

REPORT OF THE CHAIRS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) is an essential part of our local democracy, playing a vital role in the governance of Birmingham, influencing improvements in services and shaping plans to enhance conditions for our citizens.
- 1.2 The Constitution sets out the ways in which good Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the council:
- Drives improvement in public services;
 - Provides “critical friend” challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
 - Enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard;
- 1.3 It also reminds us that scrutiny is carried out by ‘independent minded members’ who lead and own the scrutiny process. **This report, and the discussion that will follow at City Council, is one way in which members of the City Council can support that member-led process.**
- 1.4 For many years, Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees have presented a report on the forthcoming work programme annually in the autumn or later, setting out the emerging work programmes, as well as reflecting on the achievements of the past year. Following feedback from members last year, the chairs of the committees agreed to bring this report at this earlier stage to encourage involvement from all members in shaping the work programme for the forthcoming year.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR

- 2.1 In May 2015, the City Council agreed changes to the Constitution that reduced the number of O&S Committees from nine to five. The move to five O&S Committees took into account the statutory responsibilities, workloads and demands on members, whilst acknowledging the need to reduce the number of committees as resources reduce.
- 2.2 The work programmes therefore had to encompass a wide range of policy and service areas – the number of scrutiny committees may have reduced, but the breadth and depth of work they were expected to cover did not. The following section summarises the year’s work.

3. WHAT WE DID

- 3.1 The 2015/16 work programme was influenced by a number of factors, including the need to address key corporate themes, to reflect areas of public concern and to support the Executive effectively.
- 3.2 The key themes set in the 2015 Council Plan were prosperity, fairness and democracy. The “**Prosperity**” theme encompassed economy, skills, enterprise, infrastructure and sustainability. The Economy, Skills & Sustainability O&S Committee held the main brief on those areas and tackled a number of issues including supporting the development of the Skills Investment Plan and Youth Promise; and working with Business Improvement Districts and Cabinet Members to foster better relations and communications with the aim of ensuring vibrant local centres. With regards to transport, the Committee considered the consultation on Movement for Growth – the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan with the Integrated Transport Authority; Birmingham Cycle Revolution and the significant impact of the Scrutiny Changing Gear Report; parking issues, given the pressure of parking in many parts of the city the Committee looked at the steps being taken to develop a strategy for the city centre; and a discussion with Virgin Trains about the West Coast Main Line Franchise, training for the new customer advisors at New Street and complaints resolution.
- 3.3 The Council Plan’s “**Fairness**” theme related to safety, health and wellbeing, children and young people and tackling poverty.
- 3.4 Two Scrutiny committees had specific statutory duties with regards to these areas. The Health and Social Care O&S Committee has responsibility for scrutinising health services and engaged with a wide variety of topics and organisations, including Birmingham Healthwatch, the Care Quality Commission, the West Midlands Ambulance Service and other provider trusts, including for example, Birmingham Community Healthcare, in relation to an issue with the new telephone triage system to access unscheduled dental care appointments at the Birmingham Dental Hospital.
- 3.5 Work included checking on the implementation of the new contracts around Sexual Health Services in Birmingham and Solihull and the Birmingham Substance Misuse Recovery System, to establish how they were progressing and their effectiveness six months after their introduction. Monitoring the performance of adult social care services including the budget and savings plans and the Safeguarding Adults Annual Report was another important strand of work. Members also worked with their West Midlands colleagues on two joint committees, with Sandwell and Solihull.
- 3.6 The Neighbourhood & Community Services O&S Committee was the designated “crime and disorder committee” and in that role the Committee scrutinised the work of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) and examined the three strategic outcome measures for the partnership. The Committee also looked at the shortage of housing supply, the additional housing needs over the past ten years and the changing balance of housing in terms of declining home ownership and the increasing growth of the private rented sector and the need to work with the private rented sector and housing associations to produce a more comprehensive housing offer to deal with this. The committee discussed licensing and regulation in licensing of houses in multiple occupation and the possibility of additional/discretionary licensing schemes within the private rented sector, the enforcement of tenancy conditions and housing services to older people.

- 3.7 The Education & Vulnerable Children O&S Committee continued to keep a sharp eye on the wide range of issues affecting children and young people. Topics last year included the Education and Schools Improvement Plan, school attainment, permanent school exclusions, unregistered schools and the work of the Birmingham Education Partnership. The Committee had an early input into the early years consultation (June 2016) and then received interim feedback on the outcome of the consultation in March 2016 for the Health & Wellbeing offer.
- 3.8 Focusing on the more vulnerable children in our city, the Committee carried out the inquiry into Children Missing from Home and Care which followed on from concerns raised in the Child Sexual Exploitation inquiry. The Committee also looked at children missing from education.
- 3.9 The Corporate Resources O&S Committee considered the Council's approach to zero hours contracts, and made recommendations that the City Council and partners work towards implementing improved rights for zero-hours contract workers and others on casual contracts.
- 3.10 Under the “**Democracy**” theme, there was a focus on the new governance models, engagement and modern customer services. The Corporate Resources O&S Committee covered a number of areas in relation to these matters including the Combined Authority, Boundary Commission and devolution. With regard to the latter, an inquiry was undertaken to support the strengthening of governance arrangements at a time of major change: District and Ward Arrangements following the changes to the Constitution in 2015. This was supported by a short inquiry on the implementation of the new duty on District Committees to undertake a “Neighbourhood Challenge” undertaken by the Neighbourhood & Community Services O&S Committee.
- 3.11 In addition, a “task and finish” group focusing on the developing Future Council programme considered each of the sub-programmes, particularly focusing on shaping member and public interaction with the programme.
- 3.12 As always, O&S Committees sought to address **topical issues of public concern**, including:
- A review of Super September by the Economy, Skills & Sustainability O&S Committee: in advance of the Birmingham Weekender weekend which coincided with the opening of Grand Central and the Rugby World Cup. The Committee questioned various officers about how movement around the city would be maintained. Subsequently the weekend was a great success and was credited with helping ensure half a million more visitors visited the city in Autumn 2015 compared to the previous year.
 - Waste management and cleaner streets were also very much at the forefront, and a number of committees contributed here. The Neighbourhood & Community Services O&S Committee looked at the operational roll out of wheeled bins. The Economy, Skills & Sustainability O&S Committee tracked the recommendations of the Waste to Resource and Household Recycling Centres inquiries; it also examined the consultation on the Waste Strategy following the early termination of the initial questionnaire. The Corporate Resources O&S Committee members also conducted a short inquiry into the procurement of fleet and waste vehicles following a question at City Council in January.
 - Customer Services continued to be a major focus of the former Corporate Resources O&S Committee. The Committee undertook an inquiry to support maximum

improvement in customer services. In particular, the Committee focused on customer satisfaction with the main routes that citizens use for contacting the City Council and to identify how that satisfaction could be increased. They found that customer satisfaction rates had risen to a level comparable with other local authorities; however there is still much to be done to offer a consistently excellent service, and the Committee made a series of recommendations to support further improvement.

- The Education & Vulnerable Children O&S Committee picked up on concerns in relation to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the slow transfer of children from statements to the new statutory framework of Education and Health Care Plans, which better integrate children's needs into one plan. Education Awards Appeals (Home to School transport) was also covered.
- The Health and Social Care O&S Committee responded to a petition on budget cuts to supporting people with mental health and disabilities, consideration of the 3 year City-wide Transforming Care Plan which was due to be submitted to NHS England in April 2016 as well as enquiring into the current position regarding support provided in relation to housing and employment to enable independent living.
- Severn Trent are undertaking the Birmingham Resilience project, which brings huge investment into their infrastructure, in order to ensure there is a backup water supply for when repairs need to be made to the Elan Valley reservoir, or if the existing infrastructure fails. This will require on-going engagement with the citizens of Birmingham, and the Economy, Skills & Sustainability O&S Committee explored the approach with Severn Trent.

3.13 Other pieces of work were undertaken following direct requests from the Executive, including two short inquiries by the Corporate Resources O&S Committee (on Golden Square and zero hours contracts) and work undertaken by the Economy, Skills & Sustainability O&S Committee on Public Realm.

3.14 Members also welcomed the attendance of Cabinet Members at many meetings, reinforcing the important role of O&S in holding the Executive to account. In addition, the call-in procedure was used four times in the last municipal year.

4. 2016/17 Work Programme

4.1 In May 2016, City Council agreed further changes to the remits of O&S Committees. The new remits of the five committees are summarised below. As this report is being written, Committees are engaged in discussions to determine the priorities for the year. Each has recognised the importance of leaving room within work programmes for policy development work as it arises. However, emerging themes are also set out below.

- **Corporate Resources and Governance O&S Committee** – chaired by Cllr Mohammed Aikhlaq; the committee's remit encompasses those corporate matters that involve the governance, financing and performance of the council. In doing so, the remit mirrors some or all of the portfolios of four Cabinet Members: the Leader (for governance, finance, partnerships and regional working); Deputy Leader (resources, performance, finance and human resources); the Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Efficiency (council wide efficiency, commissioning and procurement); and the Cabinet Member for Transparency, Openness and Equality (customer services, transparency, inequality and public engagement).

Emerging Priorities for the Corporate Resources and Governance O&S Committee

Further discussion will take place at the July meeting of the Committee, but initial discussions indicate that the following issues will be priorities:

- Governance issues, including how scrutiny can support and work with the new Cabinet Committee Local Leadership; the Committee is also considering work examining how districts work with a parish/town council.
- Contracting and procurement issues, including scoping out work around the new Commissioning and Procurement Strategy, and contributing to the review of the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility; with a focus on how the City Council engages local suppliers and businesses through our contractors.
- Continuing the former committee's work on customer services, to see maximum improvement in customer services and in end-to-end service delivery, i.e. not just the quality of the call but whether the request was completed to the citizen's satisfaction.
- A programme of finance reports, to be presented at key points in the year; the Committee also intends to explore how scrutiny can play a greater role in the budget setting process.

- **Economy, Skills and Transport O&S Committee** – chaired by Cllr Zafar Iqbal: the committee's remit focuses on economic growth and jobs, transport strategy and highways, skills, and culture (including libraries, arts, sports and museums). Therefore the Committee largely reflects the portfolios of four Cabinet Members, including for Transport and Roads; for Jobs and Skills; the Leader (on economic growth and inward investment) and the Deputy Leader (on arts, culture and libraries).

Emerging Priorities for the Economy, Skills and Transport O&S Committee

The main strands of work that have been identified as a priority for this year include:-

- Development of an East Birmingham and North Solihull Strategy A study has been commissioned to understand the key challenges and needs of the East Birmingham corridor which has historically suffered from multiple deprivation, high unemployment and low skills levels amongst its population. Once the initial results are available there is an opportunity to see how scrutiny can be involved in and contribute to the development of a comprehensive strategy to tackle these challenges.
- Maximising the benefits of the impact of/value to the city from HS2 in particular in relation to maximising the HS2 connectivity package and maximising long-term job opportunities and ensuring that local communities are facilitated to access the employment opportunities that will be generated.
- Review of delivery of Metro project, lessons learned and how these will be applied to the delivery of the Metro extension
- The impact of Highways England works on motorways connected to the city especially in relation to the A38M Expressway works.

- **Health, Wellbeing and the Environment O&S Committee** – chaired by Cllr John Cotton: the Committee has the statutory responsibility to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services as provided for by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (the 2012 Act), including the power to hold all relevant health service providers to account (i.e. public, private or voluntary organisations that deliver services commissioned by Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS England or local authorities themselves in relation to public health). In addition, the Committee has responsibility for environmental matters.

Emerging Priorities for the Health, Wellbeing and the Environment O&S Committee

- The Birmingham and Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Plan and the integration of health and social care including pooled budgets and a spending plan on how to use the money. The committee will want to look at the aims and objectives of the plan and the implications for adult social care and, in particular, focus on the proposed savings which the integration is projected to produce. This will also encompass the challenges faced by the urgent and emergency care system which are complex and link to a number of other issues including access to and utilisation of primary care, how to reduce avoidable A&E attendances and avoidable emergency admissions and improving the effectiveness of the discharge process.
- Personalisation and Independence – How the health sector including the NHS and social care are enabling people to take control of their care with particular reference to the use of technology and digitalisation and the implementation of digital shift to achieve this.
- The West Midlands Mental Health Commission – The Commission has been established by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Committee will be seeking to understand how all key partners will work together to implement the recommendations of the Commission’s final report, due to be published later in 2016.
- The impact of air pollution on health – What is the health and social care sector doing on sustainability including use of vehicles and the resulting links to air pollution and the impact on health.
- From Waste to Resource Strategy for Birmingham – What is the vision and what are the aims, objectives and targets? The Committee will be involved in contributing to the development of the proposed new waste management strategy for the city and in monitoring and evaluating its implementation.

- **Housing and Homes O&S Committee** – chaired by Cllr Victoria Quinn; this Committee’s work will focus on all matters relating to housing and homes, and in addition cover social cohesion and community safety. In doing so, this Committee will be working with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homes and three other cabinet members to ensure appropriate cross portfolio communication: Deputy Leader (with regards to land use planning); Cabinet Member for Transparency, Openness and Equality (on social cohesion and community safety); and the Cabinet Member for Clean Streets, Recycling and the Environment (relating to cleaner neighbourhoods).

In addition, this Committee has the statutory responsibility for community safety partnerships, as the Council’s designated Crime and Disorder Committee; and (subject to agreement at City Council today) the flood risk scrutiny responsibilities.

Emerging Priorities for the Housing and Homes O&S Committee

Further discussion will take place at the July meeting of the Committee, but initial discussions indicate that the following issues will be priorities:

- The Housing and Planning Act 2016 has signalled significant changes to the ability of local authorities to provide and meet housing demand. The Committee will look at supply, tenure and demand. This will involve challenging how each of the three directorates of the City Council are working together to deliver the housing and homes agenda in all its dimensions and with all its repercussions on other services in terms of economic, health and growth agendas. The Committee will take a close look at issues such as pay to stay, mandatory use of fixed term tenancies and the extended right to buy for RSLs and its impact on the city council's housing revenue account.
- The private rented sector is an integral part of the housing offer of this city. The Committee will challenge the private sector and all strategic directorates in order to ensure rogue landlords are tackled and join up our offer as a respected agency for private landlords..
- The city needs a further 80,000 homes to be built before 2031. The Committee will be looking at how the availability of land impacts on the city's ability to do this within the timescale and examine creative land disposal options. Alongside this, what work is being undertaken to bring empty homes back into use and mitigate against environmental challenges, including flooding?
- Homelessness and the need for temporary accommodation has increased exponentially in the city. The Committee will consider the City Council's role in tackling homelessness, looking at the impact of the move to a single housing advice centre within its first three months.
- The new allocation policy for council housing and nominations to registered social landlords will be implemented in the autumn. Committee will seek to assess how effective this transition has been within the first six months.
- Good housing management and maintenance is important to tenants and leaseholders. The new repairs contracts started on 1 April 2016 and Members will be interested in how this beds in and the role of the City Council's call centre.
- The Committee's work on housing will also inform its statutory role as the crime and disorder committee. The Committee will also examine community safety and equalities issues with a particular focus on the emerging domestic violence strategy, hate crime, anti-social behaviour and housing for asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

- **Schools, Children and Families O&S Committee** – chaired by Cllr Susan Barnett: the Committee has a remit covering policies, services and activities concerning the schools, vulnerable children and child safeguarding functions of the council. In doing so, it largely reflects the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools.

Emerging Priorities for the Schools, Children and Families O&S Committee

- Permanent School Exclusions – whether these have reduced and what more can be done to ensure Birmingham School Children receive an appropriate education.
- School improvement and the role of the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), commissioned in September 2015 by the City Council to support schools causing concern.
- Social Care Improvement Journey – ongoing oversight of the Early Help & Children’s Social Care Services Improvement Plan 2015 – 2017.
- Voluntary Trust (governance vehicle) – it was announced in June 2016 that the Council will be taking the Trust development forward and the Committee will want to be involved in the development of this.
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) / Looked After Children (LAC) / Corporate Parenting – the committee will continue to assist with helping to ensure the City’s most vulnerable children are protected. All Councillors have an important role to play in fulfilling their corporate parent responsibility.
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Children Missing from Home and Care – the committee will want to know how improvements have been made following the two scrutiny inquiries.
- Early Years Review: The committee are considering setting up a working group to contribute to the Early Education and Childcare Offer part of the Early Years review currently being undertaken by the City Council.
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) – the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families will be setting up a Commission and the Committee will align its work programme alongside this.

4.2 Regular meetings of all the O&S Chairs will continue to take place to discuss the overall work programme with an emphasis on potential or actual areas of overlap. As part of the work planning, Scrutiny Chairs will also explore the opportunities for joint scrutiny working and the use of “task and finish” groups.

5. Reports to City Council

5.1 A new approach to reports to city council was trialled, with the presentation of the former Corporate Resources O&S Committee’s ‘City Council Meeting Agenda report’ in April. The report did not put forward ‘recommendations’ but rather proposed ‘suggested actions’ which were debated in the Chamber. The outcomes from the debate, alongside the evidence in the report, were fed back to the Executive. This approach was welcomed by members, and will be used again where the subject matter is suitable.

- 5.2 In addition, it is proposed to bring short reports introducing potential inquiry work for scrutiny to get early member input into direction, key questions and potential witnesses; the debate would inform the terms of reference and form part of the evidence base for the inquiry, rather than getting that wider member input at the end of the process.
- 5.3 There will therefore be three types of scrutiny reports in the future: inquiry reports, debate reports and short reports introducing potential inquiry work.

6. FINALLY, OUR THANKS

- 6.1 Finally, we would like to thank all those who have been involved in and have supported scrutiny over the past year. We are indebted to the many witnesses that have contributed to scrutiny's work. Their participation, bringing knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm to our work, has been vital and we would like to express our thanks to them all.

MOTION

That the City Council note the report and contribute ideas on scrutiny topics for 2016/17.

Officer Contact Details	
Emma Williamson Head of Scrutiny Services 0121 464 6870 emma.williamson@birmingham.gov.uk	www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny @bhamscrutiny

Appendix 1: Scrutiny Reports

A. Reports to City Council 2015-16

Month	Inquiry	Committee
Jun 2015	Inquiry: Service Birmingham	Corporate Resources O&S Committee
Jul 2015	Inquiry: Homelessness	Health and Social Care O&S Committee
Oct 2015	O&S Work Programme	All
Jan 2016	Inquiry: Children Missing from Home & Care	Education & Vulnerable Children O&S Committee
Feb 2016	Inquiry: Customer Journey	Corporate Resources O&S Committee
Apr 2016	Inquiry: City Council Agenda	Corporate Resources O&S Committee

B. Reports/Letters to Cabinet Members 2015-16

Month	Topic	Committee
Oct 2015	Golden Square (private report)	Corporate Resources O&S Committee
Oct 2015	Zero Hours Contracts	Corporate Resources O&S Committee
Apr 2016	Inquiry: Neighbourhood Challenge	Neighbourhood & Community Services O&S Committee
Apr 2016	Inquiry: District and Neighbourhood arrangements	Corporate Resources O&S Committee