

# 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

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### 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)

		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?	Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Amanda Lloyd, Principal Employment Officer		
September	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 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?	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda item for OSC meeting on 13 September 2023.  Deadline for reports: 4 September 2023  Venue: Council House, Committee Room 2	Shariat Rokneddin, Policy and Governance Manager  Amanda Lloyd, Principal Employment Officer		



		<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: 1, 2 and 3</b>	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: 1,2</b>	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)