Appendix 1: Work Outline / Terms of Reference

Cost of Living Programme Task & Finish Project

Reporting to Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Our key question:	What lessons can be learned from Birmingham City Council's Cost of Living Programme?
1. How is O&S adding value through this work?	City Council in October 2022 agreed a Cost of Living Programme; governance arrangements; areas of focus for this work (food, warmth, energy, benefits, and our staff); and the allocation of £5m of funding to the programme.
	In April 2023, a progress report was presented to Cabinet, and an extension of the programme is now planned to come to Cabinet in September 2023.
	The involvement of O&S will help learn the lessons of this programme and consider whether they have wider application across other council initiatives.
	This will involve:
	• An assessment of the existing Cost of Living programme with a focus on its timeliness and value for money. • An assessment of the lessons learned as highlighted in the April 2022 Cabinet report, and consideration of how these can be applied. • A focus on the involvement of partners across the city, and the value to be gained from this approach.
	Council therefore asks Scrutiny to bring in associated officers, external partners, and the City Observatory to provide evidence so that the issues can be properly investigated and understood.
	The Task and Finish Group will consider four main themes:
	1. **Internal processes and Cost of Living programme governance**: Including the role of the Strategic Response Group, the effectiveness of the Officer Delegated Decision Making process, budget management and funding, grants allocation, the role of procurement and the evaluation methodology. The approach to partner relationship management will also be considered. Finally, the role of insight and intelligence in the programme.
	2. **The Warm Welcome network of warm spaces**: The definition of a Warm Space and how they are networked together. The growth and development of the network, and the role of partners. The branding and communications. The view of users and how stigma is avoided. Future opportunities for the network.
	3. **Food Provision and the role of the Foodbanks in the City:** Council support of the foodbanks, the issue of the cultural appropriateness of foodbanks. The challenge of sustaining foodbank provision in the longer term. Consideration will also be given to the use of food pantries, the wider food justice network and community fridges.

	4. **Information, advice, and Guidance:** The difference from business as usual, the roles of the different agencies and how they work together. The impact of both reactive and proactive support. An analysis of the forms of additional benefits that have been identified.
2. What needs to be done?	The Task and Finish Group will receive evidence from officers and partners to consider the following key issues: **General:** - What lessons should be learned from the Cost of Living programme, and can they be applied more widely across the council's activities? - What were the governance arrangements and how did this affect decision making and delivery? - How was the value for money and the capacity of the providers tested? - How did partners and users feedback on the programme? - How has co-production with partners been achieved? - How has grant funding been implemented, monitored, and evaluated? - Has the overall programme delivered value for money? - How did internal business partners support the process? - How is the programme linked to other council priorities? - How does the approach taken by Birmingham City council compare with other local authorities? - How can the City Council work with the Community and Voluntary sector to maintain and build the good will required to respond to continued Cost of Living pressures and future crises? - Could the overall activities from October 2022 to the present day have been improved? - How can the benefits of the programme be mainstreamed into the council's 'business as usual' activity? - What was the role of the City Observatory? - What is the legacy and how does the council build on this legacy? **Themes** **The Warm Welcome network of warm spaces:** - What is the definition of a warm space? Why? - How are warm spaces registered for the Warm Welcome network? - How has equality and equity been considered? - Is there a fair geographic spread of spaces? - What activity takes place within the Warm Spaces and how are other services linked into the network? **Foodbanks and food provision:** - What was the justification for supporting foodbanks? - How was the monthly level of support for foodbanks arrived at? - What options were considered in supporting the foodbanks? - Is a dependency culture being created? - Were other food initiatives undertaken and why?

	• Consideration will also be given to the use of food pantries, the wider food justice network and community fridges. **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)** • What was the additionality over and above business as usual? • What sort of engagement worked best? • How effective has this service engaged with vulnerable households? • Why was support both in-house and outsourced? • What is the relationship with other services?
3. What timescale do we propose to do this in?	The Task and Finish Group will report to Co-ordinating OSC on 13 October 2023 (TBC).
4. What outcomes are we looking to achieve?	To review the Cost of Living programme and learn lessons regarding: the services and support that were provided; how the programme worked internally; how the programme worked with community and voluntary organisations; how the impact and value of this work can be improved.
5. What is the best way to achieve these outcomes and what routes will we use?	The Task and Finish Group will meet several times. This will include 1. initial scoping – to be completed by OSC on 14 July 2. an internal review of processes; primarily meeting with officers 3. meetings to cover Warm Welcome spaces, Foodbank support, and Information, Advice and Guidance; primarily meeting with external partners 4. a meeting to agree final recommendations As part of its work, the Task and Finish Group will consider evidence from Officers, Partners, Guests, Users and Community Groups.

Member / Officer Leads

Lead Member:	Chair: Cllr. Sir Albert Bore
Members of the Task and Finish Group:	Cllr. Sir Albert Bore, Cllr Jack Deakin, Cllr Morriam Jan, Cllr Alex Yip and Cllr Ray Goodwin. Where a Member is unable to attend, a named substitute can be nominated.
Lead Officer and support:	Strategy, Equality and Partnerships Directorate will provide support for the Task and Finish Group. Support must be independent of those involved in awarding of grants and delivery of the programme. Support will include: • Liaising with members to agree meeting dates • Liaising with Scrutiny Office to book meeting room • Inviting people to give evidence • Agreeing the agenda with the Chair • Circulating agenda and papers in advance of the meeting • Producing a record of Task and Finish Group meetings that is agreed with the Chair / Task and Finish Group members • Producing the report for Co-ordinating O&SC