

Birmingham City Council

Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 September 2023



Subject: Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme

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

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24, based on the Committee's meetings to date. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 The report also refers to other topics, which the Committee has identified, for future consideration, and this will be continuously updated during the year.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee:
 - Notes the information set out in Appendix 1 and identifies if any further topics need to be added to the menu of topics for the Committee to explore over the coming year.
 - Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider during October 2023 – November 2023, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.
 - Agrees how it intends to follow any further action required to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented for Waste and Bereavement Services (Appendix 2).
 - Notes, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the meeting, its proposed work programme will be submitted to Co-

ordinating O&S to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

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.

Neighbourhoods 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:
- The collection and removal of waste from residential and other properties within the city.
 - Pest control.
 - Street cleansing, litter prevention, fly tipping/ placarding removal and enforcement, graffiti removal, scrap yard and motor salvage operator enforcement.
 - Parks and allotments.

- Local events held in parks.
- Cemeteries and crematoria, mortuary and Coroners Court services, Register Office services.
- Local Development Plans, Neighbourhood Plans, Development briefs, localisation.
- Commonwealth Games Legacy framework.

3.10 This Committee shall be the Crime and Disorder Committee (Police and Justice Act 2006) as referred to in the [Council Constitution](#). The [Crime and Disorder \(Overview and Scrutiny\) Regulations 2009](#) provides information to Local Authorities about how this function should be carried out. In fulfilling this function, the Committee will fulfil its functions as it relates to:

- Community safety, anti-social behaviour, fear of crime, support for victims of crime.
- Relationships with the Police and Crime Commissioner and West Midlands Police.
- Youth offending.
- Domestic abuse.

3.11 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Shabrana Hussain, and its membership comprises Cllrs. Deirdre Alden, Gurdial Singh Atwal, Marcus Bernasconi, Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin and Izzy Knowles.

4 Work Programme 2023-24

4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the topics the Committee will consider over the next few months, and also outlines future items for consideration.

4.2 The Committee may decide to add further items to the work programme during the course of the year. When considering this, the Committee is advised to consider where it can best add value through scrutiny, and how it can prioritise topics for consideration based on the Scrutiny Framework referred to in 3.5.

4.3 The Council's latest [Forward Plan](#) 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
011525/2023	P0403 Package 4: Processing of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR)	05 Sep 23

4.4 Overview and Scrutiny Chairs are advised to maintain regular engagement with Cabinet Members to enable flexibility to be built into the Overview and Scrutiny work programme, so as to respond to the Council's policy priorities in a timely way.

4.5 The work programme, as 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 – December 2023 the work of this Committee will contribute to 7 Corporate Priorities.

5 Customer Services Programme

5.1 Appendix 2 sets out the Customer Service programme and the work undertaken by the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the recommendations submitted to the Highways, Waste, Bereavement Services and Housing Repairs services leads, and the further action to ensure the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented. This work commenced in 2022-23 with a first review completed by January 2023. The review was undertaken by a Task and Finish group comprising Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee members.

5.2 Following a further review in June and July 2023, the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that service owner committees will follow up any further action required to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented. The relevant service owner committees are:

- Homes: Housing Repairs
- Neighbourhoods: Waste and Bereavement Services
- Sustainability and Transport: Highways Repairs

5.3 During the June and July review, the Chairs for the relevant service owner committees were invited to attend to enable an effective transition and provide continuity.

6 Any Finance Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

7 Any Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report.

8 Any Equalities Implications

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

8.3 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.

8.4 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.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Work Programme 2023-24 – September

9.2 Appendix 2: Customer Service Programme Task and Finish Group - Report to Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 14 July 2023

10 Background Papers

10.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)

10.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

Neighbourhoods 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	Fly Tipping Enforcement Corporate Priorities: 17	To outline the current position in relation to fly-tipping with specific regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying dedicated resources and which wards they are deployed in; Enforcement approach and how this is developing; How cameras are being used, and the specific impact of Grime Watch. <p>Understand if/ how this approach is making a difference to reduce fly tipping.</p> <p>Outline progress towards Cleaner Streets recommendations.</p>	Committee Meeting single item: 5 July 2023 at 2pm Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline for Papers: 22 June 2023	Darren Share, Director, Street Scene		The Committee will review this information with a view to considering whether they wish to undertake a more detailed inquiry. Related work from 2022-23: Reducing Fly tipping (April 2023) Cleaner Streets (April 2023) Performance Information (presented to Neighbourhoods O&S Committee, June 2023 by Programmes, Performance and Improvement) Co-ordinating O&S Customer Services (waste)
July	Community Safety Localities Approach Corporate Priorities: 9	To inform the development of a new localities approach with particular focus on how ward councillors can contribute towards identifying local priorities, problem solving and reviewing impact	Committee Meeting single item: 5 July 2023 at 2pm Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House	Pamela Powis, Acting Head of Partnership, Community Safety Team		This refers to the Local Partnership Delivery Groups which operate across the city. An all-day partnership event took place on 22 May 2023 to inform this new approach. Members were invited to attend.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
			Deadline for Papers: 22 June 2023			<p>The Neighbourhoods O&S Committee is the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for Birmingham. This will contribute towards discharging its duties.</p> <p>The statutory requirements, as Crime and Disorder Committee, are outlined here.</p> <p>Outcome: A list of the local managers for the six locations to be provided to the Committee.</p> <p>The Delivery Plans together with contact details to be shared with Ward Councillors.</p>
August	Youth Justice Corporate Priorities: 8 and 9	To inform the annual Youth Justice Plan	Other - Briefing: 9 August 2023 at 2pm Venue: Committee Room 2 and on-line (hybrid)	Janine Saleh, Head of Birmingham Youth Offending Service, Birmingham Children's Trust	Dionne McAndrew, Assistant Director Vulnerable Young People, Birmingham Children's Trust	<p>This is an annual report. The most recent report was approved by Council in October 2022.</p> <p>The intention is to bring this report to pre-decision Scrutiny when the draft report is available. As there were no Committee meetings scheduled in August, the Chair requested a hybrid briefing. Members of the Education, Children and Young People's O&S Committee were also invited.</p>

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
						Outcome: Annual Plan updated.
September	Scrutiny Contribution to Budget Savings and Recovery	For the Committee to consider a report on current and future Budget Savings and Recovery Plans and implications for Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Committee Meeting single item: Agenda at Neighbourhoods OSC Committee Meeting on 6 September 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 25 August 2023	Craig Cooper, Strategic Director, City Operations, Neighbourhoods		It was agreed at Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July that all Scrutiny Committees would consider the implications of the Medium Term Financial Plan at the September Committee meetings.
October	Localisation Corporate Priorities: 6, 7, 9, 17 and 21	To ascertain how the Leader proposes to take forward the localisation agenda	Committee Meeting single item: 4 October 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 26 September 2023	Cllr John Cotton, Leader		The Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee discussed this item in April 2023. Related strategies, policies and plans can be found here .
October	Cleaner Streets	Outline progress towards the Cleaner Streets recommendations, and impact to date.	Committee Meeting single	Cllr Majid Mahmood,	Darren Share, Director, Street Scene	In February 2023, the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee agreed key findings and

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
	Corporate Priorities: 17		<p>item: 4 October 2023</p> <p>Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House</p> <p>Deadline: 26 September 2023</p>	Cabinet Member for Environment		<p>recommendations for Cleaner Streets. This had followed informal best practice sessions with Derby, Rochdale and Wigan Local Authorities.</p> <p>In April 2023, Cabinet Member for Environment, Cllr Majid Mahmood attended O&S Committee to provide a formal response to the recommendations, and agreed to report progress to future committees.</p>
October	<p>Fly Tipping Enforcement</p> <p>Corporate Priorities: 17</p>	<p>Provide further information on how the Grimewatch initiative is progressing, and its impact</p> <p>Provide further information on the enforcement approach (with specific regard to legal interventions)</p> <p>Analyse locality based data and intelligence for flytipping (as per recommendation 1 arising from the July O&S Committee)</p> <p>Share a snapshot of the Land Audit Management System (LAMS) ward information (as per</p>	<p>Committee Meeting single item: 4 October 2023</p> <p>Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House</p> <p>Deadline: 26 September 2023</p>	Darren Share, Director, Street Scene		The recommendations will be shared with the report author once they have been confirmed by the Chair.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		recommendation 2 arising from the July O&S Committee)				
November	Domestic Abuse Corporate Priorities: 10	Consider the proposed Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy	Committee Meeting single item: 1 November 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 23 October 2023	Kalvinder Kohli, Assistant Director	Shirin Marashi, Senior Commissioning Officer, Adult Social Care Revinder Johal, Commissioning Manager	A new Domestic Abuse Strategy is scheduled to be discussed at Cabinet for approval in January-February 2024. This had initially been earmarked for December, but this will be too late as the strategy will be nearly complete. Therefore, the proposed timeline to present to O&S Committee is September – October 2023. Co-ordinating O&S Committee held a single theme meeting in February to review the previous strategy and input in the early stages of this strategy's development. A summary is provided here . A roundtable with service providers had also taken place to inform this review.
November	Delays in Births and Deaths Registrations	Provide an overview of, and demonstrate the impact of, the current engagement and work undertaken with the Coroner, partners and communities on steps to eliminate delays within the service.	Committee Meeting single item: 1 November 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House	Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement	Bev Nash, Head of Service will be attending on behalf of Sajeela Naseer	Following Council Resolution on 14 June 2022, a report responding to the Motion was presented to Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee on 26 September 2022. A summary of the discussion is here . The Committee requested a further update in 4-6 months' time.

Month	Item/Topic	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
		Outline the current progress towards developing a new mortuary facility for the city, including a permanent digital autopsy scanner.	Deadline: 23 October 2023			
December	Birmingham Community Safety Partnership Annual Report Corporate Priorities: 8, 9 and 10	Review the annual Birmingham Community Safety Partnership annual report **The Committee may identify specific areas they wish to consider at future meetings**	Committee Meeting single item: 6 December 2023 Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House Deadline: 27 November 2023	To be confirmed following BCSP Executive Board July	To be confirmed following BCSP Executive Board July	The Neighbourhoods O&S Committee is the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for Birmingham. The statutory requirements, as Crime and Disorder Committee, are outlined here .

*Outcome: This will be populated once the item/topic has been completed. It will highlight the added value and impact.

Menu of Options for Future Consideration

The following items had been identified as potential topics for future consideration. This approach enables the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to remain flexible and respond in a timely manner to emerging issues.

This is a live work programme work programme. New items may be added, or items removed during the course of the year. Proposed aims and objectives as well as scrutiny methodology may also be subject to change.

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
Customer Services – Bereavement Services	Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services programme (as previously	To be confirmed in September 2023	Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of,

Item/ Topic	Proposed Aims and Objectives	Proposed Scrutiny Method	Additional Information
	undertaken by Co-ordinating O&S Committee)		<p>recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Bereavement Services.</p> <p>A final Task and Finish group took place on 12 June 2023, and a report presented to Co-ordinating O&S in July. It was agreed that Neighbourhoods O&S Committee takes forward this work for Bereavement Services in the future.</p>
Customer Services – Waste	Monitor the progress and impact of the recommendations from the Customers Services O&S programme	To be confirmed in September 2023	<p>Co-ordinating O&S Committee convened Task and Finish groups to identify, and monitor progress of, recommendations to improve customer services in 4 areas including Waste.</p> <p>A final Task and Finish group took place on 9 June 2023, and report presented to Co-ordinating O&S in July. It was agreed that Neighbourhoods O&S Committee takes forward this work for Waste in the future.</p>

Scrutiny Method Options:

Committee meeting - single item

Committee meeting - single theme

Task and Finish Group (outline number of meetings)

On location

Other - (describe)

Corporate Priorities, Performance and Outcomes

Corporate Priorities 2022 – 26:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Support inclusive economic growth | 11 Increase affordable, safe, green housing |
| 2 Tackle unemployment | 12 Tackle homelessness |
| 3 Attract inward investment and infrastructure | 13 Tackle health inequalities |
| 4 Maximise the benefits of the Commonwealth Games | 14 Encourage and enable physical activity and healthy living |
| 5 Tackle poverty and inequalities | 15 Champion mental health |
| 6 Empower citizens and enable citizen voice | 16 Improve outcomes for adults with disabilities and older people |
| 7 Promote and champion diversity, civic pride and culture | 17 Improve street cleanliness |
| 8 Support and enable all children and young people to thrive | 18 Improve air quality |
| 9 Make the city safer | 19 Continue on the Route to Zero |
| 10 Protect and safeguard vulnerable citizens | 20 Be a City of Nature |
| | 21 Delivering a Bold Best in Class Council |

Information on the Corporate Priorities, Performance and City Outcomes was reported to the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee OSC in June 2023: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Friday 14th July 2023



Subject: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

Report of: Councillor Sir Albert Bore
Chair Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the 9th December and supplementary 27th January report on the actions of the Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group, established following the Customer Service Programme update report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.

2. Recommendations

Co-ordinating O&S Committee:

- 2.1. Notes that the Task & Finish Group has completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads for Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highway Repairs
- 2.2. Agrees that the Task & Finish Group should ask service owner Committees to follow up any further action required to ensure that the identified end-to-end customer service improvements are implemented.
- **Neighbourhoods:** Waste and Bereavement Services
 - **Sustainability & Transport:** Highway Repairs
 - **Homes:** Housing Repairs
- 2.4. Supports the further work of the Task & Finish Group to scrutinise how senior managers are responding to feedback from the Customer Standards Workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy.

3. Background

- 3.1. Following approval of the Customer Service Strategy by Cabinet in December 2021, the Customer Service Programme was established in January 2021 for an initial 12-month period, to implement the Strategy deliverables and 'Fix the Basics'.
- 3.2. Phase 1 saw the programme deliver a number of customer benefits' from the creation of an [easy-read Customer Service Strategy](#), co-creating Our [Customer Charter](#), establishing the Customer Panel; to the cleanse and improvement of 948 web pages and counting; roll out of products such as the Landlord's Portal and features for automated advanced payments.
- 3.3. The user research the programme conducted of four high volume, high priority service areas for the Council resulted in a set of service improvement recommendations which highlighted opportunities for services to improve the customer experience and increase customer satisfaction.
- 3.4. This report follows the Task & Finish Group's first review of the recommendations submitted to the Highways, Waste, Bereavement Services and Housing Repairs service leads, reported to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2023; and the further action to ensure the identified end-to-end customer service improvement are implemented.
- 3.5. This round of Task & Finish Groups was also attended by Committee Chairs for Neighbourhoods, Homes and Sustainability and Transport to enable an effective transition of the responsibility of these committees and provide continuity in what we've done, where we've got to, and what is outstanding and still needs to be done.

4. Update on Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

- 4.1. Appendix A provides the outcomes of all Task & Finish Group meetings with the service area sponsor/leads for improving the customer experience and details the recommended opportunities for improvement.
- 4.2. Feedback was previously submitted to the committee (9 December 2022) on Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs and Waste Management; and a supplementary update (27 January) on Highway Repairs.
- 4.3. In this second review, it was noted the overall positive progress has been achieved in implementation by service leads of the Customer Service Programme service improvement recommendations but more still needs to be done to achieve 'Best in Class' customer service and ensure the best customer journey for our users to improve satisfaction levels and reduce complaints.

4.4. Highway Repairs

- 4.4.1. The Task & Finish Group is due to meet on 7th July 2023 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth also to be attended by Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Delivery Manager. A supplementary report will be issued following the meeting on the review of previous recommendations and a status update provided.
- 4.4.2. In summary, a total of 10 service improvement recommendations were presented to Highway Repairs, and all 10 retain an implementation status of 'to do'.

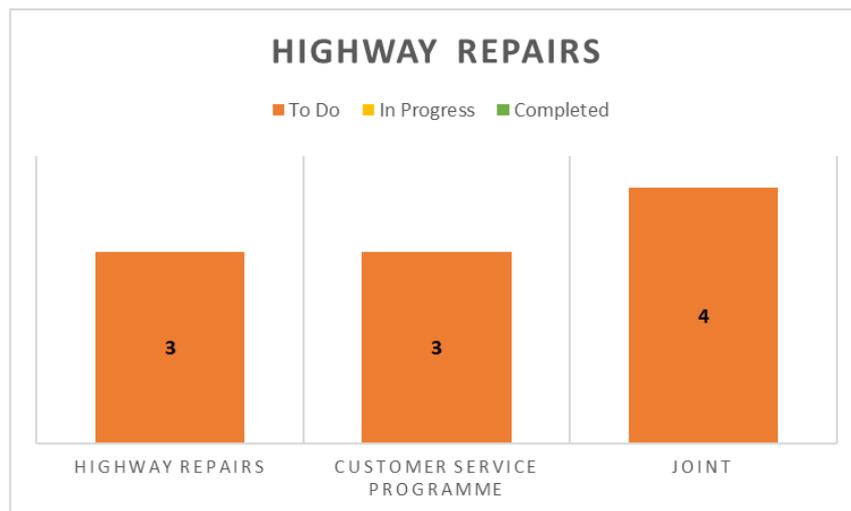


Figure 1 - Highway Repairs Status Overview

4.5. Bereavement Services

- 4.5.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 12th June 2023 with Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement, Head of Bereavement Services, Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor and Strategic Product Manager, Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.
- 4.5.2. Clear guidance has been created and improved content published on 'What to do when someone dies', and also clearly communicating to relatives' grave ownership and responsibilities in grave maintenance. Further work is required to include Coroners Service in online guidance and progress a small print run of the offline guidance.
- 4.5.3. A review of all onsite signage will be completed.
- 4.5.4. The top 20 paper forms have been prioritised for redesign and digitisation and will include automated advanced payment features, eliminating manual paperwork and enabling customers to complete requests in an easy and efficient way.
- 4.5.5. Exploration of technical options is underway to inform user need requirements for a new bereavement system / funeral directors' portal to support online

burial bookings, giving Funeral Directors' the ability to view, book and be updated.

- 4.5.6. A partial manual/mechanical back fill option is available to relatives on request where the resources to enable this are available. Resources to increase availability will be considered as part of any future operating model.
- 4.5.7. There are standardised processes, based upon best practice, in place across all sites. There are also individual standardised processes for particular sites which are based upon the specific needs of the site.
- 4.5.8. Recruitment of staff remains an issue within the service. There also needs to be a corporate response to more easily recruit agency staff as permanent staff.
- 4.5.9. In summary, a total of 28 service improvement recommendations were presented to Bereavement Services, and to date 10 have been implemented and 18 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

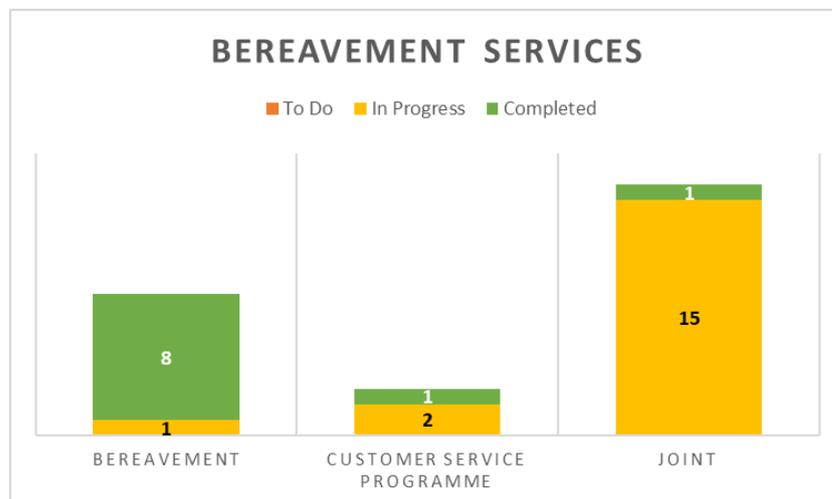


Figure 2 - Bereavement Services Status Overview

4.6. Waste Management

- 4.6.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 9th June 2023 with the Assistant Director, Street Scene and the Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor and Strategic Product Manager, Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.
- 4.6.2. The in-cab technology has been in place and in use in all vehicles since late January 2023 and addresses a number of the recommendations, although there are separate issues regarding provision of in-cab technology in rented vehicles. Work was undertaken to cleanse the data and the crews are monitored on their usage and reports are produced showing any problems; and work can be reallocated in real time to minimise missed collections, which is monitored by Service Managers.

- 4.6.3. A session with Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny is being planned to provide a more in-depth view of the in-cab technology.
- 4.6.4. Missed collections are tracked, monitored and reported on a daily and weekly basis. The reports are showing an improvement in missed collections (alongside a significant reduction in missed collection complaints - down by 41% this April compared to April 2022). However, it is fully accepted that things are still not right, and more work is needed - particularly for the now vacated Montague Street (relocated to new Atlas depot in May 2023), and Lifford Lane depots where missed collections remain off target.
- 4.6.5. HMO's / Exempt accommodation continue to be an issue but work is underway to ensure that, where these properties are licenced, the appropriate bins are provided and the correct use of bins is monitored.
- 4.6.6. The service has a stable workforce (previously, the level of agency staff covering full time posts was approximately 30%). The service still operates with 23% agency cover for sickness and leave but teams are kept together where possible.
- 4.6.7. Over 70 of the older vehicles have been replaced, providing a more reliable service with a planned procurement to replace the remaining vehicles.
- 4.6.8. Working with Corporate Communications to develop simple comms for residents when there has been a need to remove their broken bin or pod.
- 4.6.9. In summary, a total of 12 service improvement recommendations were presented to Waste Management, and to date 6 have been implemented, 3 are 'in progress', and 1 retains an implementation status of 'to do'.



Figure 3 - Waste Management Status Overview

4.7. Housing Repairs

- 4.7.1. The Task and Finish Group met on 14th June with the Director, Asset Management Housing, Interim Head, Housing Repairs with the Customer

Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Lead Delivery Manager in attendance. All recommendations were reviewed, and status updates provided and clarified by the service leads.

- 4.7.2. The BRUM account process to report 'track a repair' has been end to end tested and issues highlighted, for example, some of the information submitted was not getting passed on to the contractor. The new functionality is now confidently expected for end August / early Sept. The delay was due to a dependency on the pending NEC (Housing Management software) Upgrade. Work is also in process into the quality of repairs and repeat calls about the same issue.
- 4.7.3. An option for tenants to book / manage their own repair appointments will be delivered as part of the changes to the Brum account. There is also ongoing work by repairs teams to look into and maximise appointment availability which has diminished. This work is expected to conclude by the end of September 2023.
- 4.7.4. Live updates to keep customers informed about changes regarding a repair, for example notifying a tenant that a contractor is running late, has been included in the Repairs Contract 2024, allowing text communication between operative and customer and live tracking.
- 4.7.5. Analysis of missed appointments due to no access is being carried out, to identify trends / customer profiles and check if our comms processes are working or need improvement. Findings to date are that process are not always being followed. Many customers say they were not aware of appointments, so focus is on the evidence around text and phone ahead which is part of the current process. This analysis is expected to conclude by December 2023.
- 4.7.6. Customer satisfaction on call handling is measured for randomly sampled calls – satisfaction levels are routinely around 80% for the way the agent handled call. Feedback is provided to service area and agents as appropriate.
- 4.7.7. The [Birmingham Choice](#) site is currently being reviewed and updated to make information more available to our customers. In addition there is a link on the front page of Birmingham Choice to a '[Housing Advice Pack](#)'. This gives customers information on numbers on the Housing Register, numbers of lets completed, waiting times, other housing options, etc.
- 4.7.8. The online information, advice and guidance on damp, condensation and mould has been reviewed and was updated 27 February on birmingham.gov.uk.
- 4.7.9. In summary, a total of 13 service improvement recommendations were presented to Housing Repairs, and to date 4 have been implemented and 9 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

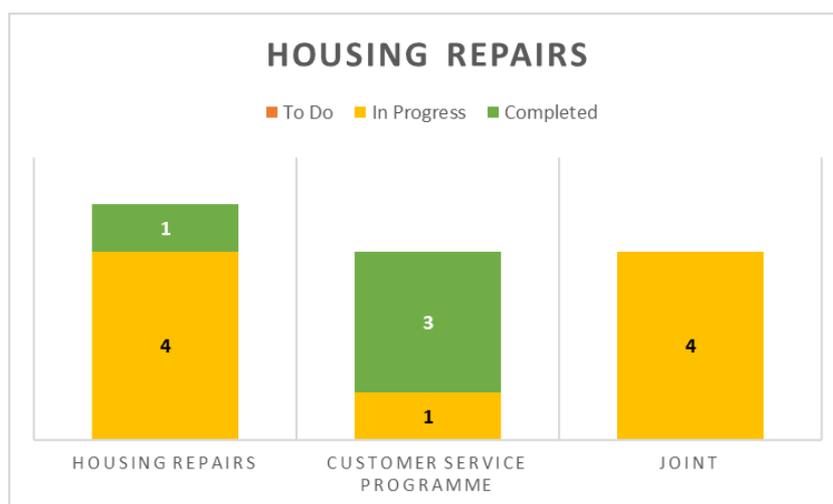


Figure 4 - Housing Repairs Status Overview

5. Any Financial Implications

- 5.1. The original Enhanced Business Case sought and approved total funding of £1.7m for Year 1 in December 2021. The Customer Service resource profile forecasts budget spend at the identified £ 1.7m costs allocated to the programme in final Quarter of 2021/22 and 2022/23.
- 5.2. The savings that are currently set out in the MTFP increase by £600k in 2023/2024, and phase 2 of the programme will help to deliver these and also identify future potential savings of over the next 2 years.
- 5.3. There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

6. Any Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Council is under a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- 6.2. The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

7. Any Equalities Implications

- 7.1. Overall, implementation of the Customer Service Strategy and therefore the activities of the Task and Finish Group may impact a number of the nine protected characteristics (specifically Age, Disability and Race) with the channel shift to self-serve; however the vision of the Strategy is clear and will endeavour to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient approach to the customer journey across all channels by ensuring our customers access the right information at the right time and content is accurate and up to date regardless of the channel.

8. Background Documents

8.1. [Customer Service Strategy](#)

8.2. [Our Customer Charter](#)

9. Appendices

9.1. A: Status overview of the Customer Service Programme recommendations