

# Birmingham City Council.

## Report to Economy, Skills and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 January 2025



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<b>Title:</b>	<b>ECONOMY, SKILLS AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25</b>
<b>Lead Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>	Not Applicable
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<b>Authorised by:</b>	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services  Legal and Governance
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this a Late Report?</b>	No
<b>Reason(s) why Late:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this decision eligible for ‘call in?’</b>	Not Applicable
<b>If not eligible, please provide reason(s):</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?</b>	No
<b>Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Reasons why not included on the Notification:</b>	Not Applicable

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Economy, Skills and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) for 2024-25. Appendix A outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 A key aspect of the work of all Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will be the continued focus on the savings agreed in the 24/25 Council budget and the relevant programmes within the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan where the Committee can add value.

## **2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW**

- 2.1 There is much more to the Improvement and Recovery Plan than just savings and budget. The work programme and the Council may benefit from a more detailed look at some of the elements of the plan, which are proving difficult to deliver, to identify blocks and proposals to overcome them.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **That the Committee:**

- 3.1 Notes the work programme, set out in Appendix A, and identify any amendments required.
- 3.2 Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Corporate and Finance O&S Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

## **4 KEY INFORMATION**

### **Context**

- 4.1 The [Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees](#) was updated in April 2024 and re-affirms the role of overview and scrutiny in holding an authority's decision-makers to account remains fundamentally important to the functioning of local democracy.
- 4.2 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 improvement in public services and strategic decision-making.

- 4.3 The [Council's Constitution Part B](#) sets out the procedures and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

#### **Terms of Reference**

- 4.4 The terms of reference for the Economy, Skills and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

- 4.4.1 To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning regeneration and infrastructure projects, Council assets, economic growth, employment, skills, arts, culture, heritage, tourism, partnership with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), major sporting events and events development. This includes:
- 4.4.2 Major physical regeneration and infrastructure projects in the city
- 4.4.3 Oversight of Council-owned land and property strategy and facilities, assets, amenities and services including markets
- 4.4.4 Promotion of the city and inward investment
- 4.4.5 Economic growth and jobs
- 4.4.6 Partnership with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)
- 4.4.7 Major sporting events and events development
- 4.4.8 Skills expansion for key growth sectors along with lifelong learning for post 14 skills and lifelong learning
- 4.4.9 Access to employment and delivery of local employment plans
- 4.4.10 Arts, culture and tourism
- 4.4.11 Museums
- 4.4.12 Promotion of the city's heritage and investment in the city.

#### **Scrutiny Work Programmes and the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan**

- 4.5 The Council's [Improvement and Recovery Plan](#) was approved at City Council on 4 April 2024 which sets out the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider key programmes and projects in the IRP, provide assurance to members and citizens on progress, consider unplanned consequences and negative impacts of the changes the Council is making.
- 4.6 The [Scrutiny Development Plan](#) was approved by the Corporate and Finance OSC on 27 September 2024. The plan builds on work carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny during 2023/24 and sets out the objectives and activities that will underpin the work of the Council's 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees to contribute to the Council's improvement journey.

4.7 The work of the [Corporate and Finance OSC Information Task and Finish Group](#) has concluded, and Members supported the development of a single point of access for OSC members to information relating to delivery, performance and risk, to support the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

**Economy, Skills and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25**

4.8 The work programme of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees will align to the priorities within the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan. The Committee work programme attached at Appendix A identifies the Improvement and Recovery Plan priorities work programme items relate to.

4.9 The work programme for 2024/25 will develop during the year. The proposed work programme for this committee includes:

- Programmes from the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan within the Committee’s terms of reference.
- Scrutiny of the implications of savings agreed in the Council’s budget including equality and equity issues arising from the budget.
- Safe and effective delivery of key services supporting vulnerable people.
- Monitoring recommendations from previous Scrutiny Inquiries and completing current Inquiries.
- Critical performance issues emerging by exception (this will be defined through work with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny).

4.10 The Council’s [latest Forward Plan](#) can also assist members in identifying future topics. The reports listed below the are of particular relevance to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Skills					
Reference Item	Title	Date Proposed	First Published	Is Key Decision	Contains Exempt/Private Information
013137/2024	East Birmingham North Solihull - Programme Update	10 Dec 2024	28 Jun 2024	Yes	No
012121/2024	Perry Barr Residential Scheme - Disposal of Plots 2, 3, 4 & 5	18 Dec 2024	06 Nov 2023	No	No
012997/2024	Arden Cross Ltd Development Agreement, Business Plan and Budget for Q3 and Q4 for 24/25	28 Nov 2024	24 May 2024	No	No
013262/2024	Disposal of Surplus Properties	18 Dec 2024	08 Aug 2024	No	No

013542/2024	Lease Renewal – Shelforce premises at Units 21/22, Erdington Industrial Park	18 Dec 2024	11 Nov 2024	No	No
013584/2024	Sale of Freehold – Land at Cranby Street & Adderley Road, Birmingham B8 1JU	18 Dec 2024	18 Nov 2024	No	No
013614/2024	Settlement of Dilapidations Claim - Old Repertory Theatre	18 Dec 2024	21 Nov 2024	No	No
013254/2024	Perry Barr Residential Scheme - Update	21 Jan 2025	30 Jul 2024	Yes	No
013263/2024	Business, Professional and Financial Sector Cluster Support Project: Extension and Additional Enterprise Zone Funding	21 Jan 2025	08 Aug 2024	Yes	No
013485/2025	Local Development Scheme 2025-2028	21 Jan 2025	17 Oct 2024	Yes	No
012432/2024	Disposal of 10 Gough Street Lease & Freehold Sale	25 Jul 24	15 Jan 24	No	No
012745/2024	Sale of Land at Peddimore Estate, Minworth, Birmingham	25 Jul 2024	25 Mar 2024	No	No
012761/2024	Arena Central	30 Jan 2025	08 Apr 2024	Yes	No
012260/2024	NEC Campus – Freehold disposal	30 Jan 2025	01 Dec 2023	Yes	No
012506/2024	Proposed Sale of Property Assets – Standard Item	28 Nov 2024	31 Jan 2024	No	No
012640/2024	Proposed Sale of Surplus Freehold Property Assets by Public Auction	30 Jan 2025	04 Mar 2024	No	No
012505/2024	Proposed Sale of Surplus Freehold Property Assets by Public Auction – standing item	28 Nov 2024	31 Jan 2024	No	No
012970/2024	Selection of the Development Partner and Bid for the former Tower Ballroom site	28 Nov 2024	17 May 2024	No	No
013026/2024	The Brasshouse, Sheepcote Street Birmingham B16 8AE	30 Jan 2025	10 Jun 2024	No	No
013302/2025	Approval of disposal of Industrial Estate - Aston Seedbed Business Centre	30 Jan 2025	27 Aug 2024	Yes	No

013303/2025	Approval of disposal of Industrial Estate - Boulton Industrial Estate	30 Jan 2025	27 Aug 2024	Yes	No
013307/2025	Approval of disposal of Industrial Estates: Aston Seedbed Business Centre, Boulton Industrial Estate, Montgomery Industrial Estate	30 Jan 2025	27 Aug 2024	No	No
013437/2024	Sale of Land at Bickenhill Lane/Morris Way, Birmingham B37 7HD	30 Jan 2025	07 Oct 2024	Yes	No
013575/2024	Disposal of Surplus Properties (standing item)	18 Dec 2024	11 Nov 2024	No	No
013580/2024	Sale of Council Freehold – Alpha Tower, Arena Central, Holliday Street, Birmingham, B1 1TT	30 Jan 2025	12 Nov 2024	Yes	No
013684/2025	Community Centres - Community Asset Transfer (CAT)	30 Jan 2025	09 Dec 2024	Yes	No
013529/2025	Adoption of Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document	11 Feb 2025	28 Oct 2024	Yes	Exempt
013585/2025	Regeneration of Kinghurst Village Centre Phase Two Project – Outline Business Case (Enterprise Zone Regional Investment Fund)	11 Feb 2025	18 Nov 2024	Yes	No
013563/2025	Sale of City Centre Retail Assets	27 Feb 2025	11 Nov 2024	No	No
009087/2021	Martineau Galleries Outline Business Case	18 Mar 2025	29 Jun 2021	Yes	No
012806/2024	Smithfield Birmingham Application for Enterprise Zone Funding	18 Mar 2025	15 Apr 2024	Yes	No
012862/2024	Smithfield: Authority to Make CPO	18 Mar 2025	03 May 2024	Yes	No
Cabinet Member for Finance					
Reference Item	Title	Date Proposed	First Published	Is Key Decision	Contains Exempt/Private Information
012487/2024	Sale of Molliett Street Park	27 Mar 2025	23 Jan 2024	No	No

4.11 The Quarter 2 2024/25 [Corporate Performance Monitoring Report](#) was considered at Cabinet on 10 December 2024. The performance against the Key

Performance Indicators and benchmarked data will inform members identification of issues for consideration by the Committee.

- 4.12 When considering the issues to be included in the work programme members are also asked to agree the Scrutiny method that will be used. This can include:
- **Committee meeting single item**, or items, on a public committee agenda: this fits more closely the “overview” aspect of the Scrutiny function and has limited opportunity for effective scrutiny.
  - **Committee meeting single theme** at a public committee meeting: This has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
  - **Task and Finish Group in a day**: provided these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics. The work of a Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task and Finish Group meeting is not public. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group will be reported to a public committee meeting.
  - **Multiple Task and Finish Group meetings**: to consider an issue in depth over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.
  - **Site Visit**: Members visit services or organisations to inform the work of the Committee.
  - **Inquiry Evidence Gathering**: Evidence for Scrutiny Inquiries may take place at public committee meetings, Task and Finish Groups or Site Visits
  - **Briefings and Workshops**: for members to be updated on specific issues.

### **The Council and young people in its workforce**

- 4.13 The Council’s workforce age profile indicates that there are very few young people working within the organisation. This presents challenges for the Council as it moves forward. Furthermore, Birmingham is the youngest city in Europe with higher than national average levels of unemployment. There is a role for the Council to champion and demonstrate how other large organisations can provide opportunities for the city’s young people.
- 4.14 On 16 October 2024, the Committee agreed to undertake a focused piece of work on this topic. It intends to make recommendations on how the Council can maximise the benefits from increased employment of young people as it moves forward. This work will be led on behalf of the Committee by Councillors Katherine Iroh (chair); Jon Hunt; Simon Morrall and Esther Rai. A terms of reference was approved on 27 November 2024.
- 4.15 Evidence gathering commenced on 27 November and is anticipated to continue until February- March 2025. A report with recommendations will then be produced in April 2025.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The Council's Governance and Stabilisation Plan identified the need to strengthen the working relationships between the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function. This will include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding that will include the respective roles of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Audit in relation to the Council's management of risk.
- 5.2 Potential risks that are identified by the Committee as part of the discussion at Committee meetings will be included in the Action Tracker to request that this is considered with a response provided to the Committee.

## **6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **Finance**

- 6.1 There are no immediate financial implications from this report. Work to support the Committee in developing its work programme is conducted by an inhouse existing team which has been funded for and there will be no external engagement resulting in incremental costs to the council.

### **Legal**

- 6.2 [Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000](#) states that the Council must have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees which have the power to take the actions listed in that section. The [Council's Constitution Part B11](#) sets out how the role and function of scrutiny prescribed by the Act is applied locally.

### **Equalities**

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 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; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

- 6.6 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.

### **People Services**

- 6.7 There are no staffing implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

### **Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero**

- 6.8 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the climate change, nature and Net Zero implications relevant to the work programme items.

### **Corporate Parenting**

- 6.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will consider the corporate parenting responsibilities and opportunities relevant to the work programme.

## **7 APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix A: Economy, Skills and Culture OSC Work Programme January 2025

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 There are no background papers.