

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2024 AT 10:00 HOURS**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 3 & 4, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA**  
**SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB**

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

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

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

#### **2 APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**3 - 10**

4 **MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 November 2023.

**11 - 16**

5 **ACTION TRACKER**

To note the action tracker.

6 **COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**

To note that no comments have been received from the Commissioner on this agenda.

**17 - 30**

7 **IMPROVING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PLAN UPDATE**

Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families and Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance & Planning, in attendance.

**31 - 50**

8 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members to note the work programme which will be reviewed at the subsequent member workshop to ensure it aligns with the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.

9 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To note the date of the next meeting is 28 February 2024 at 10am in committee rooms 3 & 4.

10 **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).

11 **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.

12 **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**

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING**

**1000 hours on Wednesday, 29 November 2023, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,**

**Council House**

**Minutes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Kerry Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors: Debbie Clancy, Adam Higgs, and Jane Jones

Other Representatives: Osamugi Ogbe - Parent Governor, Rabia Shami - Parent Governor, and Sarah Smith - Church of England Diocese

**Also Present:**

Councillor Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families

David Camps, Headteacher, Nechells Primary School (online)

John Coughlan CBE, SEND Commissioner

David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance

Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development

**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr Jilly Bermingham, Cllr Des Hughes, Cllr Morriam Jan, Cllr Shehla Moledina, and Justine Lomas – Roman Catholic Diocese.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and none were declared.

## **4. MINUTES**

(See document No 1)

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **5. ACTION TRACKER**

(See document No 2)

The Chair advised the meeting the Children's and Young People's Travel Service workshop for all councillors was held on 16 November 2023. This was a generic session and as such a request will be made for a written update on the outstanding actions listed on the action tracker for this Service, and for the presentation slides used at the workshop to be forwarded to the Committee.

### **RESOLVED:**

That:

- The action tracker was noted.
- The presentation slides used at the Children and Young People's Travel Service Workshop held for all Councillors on 16 November 2023 to be provided by the Directorate.
- A written update on the outstanding actions for the Children and Young People's Travel Service to be provided by the Directorate via e-mail.

## **6. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**

### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted that no comments had been received from the Commissioner on this agenda.

## **7. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT – THE NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOLS**

(See document No 3)

Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families, Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development, David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance, and David Camps, Headteacher, Nechells Primary School and a member of the steering group (online), were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and thanked the Director, Children and Families, for presenting proposals to the Committee at an early stage giving it the opportunity to provide feedback.

The presentation was given which set out the overview of schools and pupil characteristics in Birmingham, the current position regarding the relationship with schools, the proposed new relationship with schools, shared purpose, concurrent work, and next steps.

During the debate, the following points were raised:

### **Quality Provision – Ofsted Rating**

The Committee was informed that 86% of Birmingham schools (382) were rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. However, a large number of schools have not been recently assessed, so are due an inspection and the rating could change. The new Ofsted School Inspection Framework and timelines for inspections were discussed and it was agreed the new Ofsted School Inspection Framework would be circulated to the Committee for information.

### **Policy and Clear Accountability**

The Director, Children and Families explained the local authority was not currently equipped to hold schools to account and there were no arrangements for schools to hold the local authority to account. There was a system in place, but not clear accountability as formal arrangements were not in place. She suggested the reasons for these included decisions taken on capacity for this work by previous senior leadership and the statutory duties for education being overlooked.

It was clarified that there would be a policy for school improvement and schools causing concern to ensure that the council meets its statutory education duties. This policy will go to Cabinet for approval. The model will set out the structure for delivery of the policy.

The new ways of working included a new Education Improvement Board chaired by the Director of Children Services (DCS), with the Board being responsible for delivering improvement in education, and professionals holding to account and deploying resources appropriately. The three priorities will be attendance, achievement, and inclusion. It was confirmed the inclusion priority means SEND and inclusion and this will be how it will be described in future presentations.

### **BEP, Funding and Consultation**

It was confirmed the funding for delivering the new policy will come as a result of looking at BEP's contract for school improvement.

Officers were working on the future role of BEP within the new model with BEP and headteachers, and the model will be reviewed in the first year so it can be further refined.

Concern was expressed that schools could lose some benefit from BEP if funding to BEP was reduced, and it was questioned whether headteachers understood the implications, and whether they wanted things to work well rather than there being more changes. In response it was confirmed that meetings were taking place with headteachers to hear their views on the proposals. It was suggested that feedback from the consultation was provided to the Committee, and this was agreed.

### **The Attendance Strategy**

The attendance strategy was in the process of being co-produced with headteachers and the timeline for presentation at Cabinet will be provided for this.

### **School Governors**

Assurance was requested on the capacity of school governors and the Committee was informed there were c.25% vacancies, and a request was made for potential school governors to come forward with support being provided by School and Governor Support service.

### **Next Steps and Timescales**

Next steps included revising the schools causing concern strategy and policy, launching the data dashboard, establishing a temporary Transformation Board to oversee the pilots and share learning, and they were currently looking for a group of schools for the pilot, with the new relationship to be launched in September 2024. The Director, Children and Families agreed to provide the Committee with the timescales for the development of the new policy for school improvement and schools causing concern, which included the consultations, and presentation to Cabinet.

The Director, Children and Families informed the Committee that officers would provide a summary of the Committee's discussion and feedback to provide a sense check and used with discussions with headteachers.

### **RESOLVED:**

That:

- The Committee noted and commented on the school improvement and schools causing concern policy proposals.
- The following to be provided by the Directorate:
  - Timescales for the development of the new policy for school improvement and schools causing concern, which included the consultation, and presentation to Cabinet.
  - Details of the feedback from the consultation for the new policy.

- The timeline for the attendance strategy presentation to Cabinet.
- The new Ofsted School Inspection Framework (including timelines for inspections).

## **8. SEND COMMISSIONER**

(See document No. 4)

The Chair welcomed John Coughlan CBE, SEND Commissioner to the meeting, and set the context for the discussion.

The SEND Commissioner provided the background to his appointment as SEND Commissioner and referred to his findings and recommendations published in his two reports to the Secretary of State for Education, and the actions the Council was taking to respond to concerns and deliver improvements. He also referred to his more recent appointment as a Commissioner for the Best Value intervention in Birmingham. This made sense for the SEND work but would complicate his role. He noted the concerns outlined in his reports were also evidenced in the Best Value intervention.

He acknowledged the progress now being made after a slow start including the strengthened leadership in children services, stabilised management team, and the work of the Scrutiny Committee, which adapted its approach to challenging and recognising what needed to be done collectively.

The Chair referred to the criticism of the Committee in the past and highlighted the difficulties for Overview and Scrutiny Committees in prioritising their work programmes, and the Committee's focus since May has been across the Children and Families Directorate, with SEND being an item on nearly every agenda.

Communication was important and it was questioned whether there was more the Committee could do to add value to the SEND improvement journey, which could include helping to increase transparency. The SEND Commissioner responded he was happy to attend future committee meetings and converse directly with the Chair.

The SEND Commissioner highlighted the SEND Improvement Board has matured and there has been high level political engagement and stronger continuity, although there was more work to be done. There was stronger cohesion, and it was a joint endeavour with external agencies and the Parent Carer Forum (PCF).

Mr Coughlan confirmed he was seeing evidential progress especially at a strategic level but acknowledged that improvements may not be the lived experience of every parent of a child with complex needs. The strategic improvements were essential, but a key part of the improvement process was the relentless attempts to address the concerns of individuals.

The Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review (SENAR) service in Birmingham was the key service between parents and the local authority, and the quality assurance of the Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) was showing improvements, as was the timeliness of the EHCPs. However, the culture of quality assurance needed to embed, and recruitment was still a challenge.

The SEND inspection framework was moving towards the social care inspection framework in design which reinforces the need for good quality assurance of individual cases. Health engagement has improved although further work on reducing waiting times for Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) and other therapies was needed.

The SEND Commissioner felt one litmus test for improvement was the number of children with an EHCP in mainstream education. This has increased from 28% to 33% in Birmingham which was a significant step, but this was low in comparison with other local authorities, and was due to a number of factors, with some being national and some being Birmingham specific. He acknowledged this was controversial for parents who may not want their child in a mainstream school.

There was not a SEND system in the country where headteachers did not have concerns regarding supporting children with SEND. This was due to fundamental legislative and regulatory flaws. A better integrated and partnership approach, with better leadership and engagement with the local authority and schools was needed, and communication included clarity of roles and supporting schools with difficult situations.

It was acknowledged inclusion was difficult to sustain and relies on collective responsibility, the government needed to do more to incentivise schools, and local improvements.

There were improvements with school engagement and the relationship with schools in the city, and the complexities was acknowledged, with the need to improve communication throughout.

The Council has addressed the issues regarding the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) on a collective basis and SENDIASS was becoming legally compliant, and it was positive to see it move forward.

The SEND Commissioner will provide another report to the Secretary of State early in the new year. He was seeing vital strategic building blocks in place and improvements, which included the necessary resources. However, this may not be reflected by individual lived experiences. They were expecting a re-inspection of the SEND Service in Birmingham and with the current momentum there was now cause for some optimism about the outcome to that inspection but maintaining the momentum was key.

During the ensuing debate, the main points included:

#### **The next SEND Inspection**

The next SEND inspection could be anytime in the next 6 – 18 months, if not later.

#### **Special Education Needs (SEN) High Needs Funding**

The local authority does not have an overspend on the high needs block for SEN support and provision, which many local authorities were struggling with. Although, it was predicted there will be a deficit by 2026 if the current practice was not changed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee considered the information presented at the meeting by the SEND Commissioner, John Coughlan CBE.



## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No. 5)

The Chair updated the Committee on the work of the Budget Task and Finish Group; one meeting had taken place and a series of meetings were programmed. The Chair committed to reporting back on the detailed discussion and suggested a meeting on Teams in order for the Committee to provide input and make recommendations. This was likely to take place during December 2023 which the Committee agreed.

The following items were agreed:

### **17 January 2024 committee meeting:**

- Improving Services for Children and Families Programme Update.
- Draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy.
- Birmingham Safeguarding Childrens Partnership's Annual Report deferred to a future committee meeting.

### **28 February 2024 committee meeting:**

- Review of Short Breaks Update.
- Early Years Entitlement.
- School attainment to be confirmed for either the February or April committee meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the work programme was agreed and subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, be submitted to Co-ordinating O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

## **10. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

The next meeting to be held on 17 January 2024 at 10am.

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

None.

## **12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **13. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

#### **RESOLVED:**

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 11.57 hours.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2023-24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
22 Feb 2023	School Attainment and School Improvement	The recruitment and retention rates of teachers in the city in comparison to other areas.	This requires Oracle to be run and Schools HR advise this is currently not possible.
5 April 2023	Children's Trust	The Children's Trust to attend a future committee meeting to discuss the review of short breaks.	An interim update was e-mailed on the 21 November 2023, and the outcome of the review of short breaks is currently programmed for the February 2024 committee meeting.
17 May 2023	Action Tracker	The timeline for when the SEND Sufficiency Report would be available to be provided.	The strategy is currently programmed for the February 2024 committee meeting.
17 May 2023	Young People's Substance Use Service	Aquarius to provide the timeline for the Manchester Met University project.	Aquarius have met with the researchers, and they are preparing a slide deck of their initial findings. They are expecting the project to conclude by the end of the year.
17 May 2023	SEND	<p>The following to be provided via e-mail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The spend information for staffing within the SEND and Inclusion Service.</li> <li>Information on the indicators in the APP on the Council's website that state, 'requires baseline.'</li> </ul>	<p>E-mailed the information on 25 August 2023.</p> <p>E-mailed the response on 12 June 2023.</p>
		The Committee to provide further questions in writing for officers to provide a written response.	None were received.
14 Jun 2023	Developing the Education, Children and Young People O&S Committee's	Members of the Task and Finish Group for the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry and the Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiry will be followed up.	Cllr. Debbie Clancy replaced Cllr. Simon Morrall on the CCE Inquiry T&F Group, and the Young People's Mental Health Inquiry T&F Group.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2023-24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
	Work Programme 2023/24		
19 July 2023	Children and Young People's Travel Service	A workshop for cultural change and the statutory guidance for the Children's and Young People's Travel Service to be arranged.	The all Councillor workshop was arranged for Thursday, 16 November 2023 and the presentation slides were circulated to the Committee on 4 December 2023.
		A breakdown of discretionary and statutory spend to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		More information on Personal Transport Budgets to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		More information on the new Application and Eligibility Review Panel to be provided.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
19 July 2023	SEND Tribunals	The draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy to be added to the Committee's Work Programme.	This is currently scheduled for the February 2024 committee meeting.
		<p>Information on the programme of training/briefings being developed regarding SEND for all Members to be provided. If the following is not covered within this, then a workshop to be organised for the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A regular update from families going through the Tribunal process to understand the family experience and highlight any issues that may inform service improvement.</li> <li>A briefing note outlining how high quality decisions are made when developing Education and Health Care</li> </ul>	<p>Workshops/Sessions for all Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEND (this will include Tribunals).</li> <li>Schools (how Councillors can support local schools, e.g., admissions).</li> <li>Safeguarding (the Chair requested whether there could be a workshop for corporate parenting, and the Cabinet Member agreed to check whether the safeguarding</li> </ul>

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2023-24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
		Plans (EHCPs), including how learning from Tribunals is shared to improve services.	workshop/session could include corporate parenting).
19 Jul 2023	Performance Update	The draft attendance strategy to be brought to the committee meeting in September when discussing the Hidden Children item, and the relevant officers to be in attendance for this.	Hidden Children was an item at the committee meeting in October and the Committee are awaiting the draft attendance strategy.
19 Jul 2023	Work Programme	Cllr. Debbie Clancy to be sent the dates of the evidence gathering sessions for the CCE Inquiry.	Dates were forwarded to Cllr. Debbie Clancy.
		Members to e-mail details of items they wish to be added to the menu of topics/issues.	None were received.
		There were potentially three workshops to be arranged: Children and Young People's Travel Service, SEND Tribunals, and the Data Workshop.	The Children's and Young People's Travel Service Workshop took place on 16 November 2023.  The SEND Tribunals Workshop for the Committee will not be needed as it will be covered in the workshop/sessions arranged for all Members.
6 Sep 2023	Performance Update	Further discussions relating to the focus and format of performance data presented to the Committee be considered at the Member Data Workshop.	The Data Workshop for the Committee took place on 6 November 2023.
		Information on mental health element of Employment Support Programme be provided to Members.	E-mailed to Members on 9 October 2023.
		An explanation be given to Members as to whether the percentage figures for the most common reason for staff	E-mailed to Members on 9 October 2023.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2023-24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
		sickness absence related to days lost to sickness, or the percentage of people sick for each reason.	
6 Sep 2023	Financial Challenges – Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Savings and Recovery Plan	A copy of Director’s communication to headteachers and staff following the announcement of the S114 notice be sent to Members for information.	E-mailed to Members on 20 September 2023.
6 Sep 2023	Work Programme	That subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the SEND Sufficiently Strategy and the Early Years Education Entitlement Deep Dive items be added to work programme for January 2024.	The work programme has been updated accordingly.
18 Oct 2023	Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on the Council’s Response to S114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan	The Chair to update the Committee on the work of the Finance and Resources T&F Group in relation to the Committee’s remit.	Ongoing.
		The Director, Children and Families, to bring work at early stages of planning for input by the Committee.	Ongoing.
		Future agenda items to include a snapshot of their associated spend/budget and impact.	Ongoing.
18 Oct 2023	Hidden Children	The planning for further development of the governance around school exclusions and part time timetables to be brought to a future committee meeting for comment.	Added to the work programme under menu of issues for consideration.
		The Headteacher to provide the data on length of stay of students at City of Birmingham School (COBS).	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
		A visit of the Committee to COBS to be arranged.	Work programme updated accordingly.

**EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2023-24**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
		The Committee to forward any further questions to the Scrutiny Office.	None were received.
		The increase in behavioural problems and speech and language being less developed when children start primary schools to be included in the Early Years Education Entitlement item being discussed at the 17 January 2024 committee meeting.	Work Programme updated accordingly.
		Further focused work on Elective Home Education (EHE) and part time timetables to be considered after the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry had finished in the new year.	Work Programme updated accordingly.
18 Oct 2023	Work Programme	The review of short breaks item programmed for the November committee meeting will be deferred to a future committee meeting and subject to an interim written update to be circulated to the Committee, which will include a commitment and timescale for when the review will be completed, and a report can be presented to Committee.	An interim update was e-mailed on the 21 November 2023, and this item is currently scheduled for the February 2024 committee meeting.
		The SEND Commissioner to be invited to attend the November committee meeting.	Attended the November 2023 committee meeting.
		The school improvement re-design item (school improvement – the new relationship with schools) to be added to the work programme for November committee meeting.	The item was discussed at the November 2023 committee meeting.
29 Nov 2023	Action Tracker	The presentation slides used at the Children and Young People's Travel Service Workshop held for all Councillors on 16 November 2023 to be provided.	E-mailed to the Committee on 4 December 2023.

## EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S COMMITTEE

### ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update / Notes
		A written update on the outstanding actions for the Children and Young People's Travel Service to be provided by the Directorate via e-mail.	E-mailed the information on 15 December 2023.
29 Nov 2023	School Improvement – The New Relationship with Schools	The new Ofsted Inspection Framework (including timelines for inspections) to be e-mailed to the Committee.	E-mailed on 4 December 2023.
		Timescales for the development of the new policy for school improvement and schools causing concern, which included the consultation and presentation to Cabinet.	E-mailed the timeline for the School Improvement – New Relationship piece on 15 December 2023. The timelines on the school causing concern policy will be forwarded shortly.
		Details of the feedback from the consultation for the new policy.	
		The timeline for the attendance strategy presentation to Cabinet to be e-mailed to the Committee.	
29 Nov 2023	Work Programme	The Committee to have a meeting on Teams in December to provide input and make recommendations to the Budget T&F Group.	Work Programme updated accordingly.



# Birmingham City Council

## Education, Children and Young People

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17 January 2024



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**Subject:** The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update

**Report of:** Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services

**Report author:** Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance and Planning

#### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update to Members on progress made since July 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting regarding the The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan.

#### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee to note the attached report, agree any comments and/or recommendations.
- 2.2 To continue to return on a quarterly basis to provide regular updates on progress to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

#### 3 Background

- 3.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan was launched in November 2022 to align within one plan, all City Council improvement and transformation activity that impacts on children, young people, and their families.
- 3.2 The objectives of the plan and associated activity seek to compliment and reinforce those set out within the City Council's Corporate Plan and improvement and transformation activity, our partnership Change for Children and Young People Plan 2023-2028 and across the UNICEF Child Friendly City commitments.
- 3.3 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan was first presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2023 and again in April 2023.
- 3.4 In July 2023, a progress update was provided to the Committee and offered an overview of progress to date illustrated through a review of project and action BRAG status.

- 3.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested for further progress updates to be provided on a quarterly basis.
- 3.6 The Plan centres on five overarching workstreams that each comprise of numerous strategic and operational actions.
- **Workstream A:** Implement a strong and effective Children and Families Directorate to deliver best in class services for children, young people, families, and communities
  - **Workstream B:** Strengthen approaches to identify, recognise and respond to the vulnerability of specific groups of children and young people
  - **Workstream C:** Transform and improve services for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in line with statutory requirements and to deliver sustainable, well performing services with inclusion of children and young people at the heart.
  - **Workstream D:** Transform and improve Children and Young People's Travel Service to deliver a sustainable well performing service with outcomes for children and young people at its heart
  - **Workstream E:** Ensure services are sustainable, compliant, and designed to deliver best outcomes for children, young people, families, and communities
- 3.7 Progress reporting across Workstream C (SEND Improvement) and Workstream D (Children and Young People's Travel Service Improvement) will continue to be reported in detail through their respective Programme Leads and overseen by their respective Improvement Boards, a quarterly update is provided to the Improving Services for Children and Families Board to ensure there is continued line of sight and triangulation across interdependencies.
- 3.8 The strategic accountability for the delivery of the Plan is managed through the Improving Services for Children and Families Board. The Board consists of senior leaders from across the Council, with representation from Birmingham Children's Trust, to ensure a whole system focus is maintained.
- 3.9 The Board has an independent Chair, a credible expert and experienced DCS, well positioned to provide continued challenge and oversight.

#### **4 Improvement Journey ~ Progress to Date**

- 4.1 The most recent progress reporting of projects and actions was provided to the last Improving Services for Children and Families Board, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023, for reporting period September (end)/October 2023.

4.2 Headline progress reported:

Workstream	Headline Progress – Since July 2023
<p><b>A: Implement a strong and effective Children and Families Directorate to deliver best in class services for children, young people, families, and communities</b></p>	<p><b>E2.6 Review the vision, strategy, and delivery model of services for young people leading to service redesign, including securing internal/external budget viability and growth.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are 6 actions across this project, overall project status is green, to reach blue BRAG rating, the automation of information will be monitored further across the next reporting period to ensure that activity is fully embedded.</li> <li>▪ The Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance commenced in post in June 2023 and has supported the progression of actions from inflight to complete and embedded.</li> <li>▪ Key Performance Indicators reporting and tracking is in place.</li> <li>▪ Data quality and analysis has significantly improved and has supported the value of reporting across Directorate Performance Management, SEND, Cabinet Members Briefings and Overview and Scrutiny.</li> <li>▪ A strategic review of our education management information software system, Impulse Nexus, is underway. Focussed on maximising system capability and ensuring that the right people have the right level of access and permissions.</li> <li>▪ The Directorate Performance Board programme of work has been redesigned to facilitate increased collaboration.</li> </ul>
<p><b>B: Strengthen approaches to identify, recognise and respond to the vulnerability of specific groups of children and young people</b></p>	<p><b>B1.8 Develop an Attendance Strategy with key stakeholders that includes emphasis on the primary phase and ensuring early help is in place to support children and families - In line with statutory guidance and best practice.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ During September 2023, preparatory activity took place in readiness for proposed online and face to face workshops.</li> <li>▪ An online survey was designed to capture the voices of children and young people to inform the Attendance Strategy</li> <li>▪ A series of face to face and online workshops were held with parents, agencies, and schools to identify priorities to inform the development of the Attendance Strategy.</li> <li>▪ Most agencies were represented, and valuable discussions took place.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Drafting of the Strategy is now underway.</li> </ul> <p><b>B4.1 Ensure arrangements for reporting, monitoring, and supporting Elective Home Education are robust, including ensuring there is sufficient capacity, to enable timeline of visits and reviews of EHE in line with statutory duties and best practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily meetings have been established whereby Elected Home Education Managers and Advisors assess EHE referrals at the point of submission/receipt.</li> <li>▪ The process involves contacting schools that have sent the referrals and the parents of respective children, to understand the rationale for the referral and to explore, where appropriate, alternative options in the interest of the child/ren – keeping children and young people at the heart of decision making and planning.</li> <li>▪ This reflecting a robust and timely response to referrals.</li> <li>▪ EHE Managers are working in partnership with Virtual Schools Service and Birmingham Children's Trust to establish a pathway to respond to referrals for home educated children on Child Protection Plans.</li> <li>▪ EHE Managers attends the EHE EHCP Panel meetings led by SENAR. Development of a process to support decision making relating to EHE referrals of children on EHCP Plans is underway.</li> </ul> <p><b>B5.8 Ensure robust, best practice, systems are in place for Chaperone Licensing and Children in Employment functions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The online Chaperone Licensing Application Process is in its final stages – the system has been tested with new Chaperone applicants who have informed that the experience was positive.</li> <li>▪ The customer review team have also engaged existing Chaperones to seek their view of the digital process, positive feedback was received</li> <li>▪ The team have received positive acknowledgement of the improved timeframe for receiving chaperone licences</li> <li>▪ All work permits have been processed and currently there are no pending applications.</li> <li>▪ All telephone and email enquiries have been answered within one day.</li> <li>▪ No complaint's received this reporting period</li> <li>▪ All Chaperone licencing applications processed and working to time scales of 4 weeks ahead, consistent processing of application within an average timescale of 4 days.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 189 emails detailing positive feedback from customer experience.</li> <li>▪ Chaperone checks for other local authorities completed on the same day.</li> <li>▪ The process for responding to any potential concerns received into the service in relation to Chaperones, is currently under review to create a more robust approach to responding, managing, and concluding any investigations.</li> <li>▪ This work has been prioritised and the programme team are working with the Head of Service and the CET Team Manager to establish a revised systematic approach whilst ensuring that any current referrals are appropriately addressed.</li> </ul>
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#### Of the 34 projects:

- **19 are BRAG rated as Amber** (project started and progress is being made) – this is a positive decrease from the last reporting period
  - **3 BRAG rated Green** (project completed but continues to be monitored to ensure it is embedded) - this is a positive increase from the last reporting period
- **7 projects** are led by the Children and Young People's Travel Service Improvement Programme
  - **5 projects** are from the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan and led by the SEND Improvement Board

#### Of the 299 actions:

- **49 are BRAG rated as Blue** (Blue = action delivered, embedded, and sustained). Increase of 4 actions assessed as being embedded since the last reporting period
  - **48 are BRAG rated as Green** (Green = action completed but continues to be monitored to ensure it embeds)
  - **114 are BRAG rated as Amber** (Amber = action has started, and progress is being made)
  - **2 are BRAG rated as Red** (Red = Significant delay in implementation/still a worry)
  - **17 are BRAG rated as Grey** (Grey = action not yet started/due to start)
- **36 actions** are led by the Children and Young People's Travel Service programme
  - **33 actions** are from the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan and led by the SEND Improvement

4.3 We currently have two Red BRAG Rated Actions:

**E 2.5 Develop and implement Phase 3 of Birmingham Adult Education Service (BAES) redesign**

- The Section 114 Notice has impacted on recruitment with disruption to offers of work to external positions, resulting in vacancies
- This action requires review, clarity, and potential alignment to an alternative action owner/s to ensure that desired outcomes have been profiled correctly.

**E 2.6 Review the vision, strategy, and delivery model of services for young people leading to service redesign, including securing internal/external budget viability and growth.**

- This action requires review, in light of the current financial pressures to which the directorate is responding. Action 2.6 requires alignment to the ongoing work to redesign the 14-19 careers and youth services around a reduced budget.

4.4 Figures 1.1 and 1.2 provide an illustrative overview of progress across the respective reporting period (October 2023).

Figure 1.1

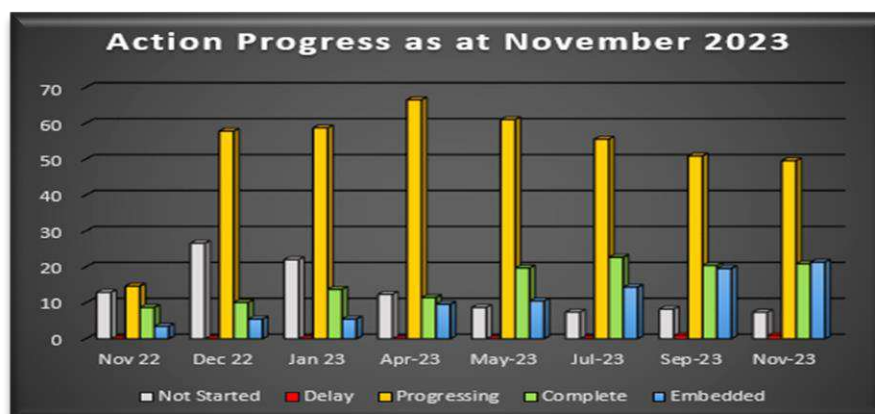
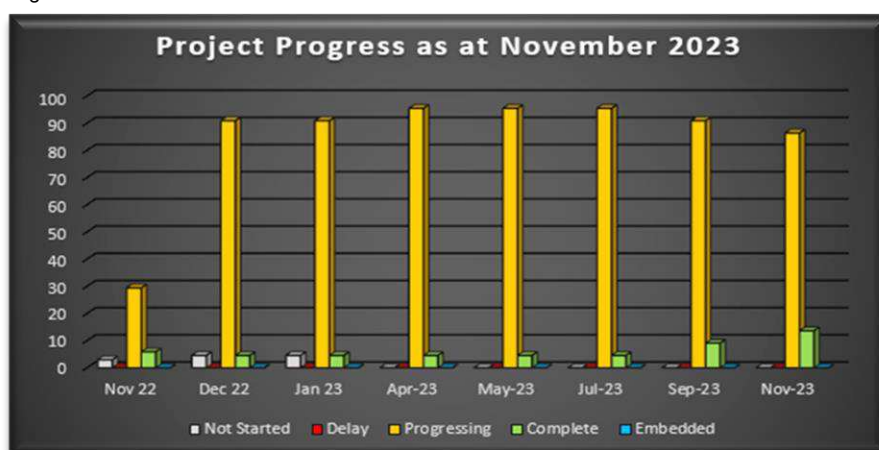


Figure 1.2

- 4.5 During the April 2023 meeting of this Committee, the potential to hold a data workshop was discussed. On 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023, David Fallows, Head of the Digital, Evidence and Performance Service along with Sue Harrison and Cllr Karen McCarthy led a workshop for Overview and Scrutiny Members on Children and Families Data and Performance.
- 4.6 The aim of the workshop was to give an overview of all the key sources of data across Children and Young People. During the workshop, Members were also given an overview of different analysis products, tips on how to interpret them and an overview of performance reporting and management across the Directorate.
- 4.7 The workshop was well received by Members. It was agreed that a further presentation would be provided to Members in 2024, detailing a Data and Digital Roadmap, outlining intended resolutions to some of the challenges presented in the workshop regarding data availability and quality.

## 5 Strategic Risks and Challenges

- 5.1 A2: Develop and implement a fit for purpose operating model for the Children and Families Directorate:
- The progression and completion of 10 out of the 19 actions is solely dependent on the Directorate redesign, further emphasising the importance of progressing the redesign at pace.

Risk/Challenge	Mitigation
<p><b>Council Wide and Directorate Financial Position.</b></p> <p>It is noted that the Council is in a different financial position since the launch of the Improvement Plan, the Section 114 is expected to affect the Council's ability to respond to asks as anticipated at the time that activity and scheduling was agreed</p>	<p>An update on the Council's financial position and associated projections and planning will feature as a standing agenda item at the Improving Services for</p>
<p><b>Directorate Redesign.</b></p> <p>Potential impact of the Section 114 arrangements on the planned Directorate Redesign in terms of how this will affect pace of implementation.</p> <p>Many projects are affected by the pace of implementation of the redesign as they are reliant on permanent and stable teams to deliver improvements, for example implementation of new processes and procedures.</p>	<p>The redesign will feature as a standing agenda item at the Improving Services for Children and Families Board, this will allow for robust monitoring and due notification of any arising issues.</p> <p>A dedicated team including colleagues from HR and the Directorate are working collaboratively to respond to and resolve issues as they arise.</p>

- 5.2 The Directorate Improvement Plan, milestones and schedule of activity will aim to offer due consideration to emerging insight to inform chosen future project methodology, future priorities and workstreams.
- 5.3 Review of the Feasibility Studies – Whilst this activity usually takes place before a project is initiated to assess the merits of a workstream, this assessment is a useful tool to support inflight project review activity. This will strengthen the Directorate's ability to assess potential alternative approaches to achieving milestones. This to include potential new activity and realising outcomes across existing actions.

## **6 Securing Continued Improvement – Building on Progress**

- 6.1 The Directorate is focussed on systematic, sustainable progress that is underpinned by the way we work and reliant on organisational arrangements equipped to facilitate impactful outcomes.
- 6.2 The Directorate improvement journey is an evidenced based operating model that is aligned to internal Directorate and Council wide and partnership ambitions and seeks to empower the Directorate to actively embed continued improvement methodology into business as usual.
- 6.3 Through the Improvement Plan and respective activity, the Directorate has been able to consistently demonstrate improvement through carefully evidenced based project and action planning.
- 6.4 During the November 2023 Improving Services for Children and Families Board, whilst reviewing 2023 progress, the Independent Chair outlined what was described as significant progress made by the Directorate which has been centre to much success across services for children and families.
- 6.5 The January 2024 Improving Services for Children and Families Board will take place in person, this to support next steps and allow members to come together to reflect, recalibrate and inform the direction of our 2024 improvement ambitions.
- 6.6 The ability to review and refresh denotes the Directorates improvements arrangements have flex and can respond to changing need and resources to ensure continued conditions for success.
- 6.7 We recognise the opportunity to refresh our efforts to strengthening our ability to collaborate and co-produce and draw on the expertise of the workforce.
- 6.8 The Directorate will continue to make progress, however we recognise that pace may well be impacted by current financial implications.

## **7 Any Finance Implications**

- 7.1 As captured within section 5 of this report.

## **8 Any Legal Implications**

- 8.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan will support the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services to fulfil the functions



and discharge duties as set out in Sections 18 and 19 of the Children Act 2004, associated statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities Directors of children's services: roles and responsibilities and in the Council's Constitution.

## **9 Any Equalities Implications**

- 9.1 The Improving Services for Children and Families Plan supports the Council's Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business ambitions. The plan also

## **10 Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix one: Children and Families Directorate Key Performance Indicators.

## Appendix One

### PROJECT PROGRESS DASHBOARD

RAG	Description
Grey	Not yet due to start
Red	Significant delay in implementation/still a worry
Amber	Action started and progress being made
Green	Action completed but continue to monitor closely to ensure it has embedded
Blue	Action delivered and performance embedded and sustained for over 3 months and meeting/exceeding targets (where the action is measurable)

3.	<i>Individual Project Summary</i>									
Project Ref	Project Title	Project Lead (name)	Previous BRAG Status	Grey	Red	Amber	Green	Blue	Direction of Travel	Comments
A1	Develop and implement the high-level strategic vision for the Directorate underpinned by values and behaviours	Director of Children and Families							↔	
A2	Develop and implement a fit for purpose operating model for the Children and Families Directorate	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A3	Implement a robust evidenced based practice approach across the Children and Families Directorate that supports the Directorate to successfully implement its vision and values working alongside the partnership	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A4	Establish a performance culture that uses performance as a tool for continuous improvement and ensures operational, senior managers and Elected Members are able to have a firm grip on performance	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	

A5	Ensure effective digital systems and technology are in place to support the Directorate to deliver good services and support IT enabled change	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A6	Recruit, retain and develop a high-quality permanent and stable workforce that represents the community - making Birmingham City Council the employer of choice for children and families professionals	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A7	Ensure there is effective professional development that is accessible to the Children and Families Directorate workforce	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A8	Establish and embed a learning culture across the Children and Families Directorate so that learning systematically informs the way we work and service development	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A9	Establish robust operating and governance arrangements that enable senior leaders and elected members to maintain a line of sight to services	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A10	Ensure staff have opportunities to shape and influence continuous improvement with the Directorate	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A11	Implement and embed a co-ordinated, planned, and strategic approach to Directorate communications	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A12	Ensure there is an effective strategic partnership for children and young people in Birmingham that is ambitious for our children with a shared vision, purpose, and plan	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
A13	Ensure financial processes are embedded so that budget resources available to the directorate are allocated and used most effectively	Director of Evidence, Strategy and Commissioning							↔	
B1	Embed Children Missing out on Education systems to ensure there is robust oversight, tracking and a partnership approach to supporting children, young people, and families and securing a rapid response	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	

B2	Ensure robust arrangements are in place to respond to safeguarding issues in schools	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	
B3	Ensure robust Early Help services are in place	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	
B4	Ensure robust arrangements are in place for children and young people who are Electively Home Educated	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	
B5	Ensure there are robust systems and processes in place regarding children attending residential/alternative/school based resourced provision /out of school settings and post 16 settings	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	
B6	Ensure robust Safeguarding arrangements for children and young people are in place across the Council and the Directorate (including commissioned services)	Director of Children and Families							↔	
B7	Continue to strengthen the support for learning and education provision for children ever known to a social worker	Director of Thriving Children and Families							↔	
C1	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority one - System Leadership (SEND Strategy, Inter-agency Working, Local Offer)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
C2	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority two - Getting the basics right – identifying and assessing need (Coordination of Assessments, Quality of EHC Plans, Waiting Times)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
C3	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority three - Working Together Well (coproduction, parental engagement, parental satisfaction)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
C4	SEND Accelerated Progress Plan: Priority four - Pathways – meeting need and improving outcomes (academic progress, attendance and exclusions, employment)	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
C5	Building on the SEND Improvement Journey, continue to strengthen the system and	Director of SEND and Inclusion	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly

	capacity to promote inclusion of children and young people									
D1	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Strategy, Policy, and Service Planning and Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D2	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service People and Organisation Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D3	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Customer, Channels and Communications Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D4	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Transformation and Route Optimisation Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D5	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service IT and Digital Infrastructure Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D6	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Data and Performance Management Workstream	Assistant Director Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly
D7	Deliver the Home to School Transport Service Contracts and Commercial Workstream	Assistant Director	N/A						N/A	Reportable Quarterly

		Children and Young Peoples' Travel Service								
E1	Strengthen services and partnership approach to support improving outcomes for children and young people	Various							↔	
E2	Deliver Directorate transformation projects to inform and deliver a sustainable service	Various							↔	

# Birmingham City Council

## Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 January 2024



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**Subject:** Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

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

**Report author:** Sarah Fradgley, Overview and Scrutiny Manager  
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### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives and other topics, which the Committee has identified, for future consideration, and this will be reviewed at the member workshop to follow the committee meeting.
- 1.2 This report also asks the Committee to reflect on the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review of Birmingham City Council and conduct a review of its future work programme to ensure it aligns with the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
  - Notes the information set out in Appendix 1 which will be reviewed at the subsequent member workshop to ensure it aligns with Council's improvement and recovery priorities.
  - 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 Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 The [statutory guidance for local government overview and scrutiny](#) sets out the role it can play in holding an authority's decision makers to account. This makes it fundamentally important to the successful functioning of local democracy.
- 3.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:
- Provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge.
  - Amplify the voices and concerns of the public.
  - Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role.
  - Drive improvements in public services.
- 3.3 The role and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are outlined in [The City Council's Constitution | Birmingham City Council](#) They will:
- Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, the Executive and/or other organisations in connection with the discharge of the functions specified in their terms of reference.
  - Consider any matter covered in their terms of reference that may affect or be likely to have an effect on the citizens of Birmingham; relevant to the Council's strategic objectives; relevant to major issues faced by officers in managing a function of the Council; and likely to make contribution to moving the Council forward and achieving key performance targets.
- 3.4 Effective scrutiny needs to add value. A well planned and timely work programme enables Overview and Scrutiny Committees to be involved at the right time and in the right way, and ensure their involvement is meaningful and can influence the outcome.
- 3.5 Members often have a number of topics suggested to them and are therefore required to **prioritise** matters for consideration. The Scrutiny Framework sets out the following factors to be considered:
- Public interest: concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen.
  - Ability to change: priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence.
  - Performance: priority should be given to areas in which the Council and Partners are not performing well.
  - Extent: priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or a large part of the city.
  - Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication.



### ***Looking Ahead***

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

### ***Scrutiny Methods***

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

### ***Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee***

- 3.9 The Committee's Terms of Reference is to fulfil its functions as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:
- Education and children's social care.
  - The safety and wellbeing of children, including safeguarding with statutory partners.
  - The needs of all children and young people, families and carers (children's services).
  - Oversight of the Children's Trust.
  - Early years health and wellbeing.
  - Looked after children, corporate parenting.

- Special Education Needs and Disability.
- School improvement, school places and travel to and from school.
- Youth engagement and youth services.
- Development of 14-19 career pathways, enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools.

3.10 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee dealing with education matters shall include in its membership the following voting representatives:

- a) Church of England diocese representative (one).
- b) Roman Catholic diocese representative (one).
- c) Parent Governor representatives (two).

3.11 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Kerry Jenkins, and its membership comprises Cllrs: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Adam Higgs, Des Hughes, Morriam Jan, Jane Jones, and Shehla Moledina, and statutory co-optees: Sarah Smith, Justine Lomas, Osamugi Ogbe and Rabia Shami.

#### **4 The Governance Review – Reframing the 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 Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2023 acknowledged the recommendations in the Governance Review of Birmingham City Council agreed by Cabinet on 12 December 2023. Recommendation 5 stated the need to reframe scrutiny work programmes on the Council's improvement and recovery priorities, and that alignment of work programmes should focus on:

- a) Having an active part in the 2024/25 budget development process.
- b) The safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.
- c) Critical performance issues emerging "by exception".
- d) Equality and equity issues arising from the development of the 24/25 Budget, the Emergency Budget (to be identified by exception), and other priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget.
- e) Culture, behaviour change and organisational development.

4.3 It will be important for the Committee to reflect on the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review and review its current work programme to ensure it aligns with the issues set out above.

4.4 The Committee may decide to add further items to the work programme during the year. When considering this, the Committee is advised to consider where it can best add value through scrutiny aligning to the Council's priorities and improvement journey, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in paragraph 3.5 above.

- 4.5 The Council's latest [Forward Plan](#) may assist Members in identifying future topics. The following reports are of particular relevance to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

ID Number	Title	Proposed Date of Decision
012234/2024	Consultation on proposed Admission Arrangements and Published Admission Numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools and the determination of the Admission Arrangements and the Local Authority Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme 2025/2026	13 Feb 24

- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 The work programme, set out in Appendix 1, also cross references the work of the Committee with the Council's Corporate Priorities 2022-26. During the period June – April 2024 the work of this Committee will contribute to Corporate Priority 8 – Support and enable all children and young people to thrive and Corporate Priority 10 – Protect and safeguard vulnerable citizens.

## **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: Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme – January 2024.

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)

Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

[Independent Governance Review of Birmingham City Council, Cabinet 12 December 2023](#)

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

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
July	Children and Young People's Travel Service  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	Assurance to the Committee and public that everything is on track for September.  Overview of KPIs, performance and finance.  Policy development including travel services for under statutory school age and over 16 year olds, including how decisions are made and what criteria is used.  Independent travel training, including the views of young people, and how this has been informed and received by the children, parents and carers.  Concerns that have been identified and how these will be addressed.  The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee Meeting single item: 19 July 2023 at 10am  Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House  Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023	Adrian Weissenbruch, AD, Children and Young People's Travel Service	Stephen Hughes, Interim Deputy Operations Manager  Marie Nicely, Travel Assist Supervisor  Abdulahdi Mehraj, PMO Manager  John Wood, Change Manager  Linda Sutton-Howard, IT Project Manager	<b>Outcome</b> Update / Assurance: The Committee was updated on the preparation for the Children and Young People's Travel Service for start of the 2023/24 academic year and independent travel training.  It was agreed that a workshop will be held for all city councillors, and this was held on 16 November 2023.
July	SEND Tribunals  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	To update members to on the process for SEND tribunals including data.	Committee meeting single item: 19 July 2023 at 10am	Helen Ellis, Director, SEND and Inclusion	Kate Harvey, Head of SEND Resolution, SENAR	Agreed at Committee meeting October 2022 ( <a href="#">CMIS Link</a> ).

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House  Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023			<b>Outcome:</b> Update / Assurance: The Committee was updated on the SEND tribunal process.  It was agreed to hold a workshop for all Councillors.
July	Performance Update  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	Report on Children and Families Improvement Plan and data.  The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting standing item: 19 July 2023 at 10am.  Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House.  Paper/Presentation Deadline: 10 July 2023	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance & Planning	<b>Outcome:</b> Update / Assurance: The Committee was updated on the Children and Families Improvement Plan/Programme.
September	Performance Update  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	The report will include statutory and non-statutory services, and how performance contributes to efficiencies, such as interims and permanent appointments.  The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting – standing item: 6 Sep 2023 at 10am  Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House  Paper/Presentation Deadline: 25 Aug 2023	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	David Fallows, Head of Performance, Business and Commissioning Intelligence	<b>Outcome:</b> Update/ informed work programme: Updated on performance methodology. Scrutiny of data informed decision to deep dive into early years take up (Jan 2024) and school attendance data (hidden children Oct 2023).

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						<p>Further discussions on the focus and format of performance data was considered at Committee Data Workshop on 6 Nov 2023.</p> <p>Additional information on mental health element of Employment Support Programme has been provided to Members.</p> <p>Clarification has been given on staff sickness absence percentage figures (days lost to sickness, or the percentage of people sick for each reason).</p>
September	Financial Challenges - Scrutiny Contribution to the Budget Savings and Recovery Plan	To consider the implications of Equal Pay and the Medium Term Financial Plan for the Committee's work programme including agreed savings for 2023/24.	<p>Committee meeting – standing item: 6 Sep 2023 at 10am</p> <p>Venue: Committee Rooms 3 and 4, Council House</p> <p>Paper/Presentation Deadline: 25 Aug 2023</p>	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>Councillor Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families</p> <p>Janie Berry, City Solicitor</p> <p>Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive,</p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b> Members were informed of the Q1 budget savings position 2023/24 for areas relating to the Committee remit.</p> <p>Members discussed with Director, Cabinet Member, S115 Officer and BCT Chief Executive the potential impact of S114 notice and</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
					<p>Birmingham Children's Trust</p> <p>David Fallows, Head of Performance, Business &amp; Commissioning Intelligence</p> <p>Fiona Greenway, Interim AD, Financial Performance and Insight</p> <p>Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Young People</p> <p>Mohammed Sajid, Interim Head of Financial Strategy</p> <p>Adrian Weissenbruch, AD, Children and Young People's Travel Service</p>	financial challenges on service provision and spending.



Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
October	Scrutiny of Delivery of 2023/24 Budget Savings and Update on the Council's Response to S114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan	<p>For the Committee to consider a report on current and future Budget Savings and Recovery Plan and implications for Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Quarter 1, 2 and 3 2023/24 savings to be presented to enable the committee to examine progress of delivery of the 2023/24 savings within the remit of the Committee's terms of reference.</p> <p>Committee invited to consider the implications of Council's response to the Section 114 Notice and Financial Recovery Plan, Secretary of State DLUHC statement to House of Commons, Section 5 Notice and supplementary Section 114 Notice on the scrutiny work programme.</p>	<p>Committee meeting standing item: 18 October 2023</p> <p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 9 Oct 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am</p>	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>Harjinder Dool, AD, Financial Performance and Insight</p> <p>Clare Sandland, Finance Business Partner</p>	<p><b>Outcome:</b></p> <p>Members were informed of the Q2 budget savings position 2023/24 for areas relating to the Committee's remit.</p> <p>The Chair to update the Committee on the work of the Budget T&amp;F Group in relation to the Committee's remit.</p> <p>Sue Harrison to bring work at early stages of planning for input by the Committee.</p> <p>Future agenda items to include a snapshot of their associated spend/budget and impact.</p>
October	Hidden Children  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8 and 10	To update the Committee on hidden children including exclusions, suspensions, part time timetables, elective home education, findings of the Inquiry on period poverty regarding attendance during their periods, and information on children that	<p>Committee meeting standing item: 18 October 2023</p> <p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 9 Oct 2023</p>	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	<p>Razia Butt, Director, Children and Families</p> <p>Steve Howell, Head Teacher, City of Birmingham School (COBS)</p>	<p>Duty on local authorities to progress recommendations linked to improving school attendance in Government White Paper by Sept 23</p> <p><a href="#">Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		<p>have and have not returned following the pandemic.</p> <p>To consider information and data on the equalities implications of hidden children.</p> <p>The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.</p>	Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am		<p>Barry Bowles, Chair, COBS</p> <p>Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP)</p> <p>Alan Michell, Head of Service for School Admissions and Fair Access</p> <p>David Fallows, Head of Performance, Business and Commissioning Intelligence</p> <p>Edwina Langley, Lead Practitioner</p> <p>Diane Rhoden Director of Nursing - Safeguarding &amp; Children in Care NHS Birmingham and Solihull</p>	<p>Relevant performance information to be included in the report to enable the committee to conduct a deep dive.</p> <p>The school exclusions, part time timetables, and unsuitable school places item was discussed at the 22 Feb 2023 committee meeting. The papers are available <a href="#">here</a> and the minutes are available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The Committee was updated/assured on the work being undertaken for Hidden Children and it was agreed:</p> <p>The planning for further development of the governance around school exclusions and part time timetables to be brought to a future committee meeting for comment.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						<p>Steve Howell to provide the data on length of stay of students at COBS.</p> <p>A visit of the Committee to COBS to be arranged.</p> <p>The increase in behavioural problems and speech and language being less developed when children start primary schools to be included in the Early Years Education Entitlement item being discussed at the 17 January 2024 committee meeting.</p> <p>Further focused work on Elective Home Education (EHE) and part time timetables to be considered after the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry had finished in the new year.</p>
November	Data Workshop	To understand what performance and measurement data is used across the portfolio to enable Committee to make an informed decision on the focus of	Workshop to be held on the 6 November 2023 at 10.30am in Committee Room 2	Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families	David Fallows, Head of Performance, Business & Commissioning Intelligence	Outcome: Members expanded their knowledge of the rationale, range and purpose of data used across the portfolio and decided

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		performance presented to the committee.				what data to include in future reports.
November	School Improvement – the New Relationship with Schools  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	To consider and comment on the proposals being developed.	Committee meeting standing item: 29 Nov 2023  Presentation/Paper Deadline: 13 Nov 2023  Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families	Lisa Smith, School Improvement – Lead for Strategic Development  David Fallows, Head of Digital, Evidence and Performance	This item was agreed at the October 2023 committee meeting.  <b>Outcome:</b> The Committee provided feedback to the proposals and the following was requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timescales for the development of the new policy for school improvement and schools causing concern, which included the consultation, and presentation to Cabinet.</li> <li>• Details of the feedback from the consultation for the new policy.</li> <li>• The timeline for the attendance strategy presentation to Cabinet.</li> <li>• The new Ofsted School Inspection Framework (including timelines for inspections).</li> </ul>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
November	SEND Commissioner  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	<p>To provide an update on SEND improvements.</p> <p>Update could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of the SEND Commissioner's expanded role.</li> <li>• Discussion about how the Committee can work and support the Commissioner with improvements.</li> <li>• Increasing transparency.</li> </ul>	<p>Committee meeting single item: 29 Nov 2023</p> <p>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 13 Nov 2023</p> <p>Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am</p>	John Coughlan CBE, SEND Commissioner	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families	<p>The SEND Commissioner attended the 19 October 2022 committee meeting and the weblink for the Commissioner's first report to the Secretary of State for Education was provided: <a href="https://bit.ly/3g0k85W">https://bit.ly/3g0k85W</a>. The action notes/minutes for the committee meeting are available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The Cabinet Report dated 5 September 2023: Acceptance of the Commissioner's recommendations and progress on the first and second recommendations is available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The Commissioner's Second Report to the Secretary of State for Education is available <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> The Committee was provided with an update.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
January 2024	Improving Services for Children and Families Plan Update  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	To comment / make recommendations on the progress of the improvement programme.	Committee meeting standing item: 17 January 2024  <b>Presentation/Paper Deadline: 18 December 2023</b>  Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families	Fayth Skeete, Head of Strategic Governance & Planning	The Committee received an update on progress of the programme at the July 2023 committee meeting and the report is available <a href="#">here</a> .  Also, the Committee received a summary of the Children and Families Directorate performance approach and progress at the September 2023 committee meeting and the report is available <a href="#">here</a> .
February 2024	Draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8 and 10	For the Committee to comment on the Draft SEND Sufficiency Strategy.	Committee meeting single item: 28 February 2024  Presentation/Paper Deadline: 12 February 2024  Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families	Helen Ellis, Director, SEND and Inclusion  Helen Price, Director, Strategy, Commissioning and Transformation, Children and Families  David Bridgman, Head of SEND Commissioning	

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
					Jaswinder Didiyally, Head of Service	
February 2024	Early Years Education Entitlement  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8 and 10	To examine how best the council can increase the take up of Early Years entitlement for children in the city and the benefits it provides children.  To examine the plans for delivering the new and expanding responsibilities for early years.	Committee meeting single item: 28 February 2024  Presentation/Paper Deadline: 12 February 2024  Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families	TBC	Project to increase uptake of early years and profile of families and data on variation of uptake: <a href="#">BCC Early Years - NESTA project   Birmingham City Council</a>
February 2024	Update on the review of short breaks.  <b>Corporate Priorities:</b> 8	To provide an update on the outcome of the review of short breaks when it has been completed.  The Committee to agree any comments / recommendations.	Committee meeting single item: 28 February 2024  Presentation/Paper Deadline: 12 February 2024  Venue: Council House, Committee Rooms 3 and 4 at 10am	David Stringfellow Interim Director of Practice Birmingham Children's Trust	Lisa Jamieson, Interim Director, Commissioning and Corporate Parenting, Birmingham Children's Trust	A briefing paper was e- mailed to the Committee on 21 November 2023.
April 2024	School Attainment		Committee meeting single item: 10 April 2024	Sue Harrison, Director, Children and Families		

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
			Presentation/Paper Deadline: 21 March 2024			
April 2024	Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's (BSCP) Annual Report  Corporate Priorities: 8 and 10	To update the Committee on the children's safeguarding arrangements in the city.	Committee meeting single item: 10 April 2024  Presentation/Paper Deadline: 21 March 2024	Penny Thompson, Independent Chair, BSCP,	Simon Cross, Business Manager, BSCP	The Committee last discussed this item on 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2022. The papers are available <a href="#">here</a> and the minutes are available <a href="#">here</a> .

\*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. 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
The Committee to Feed into the work of the Budget T&F Group	To provide input and make recommendations on the work of the Budget T&F Group.	Meeting on Teams.	
A visit to COBS to be arranged (possibly in the new year).			
A visit for Committee to a school – Adderley Primary School.	To inform future work.		
Child Poverty.			
Regular updates on SEND.			



Item/Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Update on the next joint local area SEND inspection.			The joint local Area SEND assessment in 2021 is available <a href="#">here</a> .
Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).	To provide an update on the Improvement plan to meet statutory compliance.		
UNICEF Child Friendly City.			
Post 16.		This could be a joint piece of work with the Economy & Skills OSC	
The planning for further development of the governance around school exclusions and part time timetables to be brought to a future committee meeting for comment.			
Further focused work on Elective Home Education (EHE), and part time timetables to be considered after the Child Criminal Exploitation Inquiry had finished in the new year.			

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

## 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 Education and Children's Social Care OSC in June 23:  
[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com/Document.ashx)