

Birmingham City Council.
**Report to Education, Children and Young
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

4 December 2024



Title:	EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024-25
Lead Cabinet Portfolio:	Not Applicable
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
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Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable
Ward(s):	Not Applicable
Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?	No
Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?	Not Applicable
Reasons why not included on the Notification:	Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed work programme for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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.

COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 1.3 No observations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the work programme, set out in Appendix A, and identify any amendments required.
- 2.2 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.

3 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 3.1 The Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/121212/Overview_and_scrutiny_statutory_guidance_for_councils_combined_authorities_and_combined_county_authorities_-_GOV.UK_(www.gov.uk).pdf) 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.
- 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 improvement in public services and strategic decision-making.
- 3.3 The [Council's Constitution Part B](#) sets out the procedures and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Terms of Reference

3.4 The terms of reference for the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning education and school improvement, children's social care, looked after children, children's wellbeing and safeguarding, early years, Special Educational Needs and Disability, youth services, entrepreneurship and youth offending. This includes:

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship in Birmingham schools.
- 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.
- Youth offending.

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

3.5 The Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan was approved at City Council on 4 April 2024 [BCC Improvement and Recovery Plan \(IRP\) \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) 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.

3.6 The [Scrutiny Development Plan](#) was approved by the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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 seven Overview and Scrutiny Committees to contribute to the Council's improvement journey.

3.7 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee members to information relating to delivery, performance and risk, to support the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 The work programme for 2024/25 will develop during the year. The proposed work programme for this committee includes:
- Delivery of the Corporate Plan Priorities.
 - Critical Performance Issue by Exception.
 - Safe and Effective key services for vulnerable people.
 - Equity Issues Arising from the Budget.
 - Business Critical services.
 - Life and Limb services.
 - Statutory Scrutiny Functions and engaging with external organisations to inform the work of Scrutiny Committees.
 - Monitoring the implementation of Scrutiny Recommendations.
- 3.10 The Council's latest Forward Plan can also assist members in identifying future topics. <https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/birmingham/ForwardPlans.aspx>.
- 3.11 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.

Tracking Implementation of Scrutiny Inquiry Recommendations

- 3.12 Implementation of scrutiny inquiry recommendations is tracked every six months to enable Members to assess progress.
- 3.13 In April 2024 City Council adopted the 15 recommendations of the Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee's inquiry into [Child Criminal Exploitation](#). The first tracking report will be presented to Committee in December.
- 3.14 In January 2024 City Council adopted the 25 recommendations of the [Scrutiny Inquiry on Children and Young People's Mental Health: Is Birmingham meeting young people's mental health needs?](#) This inquiry group consisted of members of the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Education and Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Health and Adult Social Care Overview Committee tracked the implementation of recommendations at its 4 September 2024 meeting.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.

5 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Best Value

- 5.1 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

- 5.2 [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

- 5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

5.6 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

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

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

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

Corporate Parenting

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

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix A: Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024 - 2025

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 There are no background papers.