

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **ECONOMY AND SKILLS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 06 DECEMBER 2023 AT 10:00 HOURS**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE,**  
**BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB**

### **A G E N D A**

#### **1 NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

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

#### **2 APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies.

#### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

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

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

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

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

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

- 3 - 10**
- 4 **MINUTES**
- To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2023.
- 11 - 12**
- 5 **ACTION TRACKER**
- To note the action tracker.
- 13 - 14**
- 6 **COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**
- For the Committee to note the attached comments on the agenda.
- 15 - 28**
- 7 **WEST MIDLANDS AND WARWICKSHIRE LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
- This report sets out the work undertaken on the Local Skills Improvement Plan to date and next steps. It also highlights key areas for Birmingham City Council to consider.
- Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce will be presenting this report. Officers from Education & Skills Service will also be in attendance to support the discussion.
- 29 - 42**
- 8 **WORK PROGRAMME**
- To consider the Committee's work programme and agree any updates/amendments.
- 9 **REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)**
- To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).
- 10 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**
- To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chair are matters of urgency.
- 11 **AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**
- Chair to move:-
- 'In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee'.

## BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

## ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&amp;S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Committee Room 2, Council House

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**Present:**

Councillor Katherine Iroh (Deputy Chair), Jon Hunt and Richard Parkin

**Also Present:**

Paul Kitson, Strategic Director, Place, Prosperity, and Sustainability

Azhar Rafiq, Interim Business Partner (online)

Ekbal Hussain, Interim Business Cases Business Partner (online)

Harjinder Dool, Assistant Director, Financial Performance and Insight

Spencer Wilson, Interim Head of Service, Employment and Skills

Hannah Redfern, Acting Head of Service, 14-19 Participation and Skills Team

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

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The meeting began at 10:08 hours.

**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast and that Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Cllrs Akhlaq Ahmed, Jamie Tennant and Lisa Trickett.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **4. MINUTES**

(See Item No.5)

The action notes of the last meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were approved.

#### **5. ACTION TRACKER**

(See Item No.6)

The action tracker was noted.

Cllr Iroh, Deputy Chair explained that due to papers not being submitted on time for Item 8 - Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIP) and in line with recommendations from the Commissioners this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

A request was made for a change to running order of the agenda so that item 7 was taken first to allow for the Finance representative to arrive for Item 6.

#### **6. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS INQUIRY**

(See Item No. 7)

Spencer Wilson highlighted the key points in relation to the recommendations as set out in the report and appendices and during a discussion with Members the following were amongst the points made: -

- Those projects funded through the Commonwealth Games legacy should be secured this week following receipt of the contract from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). The funding is for a period of 2 years all projects. In terms of making these sustainable the Council is looking at future funding models including the Shared Prosperity Fund however the current climate is very uncertain in relation to securing fixed funding long-term.
- Following the Section 114 notice and the challenges the Council faces it was decided that a scoping exercise for the review of the Careers, Youth and 14–19-year-old services would be done to analyse what is currently delivered and what the Council is statutorily required to deliver. This has been finalised and an external provider is being procured to deliver this. It is anticipated that by the end of the calendar year this will be completed and first draft of from the review. These findings should be available to be shared early next year. Relevant Cabinet Members are regularly briefed. Staff, young people and other relevant professionals have been consulted on the scope of the review.
- In relation to tracking performance data it was confirmed that the 14 to 19 Participation Skills team and the Career Service both have a duty to report monthly to the Department for Education (DfE), on the status of young people in employment, education or training. The Council is held to account on an annual basis on the published figures of those young people who are not in employment, education, or training (NEET) and those not known and participation figures.

- The Council is performing reasonably well so far considering the size of the city and having about 13,000 young people in a cohort. The figure for NEET young people is in the third quintile for the DfE, the not-known figure is in the bottom quintile and is below 3% last year and the same is envisaged for this year with an increased cohort. However intensive wrap around support and new ways of addressing and reducing that figure is happening on an ongoing basis. Additionally, targets set for interventions are monitored in relation to specific activity. This data can be shared should the committee wish.
- Signposting and supporting SMEs to enable high quality apprenticeships to be developed as Birmingham has a significant of businesses in this sector and a high unemployment rate amongst its young people was acknowledged. It was outlined that previously this work funded through European Social Funding was supported through the Growth Hub that was part of the GBSLEP however it wasn't as successful as envisaged.
- The Growth Hub is now part of the City Council and is focussing on business support activity. This includes developing a business support package which includes skill support and identification of opportunities for SMEs that is more activity and incentive focused. This will include training and mentoring and support for SMEs to access different skills and opportunities including apprenticeships. A decision has also been made to use an element of the Apprenticeship Levy that the Council to SMEs with more incentive for them to deliver apprenticeships. This work will be monitored closely and the input from Members will be valuable as part of this work.
- It was acknowledged that the apprenticeship offers for young people on the Birmingham Careers Hub needed further work as opportunities were few and not varied and unlikely to attract the attention of young people. Members were told that a key issue is that the City Council has taken on the agreement to deliver the contract is that so it has a strategic overview in how careers supervision is undertaken, and this includes prioritising apprenticeships so there is an alternative to the education pathway after school into employment and available at different levels to ensure that young people have access to a meaningful qualification.
- The Ladder for Greater Birmingham is based at the Library of Birmingham however there was concern on how many young people were likely to see this. It was confirmed as that these are now being based in youth hubs and a Ladder Academy has been set up offering taster sessions to young people to try a trade or other opportunities that would normally be only available through an academic route such as dentistry with emphasis being on offering careers through apprenticeships.
- The National Apprenticeship website is a contractual requirement on the delivery providers to advertise opportunities however the website does require a review to ensure that these are clear and visible to those visiting the site alongside some of the Council's own digital platforms for jobs.
- Further details of the mentoring programme will be shared when available as this is still undergoing approval.
- The importance of careers advice in primary school was raised and not only offering advice to young people aged 14 and over. Currently the Careers

Service works with secondary schools as set out by the Gatsby Benchmarks and this is offered from Year 8 onwards. The Careers Enterprise Company also engages with schools and employers outside of statutory requirements and this is done earlier than the requirement. Information on work with young children sits with the Director for Children and Thriving Families and a request will be made for further information to be reported back at a future meeting.

- Information for young people on careers and opportunities is provided in a variety of settings. This includes visiting settings where young people gather, cascading information through the weekly newsletters that are disseminated out every Thursday from the City Council. There is also a visible presence at Library of Birmingham and youth centres where Personal Advisors drop in and give impartial advice and guidance. Information is also shared as much as possible across all services across all the directorates. Further information is also listed on websites where the facilities are for young people to be able to go and see what's on offer. If funding allows at the opportunity for some more mobile and provision to access communities is also being looked at.
- There is more incentive in terms of achieving the social value aspect for those employers to support young people with additional vulnerabilities (such as care leavers or those with special educational needs).  
In respect of the letter to Government (DWP and DfE) as highlighted in Recommendation 4 there are discussions taking place on this with the WMCA and officers will expediate this.
- The opportunity to speak to the relevant Cabinet Member about some of the issues raised would be helpful in future.

**RESOLVED:** -

1. The report was noted.
2. Financial information including live information will be provided at the next update.
3. A letter to government has been drafted in relation to matters raised by young people during the Employment & Skills Inquiry with reference to education, careers advice and guidance and employment support. This is awaiting comment from the Cabinet Member and will be followed up.
4. A request for Cabinet Member attendance for future monitoring reports will be made.
5. The Committee agreed that the next report would be in 6 months' time and added to the work programme for April.

**7. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES - SCRUTINY CONTRIBUTION TO THE BUDGET SAVINGS AND RECOVERY PLAN**

(See Item No.6)

Harjinder Dool, Assistant Director, Financial Performance and Insight and Paul Kitson, Strategic Director, Place, Prosperity, and Sustainability were present for this item.

Harjinder Dool outlined the key points from the Appendix 2 Q2 report detailing the proposed savings until the end of September. There are approximately £10.5m worth of savings identified in relation to the Economy & Skills portfolio. £0.7m are at a low risk of delivery and highlighted green. £0.8m of savings currently shown in amber relate to staffing costs and specifically vacancy management. It is anticipated that this will be re-categorised as low risk once the data from Oracle is available. Most of the identified savings of about £9m are at risk of not being achieved in the current financial year. However, mitigation work is ongoing in respect of this sum.

In response to queries raised by Members Paul Kitson, Strategic Director, Place, Prosperity and Sustainability made the following points: -

- Further information will be provided on the process undertaken by CLT considering the new budget recognition challenge (in year budget savings) and the overall balancing of the budget (and the original budget forecast savings) at next month's meeting. In addition, a delivery plan tracking fortnightly/monthly performance will be shared to ensure that the directorate and Council is operating within its means.
- The Committee will be provided with the progress made against the savings targets for 4 categories:
  - Staffing costs (vacancy management);
  - What pieces of work can be paused and stopped;
  - In respect of third-party payments – what can be paused and stopped and;
  - Income optimisation (what can the directorate do to generate more).
- The Corporate Landlord programme is underway, and it may achieve some savings in the current year however this is not certain, and it has been highlighted as high risk and identified as slippage. There is a similar situation for savings on CAB premises where savings have not been achieved due to delays.
- An outline strategy and rationalisation of the CAB estate will be shared so that Members can understand the occupancy rates and usage trends over the past 12 months as a significant number of staff continue to work from home with people coming in for meetings as and when necessary.
- Options are also being considered in relation to arms-length companies and what learning can be achieved from peers in respect of this.
- Significant in-year proposed savings won't be made this year however these are being worked on to close the gap as far as possible this year. An asset strategy and review will be taking place with input from the commissioners in relation to asset sales. It is imperative that consideration is given to making sure the right resources are in the right place as part of this.
- In respect of smaller commercial properties and a disposal programme this work is ongoing and further information will be shared on what can be delivered realistically this year.

- In relation to commercial property the cost of borrowing has increased to 6% on average and it is currently unviable to invest.

**RESOLVED: -**

1. The report was noted.
2. Further information will be provided on the process undertaken by CLT considering the new budget recognition challenge and the overall balancing of the budget and this will be presented at the next meeting.
3. A delivery plan will be shared tracking fortnightly/monthly performance to ensure that the directorate and Council is operating within its means.
4. There are 4 categories to be reported back on in terms of progress made against savings targets: -
  - a. Staffing costs (vacancy management),
  - b. What pieces of work can be paused and stopped,
  - c. In respect of third-party payments – what can be paused and stopped here,
  - d. Income optimisation (what can we do to generate more).
5. An outline the strategy and rationalisation on the CAB estate including occupancy rates in CAB building over the past 12 months to be shared with Members.
6. Asset strategy and review with respect to smaller commercial properties and the disposal programme actual figures on what can be delivered realistically this year will be shared with Committee.

**8. LSIP**

This item was deferred due to paperwork not being submitted and this will be scheduled to a future meeting.

**9. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See Item No. 9)

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager talked Members through the work programme noting that requests made to update the work programme with suggestions made were noted.

CLlr Iroh stated that the committee had the option to meet informally in place of formal meetings should it wish to do so.

The opportunity to meet with employers and young people was highlighted and it was confirmed that the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce had highlighted possible events in the Spring that Members could attend. Further details these will be shared in due course.

In relation to meeting with young people who are part of the Youth City Board this information would be shared with officers who attended today's meeting.

**RESOLVED: -**



1. The report was noted.

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

None.

**11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

Agreed.

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The meeting ended at 11:33 hours



## ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE

### ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Financial Challenges - Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Saving and Recovery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further information to be provided on the process undertaken by CLT considering the new budget recognition challenge and the overall balancing of the budget at the next meeting.</li> <li>• A delivery plan tracking fortnightly/monthly performance to ensure that the directorate and Council is operating within its means.</li> <li>• Further information to be reported back on at the next meetings on progress made against savings targets for the following 4 key areas: -               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staffing costs (vacancy management);</li> <li>- What pieces of work can be paused and stopped;</li> <li>- In respect of third-party payments – what can be paused and stopped here; and</li> <li>- Income optimisation (what can we do to generate more).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	It has been agreed that the Co-Ordinating & Finance O&S Committees have set up a Task & Finish Group to consider how the Council might close the in-year (2023-24) budget gap and how Scrutiny could contribute to the development of the Budget proposals for 2024-25. This information will be provided to directly to that Task & Finish Group.
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Financial Challenges - Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Saving and Recovery Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An outline the strategy and rationalisation on the CAB estate including occupancy rates in CAB building over the past 12 months.</li> <li>• Asset strategy and review with respect to smaller commercial properties and the disposal programme actual figures on what can be delivered realistically this year will be shared with Committee.</li> </ul>	To be discussed as part of the work programme item following the Commissioners comments and review of the agenda and reports.
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Implementation of Recommendations: Employment and Skills Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial information including live information will be provided at the next update.</li> <li>• A letter to government has been drafted in relation to matters raised by young people during the Employment &amp; Skills Inquiry with reference to education, careers advice and guidance and</li> </ul>	Information requested will be provided as part of the next update scheduled for April.

## ECONOMY AND SKILLS O&S COMMITTEE

### ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update
		<p>employment support. This is awaiting comment from the Cabinet Member and will be followed up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A request for Cabinet Member attendance for future monitoring reports will be made.</li><li>• The Committee agreed that the next report would be in 6 months' time and added to the work programme for April.</li></ul>	<p>Scrutiny office will request for the next update. Work Programme has been updated.</p>

# Birmingham City Council

## Economy & Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee

06 December 2023

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### Commissioner's Review

#### Agenda Item: **Local Skills Improvement Plan**

This is an external report. There are no comments from the Commissioner.

#### Agenda Item: **Work Programme**

The impact of the Direction regime will focus on the management and use of Council assets and a step change in the needs for disposals to cover any funding gap in the budget. Some authorities have reported an increase in private sector investment as councils have disposed of assets and concentrated their activities into fewer physical locations. The committee might find it useful to undertake work in this area as against activity which will be severely constrained by spending controls.



# Birmingham City Council

## Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 December 2023



**Subject:** West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan

**Report of:** Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

**Report author:** Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the work undertaken on the Local Skills Improvement Plan to date and next steps. It also highlights key areas for Birmingham City Council to consider.

### 2 Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the report.

### 3 Any Finance Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### 4 Any Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### 5 Any Equalities Implications

- 5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### 6 Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan presentation





# West Midlands & Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan

Corin Crane, CEO C&W Chamber

BCC Economy & Skills Scrutiny Committee



# WM LSIP: Research



## To Date:

- Conducted a mapping exercise, identifying existing research
- Worked with the Operational Board to finalise research questions
- Delivered focus groups with c.60 employers in the following 'Priority Growth Clusters':
  - Manufacturing of electric light vehicles and associated battery storage devices and Aerospace, Logistics & distribution, Health Technology and Medical Technology, Professional and financial services and supply chain, Modern and low carbon utility and manufacturing of future housing
- Delivered focus groups with c.60 businesses through BITC, Make UK, NHS and FSB
- Roundtables with c.50 West Midlands Training Providers, Colleges and Universities
- Quantitative survey of 501 businesses (reflecting the business demography of the region)
- Qualitative surveying of c.400 businesses (across all sectors and business sizes)

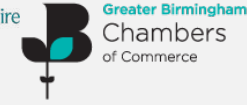
# WM LSIP: Emerging Themes



1. Strategic Leadership
2. Core and technical skills
3. Identifying the right providers
4. Identifying the right means of delivery
5. Recruiting into education



# Strategic Leadership



## Evidence:

- Focus on short term business survival and current cost pressures
- Understanding that there are opportunities (especially associated with digitisation) but lack of certainty around how to maximise them
- A lack of understanding of what the transition to net zero means for businesses
- Focus on soft skills (communication, collaboration)
- Inclusivity

**16%** and **14%** respectively don't believe all leaders and people managers within their business have adequate skills to overcome challenges and/or maximise opportunities associated with the transition towards net zero and digitisation/the advancement of new technologies.

Strategy Development (**43%**) and Performance Management (**42%**) were the most frequently identified additional skills needed

**42%** of businesses currently have no plans to address these gaps. **20%** and **24%** respectively plan to address through training in technical skills.

## Barriers:

50% of businesses surveyed identified barriers to increasing investment in skills and training. Most frequently, these are:

- Money: **51%** - lack of budget for training
- Time: **21%** lack of staff time to oversee training; **19%** Lack of staff time to undertake training; **14%** lack of staff time for administration associated with training
- Uncertainty: **15%** Providers not offering what we require; **10%** uncertainty over what training is needed; **8%** uncertainty over the quality of external providers

# Core and technical skills



## Evidence:

- WM QES: Q3 2022, 66% of businesses looking to recruit staff experienced difficulties doing so – 72% of manufacturers and 64% of services firms
- Particularly in automotive and aerospace manufacturing – employers want broad, base engineering skills and more practical experience than current apprenticeships offer
- Building problem solving, innovation and commercialisation into standards
- Health and Med Tech – strengths in research, less so development
- Soft skills (as per previous slide)

## Barriers:

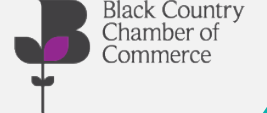
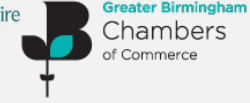
74% of those surveyed haven't worked with post-16 education and training providers in the last 5 years

As per previous slide: time, money & uncertainty

Examples of specific training employers report struggling to access in the West Midlands:

- Hydraulic engineering
- Heat pump engineering
- Welding NVQ
- Machine engineering
- Data analytics
- Event management
- Basic IT skills, IT literacy

# Identifying the Right Providers



## Evidence:

### Focus groups identified:

- Challenges identifying opportunities and larger organisations having to piece together provision
- Capacity to build genuine relationships between providers and businesses
- Concerns about the number of providers trying to engage with businesses

### Primary means of identifying appropriate providers:

- 25%** - Utilising existing relationships/connections with providers
- 24%** - Online Research

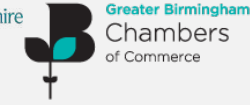
**20%** of survey respondents identified that Independent, funded support to identify skills needs and advise on suitable training provision would help them overcome barriers to increasing investment in skills and training

## Barriers:

**50%** of businesses surveyed identified barriers to increasing investment in skills and training.

Of these, **8%** cite uncertainty over the quality of external providers

# Identifying the Right Means of Delivery



## Evidence:

### Focus groups identified :

- a need for short, modular, accredited training around technical digital skills and sustainability management in particular
- scope for the bootcamp model to be used to upskill technicians and mechanics (at L3)

Our surveying found that a majority of businesses are unaware of or only have a limited awareness and understanding of all post-16 education and training initiatives, including T levels, trainee ships, apprenticeships, SWAPs and skills bootcamps

**17%** identified they would like access to shorter, modular training courses

**17%** would like access to in-person training nearer to business premises (critical for D&I)

Businesses would most frequently utilise Employer Representative Organisations (**49%**), Local Universities, colleges and/or training providers (**49%**) and Local Authorities (**44%**) for reliable advice or other practical help on skills and training related challenges

## Barriers:

- Awareness and understanding of means of delivery
- Length of training – need for more short, modular training
- Cost of training

# Recruiting into Education



## Evidence:

### Focus groups identified :

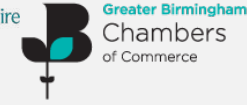
- Difficulties accessing staff, to deliver provision needed to close skills gaps (trades, engineering, digital)
- Challenges incorporating new technologies and approaches where these are developing quickly, in part due to workforce requirements
- Appetite among employers to work more closely with education (particularly to raise awareness of their sector)
- Surveying identified that 17% of businesses would be interested in provision co-developed with their organisation to be more specific to their needs

## Barriers:

- Competitive labour market and salary costs
- Staff time and resource, particularly among smaller employers



# Local Skills Improvement Fund



## 1) Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF):

- Following the submission of the West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP, we have supported a successful application to the Local Skills Improvement Fund.
- We have and the region has been awarded the largest settlement in the country with a £10.6m allocation. T
- The proposal was a joint application, led by Solihull College, on behalf of the regions FE Colleges and private providers. It will focus on the key areas highlighted in the LSIP

## Key Themes:

- **Expanding the regional electrification and engineering offer.**
- **Low Carbon/Sustainable Construction**
- **Green Skills**
- **Digital Transformation**
- **Employer Engagement**

# Birmingham CC: Issues to consider



- Most businesses are overwhelmed by amount of choice/ don't know what to choose
- Recruitment is more important than upskilling for most employers
- Modular/ Shorter Courses focused on getting people job ready were hugely popular
- Broadly – only larger businesses are engaged strategically with apprenticeship programmes
- Smaller businesses need long term relationships and physical support to organise work placements/ apprenticeships/ T-Levels
- Blocks of placements rather than day release seems more attractive to businesses
- Nearly all businesses ranked Net Zero and Digitalisation as important – few were doing much about it with lack of internal capacity and expertise the main reason
- Different Sectors need different sales approaches and delivery techniques – Tech Sector and Hospitality polar opposites

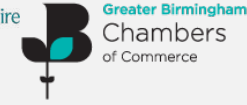
# WM LSIP: Next Steps

- October 2023: LSIF Launch and Start
- November 2023: Curriculum Research commences
- December 2023: Employer Board Launched
- Jan – April 2024: Data Refresh – Sector Deep Dives





Coventry & Warwickshire  
Chamber of  
Commerce



Greater Birmingham  
Chambers  
of Commerce



Black Country  
Chamber of  
Commerce

# Any Questions?

## Corin Crane

CEO C&W Chamber of Commerce  
[corinc@cw-chamber.co.uk](mailto:corinc@cw-chamber.co.uk)

# Birmingham City Council

## Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 December 2023



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**Subject:** Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

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

**Report author:** Amelia Wiltshire, Overview and Scrutiny Manager  
amelia.wiltshire@birmingham.gov.uk  
07825979253

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for 2023-24, based on the Committee's meeting in June. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 The report also refers to other topics, which the Committee has identified, for future consideration, and this will be continuously updated during the year.
- 1.3 At Co-ordinating OSC on 15 September 2023, it was acknowledged that Overview and Scrutiny work programmes will need to refocus, giving priority on issues around the Section 114 Notice, the Council's financial situation and recovery.
- 1.4 A Finance and Resources OSC Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has been set up to consider proposals to close the 2023/24 budget gap, contribute to the development of the 2024/25 Budget proposals and the Council's future financial plans.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
  - Notes the information set out in Appendix 1 and identifies if any further topics need to be added to the menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.

- Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider during January-February 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
- Notes, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.
- Notes the update on the Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

### 3 Background

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

3.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:

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

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

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

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

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

- Public interest: concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen.
- Ability to change: priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence.

- Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well.
- Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the city.
- Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication.

### **Budget Task and Finish Group**

- 3.6 In October 2023, a cross-party Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was established by Co-ordinating OSC to examine the follow key issues:
- How the Council will close the in-year budget gap during 2023/24.
  - How Scrutiny can contribute to the development of the Budget proposals for 2024/25 and financial plans for the following years
  - Comments and recommendations the Task and Finish Group will report to Cabinet when the 2024/25 budget proposals are considered.
- 3.7 The membership of the Group comprises all Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and Cllr Robert Alden, Cllr Alex Yip and Cllr Paul Tilsley.
- 3.8 At the October Economy and Skills OSC, the Committee requested information on the strategy and rationalisation of the CAB estate, and the Asset Strategy and review with respect to smaller commercial properties and disposal programme actual figures for 2023-24. This information is anticipated to feed into future meetings of the Budget Task and Finish Group and will be subsequently reported to the Economy and Skills OSC.

### **Looking Ahead**

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

### **Scrutiny Methods**

- 3.10 There are a range of ways to undertake scrutiny. The approach for 2023-24 enables flexible scrutiny and outlines a shift from monthly formal meetings to a combination of approaches. The Committee will choose the most effective scrutiny method to achieve the desired aims and objectives for each topic.
- 3.11 Based on Statutory Guidance published in 2019, different scrutiny methods include (but are not limited to):
- A single item, or items, on a committee agenda – this method fits more closely with the “overview” aspect of the Scrutiny function and provides

limited opportunity for effective scrutiny. It is most appropriate for specific issues where the committee wants to maintain a watching brief.

- A single item meeting, either as the committee or a more limited number of Members. It has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
- A task and finish day - provided that these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics.
- A task and finish review – this is an enhancement of the previous option being held over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.

### **Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

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

- Major physical regeneration and infrastructure projects in the city
- Promotion of the city and inward investment
- Land use and property assets
- Economic growth and jobs
- Skills expansion for key growth sections along with lifelong learning for post-14 skills and lifelong learning
- Access to employment and delivery of local employment plans
- Economic impact of arts, culture, tourism and sport.

3.13 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Akhlaq Ahmed and its membership comprises Councillors Bushra Bi, Jon Hunt, Katherine Iroh, Simon Morrall, Richard Parkin, Jamie Tennant and Lisa Trickett.

## **4 Work Programme 2023-24**

4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the topics the Committee will consider over the next few months, and also outlines future items for consideration.

4.2 The Committee may decide to add further items to the work programme during the course of the year. When considering this, the Committee is advised to consider where it can best add value through scrutiny, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in 3.5.

4.3 The Council's latest Forward Plan: [November 2023 Forward Plan \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) may assist Members in identifying future topics. The following reports are of particular relevance to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:



<b>ID Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Proposed Date of Decision</b>
012151/2023	2023/24 Budget – In-Year Savings Update	Cabinet: 12/12/23
010840/2023	Asset Management Strategy	Cabinet: 16/01/24
011738/2024	Council Tax Tax-base for 2024/25	Cabinet: 16/01/24
011739/2024	Business Rates Income 2024/25	Cabinet: 16/01/24
009483/2022	Disposal of Surplus Properties	Cabinet: 13/02/24
009087/2021	Martineau Galleries Outline Business Case	Cabinet: 13/02/24
011742/2024	Draft Financial Plan 2024-2028	Cabinet: 13/02/24
012048/2024	Higher Level Skills Match Plus (HLSM+) Project Full Business Case and Investment Report	Cabinet: 13/02/24
011743/2024	Financial Plan 2024-2028	Cabinet: 27/02/24
010173/2022	Our Future City Plan 2040 – Draft Central Birmingham Framework	Cabinet: 19/03/24
010635/2023	Paradise Phase 3	Cabinet: 19/03/24
011840/2023	Enterprise Zone Programme Management Levy	Cabinet: 19/03/24

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

## **5 Any Finance Implications**

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

## **6 Any Legal Implications**

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

## **7 Any Equalities Implications**

7.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-24 - December

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)
- 9.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

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

Month	Item/Topic Link with Corporate Priorities	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Regeneration across the City  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1,2,3, 11, 20	How is regeneration and the benefits being spread across the city and what are the main regeneration programmes (not just those areas covered by the OFCP). Input to the OFCP consultation. Further information on the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 and plans for renewing including process and timescale to enable the Committee to schedule work in the work programme.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 12 July 2023.  Deadline for reports: 3 July 2023  Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Phillip Nell, Director of Property and Investment  Simon Delahunty-Forrest, Assistant Director, Inclusive Growth		When considering the timescales for the Birmingham Development Plan Members have identified further work on the impact of the night time economy.  Report to Scrutiny Committee November 2021: <a href="https://cmis.uk.com">Planning and Noise (cmis.uk.com)</a>  <b>Outcome:</b> Response submitted following discussion at Committee Meeting to OFCP Consultation
July	Increasing the opportunities for employment and skills for young people through the Council's Social Value Procurement  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1,2,5,8	What role does procurement have in delivering social value through Council contracts to increase employment and skills opportunities for young people? What data / information is available to demonstrate	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 12 July 2023.  Deadline for reports: 3 July 2023	Steve Sandercock, Assistant Director Procurement  Shariat Rokneddin, Policy and Governance Manager		Issue identified during the Scrutiny Inquiry on Employment and Skills and recommended as issue for work programme for 2023/24)

		<p>the difference this has made? Including any information that Amanda might be able to provide on number of apprenticeships created. Going forward, how will the number of apprenticeships created through social value of procurement be monitored and what systems will be put in place to do this?</p>	<p>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2</p>	<p>Amanda Lloyd, Principal Employment Officer</p>		
<p>September</p>	<p>Increasing the opportunities for employment and skills for young people through the Council’s Social Value Procurement</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1,2,5,8</p>	<p>What assurance can be provided that the Council contracts are delivering their social value commitments? How is Procurement working with Contract Managers to ensure delivery of social value outcomes? How does this ensure that the contractors deliver added value e.g. the apprenticeships that are created are not just the ones that they would have any way through the apprenticeship levy?</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 13 September 2023.</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 4 September 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2</p>	<p>Shariat Rokneddin, Policy and Governance Manager</p> <p>Amanda Lloyd, Principal Employment Officer</p>		

		<p>Up to date information / snapshot on the delivery of the top 40 contractors social value commitment with an analysis of this</p> <p>What are the options to develop a system to monitor social value procurement across the council and timescales to deliver this?</p> <p>What can Birmingham learn from other areas of good practice regarding social value procurement and how this is delivered and monitored?</p>				
September	<p>Financial Challenges - Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Savings and Recovery Plan</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1,2,3</p>	<p>To consider the implications of Equal Pay and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP) for the Committee's work programme including agreed savings for 2023/24.</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 13 September 2023.</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 4 September 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3&amp;4</p>	TBC		<p>Agreed at Co-ordinating OSC 14.07.23 that all Scrutiny Committee meetings will include a standing item on implications of Equal Pay within the remit of the Committee.</p>

October	<p>Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on Council's Response to Section 114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities: 1,2,3</b></p>	<p>To monitor the agreed savings for 2023/24 as set out in the MFTP.</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 11 October 2023.</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 2 October 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2</p>	TBC		<p>Co-ordinating O&amp;S Committee on 15.09.23 agreed that all committees should have a standing item on the delivery of existing savings for 2023/24 particular to the remit of the Committee.</p>
October	<p>Monitoring Recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities: 2,5,8</b></p>	<p>Track progress on recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 11 October 2023.</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 2 October 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2</p>	Spencer Wilson, Interim Head of Employment and Skills		<p>Recommendations were agreed at Council in April 2023. This is part of the standard inquiry tracking programme.</p>

December	Scrutiny of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1, 2 and 3	To scrutinise the integration of the LEP functions into Birmingham City Council including administration of the legacy funds and Enterprise Zone.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 6 December 2023.  Deadline for reports: 27 November 2023  Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Edward Scutt, Head of Governance, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership		The LEP Scrutiny function no longer exists and there is an expectation that individual local authority arrangements will scrutinise the LEP Integration.  Link to Cabinet report 27 June on LEP Integration into Birmingham City Council: <a href="#">Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)</a>
December	Local Skills Improvement Plan  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1,2	To inform members of the Local Skills Investment Plan, the implications for Birmingham and the role of Birmingham City Council and agree any recommendations to support the development of skills in the City.	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 6 December 2023.  Deadline for reports: 27 November 2023  Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Corin Crane, Chief Executive, Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce.		Deferred from October.  LSIP Employer designated representative body: Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce  Data reported to June E&S OSC showed decrease in Level 2 Qualifications and increase in Level 4 Qualifications between 2019 – 21. <a href="#">Document.ashx (cmis.uk.com)</a>

January	<p>Young People and Skills</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 1, 2, 6 and 8</p>	<p>To understand the views of young people to inform the work of the Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>To report back on the implementation of the recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry.</p>	<p>Informal meeting – date/ time to be confirmed</p>	<p>Juliet Faulkner, Senior Youth Worker (Participation)</p>		<p>This session will involve members of the Youth City Board. Members of this board had contributed to the Scrutiny Inquiry.</p> <p>Members of the Education and CYP OSC could be invited to attend.</p>
April	<p>Monitoring Recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry</p> <p><b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 2,5,8</p>	<p>Track progress on recommendations of the Employment and Skills Scrutiny Inquiry</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 17 April 2023.</p> <p>Deadline for reports: 2 April 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2</p>	<p>Spencer Wilson, Interim Head of Employment and Skills</p>		<p>Recommendations were agreed at Council in April 2023. This is part of the standard inquiry tracking programme. It will be the second time the inquiry reports to Committee.</p>

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



### Menu of Issues for Consideration

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

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

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Our Future City Plan	To outline the current position of the Our Future City Plan, including a response to the feedback from the O&S Committee during the consultation.	Committee meeting – single item.	This follows on from previous presentations to the Committee on <a href="#">26 April 2023</a> and <a href="#">12 July 2023</a> This included a formal response to the consultation. A Cabinet decision on this report is scheduled in March 2024. It is therefore likely that this item will return to Committee in January or February 2024.
Employers	To understand how Birmingham City Council can support local businesses.	Link with existing meeting / event	During the evidence gathering for the Employment and Skills Inquiry, there had been an intention to hear evidence from the business sector. This had not been possible. As part of its conclusions, therefore, the inquiry report had indicated that it would be useful to still meet with business. This could have a wider focus than youth employment.
CWG Employment Legacy	Aims and Objectives to be determined.	To be determined.	Neighbourhoods O&S Committee has Commonwealth Games Legacy Framework as part of its remit. All other Committees will consider specific areas of Games legacy as relevant to their Terms of Reference.
Night-time economy	Aims and Objectives to be determined.	To be determined.	Following consideration of the Birmingham Development Plan to consider the issues experienced by communities as a result of the night- time economy and how these can be managed / mitigated in future developments.
East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy	To update on the implementation of the East Birmingham Growth Strategy.	Committee meeting – single item	This will follow on from the most recent presentation to the Committee on <a href="#">26 April 2023</a> . The Committee had requested 6 monthly updates.

**Scrutiny Method Options:**

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

**Corporate Priorities, Performance and Outcomes****Corporate Priorities 2022 – 26:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 Support inclusive economic growth                          | 11 Increase affordable, safe, green housing                       |
| 2 Tackle unemployment  | 12 Tackle homelessness  |
| 3 Attract inward investment and infrastructure               | 13 Tackle health inequalities                                     |
| 4 Maximise the benefits of the Commonwealth Games            | 14 Encourage and enable physical activity and healthy living      |
| 5 Tackle poverty and inequalities                            | 15 Champion mental health   |
| 6 Empower citizens and enable citizen voice                  | 16 Improve outcomes for adults with disabilities and older people |
| 7 Promote and champion diversity, civic pride and culture    | 17 Improve street cleanliness                                     |
| 8 Support and enable all children and young people to thrive | 18 Improve air quality  |
| 9 Make the city safer  | 19 Continue on the Route to Zero                                  |
| 10 Protect and safeguard vulnerable citizens                 | 20 Be a City of Nature  |
|  | 21 Delivering a Bold Best in Class Council                        |

Information on the Corporate Priorities, Performance and City Outcomes was reported to the Economy and Skills OSC in June 23: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)