solutions. Funding from Central Government will dictate the duration and scope of services commissioned whilst the grants programmes and services commissioned are administered in line with BCC procurement and contracting regulations.

8. In 2021, nationally 1,587 people were granted protection through resettlement schemes[1]. Within one month of the Ukraine visa scheme being established, 3,200 Ukrainian families had arrived in the country, which was double the annual number of arrivals across all resettlement schemes. The numbers gave a clear indication that, alongside its novel nature, local authorities would need to respond differently to the scale of the crisis. The total numbers of arrivals as set out above clearly indicate that the current crisis is far larger than other recent refugee programmes.

9. In March 2022 Birmingham City Council initiated its emergency procedures in response to the arrival at very short notice of a group of paediatric medical evacuees from Ukraine into the City. This drew in a multi-agency response which included Birmingham Children's Trust, early help teams and Refugee Action to provide the much-needed expertise and the immediate support these families needed (providing financial assistance, going shopping for clothes, shoes, and toys; access benefits and to get poorly children settled into hospital). Due to the confidential nature of the evacuation and sensitive nature of the arrivals (children requiring cancer treatment), the Council could only engage trusted partners and providers. Refugee Action was included in the support to these evacuees.

10. The early emergency response to the crisis was multifaceted in its approach and as well as supporting the urgent arrivals, it also looked at the following:

   a. Communicating and providing support to BCC staff who were impacted by the crisis.

   b. Communicating with residents - both in terms of support those directly affected and signposting to support as well as those that wanted to offer support to the large-scale humanitarian assistance.

   c. Supporting the Government's approach by reviewing the Council's contracts and investments to check for those that had Russian economic interests.

11. By the end of March, more than 100 Ukrainian refugees had arrived in Birmingham under the Homes for Ukraine scheme – typically that would be the number the city would see over the course of a year from other schemes. The

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[1] Home Office: National Statistics: How many people do we grant asylum or protection to? - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

formal emergency procedures were stood down by the beginning of April, but the cross-service approach was used to inform the governance for an ongoing Ukraine Response programme. The programme drew on existing resources from several directorates including Birmingham Children's Trust, Adult Social Care, Housing, Education & Skills, the Contact Centre, finance, etc to help support the response.

12. By the end of June 2022, the City had seen over 400 arrivals which represents just under two-thirds of the total arrivals that have been received to date. This initial response was being provided in a highly uncertain policy and financial landscape, with little clear published guidance from Central Government as well as access to or clarity around funding. The policy development timeline is detailed in the following section to provide greater context of the level of local discretion and decision-making that was required.

13. Up to the 15th January 2023, the City has seen 730 Ukrainian guests arriving to 315 sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. There are also 242 Ukrainian nationals that have been matched to a Birmingham sponsor and have been issued with a Homes for Ukraine scheme and are yet to arrive. As the chart below shows, the largest month for Homes for Ukraine arrivals was May 2022, after which successive months have seen a gradual decline in the number arrivals – although guests continue to arrive (e.g. 30 in December 2022). We have much better data available on those arriving under this scheme than for Family Visa arrivals. At present we do not know the number of Family Visa arrivals in Birmingham, but we estimate (in line with the national numbers) that there may be approximately an additional 200 such persons.

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Chart: Homes for Ukraine guest arrivals by month (2022)

Guest Arrivals by Month
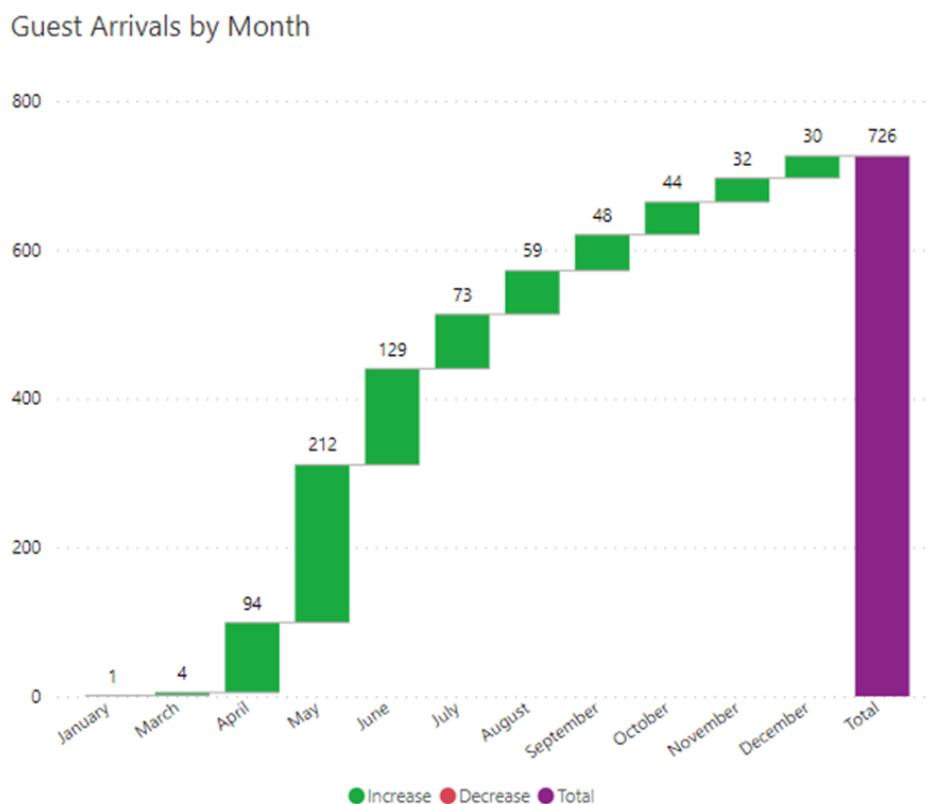
Source: BCC Refugee Resettlement Solution Management Dashboard

Policy development timeline

14. In **April 22**, the Government issued the first version of its guidance to LAs which also provided access to the Home Office online portal (called 'Foundry') which allowed local authorities to review the data and records of individuals sponsored into Birmingham. The system was beset with glitches and anomalies which made working with it exceptionally difficult for officers. At the outset there were thousands of individual records on the Government portal with little or no guidance on its use or functionality. This system:

    a. Made it difficult to assess if Ukraine families were still in Ukraine or neighbouring countries or had already arrived in Birmingham.

    b. Didn't articulate the checks the Home Office and Border Force had undertaken before agreeing the match of guests to sponsors.

    c. Was slow and unresponsive – with delays in updating visa and travel dates.

    d. Many important guest or sponsor details were wrongly recorded or duplicated. For example, guests were assigned to the wrong local authority based on the location of their host.

    e. Some Hosts had multiple families or individuals registered to them.

15. At the end of April, Government shared some information and guidance that would enable local authorities to plan effectively and set out the requirements for checks.

16. The **end of May** saw the release of more detailed guidance, which included further expectations on local authorities. At the **end of June 22** the Government issued guidance on the processes for alerting them of failed accommodation and safeguarding checks. Officers with access to the Foundry portal, had real concerns (that later materialised) of families arriving to unsafe situations or that an unaccompanied child would arrive without an appropriate guardian. Where these incidents materialised, the Council were able to intervene with the assistance of Border Force to ensure the safety of guests.

17. There were 12 updates to the guidance issued to local authorities between April – August 22, with further changes in policy related to unaccompanied children and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) requirements up until November 22, and most significantly funding changes in December which has meant an overall reduction in funds from what had previously been provided for arrivals in the earlier stages of the scheme.

B. PWC CONTRACT

18. One of the key challenges at the outset of the programme was the Council's role in safeguarding the arrival of vulnerable Ukrainian families. Upon receipt of Central Government's data through the Foundry system, it was clear that guests had arrived or were shortly arriving to their sponsored accommodation before local authorities had been able to take any action or carry out any checks. This created a significant risk to both the guest and sponsor families. However, Government explicitly recognised that this was a consequence of the scheme and considered that in the circumstances of a humanitarian crisis this was an acceptable risk. Birmingham City Council sought to minimise the risk and prioritised the safety of guests including children. Good management of the data was considered to be essential for this purpose and to the effective overall management of our response.

19. On 6th September 2022, Cabinet approved resource proposals for the Ukraine programme, including the allocation of £330,000 plus VAT of funding for PwC to further develop a case management and reporting system.

20. The paid work that PwC undertook built on substantial pro bono support they already provided to help the Council build a digital solution to capture, store and use data relating to Ukrainians guests and hosts. The purpose of the PwC work was to allow timely understanding by the Council of the situation in the City, facilitate effective decision making and to support contract management of service providers and delivery of services to hosts and guests, including safeguarding services.

21. The scale and volume of guests arriving and sponsors coming on board meant there was a significant amount of data that needed to be managed. Activity was initially spread across at least six different Council services (BCC contact centre, adult social care, finance, HR, Birmingham's Children's Trust). This meant data being maintained, shared, and updated in multiple places, increasing administrative resources and costs, and making the data harder to use. The tool that PwC started to develop through their pro bono engagement meant that the data could be securely contained in one place and accessed appropriately by the relevant services.

22. At the end of their six-week pro bono engagement, PwC had built up a unique cross-service understanding of the requirements for the Council's approach to the Ukraine response. From this they built the framework of a case management system and reporting tool, which now provides insights on how the Council is managing safeguarding risks, performing against Central Government requirements[2], as well as providing a 'live' view as to where Ukrainian families/individuals are arriving in Birmingham, and facilitating some key needs (e.g., access to immediate cash resources for guests on arrival, and regular thank you payments to hosts). This was seen as being the most cost effective and efficient means for the Council to be able to maintain its response to the Ukraine crisis.

Image: Dashboard excerpt showing arrived guests in Birmingham by ward (as of January 15th 2023)
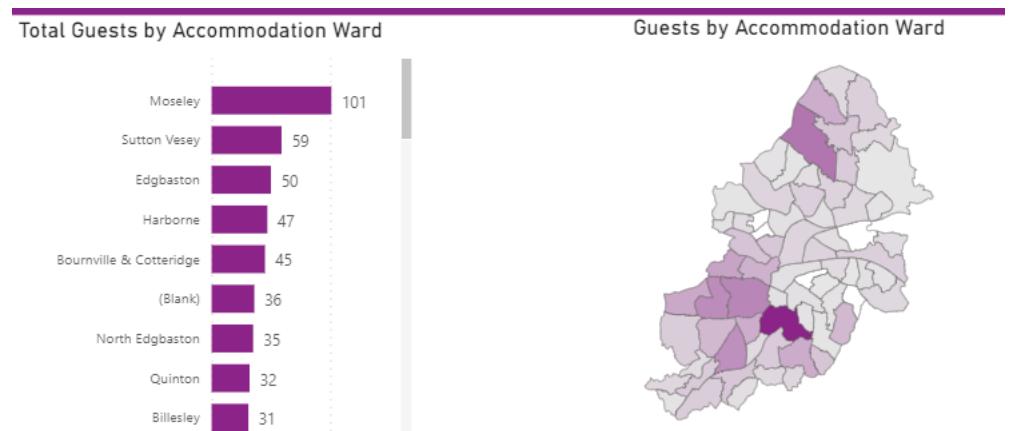
23. The tool plays a key role in supporting safeguarding requirements, allowing a detailed view of progress with safeguarding checks[3] and helping to ensure these are prioritised based on the arrival status of the guests and an assessment of risk. This has also enabled the Council to fail multiple sponsors that have not met these requirements, ahead of their Ukrainian guests arriving. It allows a mapping at local level of where checks are still outstanding, helping to focus attention on key risks to children and vulnerable adults.

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[2] Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[3] The safeguarding checks includes a Children's Advice and Support Service, Disclosure and Barring Check and pre arrival home check

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24. The tool is also a key operational tool that is being used by Refugee Action and its partners. It manages and also monitors the distribution of the early support payment of £200 for every guest and signals where payments are outstanding. It similarly supports the monthly £350 thank you payment to hosts (now topped up with additional resources of at least £150 per month). Having this tool has also meant the Council has been able to swiftly automate new processes – such as the introduction of free three months travel passes to all guests on the Home for Ukraine Scheme. Within three weeks of the beginning of this we had distributed more than 300 bus passes.

25. PwC's contract finished on the 16th September 2022, and the work has transferred to the relevant Council teams. There are no related ongoing payments to PWC. The tool continues to generate value and provide an up-to-date view of key information relating to the programme of Ukraine work. Our intention is to build from this work with Ukrainian arrivals towards a better approach for all refugees in Birmingham.

C. REFUGEE ACTION (RA) CONTRACT

26. In the earliest stages of the Ukraine crisis, we used staff from within the Council to conduct safety checks and perform other essential roles. However, this was unsustainable given that this relied on staff carrying out this work in addition to their existing full-time roles. As such we chose to act at pace to award a contract to a service provider. We did this in line with our procurement processes, and on the 26th April 2022 Cabinet were asked to approve a proposal to undertake single contract negotiations with Refugee Action to deliver resettlement support for sponsors and Ukrainian guests.

27. The contract was awarded under Single Contract Negotiation and Refugee Action is the lead provider and contract holder, with 2 sub-contractors (Refugee Migrant Centre and Spring Housing). The scope of the contract is to deliver refugee resettlement and support services to a maximum of 1,000 Ukraine guests (and their hosts) arriving in Birmingham under the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. This Refugee Action contract ends on the 31st of March 2024.

28. The contract was awarded to Refugee Action on the 6th June although formally signed in October 2022. A mobilisation plan was agreed with Refugee Action in May 2022 to cover the negotiation period and this plan was monitored through weekly meetings.

29. The Adult Social Care refugee and migration commissioning team are responsible for contract monitoring which is in line with existing Refugee resettlement contract and performance monitoring. The Refugee Action contract is monitored against 11 Key Performance themes and 41 Indicators. Performance is measured and triangulated using data, information and case studies provided by Refugee Action against KPI's, data extracted from the

refugee resettlement tool, as well as intelligence from stakeholders, concerns, complaints and issues raised with BCC officers.

30. Across the themes and indicators, Refugee Action are performing well in conducting pre arrival checks in a timely manner, and before guests have arrived at their sponsored accommodation. This means that safeguarding risks are being managed and Refugee Action are identifying and addressing safeguarding concerns. They have adopted a multiagency approach to reviewing and responding to cases of concern, which has prevented unsuitable sponsor applicants from joining the scheme, and swift action has been taken where there have been pre and post arrival safeguarding concerns.

31. Whilst Refugee Action are performing well on the processes that support the onboarding of hosts onto the scheme, there has been mixed performance against the provision of guest and host support. The immediate support offered to guests through the distribution of pre-payment cards, bus passes and SIM cards are all being done within the first week of the guest arriving. To date Refugee Action have issued 686 pre-payment cards, 101 bus passes and 343 SIM cards. By the 30th November, they had established contact and conducted in person visits to 577 guests. Through their caseworker model they have focused on building relationships directly with guests so that they can assess and support guests with their immediate and ongoing needs. However, unlike with other resettlement schemes, this is proving more challenging because many guests have and continue to establish relationships of trust, dependency and support with their hosts. In many cases hosts have voluntarily played a very significant and effective role in providing support which might otherwise be provided by public agencies or their contractors. This dynamic is a very novel part of the scheme, of which none of the participants including Refugee Action had any prior experience.

32. Whilst Refugee Action's early priorities have been focused on supporting guests to settle, the pace of support to sponsors has been much slower to be implemented. From October 2022, Refugee Action started to put in place more structured support for sponsors, albeit after many sponsors had already self-organised and/or garnered support from community groups, individuals and organisations. All sponsors are now being offered support and have the opportunity to engage through WhatsApp and email, although there are also many self-organised community-led communication groups in addition to this. Refugee Action are now engaged with community organisations to bolster the support being offered by them with over 75 in-person outreach sessions delivered for sponsors and guests from community venues.

33. Through case studies supplied by Refugee Action and direct correspondence from hosts, there are elements of the quality of guest/host support that are being discussed at the formal and informal contract meetings. However, there is a focus on establishing a more structured approach to gathering direct feedback from guests and hosts to support contract monitoring meetings going forward.

34. Since November 2022 monthly formal and informal contract monitoring has been initiated with the first formal contract monitoring on 7th December 2022. Monthly monitoring meetings will continue up to the beginning of April 2023 and may then move to quarterly KPI reporting.

Contract Monitoring

35. A phased Implementation plan was agreed with Refugee Action to support mobilisation and to ensure a staged transition from BCC delivery, minimising risk to the programme and disruption to guests and hosts. This commenced from 23rd May 2022 and was expected to take 6 weeks. The over-riding priority was to ensure guests arriving from Ukraine into Birmingham did so into safe environments and their immediate needs were met.

36. Unforeseen challenges of this novel scheme resulted in a more protracted transition period. This has enabled Refugee Action to scale up its capacity and skills, whilst adapting their previously tested refugee support response to the new scheme and emerging guidance, to utilise a new refugee resettlement tool, onboard sub-contractors, undertake wellbeing checks and re-matching at scale and pace, and responding to the requirements and expectations of hosts.

37. During the mobilisation phase BCC officers from the Refugee and Migration Team and Ukraine Response programme have held weekly meetings with Refugee Action to oversee the mobilisation plan; monitor progress against the milestones; review concerns /risks or issues that would impact delivery; modify the plan in light of new guidance and implement corrective action where this was required. The mobilisation plan has been fluid to allow for safe handover of distinct programmes of delivery.

38. Acknowledging the lengthy mobilisation, BCC commissioners re-negotiated the contract delivery tariff with RA. **Tariff 1** applied to the arrivals between March – June 2022 where BCC had led the programme delivery and **Tariff 2** For arrivals after June 2022. The tariff did not reflect any changes to the level and quality of service provision but has enabled commissioners to cover additional resource costs that were required to support delivery; secure additional resources to invest into the Ukraine programme and to have further funds to commission services that respond to other emerging needs. This approach is in line with the BCC refugee resettlement model for Afghan, Syrian and other refugee schemes, as isthe overall size of the payment per refugee / guest.

Funding Model and payments

39. Refugee Action will receive:

   a. Tariff 1 - £4350 pp for 1-320 arrivals (March to June 2022)

   b. Tariff 2 - £7251 pp for 321 – 1,000 arrivals (to 31st March 2023)

   c. 50% of the tariff is payable on guest arrival and completion of 5 initial checks.

   d. 50% tariff is payable after 6 months.

Mobilisation

40. **Phase one and Two** would facilitate Refugee Action having access to sponsor and guest data. Refugee Action were initially onboarded to using Share-point database that had been developed internally by BCC to respond to the data anomalies within the DLUHC foundry portal. Due to GDPR they were only able to access some parts of the BCC database until a Homes for Ukraine Data Sharing Agreement was in place. As Refugee Action were an existing provider of existing refugee resettlement agreements, they were approved to cover the onboarding period. There were challenges with Refugee Action getting to grips with this live database whilst simultaneously using their own internal systems and processes which was a capacity l and technical shift for Refugee Action staff. At this time, Refugee Action were also recruiting new staff to oversee the contract delivery. Phase one of contract monitoring reflected the challenges and the novel aspect of this part of the mobilisation.

41. Refugee Action also led the operational delivery of priority areas identified by BCC Ukraine Response. This included issuing of £200 prepayment cards for new arrivals within set timeframes (to date Refugee Action have issued prepayment cards to 194 guest households which accounts for 686 guests, and these have been issued within an average of 4 working days), commencing post arrival checks on guests flagged for priority review who arrived between March-June 2022 and initiating accommodation checks on newly arriving guests where BCC had identified a concern. 293 guests' details were provided to Refugee Action to conduct post arrival visits. Completion of these checks within agreed timeframes (6 weeks) were monitored during the weekly meetings with Refugee Action.

42. With safeguarding the key priority, initial contact was made with guests and hosts who were sponsoring unaccompanied children, guests with special needs, families with young children or where pre-arrival checks had flagged a concern.

43. **Phase Three and Four** Refugee Action took on responsibility for providing emergency assistance where guest/sponsor relationships had broken down, provision of housing advice and assistance as well as re-matching. They were responsible for undertaking all new wellbeing checks on arrivals and initiating host support. Refugee Action initiated stakeholder engagement with Ukraine support groups (Moseley, Sutton, Centrala) and BVSC Engage for Ukraine. Some examples of specific support provided by Refugee Action include:

    a. Supported a guest to access sector specific training to enhance employment opportunities. L was a nurse for 25 years in Ukraine and is keen to get back into nursing. Refugee Action have referred her to specialised provider that have started supporting L in preparing for the required medical exams.

    b. Supported a young person with integration. B had been struggling to adapt in the UK and missed her father and friends from Ukraine. Her mother advised that her daughter is only interested in dance classes, but she could not afford them. Refugee Action identified and negotiated free full-time tuition at a dance studio, which B has been attending since October.

This has helped her become more integrated and sociable with other children.

c. Supported a family to bring over their pet. The family was eager to bring their dog from Ukraine into UK but was struggling with the process and the paperwork. Refugee Action supported the family in the end-to-end process; from finding a vet in Germany to support with the medical requirements of the dog; to completing the paperwork and obtaining a license APHA. Refugee Action also supported the family with advocacy to release the dog from quarantine and be united with the family.

d. Supported the safe transition of a guest to another local authority by continuing wellbeing support. A case related to an individual with mental health concerns who left the host accommodation to secure work in a factory and lost touch as they moved to another local authority. Refugee Action tracked the client down to continue providing wellbeing support until the new LA picked this up.

44. **Phase 5** Complete delivery including data cleansing and CASS referrals. This will commence in April 2023.

D. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO HOST & GUEST CONCERNS

45. The scale and novel nature of the Homes for Ukraine scheme has meant that there have been many challenges to delivery, particularly in rapidly designing and implementing new processes. Perhaps the most striking innovation in the Homes for Ukraine scheme is the role of hosts – those local people who have voluntarily come forward to provide refuge for a Ukrainian guest. Hosts stepped into this role in an environment of great uncertainty, had a wide range of differing expectations about their role and the support they would receive, and have experienced a wide range of outcomes in terms of the nature of their guests and the challenges they have faced.

46. It is a remarkable strength of the Homes for Ukraine approach that guests have willing hosts who often act as their advocates, help them navigate their new environment, and facilitate access to essential services and resources. This is in contrast to many other refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who arrive under different arrangements. The council has sought to respond to the needs of hosts in a challenging and fast-moving environment.

47. Over the course of the previous nine months, the following challenges have been faced:

New financial processes and payments for guests and hosts

48. As Ukrainian guests started to arrive at the end of March 2022 there was not an established payment mechanism that enabled the Council to easily roll out the £200 initial payments to guests. The Council had recently adopted a new

payment system, which made it difficult to pay individuals directly. The £200 payments were essential to arrivals having access to immediate cash, and we quickly started to receive concerns from hosts about the delay in payments. In early April, to avoid any significant delay Refugee Action, through the vehicle of an existing resettlement contract arrangement (Afghan / Syrian resettlement) started to roll out prepayment cards directly to guests that had arrived and were continuing to arrive.

49. Similar issues surrounding payment mechanisms also applied to the monthly sponsor (host) 'thank you' payments. By May 2022, some hosts were beginning to experience the financial strain of adding to their households. A solution was identified through the adult social care system, CareFirst, which would mean an automated and enduring payment solution. However, this did require some configuration/development work so that sponsors data could be maintained separately from any adult social care records. Whilst this was set up, off-system payments through Oracle were made at the end of June which included any backdated payments. The CareFirst 'thank you' payments went live at the end of July and is still managing the monthly Sponsor payments.

50. Whilst these system issues were one facet of the delay in sponsor 'thank you payments, guidance from Central Government changed at the end of May 2022, which related to the requirements needed for local authorities to onboard and pay a sponsor. As well as successfully clearing any pre-arrival checks, the post arrival wellbeing visit became a 'new' prerequisite to enable payment.

51. Host payments are now routinely made at the beginning of each month basis, in arrears, and this is monitored through the dashboard.

Resource intensive/face to face checks

52. Prior to June 2022, the Council had resources from Birmingham Children's Trust and the Contact Centre that could focus on onboarding and conducting pre-arrival/initial checks on sponsors. There was limited resource that could be pivoted to conduct post arrival visits without impacting a critical service to other vulnerable residents. Therefore, this was deemed as a first priority for the commissioned provider, Refugee Action, to get to grips with. In the interim, Birmingham Children's Trust were on hand to support any urgent/high risk cases. In early June, the Council started to received challenges and concerns about the lack of face-to-face visits. Refugee Action began to conduct post arrival visits and based on the 150-household backlog (293 guests), took a risk-based approach to conducting visits for e.g., identifying those that had arrived with children and vulnerable adults.

Community Organisation involvement

53. During the timeline it took to agree and onboard the commissioned provider, Refugee Action, community organisations were actively supporting Ukraine arrivals in a range of ways i.e., helping arrivals with practical elements like food/clothes shopping through to helping them apply for benefits. Community organisations began to voice concerns about their capacity to maintain support at the scale required without any additional resources from the Council.

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54. By the end of May, there was a growing consensus that their level of involvement was unsustainable. In response to this, the Council announced a grant scheme for organisations supporting Ukraine guests and sponsors. The grants awarded enabled support to be provided across a range of areas stemming from employment support, low level mental health therapies as well as support to hosts. The scheme made 14 grants awards to 9 organisations, to a value of £270,000.

55. Through community organisations' extensive engagement with guests, they started to raise the issue of travel as one of the key issues that was impacting Ukrainian arrivals to successfully begin to settle. Through support from National Express, the Council secured funding to launch free 12-week bus passes for Homes for Ukraine and Family Visa Scheme arrivals. Through the volume and demographic data that was held by the Council, National Express were able to financially profile the costs, which enabled them to confirm the offer. The first phase for Homes for Ukraine was launched on the 6th September followed by the Family Visa Scheme in October. National Express are using this as a pilot to see if this can be extended to other resettlement schemes.

Direct engagement with community groups and hosts, emerging issues

56. Since September 2022, BCC has proactively sought to build and sustain relationships with community organisations that are offering support to Ukrainian arrivals, to get a more holistic view of the ongoing needs of the community. The programme has created a small stakeholder group which currently includes key community organisations alongside a number of hosts. The group met for the first time in November and developed a shared action plan. Within the plan, the following priorities have been identified as immediate areas of action that benefit Ukrainian families and have a significant positive impact on their ability to settle in the City:

   a. Improving the communication channels and signposting to support

   b. Finalising a housing move approach and looking at employment pathways

   c. Provision of ESOL

57. One of the first actions that has been driven forward by the group has been to support the operational design of the £3-4000 move on fund that was announced by the Council in November 2022, to support Ukrainian households move on from hosting arrangements to their own. The group have devised the claims process and communication approach to rolling out the funds. The first phase of roll out begun at the start of the year and has initially targeted guests that have recently moved on from hosting arrangements and those that are in the process of moving on. The Council has made one full payment of the move on fund to support a guest moving on to private rented accommodation and is processing three more payments as of 18th January 2023. We are continuing to roll out and this offer will be available to all guests.

58. As well as engaging organisations, the programme has also started to directly engage with hosts (and has plans to do so with guests). In December 2022, the Council hosted two events for sponsors – one face to face and one virtual - to listen to their experiences of hosting. The events were attended by approximately 85 hosts, who provided a wide range of experience and views about their sponsorship arrangements. There were sponsors that had signed up to the scheme and had very little knowledge and/or no expectation about accessing support and wanted to provide this themselves; whereas there were others that solely saw their role as providing accommodation and expected the wraparound support to their guest would be provided by the Council or elsewhere. Some hosts have had guests that required quite intensive support, whilst others have had guests that are either well-resourced or almost completely self-sufficient. The range of experience and expectations was very diverse. However, like the community organisations, they raised the same priorities in relation to guest's needs. This has provided validation to the priorities being addressed in the action plan.

E. EVOLVING POLICY AND FUTURE LANDSCAPE

59. The Council is trying to provide a higher level of support to Ukrainian refugees than for any previous group of arrivals. It is doing this in a new way with much greater reliance on the generosity and efforts of private citizens: as hosts; through community and voluntary organisations; and also through private individuals who have voluntarily chosen to act as brokers and provide support to host and guest families. Homes for Ukraine sponsors have become a strong advocate for their guests and are challenging parts of the system and reframing expectations about the level and intensity of support that should be provided to refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.

60. This has come at a time when the Council needs to refresh its City of Sanctuary strategy. Therefore, the following lessons from this programme will help to inform this approach:

   a. The Ukraine response has shown that an inter-agency response and capacity is required for medium- to long-term resettlement programmes, beyond the traditional emergency planning arrangements to ensure that emerging needs can be anticipated and met.

   b. The Council's programme and data management (including the resourcing of a single online tool) have been essential to meeting the scale of the challenge and has helped to leverage new investments and initiatives such as the free bus travel and approach to guests moving on to independent accommodation.

   c. Establishing good community engagement and partnership working with the voluntary and community sector from the outset will help to provide an enhanced view of needs. It will also maintain confidence and trust through periods of uncertainty.

d. Practical data/systems/technology capabilities have an impact on the Council's capacity to respond to crisis/rapid events - for example having in place a platform to make payments at scale and direct to residents.

e. There is an ongoing challenge responding to public expectations, where high-level national announcements run ahead of the issuing of any detailed guidance and direction.

61. It is important that given the novel nature of this resettlement approach, the Council draws on any lessons learnt to inform the future approach to resettlements and seeks to apply this in so far as it is possible across the board to all refugee groups. However, Homes for Ukraine provides specific national funding for arrivals under this scheme which is not available for other refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. Similarly, the Homes for Ukraine scheme provides significant data on the individuals who are arriving, which facilitates better service provision and support. Again, this data is not available to the council for other arrivals, including for those Ukrainian arrivals under the Family Visa scheme. As well as seeking to apply the lessons of the Ukraine programme locally across the board, there remains a strong need to advocate nationally for equitable treatment and funding of all refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, regardless of their country of origin and entry route.

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Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Friday 27th January 2023**

Subject:	Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group
Report of:	Councillor Sir Albert Bore
	Chair Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny
Report author:	Nikki Spencer
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1   Purpose

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

1.2   The programme has delivered a number of customer benefits in year one including the creation of an easy-read Customer Service Strategy, a co-created Customer Charter, introduced a Citizen Panel, the refresh and cleansing of approximately 800 web pages to date; and end to end discovery of 4 high volume, high priority service areas for the Council providing a set of recommended opportunities for services to improve the customer experience and increase customer satisfaction.

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 Highways.

2.2.   Agrees that the Task & Finish Group should take further action to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.

2.3.   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 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.

3.2.   Feedback was previously submitted to the committee (9 December 2022) on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management.

3.3.   Highway Repairs

3.3.1. Task & Finish Group held on 12th December 2022 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth, Head of Highways PFI Procurement, Highways & Infrastructure, and Programme Manager, and Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Product Owner and Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, a status update provided and clarified with further comments and recommendations from OSC taken onboard by the service representatives.

3.3.2. It was accepted that current systems are not integrated as well as they should be and need to be joined up and the quality of responses vastly improved. However it was generally acknowledged that the procurement of the new system, currently inflight, has the potential to address many of the pain points identified and provide a common approach and consistency across services such as Housing Repairs, for example.

3.3.3. The procurement of the new technical solution also has the potential to address a number of the recommendations, such as consolidation of complaints - enabling the identification of duplicate complaints generated from multiple sources; and automation of the reporting process – providing customers to easily report issues on the go.

3.3.4. OSC noted it was positive that customer engagement takes place within the service but more needs to be done. The services assured the group the requirement was detailed in the new PFI contract for contractors to work in alignment and ensure focus groups are reflective and representative. This will be further strengthened by the work around public participation and citizen engagement by Strategic Equality Partnership and the new strategy developed as a result.

3.3.5. The correct use of process and systems established for Member enquiries/complaints was discussed and although the use of forms was muted due to the time it takes to complete them, in fact 85% of queries come through the corporate complaints route with exception of critical cases which go direct to the relevant service. However the majority are Member enquiries rather than complaints and it was agreed clarification of an improved process to better deal

with member requests needs to be explored which will also relieve the impact on the complaints team.

3.3.6.   The above 3.3.5 is exacerbated by two teams in Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints. As a Digital and Customer Service activity, OSC commented this required one team to own it and then DCS to close task 3.3.6 down.

3.3.7.   There was a consensus for a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise activities within the service, including the ability for Members to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge. 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 Members identify as a priority, requires further exploration.

3.3.8.   OSC acknowledged the rejection of Clean Air Zone (CAZ) recommendation as this currently sits with two different directorates (Highways for non-payment of PCNs and CAZ team for communications and messaging about the CAZ charge and how to pay) further work needs to be undertaken to resolve this.

4. Any Finance 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 qtr. of 2021/22 and 2022/23.

4.2.   The savings that are currently set out in the MTFP increase by £600k in 2023/2024, phase 2 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. Appendices

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

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Code	Insight	Recommendation detail	Initial rating	Delivery Accountability
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, 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 24-Nov : clear online guidance developed and published: what to do after someone dies, offline guidance is awaiting sign off and coroners review. Amendments to offline guide were made to reflect the online guide; further bereavement changes required to make clear that only next of kin/one nominated lead family member to try and reduce the volume of duplicate enquiries. Coroners web content to be reviewed inline with existing guide/forum for Bereavement Officers. Registers medical examiner system (informing bereaved when form issued and a medical examiner will be involved) resulting in a further change to the documentation being required - target date Mar/Apr tbc which will impact all services. Hold back until April - validate to prior to print.*	Medium	Programme
B	Wildlife can have a negative impact on grave sites, which can be distressing for the family.	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 24-Nov : Wildlife is an on-going issue that is being managed by the service - adding information to interpretation boards and signage with QR codes; community meeting in Yardley Chapel to involve local Cllrs to educate public, Badger ecologist to attend in the next couple of weeks. 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).*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme
C	Some grave sites are not well maintained over time.	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 24-Nov : work inflight to articulate clear guidelines for people, eg; 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 - potential link to memorial safety (resource intensive as too many graves unattended); not actively promoting grave maintenance service due to resource capacity - previously hasn't generated substantial income.*	Low	Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme
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 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 24-Nov : we need to chase the timeline for this (scanning) and circulate the timeline. Soft market testing underway and follow with an analysis of options for new system; RPA - service "put on the list" of potential developments that could offer a saving but not yet prioritised. Eliminated a lot of paperwork printing previously required unless a physical copy required but manual entry still being done. Digitisation of Bereavement forms inflight (not necessarily a wet signature but a true copy of signature that complies with the e-signature requirements - need to be validated) Links to Register Office digitisation - Private Beta and then Public Beta inflight before wider roll out for full replacement of Registration Online (RON) and NHS Digital (EMCD element - no physical medical certificates required no scanning/printing) which is out of scope for programme.*	High	Programme
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 (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 24-No v: 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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing with support from programme
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, 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 24-Nov : the service is trying to find a scheme that works, however there is also an impact on staffing and time required etc. Agreed in principle as already offer this as a service but resourcing it will be an issue until recruitment completed; will need to be reviewed once resources in place. Impact on 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.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing

G	Some funerals run over time, which has a knock on impact for later bookings and for staff.	Communicate to citizens the overrun charge and ensure they are aware of where responsibility for this penalty lies (i.e. funeral directors) *Status Update 24-Nov : service need to be better on the comms but down to funeral directors to manage these situations. 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.*	Medium	Rejected
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 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 24-Nov : Need a system that keeps funeral directors updated, does the current functionality have scope to be improved? assistance from the programme required. Graves that are being opened are demarcated by boarding and matting around the grave. Traditional type graves, with kerb sets, are 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. Already inflight with ministers, however paths not possible in older cemeteries but have already been incorporated in newly designed cemeteries.*	Low	Service: work started/ongoing
I	The current system is unable to notify funeral directors of updates and changes to their bookings.	Ensure the new bereavement system has the capability to keep funeral directors updated without having to make manual checks on the system. *Status Update 24-Nov : 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*	High	Informed new solution spec
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 bereavement system has the capability to provide funeral directors with a view of all current bookings with the council. *Status Update 24-Nov : 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*	High	Informed new solution spec
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. Consider how to standardise the process across all sites based on best practice. *Status Update 24-Nov : there are differences across sites, standardised model but different areas doing different things, we should have common processes. The service has merged teams and are adopting a more standardised and streamlined approach. There will always be differences as not every site offers that same services as another. O&S concerned about this being rejected.*	Low	Rejected
L	Some funeral directors give incorrect information to citizens about BCC's availability to conduct funerals.	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 24-Nov : 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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
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. 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 24-Nov : 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.*	Low	Informed new solution spec
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. 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 24-Nov : corporate '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.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing
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 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 24-Nov : 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 guidance.*	High	Service: work ongoing with support from programme
P	Stone masons are often posted invoices from BCC for each individual permit, which creates a lot of manual paperwork for both parties.	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 24-Nov : stone mason invoices, ensuring the Oracle system is working for the service, specification required for Oracle. There is no integration for this at present, the service will require IT support. However, invoices to monumental masons are being raised manually via the Oracle finance system - not a simple task to resolve. O&S - should not be rejected.*	Medium	Rejected

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 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 24-Nov : Agreed that website is useful but signage should 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 - some information already available, but may require payment for customers and research has indicated that this is not liked.*	Low	Informed new solution spec
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).	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 24-Nov : Sutton New Rd open until 7pm, service is investigating if there is demand for the others to be open late. Looking to visit Bradford. 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. When Kings Norton Cemetery extension is developed this will increase the options and a similar approach may be adopted at that site too. The telephone service operates every day except Christmas day to accept short notice bookings both during the week and at weekends.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing
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 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 24-Nov : staffing is currently challenging and looking to backfill vacancies, currently 8 vacancies. Three office staff and three cemetery operatives have been, or are in the process of being, recruited. Shortlisting for more cemetery operatives interviews is currently taking place and there has been an increased interest in the posts. If the required amount of new starters are not identified then the post will be readvertised for a third time. There are another four vacancies that have occurred since the November update.*	Medium	Service: work already ongoing
T	There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses that the service must manage	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 24-Nov : Agreed - work started/ongoing - need to understand the service from data collection, and if remain or fully transition the service to the Contact Centre. Activity inflight inc. Automation; digitisation of forms followed by RPA in the subsequent 6/8 months; and analysis of one email inbox and use of Omni channel.*	High	Programme
U	No key performance indicators available	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 24-Nov : Agreed - as row T above, work already completed. Service is now operating using one telephone number and one e-mail address. Still using Outlook and not omni-mail, so some work remains outstanding for the IT to be developed by the team to support the service.*	High	Programme
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. 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 24-Nov : 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.*	Low	Service: work already inflight
W	User feedback is not available – this was suspended during the pandemic to enable the service to prioritise core services (funerals and memorials).	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 24-Nov : Agreed - help required 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 available on website to enable service users to make request for assistance directly to the service as an alternative to phoning.*	High	Programme
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. Work with the complaints leads to see how they can be avoided through service improvement plans. *Status Update 24-Nov : Agreed - work started/ongoing. The service area has no access to complaint data. From experience of responding to individual complaints, the majority seem to relate to infrastructure and presentation of sites, predominantly due to a lack of investment and resources. Programme supporting the service with obtaining raw data and providing a summary report to inform the service's action plan.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing

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. 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 24-Nov: 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.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing
Z	Additional income generation opportunities	Review fees of core services to understand where the service makes the most revenue, to understand how the service can maximise income *Status Update 24-Nov: 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.*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing
		Review possible package options to encourage relatives to buy additional services, e.g. maintenance or borders for graves *Status Update 24-Nov: subject to site rules. An increase in resources will be needed through the current recruitment processes 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. This scheme was suspended during the pandemic and has not been reintroduced due to lack of resources.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
		Offer longer lease lengths or renewal options for grave leases to generate additional income *Status Update 24-Nov: as row-Z above. 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	Service: work started/ongoing

HOUSING REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Code	Insight	Recommendation	Initial Rating	Delivery Accountability
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. Link to Rows 20 & 22*	Medium	Programme
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 faciliate 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. Link to Rows 19 & 22*	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.*	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.	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. ***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.* *Link to Rows 19 & 20*	**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.	More joined up/partnerhsip 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. ***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.* *Wider tenant satisfaction measures - Apr23 and target publication Jun/Jul23. *(Joint delivery by Service and Programme)* *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.*	**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.	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. ***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 Customer Service Programme, this functional requirement will now be incorporated in the new tender process.* *Strongly supported by O&S - if we get this right, it will revolunise the service; timeline for activity required.* *Link to Row 25*	**Medium**	Inform new solution spec
25	Customers sometimes miss repair appointments, which is costly to the service.	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. ***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).* *Link to Row 24*	**Medium**	Service: work started/ongoing

#	Finding	Recommendation / Status	Priority	Owner
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.	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. *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 referemce.* *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.* *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.*	High	Service with support from programme
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.	More effective working closely with partners, sharing data and systems, to improve efficiencies and the experience customers have of the service. *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* *O&S: Proactive approach required to address this recommendation and plug the tenant data gaps.*	High	Service with support from programme
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.	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. *Status Update 29-Nov: Customer Standards Workshops to embed principles of our customer charter 'putting customers first all the time, every time'.* *O&S: require an update on the issues coming out of the workshops as part of the next phase of Task and Finish Group work.*	Medium	Programme
29	Data shows that there were over 70,000 calls related to housing applications	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. *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.* *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.* *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.* *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.* *O&S: historical levels are far too high; escalation to Housing O&S for visibility*	High	Programme
30	Data shows over 20,000 calls were made by customers checking their rent/council tax balance	Ensure customers are made aware how they can view their balance online via the BRUM account *Status Update 29-Nov: Online rent account account, payments calculator, payment history and notifications all live in the Brum Account. Need shift to self serve to irradicate calls for simplier enquiries.* *Service provide 12-week support at the beginning of the tenancy journey, communicating the expectations of tenants.*	Medium	Programme
		Some contractors have a FLAG initiaive 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 *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*	Medium	Service

WASTE MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Code	Insight	Recommendation	Initial Rating	Delivery Accountability
31	Slab in the cab is currently used at the driver's/team leader's discretion n.b. 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.	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. *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 anomolies 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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
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.	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. *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.* **O&S** - *The ability for concerned residents to report HMO missed bins needs to explored, as currently this can only be reported if the property location of the missed bin is known.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
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.	Use slab in the cab to reallocate dropped work before crews return to the depot. *Status update 05-Dec: see row 32*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
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.	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 *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 vehciles should be sourced in advance and if not possible the work reallocated between other crews with capacity.*	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.	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. *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 trunaround 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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing

#	Issue	Action / Status Update	Priority	Status
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.	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. *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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme
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.	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. *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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme
38	Sometimes rubbish is accidentally dropped during rounds. The public can at times become aggressive and there are road rage incidents towards the crews.	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. *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.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
39	Staff highlighted that due to traffic issues on their rounds they miss around 15 streets a day resulting in many missed bins.	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. *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*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
40	Not all streets are included on the digital form when reporting a missed bin collection, making this a painful process for some customers.	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. *Status update 05-Dec : Dependency on LLPG data between the mapping solution and the line of business application which needs to 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.*	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.	Note: We understand legislation around garden waste has recently changed and local authorities may no longer be able to charge for garden waste. *Status update 05-Dec : We are looking to introduce reoccuring 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 subsription 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.* *O&S - recommends a move to an automatic renewal system; once residents sign up we tend to retain them (very few cancel)*	Low	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.	Consider reviewing the current mechanism for informing a customer their collection will not be done on a single occasion or for multiple occasions. *Status update 05-Dec : See Row 32 - Covered by KIT implementation - pulls all the repeats together to be provided with a hotspot of issues.*	High	Service: work started/ongoing
43	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.	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. *Status update 05-Dec : See Row 36 - Keep Britain Tidy and HMO engagement*	Medium	Service: work started/ongoing with support from the programme

HIGHWAY REPAIRS
RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Code	Insight	Recommendation	Initial Rating	Delivery Accountability
44	The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality.	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. **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. *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*	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)	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 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. *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.*	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	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. 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. *Update 12-Dec : Need one team to own it and close the task down*	High	TBC should be DCS not programme
47	The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'.	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. Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service. Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme *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 envoke 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*	Medium	Service with Programme support

#	Issue	Recommendation	Priority	Status
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.	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. Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penality 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. *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* *Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend* *O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.*	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.	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. 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. *Update 12-Dec : This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available*	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.	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. 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. *Update 12-Dec : This will be possible with the new technological solutions becoming available to automate the process*	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.	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. 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. *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*	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.	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. 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. *Updae 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.*	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 |

Code	Insight
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.
B	Wildlife can have a negative impact on grave sites, which can be distressing for the family.
C	Some grave sites are not well maintained over time.
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.
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.

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.
G	Some funerals run over time, which has a knock on impact for later bookings and for staff.
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.
I	The current system is unable to notify funeral directors of updates and changes to their bookings.
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.
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.
L	Some funeral directors give incorrect information to citizens about BCC's availability to conduct funerals.
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.

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.
O	The process of applying for a permit for a headstone is lengthy and time consuming for bereavement staff, stone masons and relatives.
P	Stone masons are often posted invoices from BCC for each individual permit, which creates a lot of manual paperwork for both parties.
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.
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).
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.

T	There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses that the service must manage
U	No key performance indicators available
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.
W	User feedback is not available – this was suspended during the pandemic to enable the service to prioritise core services (funerals and memorials).
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'
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.

Z   Additional income generation opportunities
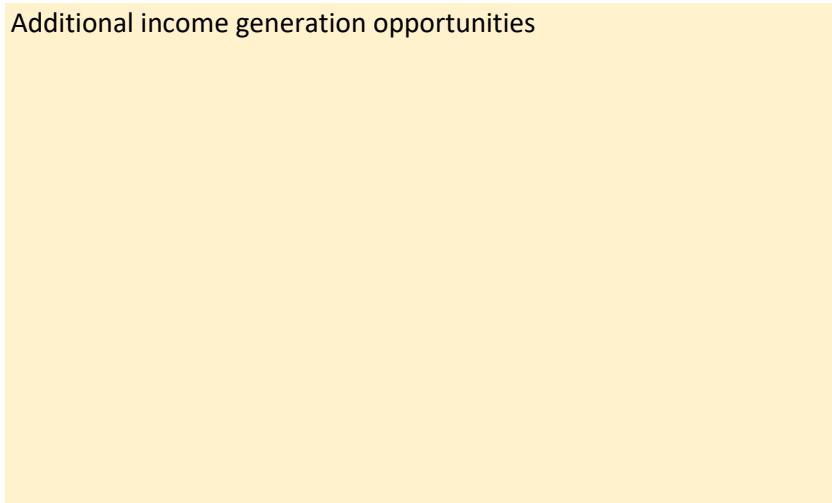
Recommendation summary

Create clear guidance taking relatives through each step in the process and their options

Communicate with relatives that wildlife can be an issue in graveyards

Communicate with relatives their responsibility of maintaining a grave

Eliminate as much of the physical paperwork as possible as part of the new system

Review the process for booking burials to understand how we could simplify the service

Offer a partial back fill/ partial manual fill
option for relatives

Communicate to citizens the overrun
charge, ensure they are aware of where
responsibility lies

Clearly demarcate graves , ask ministers to
request mourners are mindful of where
they stand

Ensure the new digital system has the
capability to keep funeral directors
updated

Ensure the new system can provide
funeral directors with a view of all current
bookings

Consider which sites are most streamlined
and effective and how to
standardise across all sites

Have online view of ceremony availability
across all sites for citizens

Review the current process of reassigning
grave ownership

Explore how we can better join up and share information internally between Bereavement and Registrars

Review the process and timelines of putting a headstone on a grave and how requests are currently prioritised

Explore possibility of sending invoices to stone masons via BCC's current finance system

Consider how to make sites easier to navigate around, including signage and site maps

Consider establishing an out of hours process to enable Muslim burials to proceed at pace

Consider how we could bring some of the long-term agency staff into the service as permanent staff

Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries -
 opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre

Consider moving to one main service contact number and mailbox with a triage team handling general enquiries -
 opportunity to use the Corporate Contact Centre

Look at ways to promote the creation of Cemetery Friends groups to help provide general information and news relating to local cemeteries

Consider restarting service customer feedback (make available in online and offline) - opportunity to use corporate solution to measure satisfaction levels already in place

Regularly review the complaints data to identify repeat complaints and common trends

Monitor the dates between complaints being submitted and the bereavement team receiving notification by the complaint leads to ensure there are no internal delays.

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

Recommendation detail

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

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.

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, eg; 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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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-

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

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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 -

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

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 -

Priority rating	Delivery Accountability
Medium priority	Programme - in progress
Medium priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Low priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
High priority	Programme - work in progress
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme

Medium priority	Service: completed but work in progress to increase availability as resources permit.
Medium priority	Service: Already in place - complete
Low priority	Service: Already in place - complete
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Low priority	Service: completed
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Low priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme

Medium priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Medium priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Low priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Medium priority	Service: work in progress
Medium priority	Service: work in progress

High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Low priority	Service: work in progress
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Medium priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Medium priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme

Medium priority	Service: work in progress
High priority	Service: work in progress with support from programme
Medium priority	Service: Already in place - completed

Based on our analysis and recommendations we have identified a high-level set of user stories for the
identifying the Minimum Viable Product (MVP, release 1 for private – public beta) and post MVP (rele

#	Type	As a....	I need.....
1	Functional	Member of staff	I need to give relatives a view of what ceremony slots we have
2	Functional	Member of staff	I need to track burial events taking place in real-time and confirm the completion time
3	Functional	Member of staff	I need to view all bookings made online
4	Functional	Member of staff	I need all the required forms for submission in a digital format available on the system for customers to complete
5	Functional	Member of staff	I need to have access to a live dashboard & management information reports
6	Functional	Member of staff	I need to log all service requests received for the service
7	Functional	Member of staff	I need all business customers to receive a digital invoices or output invoice files through software integration
8	Functional	Member of staff	I need to have the ability to add and amend available services and costings as and when necessary
9	Functional	Member of staff	I need to issue work instructions for staff against each booking
10	Functional	Member of staff	I need customers to have access to support and guidance tools
11	Functional	Member of staff	I need to plan, track and carry out activities based on stages of the services we provide (bookings, permits, service requests)

12 Functional	Member of staff	I need to be able to upload and store various file formats
13 Functional	Member of staff	I need to take a payment for services requested
14 Functional	Member of staff	I need to be able to a confirmation of the payment taken
15 Functional	Member of staff	I will need to share a payment reference number with a customer
16 Functional	Member of staff	I need to see the service requested and the payment made
17 Functional	Member of staff	I would like to see the payments taken going to the correct service ledger
18 Functional	As a relative	I need an accurate view of time slots for ceremonies
19 Functional	As a relative	I want to create and manage my account profile
20 Functional	As a relative	I want to provide feedback on the ceremonies arranged by myself or on my behalf
21 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to book everything quickly online
22 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to quickly amend bookings online
23 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to cancel a booking online
24 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to receive a notification email confirmation of my bookings with site location and date/ time details
25 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to see a dashboard of all ceremonies I've booked, including costs
26 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to be updated if there are any changes to a booking
27 Functional	As a funeral director	I want to receive notifications & reminders e.g. missing forms, ceremonies due to take place
28 Functional	As a funeral director	I want to see funeral options available & the equivalent live calculations
29 Functional	As a funeral director	I want to create and manage my account profile

30 Functional	As a funeral director	I want to provide feedback on completed ceremonies & the system
31 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to contact the service on the system
32 Functional	As a funeral director	I need to be able to upload and store various file formats
33 Functional	As a stone mason	I need a standard online process to apply for a permit
34 Functional	As a stone mason	I need a simple, consistent way to be billed for my work
35 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to contact the service on the system
36 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to be able to upload and store various file formats
37 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to receive notifications & reminders
38 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to see all my permit requests on a dashboard including tracking/status of each request submitted
39 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to provide feedback for each completed memorial request on the system
40 Functional	As a stone mason	I need to create and manage my account profile
41 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need a stable connection on my device to access the new application
42 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need to login to the application securely using modern authentication (SSO - AAD)
43 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the application to record user actions
44 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the new application to be scalable to accommodate as a minimum of ~9K bookings per year
45 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the application live environment to be supported every working day
46 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the planned maintenance of the application to be scheduled over the weekend or when demand on the system is low
47 Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the data to be stored securely, (encrypted at rest)
48 Non-functional	As a senior member of staff	I need the new application to have an archiving capability

49	Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need google analytics to monitor website usage and page views
50	Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the new application to support BCC branding
51	Non-functional	As a member of staff	I need the new application to be able to integrate easily with other BCC LOB applications e.g. the register death application
52	Non-functional	As IT&D	I need to proactively monitor the performance of the new application
53	Non-functional	All users	I need to ensure the new application meets the web content accessibility guidelines, WCAG 2.1 level AA
54	Non-functional	All users	I need my applications to be available during my working hours
55	Non-functional	As a funeral director & stone mason	I need to login to the systems securely using modern authentication and RBAC
56	Non-functional	As a relative	I need to login to the systems securely using modern authentication and RBAC (SSO - Brum account)
57	Non-functional	All users	I need the application to be useable across different mobile devices
58	Non-functional	All users	I need the application to work across different browsers

e soft market test delivery team to take into considerations when
ase 2, 3 etc) product roadmap.

So that.....	Initial priority recommendation
So that I can reduce calls from families double checking slots	MVP
So that I can monitor the duration and identify those that have overrun	MVP
So that I can manage bookings and resources appropriately	MVP
So that customers can save & complete the required forms online, with checks before submission	MVP
So that I can monitor operational & financial performance of the service	MVP
So that I can log, track, manage and report on all service requests received by the service	MVP
So that I can have all invoices generated through the corporate finance system	Post MVP
So that I can easily keep our service offering up to date	MVP
So that staff have a clear set of actions they need to complete that is auditable within the system	MVP
So that the system provides tailored self-service support first	MVP
So that I can have a clear view of the activities to be carried out based on the stages of the request	MVP

So that I can submit supporting documents digitally	MVP
So that I can confirm the request has been paid for with the customer	MVP
So that the customer has proof of the payment made	MVP
So that I can confirm the payment has been processed successfully	MVP
So that I can confirm that the service request has been delivered and paid for	MVP
So that we can reconcile service requests and income taken	MVP
So that I can get the most convenient time for me and my family	MVP
So that I can keep my account up to date	Post MVP
So that I can share my experience to help improve the service & system functionality	Post MVP
So that I can get arrangements booked to give the family certainty	MVP
So that I can meet families changing needs whilst not having to call the council	MVP
So that I can meet families changing needs whilst not having to call the council	MVP
So that I can pass on the ceremony details to the family	MVP
So that I can have a quick view of what funerals are taking place, at what time	MVP
So that I can quickly make any amendments to all other arrangements	MVP
So that I can avoid form submission delays and deliver any booked ceremonies	Post MVP
So that I when I meet with families, we can review the options available and total costs	MVP
So that I can keep my account up to date	MVP

So that my feedback is reviewed to help with ongoing service & system improvements	MVP
So that I can submit enquiries & receive responses in one place	Post MVP
So that I can submit supporting documents digitally	MVP
So that I manage my workload and my relationship with families	MVP
So that I can accurately make payments as easily as possible	MVP
So that I can submit enquiries & receive responses in one place	MVP
So that I can submit supporting documents digitally when it's convenient to me	MVP
So that I can see a status of permit submissions and receive reminders should any online forms be missing	Post MVP
So that I can see what permits have been approved and the current stage of those still being processed	MVP
So that my feedback is reviewed to help with ongoing service & system improvements	Post MVP
So that I can keep my account up to date	MVP
So that I can carry out my tasks efficiently	MVP
So that I access systems securely	MVP
So that I have visibility of audit history on the new system	MVP
So that it is capable of meeting increased demand on the service	MVP
So that users have support available to help capture & resolve system or service-related issues	MVP
So that it does not impact system availability to our users	MVP
So that we can prevent any potential data breaches	MVP
So that it meets the BCC corporate & service specific retention schedules	Post MVP

So that I can analyse how citizens navigate and use the information available on website to see if it meets their needs   MVP

So that users have confidence that they are accessing a BCC service   MVP

So that Citizen data can be consistent across BCC and to increase automation efforts   MVP

So that I am aware of application performance issues and I'm able to make continuous improvements   MVP

So that the new application (web site/app/mobile version) is accessible to all users, including users with impairments to their vision, hearing, mobility, thinking & understanding\   MVP

So that I can carry out my tasks efficiently   MVP

So that I access systems securely   MVP

So that I access systems securely   Post MVP

So that I am not restricted to my device type and can work on the move   Post MVP

So that I can carry out my tasks from any secure device   MVP

Notes

Can only digitise non-statutory forms, statutory forms have to remain in paper format that can be scanned/uploaded to the new system

**Further user research would need to be undertaken if this user type was given access to the new application to view bookings made on their behalf and manage bookings directly rather than via a funeral director

Scrutiny Work Programme 2022/23

Chair:	Cllr Sir Albert Bore
Deputy Chair:	Cllr. Kerry Jenkins
Committee Members:	Cllrs: Akhlaq Ahmed, Deidre Alden, Mick Brown, Jack Deakin, Roger Harmer, Mohammed Idrees, Kerry Jenkins, Chaman Lal, Ewan Mackey, Saima Suleman, Alex Yip
Officer Support:	Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services: Christian Scade, (07517 550013)
	Senior Overview & Scrutiny Manager: Fiona Bottrill, (07395884487)
	Scrutiny Manager: Amelia Murray (07825979253)

1 Terms of Reference

1.1 As per City Council on 24th May 2022 the Committee's Terms of Reference is to "plan and co-ordinate the work of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees. To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning governance (including transparency, regional working and partnerships): citizens (including communications and public engagement); performance; customer services; social cohesion; equalities and emergency planning." These functions include:

- giving such guidance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in any cases of uncertainty, as to work which they should or should not be undertaking, as may be necessary to achieve such co-ordination, including the allocation of "call-in" to the appropriate Committee;

- determining, in any cases of uncertainty, the allocation of responsibility for specific tasks between the Overview and Scrutiny Committees;

- ensuring (by means, for example, of issuing appropriate guidance and/or instructions) that the Overview & Scrutiny Committees pay proper attention in their work to the consideration of key cross cutting issues, in particular equalities, transparency and improvement;

- publishing each year an Annual Programme of major scrutiny inquiries as suggested by individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees following consideration of the Council Plan and priorities;

- agreeing the establishment of any task & finish groups; and

- considering overview and scrutiny development, working practices and constitutional arrangements.

2   Purpose of the Report

2.1   To enable the Committee to:

2.2   Review the work programme for the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee and update members on the work programmes of the other Scrutiny Committees and the Scrutiny Inquiries that will be carried out during 2022/23.

3   Recommendations

3.1   The Committee:

3.2   Reviews and agrees any amendments at to the work programme for the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Appendix 1.

3.3   Reviews the work programmes January – March 2023 for the Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity, Education and Children's Social Care, Economy and Skills, Health and Adult Care, Housing and Neighbourhoods, Resources, Transport and Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in Appendix 2

3.4   Notes the update on the Scrutiny Inquiries in section 7 of the report.

4   Background

4.1   Each Scrutiny Committee has developed a work programme and any cross cutting issues have been considered by Co-ordinating OSC to decide how these will   be managed. The Inquiries for 2022/23 have been agreed and the Task and Finish Groups established to undertake this work.

5   Co–ordinating Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

5.1   Appendix 1 sets out the work programme for February – April 2023. Members are asked to review the work programme and the items to be scheduled and agree any amendments.

6   Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes

6.1   The Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee terms of reference include the duty to plan and co-ordinate the work of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees. The work programmes from February – April 2023 for the other Overview and Scrutiny Committees are attached as Appendix 2 to enable Members to consider the range and scope of issues

that will be scrutinised and identify any gaps or duplication to be raised with Committee[1]. The cross-cutting issues relating to future work are set out below:

Lead Committee	Meeting and Agenda Item	Members to be invited and reason
Co-ordinating OSC	Customer Services T&F Group Meetings	The Chair or Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Committee that includes the service under consideration with the Committee's Terms of Reference to be invited.
Health and Social Care O&SC	24 January 2023: Report on Approved Mental Health Professionals	Members of the CYP Mental Health Inquiry from the Education and Children's Social Care O&SC Information will inform the CYP mental health inquiry.
Resources O&SC	9 February 2023 Scrutiny of Budget Proposals	Scrutiny Chairs and Committee Members may want to input views to inform scrutiny of the budget proposals.
Education and Children's Social Care O&SC	22 February 2023: Report from Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP)	Members of the CYP Mental Health Inquiry from the Health and Adult Care O&SC Information from the BSCP will inform the CYP mental health inquiry.
Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity O&SC	Meeting: TBC Report on employment and skills Legacy of the Commonwealth Games	Members of the Economy and Skills OSC At the meeting on the 8th July Co-ordinating O&SC decided that this issue falls within the remit of the CWG, Culture and Physical Activity OSC, and as it has been identified during the work planning for the Economy and Skills O&SC as an issue of interest Members of this Committee would be invited to the relevant meeting.
Co-ordinating O&SC	17 February 2023: Domestic Abuse To enable O&SC to inform the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy	Housing and Neighbourhoods O&SC This O&SC is the appointed Crime and Disorder Committee for the Council. Cllr Yip has been appointed by Co-ordinating O&SC to undertake work with partners in advance of this meeting.

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[1] Scrutiny Work Programme are live documents and may be updated prior to future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in December.

7   Scrutiny Inquiries 2022/23

7.1   Work is progressing for the Scrutiny Inquiries with evidence gathering taking place through Committee Meetings and Task and Finish Groups.

8   Request(s) for Call In / Councillor Call for Action / Petitions Received (if any)

8.1   There are no other meetings scheduled at this time.

Call in Meetings:

None scheduled

Petitions

None scheduled

Councillor Call for Action requests

None scheduled

It is suggested that the Committee approves Friday at 10.00am as a suitable day and time each week for any additional meetings required to consider 'requests for call in' which may be lodged in respect of Executive decisions

9   Forward Plan for Cabinet Decisions

9.1   Since the implementation of the Local Government Act and the introduction of the Forward Plan, scrutiny members have found the Plan to be a useful tool in identifying potential agenda items.

9.2   The Committee may wish to consider whether issues currently listed on the Forward Plan require further investigation or monitoring via scrutiny. This can be viewed in full via Forward Plans (cmis.uk.com).

10   Legal Implications

10.1   There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

11   Financial Implications

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

12 Public Sector Equality Duty

12.1 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.

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

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

13 Use of Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 – Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme February – April 2023

13.2 Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes February – April 2023

CO-ORDINATING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

Meeting Date: 17 February 2023   **10.00am Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House**

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Domestic Abuse	Strategy / Policy Review and Development	To enable Co-ordinating OSC to inform the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services Kalvinder Kohli, Programme Director – Prevention and Early Intervention Revinder Johal, Commissioning Manager	TBC	TBC	Cllr. Yip has been working with officers and a round table meeting was held in December 2022 which will inform the February meeting.
Scrutiny Work Programme	Decision	To review the work programme and agree the items to be considered at future meetings, to receive an update on the Work Programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Scrutiny Inquiries	Christian Scade	N/A	N/A	

Final Deadline:8 February 2023

Meeting Date: 17 March 2023   10.30am Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Leader Priorities	Cabinet Member Priorities	Cabinet member to set out priorities for the administration and key deliverables for 2022/23 and issues for further scrutiny within the remit of the Committee: Structure and Governance of the Council Communications Council Wide Efficiency and Improvement Policy and Partnerships West Midlands Combined Authority	Rebecca Grant	Leader.		
Exempt Accommodation	Report on implementation of Recommendations of Exempt Accommodation Scrutiny Inquiry	To report on the implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the Exempt Accommodation Scrutiny Inquiry	Guy Chaundy	N/A	N/A	May be postponed to April 2023 to allow time to progress implementation.

| Customer Services Programme | Report from Task and Finish Group | To report on the implementation of the Task and Finish Group recommendations and services response to the culture workshops | Wendy Griffiths | N/A | N/A | |
| Scrutiny Work Programme | Decision | To review the work programme and agree the items to be considered at future meetings, to receive an update on the Work Programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Scrutiny Inquiries | Christian Scade | N/A | N/A | |

Final Deadline:8 March 2023
Publication: 9 March 2023

Meeting Date: 14 April 2023   **10.00am Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House**

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Scrutiny Work Programme	Decision	To review the work programme and agree the items to be considered at future meetings, to receive an update on the Work Programmes of the Overview and Scrutiny	Christian Scade	N/A	N/A	

		Committees and Scrutiny Inquiries				
TBC						

Final Deadline: 5 April 2023
Publication: 6 April 2023

To be scheduled:

To consider the data available from the City Observatory that is relevant to the terms of reference for the Co-ordinating OSC

Council Procedures and Arrangements

Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements

Update on Election Act to Committee before new year following report to Committee in December 2021

Update on Trailblazer Devolution Deal

Report on how the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are tacked and monitored and relate to the wider Council including Cabinet Members and Senior Officers. Email and digital security within the Council

Consider developing a Scrutiny Communications Strategy during 2023/24

Update on Elections Act: To be reported after May 2023 including learning from elections held in other areas.

COMONWEALTH GAMES, CULTURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 1ˢᵗ February 2023 at 2pm in Committee Rooms 3 & 4

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Inquiry – Evidence Gathering (organisation/department (tbc)	Evidence Gathering	Provide evidence in response to the key lines of enquiry outlined in the Inquiry Terms of Reference	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	None Required	This session has been scheduled in the event it is required
Inquiry Evidence Gathering – Birmingham City Council, Adult Social Care	Evidence Gathering	Provide evidence in response to the key lines of enquiry outlined in the Inquiry Terms of Reference	Maria Gavin, AD, Quality and Improvement, Adult Social Care	Maria Gavin, AD, Quality and Improvement, Adult Social Care		Adult Social Care previously attended 15 September 2021 committee meeting. This may provide useful background to this item.

Final Deadline: Monday 23ʳᵈ January 2023

Publication: Tuesday 24ᵗʰ January 2023

Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 2pm in Committee Room 6

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Inquiry – Evidence Gathering (organisation/department tbc)	Evidence Gathering	Provide evidence in response to the key lines of enquiry outlined in the Inquiry Terms of Reference	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	This session has been scheduled in the event it is required
Arts and Culture: Impact of Financial Pressures	Follow up report	Report outlining the financial challenges affecting the sector, and how the Council is working with arts and culture organisations to mitigate these challenges and build on the success of Commonwealth Games. This will particularly refer to the BMT.	Symon Easton Head of Cultural Development & Tourism Cultural Development, BID's & Tourism Service	Cllr Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Digital, Culture, Heritage & Tourism To be confirmed	None	Requested by Members at their November OSC meeting. This item will be based on a briefing on BMT to be provided to Cabinet and Group Company Governance

Final Deadline: Monday 20th February 2023

Publication: Tuesday 21st February 2023

Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 5th April 2022 at 2pm in Committee Rooms 3 & 4

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Enhancing Tennis Opportunities Across the City	Update Report	To discuss the proposals for enhancing tennis opportunities across the City	Dave Wagg, Head of Sport and Physical Activity / Alexander Stadium Redevelopment	Dave Wagg	None	This item was requested at the 7 December 2022 committee meeting.

Final Deadline: Monday 27th March 2022

Publication: Tuesday 28th March 2022

TO BE SCHEDULED:

1. Culture Strategy 2023-2033 including the External Review of Culture
2. Physical Activity Strategy (at an early stage of development)
3. Economy and Skills O&S to be invited to the CWG, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee for report on employment and skills legacy of CWG.

Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee

ECONOMY & SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

Meeting Date: 8th February 2023

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Employment & Skills Inquiry – Informal meeting of Task and Finish Group	Inquiry	For the Committee to reflect on the evidence gathering sessions to date and to consider draft report including conclusions recommendations.	Fiona Bottrill, Scrutiny Manager	N/A	N/A	

Final Deadline: Monday 30th January 2023

Publication: Tuesday 31st January 2023

Meeting Date: 8th March 2023

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy (TBC)	Agenda Item	To keep up to date with the ongoing work in the area and identify further issues for scrutiny	Mark Gamble	Mark Gamble	None Required	The committee has regularly received 6 monthly updates since the approval for implementation.
Our Future City Plan: Shaping Our City Together	Agenda Item	To be appraised on ongoing plan and take part in future consultation and engagement and identify further issues for scrutiny	Simon Delahunty-Forrest	TBC	None Required	A further update was requested following the original item presented to committee in July. This work also complements the EBICGS. Members also have the opportunity to keep up to date on proposed consultation and engagement.

Final Deadline: Monday 27th February 2023

Publication: Tuesday 28th February 2023

Meeting Date: 26th April 2023

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
TBC						

Final Deadline: Monday 17th April 2023

Publication: Tuesday 18th April 2023

To be scheduled:

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (Including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Invitation to Cabinet Members	Agenda Item	To outline priorities, key areas of work and to take part in areas of discussion linked to their respective portfolio	Respective CM and CSO			4 cabinet members: Leader, Deputy Leader, CM for Children Young People and Families and CM for Digital, Culture, Heritage and Tourism.
Night-time economy & impact on city	Agenda Item	Opportunity to understand the differing needs of local centres around the city.	TBC			With reference to local areas and high streets post pandemic.
The role of universities in the city	Agenda Item	To understand the economic input and output of the city's 5 universities in respect of capital investment (infrastructure), as employers, attracting people to the city for study and work.	TBC			Retention of graduates has historically been identified as quite low. Has this changed? What is being done to retain more young people who come to study in the city to start their career and make it their home. Are more people coming here for work for example relocating from other big cities such as London, Manchester (are there any statistics that support more people coming to the city, possible data on house prices and purchasing?). Link to Housing & Neighbourhoods O&S?

Economy & Skills O&S Committee, January 2023

Engagement with Council for SMEs	Agenda Item	To understand how SME's can improve access to council procurement activity and identify barriers and opportunities for improvement.				Noted that Resources O&S has recently completed a report due to Council covering procurement
Legacy of the Commonwealth Games in relation to Jobs & Skills	TBC	The Co-Ordinating O&S Committee agreed that work around the legacy of the Commonwealth Games will be led by the Commonwealth Games, Culture & Physical Activity O&S Committee and this Committee should be invited to a future meeting focussing on jobs and skills.	CWG O&S Committee			Scrutiny officers to liaise to ensure that members of this committee are invited to the relevant future meeting.

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 10am in Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council House

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BSCP)	Update Report	To receive the BSCP Two-Year Report, the Independent Chair's Accountability Report, and provide evidence to two Inquiries: Child Criminal Exploitation and Children and Young People's Mental Health	Simon Cross Business Manager, BSCP	Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP Simon Cross Business Manager, BSCP	None	BSCP last attended on 16th February 2022 Members of the C&YP Mental Health Inquiry from Health and Social Care OSC have been invited (Cllrs: Brown, Hartley, Moore, Pritchard, and Tilsley
School Attainment	Update Report	To receive a report on school attainment and discuss school improvement with BEP	Lisa Fraser, AD, Education and Early Years - TBC Kate Reynolds, AD, Lifelong Learning & Employability - TBC	Lisa Fraser, AD, Education and Early Years - TBC Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, BEP	None	To include attainment by ethnicity
School Exclusions & Part Time Timetables	Update Report	Information on school exclusions, part-time timetables, children who haven't got a suitable school place, and support that is being provided, and how many excluded primary school children have unmet SEND needs/ EHCPs	Lisa Fraser, AD, Education and Early Years - TBC Kate Reynolds, AD, Lifelong Learning & Employability – TBC	Lisa Fraser, AD, Education and Early Years - TBC Kate Reynolds, AD, Lifelong Learning & Employability - TBC	None	This will also be part of the evidence gathering for the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry

Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee

| | | | Trudy Pyatt, Interim Director, Thriving Children and Families | Trudy Pyatt, Interim Director, Thriving Children and Families | | |

Final Deadline: Monday 13th February 2023 and publication: Tuesday 14th February 2023

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 5th April 2023 at 10am in Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council House

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Children's Trust	Update Report	To provide an update on progress with the priorities	Seamus Gaynor, Head of Executive, Children's Trust Suman McCarthy, Cabinet Support Officer	Andrew Christie, Chair, Children's Trust Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust Cllr Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	No	
Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)	Update Report	To provide an update on progress	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	No	

Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee

| Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan | Quarterly Update Report | To provide a quarterly update on progress | Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families | Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families

Kerry Madden, Strategic Improvement Programme Director | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Final Deadline: Monday 27th March 2023 and publication: Tuesday 28th March 2023

Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 10am in Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council House

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Young People's Substance Misuse Service	Update Report	To update Members on the Service (under the HSC Act 2012, local authorities have a legal duty to protect children from harm, reduce health inequalities and improve the health of their local population by ensuring that there are public health services aimed at reducing drug and alcohol misuse) Outstanding Information: • The referral process for elected members, so they can add this to their resource toolkit when they are dealing with casework to be provided. • Data to see young people's transition out of substance misuse is to be provided.	Karl Beese Commissioning Manager - Adult Public Health Services	Chris Baggott, Service Lead (Health Protection) John Freeman, Commissioning Manager, Adults Social Care	None required	This item was last discussed on 24 November 2021 Members of the Health and Social Care O&S Committee to be invited to attend for this item.

Final Deadline: Friday 5th May 2023 (Monday 8th May 2023 is a bank holiday)

Publication: Tuesday 9th May 2023

Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee

TO BE SCHEDULED:

1. Grand Challenges, City Observatory data indicators by committee remit.
2. Scrutiny Inquiry: Child Criminal Exploitation.
3. Joint Scrutiny Inquiry with Health and Social Care O&S Committee: Children and Young People's Mental Health.
4. Visits.
5. Student attendance at school during their period (Period Poverty Inquiry). The focus of the report would be on the learning / good practice that has been identified and how this being shared with schools across the city, and members of the Health and Social Care O&S Committee to be invited to attend for this item.
6. The DfE SEND Commissioner to attend a committee meeting early next year.
7. Janie Berry, City Solicitor to be added to update Members on tribunals and delays etc., and feedback on how the role of Legal Services contributes and makes risk informed decisions.

Education and Children's Social Care O&S Committee

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-23 WORK PROGRAMME

Date of Meeting: **Tuesday 21st February 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Birmingham Sexual Health Services – Umbrella (UHB)	*Agenda item*	*Annual report on performance against public health contract.*	*Karl Beese*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
Immunisation	*Agenda item*	*Report to set out the challenges with the take up of immunisations.*	*Mary Orhewere / Kate Woolley, Director of Immunisation and Vaccinations*	*N/A*	*None identified*	*Report to be presented as a scoping paper for a possible future inquiry based on previous scoping paper for Infant Mortality.*

Final Deadline: Thursday 9th February 2023

Publication: Monday 13th February 2023

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Tuesday 14th March 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Cabinet Member Update Report	*Agenda item*	*Cabinet Member to report progress against portfolio priorities*	*Ceri Saunders*	*N/A*	*None identified*	*Councillor Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care.*
Day Opportunities Co-Production Review	*Agenda item*	*Findings of the independent co-produced review of day opportunity services.*	*Dr Temitope Ademosu / John Williams / Saba Rai / John Freeman*	*N/A*	*None identified*	*Also attending are representatives from the Empowering Peoples Team.*
Q3 Adult Social Care Performance Monitoring	*Agenda item*	*Report on red rated performance indicators; 5 performance indicators chosen by HOSC for in-depth examination and the complete set of Adult Social Care performance indicators.*	*Maria Gavin*	*N/A*	*None identified*	

Final Deadline: Thursday 2nd March 2023

Publication: Monday 6th March 2023

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Tuesday 18ᵗʰ April 2022**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
ICB Update	*Agenda item*		*Paul Sherriff and Karen Kelly*	*N/A*	*N/A*	

Final Deadline: Thursday 6ᵗʰ April 2023

Publication: Monday 10ᵗʰ April 2023

INFORMAL BRIEFINGS (TO BE ARRANGED)
Engaging with third sector providers of Adult Social Care (Louise Collett)
City Observatory Data (Richard Brooks)

TO BE SCHEDULED:

1. Public Health Horizon Scanning / JSNA
2. Primary Care Networks
3. Access to GPs
4. Mental Health and Wellbeing Post-COVID
5. Visit to UHB NHS Foundation Trust Hospital sites.
6. Visit to Early Intervention Community Team, Norman Power Centre

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

BIRMINGHAM/SOLIHULL JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: **15th February 2023 at 6.00pm, Civic Suite**

Venue: **Solihull**

Dementia Strategy	*Agenda item*	*Following consultation seeking approval for the strategy*	*Revinder Johal, Commissioning Manager – Strategy and Integration, ASC* *Anna Walker, Commissioning Manager for Strategy and Planning, Solihull MBC*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
Primary Care Enabling Strategy	*Agenda item*		*Paul Sherriff*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
Integrated Care System and the Role of Scrutiny	*Agenda item*	*To determine future arrangements and reporting*	*TBC*	*N/A*	*None identified*	

Final Deadline: 6th February 2023

Publication: 7th February 2023

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

BIRMINGHAM/SOLIHULL JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: **13th March 2023 at 2.00pm, Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House**

Venue: **Birmingham**

ICS/UHB Update	*Agenda item*	*Update on actions taken to respond to concerns raised at the January meeting.*	*Jonathan Brotherton, UHB; David Melbourne, BSol ICS*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
West Midlands Ambulance Service Update	*Agenda item*	*Update on actions taken to respond to concerns raised at the January meeting.*	*Vivek Khashu and Mark Docherty, WMAS; David Melbourne, BSol, ICS*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
BSol ICS update on performance against finance and recovery plans	*Agenda item*	*To update on the current status regarding finance and recovery plans*	*Paul Athey, ICS Finance Lead*	*N/A*	*None identified*	

Final Deadline: 2nd March 2023

Publication: 3rd March 2023

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

TO BE SCHEDULED

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
ICS Joint Forward Plan	*Agenda item*	*Report on health planning for the system including commissioning intentions.*	*Carol Herity to confirm Lead Officer*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
ICS Quality Assurance Update	*Agenda item*	*Update on Quality Assurance to every JHOSC*	*Carol Herity to confirm Lead Officer*	*N/A*	*None identified*	
Remodelling of the Primary Care Service	*Agenda item*	*Update report on the current position regarding Primary Care*	*Paul Sherriff, Executive Director at NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB.*	*NA*	*None identified*	*Report to include information on commissioned primary care services.*
Update on Post-COVID Syndrome ('Long COVID') Rehabilitation	*Agenda item*	*Update on previous report presented to JHOSC on 29th September 2021*	*Ben Richards, Chief Operating Officer, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust*	*N/A*	*None identified*	*Report to include Long COVID implications on health and long-term employment.*
Phase 2, Musculoskeletal Redesign Programme	*Agenda item*	*To report on the current status of the programme*	*Marie Peplow, Chief Operating Officer, The ROH*	*N/A*	*None identified*	

Health and Social Care O&S Committee, February – April 2023

HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 16th February 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for Housing, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support	TBC	None Required	This will pick up the action from Item 5 (Customer Services and Complaints) at Co-ordinating OSC (23 September 22)
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for City Operations, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support	Sajeela Naseer, Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 7th February 2023

Publication: Wednesday 8th February 2023

Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 16th March 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Localisation	Update Report	Provide progress on delivery of the Working Together in Neighbourhoods White Paper, to include case studies from the Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinator Programme pilot in the 22 wards.	Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods	Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of the Council Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods Karen Cheney, Head of Service, Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit	None Required	Working Together in Neighbourhoods White Paper: Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods (White Paper)	Birmingham City Council Progress Report presented in October: Localisation Update 13 October 2022
Voids – Improving Standards	Evidence-gathering	To undertake a deep-dive into Voids with a focus on improving the standard of properties.	TBC	TBC	TBC	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 7th March 2023

Publication: Wednesday 8th March 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 13th April 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Tenant Engagement Strategy	Policy Development	Provide an outline of the new engagement strategy to inform its future development and delivery Provide an overview of how tenant engagement will inform and shape Housing Repairs, Maintenance and Investment 2024	TBC	TBC	None Required	Part of this item follows on from the Housing and Neighbourhoods OSC on November 29. This Committee considered a Request to Call-In of the Cabinet Decision (8 November) Housing Repairs, Maintenance and Investment 2024. The decision was not Called-In but a letter to the Cabinet Member has been sent. One of the key points raised by the OSC relates to tenant engagement.
Mobile Household Recycling Centres	Update Report	Provide an overview of the scheme, and highlight impact to date	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 4th April 2023

Publication: Wednesday 5th April 2023

Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-23 WORK PROGRAMME FEBRUARY – APRIL 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 9th February 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Monitoring report	Scrutiny of current financial position	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management Sara Pitt, Director of Finance	None Required	
Budget Scrutiny	Consultation	Scrutiny to respond to Budget Consultation	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management Sara Pitt, Director of Finance	None Required	
Planned Procurement Activities Report	Standing Item	To note the latest Cabinet report on planned procurement activity.	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	None Required	
Work Programme Development	Decision	Approve work programme for 2022-23	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 31st January 2023

Publication: Wednesday 1st February 2023

Resources O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 2nd March 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Monitoring report	Scrutiny of current financial position	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management Sara Pitt, Director of Finance	None Required	
S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Briefing	To understand the S106 and CIL Policy and Procedure	Hayley Claybrook, Planning Contributions Team	Hayley Claybrook, Planning Contributions Team	None Required	
Planned Procurement Activities Report	Standing Item	To note the latest Cabinet report on planned procurement activity.	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	None Required	
Work Programme Development	Decision	Approve work programme for 2022-23	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 21st February 2023

Publication: Wednesday 22nd February 2023

Resources O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 30ᵗʰ March 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Monitoring Report	Scrutiny of current financial position	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management Sara Pitt, Director of Finance	None Required	
Planned Procurement Activities Report	Standing Item	To note the latest Cabinet report on planned procurement activity.	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	None Required	
Work Programme Development	Decision	Approve work programme for 2022-23	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

Final Deadline: Tuesday 21ˢᵗ March 2023

Publication: Wednesday 22ⁿᵈ March 2023

Resources O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

Date of Meeting: **Thursday 27th April 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Financial Monitoring 2022/23	Monitoring Report	Scrutiny of current financial position	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management	Rebecca Hellard, Director of Council Management Sara Pitt, Director of Finance	None Required	
Planned Procurement Activities Report	Standing Item	To note the latest Cabinet report on planned procurement activity.	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director, Procurement	None Required	
Work Programme Development	Decision	Approve work programme for 2022-23	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None		

Final Deadline: Tuesday 18th April 2023

Publication: Wednesday 19th April 2023

Resources O&S Committee Work Programme, February-April 2023

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-23 WORK PROGRAMME

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 15th February 2023

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Bus Services in Birmingham	Discussion	To understand current trends relating to use of buses, level of services including fares and reliability	TBC	Pete Bond, Steve Hayes and Jon Hayes, Transport for West Midlands Mark Heffernan, National Express	None	

Final Deadline: Monday 6th February 2023

Publication: Tuesday 7th February 2023

Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee, January 2023

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 15th March 2023

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Cabinet Member Annual Report	Briefing	Provide an overview of progress towards portfolio priorities	Rose Horsfall, Cabinet Support Officer	Cllr Liz Clements, Cabinet Member Transportation	None Required	A formal invite will be sent
Annual Flood Risk Management Report	Briefing	Outline current priorities, delivery towards achieving these priorities and future risks	Hannah Hogan, Flood Risk Manager	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	

Final Deadline: Monday 6th March 2023

Publication: Tuesday 7th March 2023

Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee, January 2023

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 19th April 2023

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
City of Nature	Briefing	Provide an overview of the progress of the Our Future Nature City Plan Outline the challenges moving forward and the steps being undertaken to address them	Humera Sultan	TBC	None identified at this time	
Development of a new Road Safety Strategy	Briefing	Aims and objectives to be developed	Mel Jones, Head of Transport Planning & Network Strategy	TBC		

Final Deadline: Monday 10th April 2023

Publication: Tuesday 11th April 2023

TO BE SCHEDULED:

The following items had been identified as topics for consideration to be included in the work programme and no dates have yet been set. The work programme is a live document, and additional items may be identified in future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

1. **Active Travel including cycling and Safer Travel to Schools**
2. **Environmental, Public Open Space and Transport Issues within City Council Masterplans (i.e., Smithfield) and Urban Regeneration Frameworks**
3. **Displacement of vehicles onto to the public highway from CPZs and parks**
4. **Waste Disposal Contract** (private briefing to be arranged)

Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee, January 2023