

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2024 AT 14:00 HOURS
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL HOUSE, VICTORIA SQUARE,
BIRMINGHAM, B1 1BB

A G E N D A

1 NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

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

2 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

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

- 5 - 8**
- 4 **MINUTES**
- To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024.
- 9 - 12**
- 5 **ACTION TRACKER**
- To note the Action Tracker.
- 13 - 14**
- 6 **COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA**
- To note the comments received from the Commissioner on this agenda for item 8.
- 15 - 18**
- 7 **HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES PFI - UPDATE AND CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS**
- To provide a further update to the Committee, following the previous briefing dated 7 March 2024 on the Government's decision on the Outline Business Case (OBC) which set out the Council's proposals for the revised Highways Maintenance PFI arrangement.
- Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure and Stephen Walton, Head of Highways PFI will be presenting this report.
- 19 - 36**
- 8 **CUSTOMER SERVICES PROGRAMME – HIGHWAYS REPAIRS UPDATE**
- The purpose of this report is to provide the background as detailed in the 14 July 2023 report on the actions of the Task and Finish Group, established following the initial Customer Service Programme report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022; and a subsequent report on the 9 December 2022 and a supplementary report on 27 January 2023.
- This report will enable Highways and Infrastructure leads to further update the Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any recommendations actioned since the last reporting period.
- Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure will be attending for this item.
- 37 - 46**
- 9 **WORK PROGRAMME**
- That the Committee considers its 23/24 work programme, and attached appendices, and agrees any updates/amendments required.
- 10 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**
- To note the date and time of the next meeting.

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

To consider any request for call in/councillor call for action/petitions (if received).

12 **OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any items of business by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) that in the opinion of the Chair are matters of urgency.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

**1400 hours on 7th March 2024, Committee Rooms 3&4, Council House –
Public Meeting**

Present:

Councillor Lee Marsham (Chair)

Councillors David Barker, Timothy Huxtable, Richard Parkin and Waseem Zaffar

Also Present:

Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure

Stephen Walton, Head of Highways PFI

Amelia Wiltshire, Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Baseema Begum, Scrutiny Officer

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast and that Members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Saima Ahmed, Martin Brooks and Colin Green.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests submitted.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Public Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED: That the Private Minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of 8 February 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair subject to correction of apologies noted from Councillor Parkin.

5. SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER

The Chair gave an update on the lack of up-to-date information published on the Council's website in relation to the rolling 3-month planned schedule of works for the public highway. The Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure agreed that the issues would be taken up with the relevant officers. In the meantime, this information would be circulated by email to Members.

RESOLVED: -

1. That the action tracker be noted.
2. The Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure to speak with relevant officers and ensure that a copy of the schedule of works is circulated to all Members.

6. COMMISSIONER'S REVIEW AND COMMENTS ON THE AGENDA

RESOLVED: It was noted that no comments had been received.

7. HIGHWAYS MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES PFI

Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure and Stephen Walton, Head of Highways PFI were in attendance for this item.

The Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure explained the current position and confirmed that a date was set for the legal hearing on 21-22 March. Legal advisors and Highways officers were preparing for this, and the Council had asked for the hearing to be expedited due to the financial issues that it currently faces and because the Highways PFI contract should have already been in place.

It was anticipated that a decision could be received up to 3 months after the hearing. It was hoped that the Judge would give a timescale on when the outcome might be expected. This would be imperative due to the time constraint in relation to funding issues. The Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure confirmed that Council officers were working with partners to ensure that this position was sustained.

A discussion was held, and the following were among the points made: -

- Following the budget agreed at Council it was clarified that this was predicated on the PFI not continuing. The standard of service would not change however there would be a much-reduced level of maintenance works in the future (aside from what is already published on the Council's website). Members

were informed that the main concern would be ensuring that safety issues are met, and these will continue to be carried out.

- It was confirmed that the £12m proposed saving was the input from the Council was part of the PFI contract.
- In relation to the impact on planned activities of the £12m budget saving it was clarified that this would not affect larger planned schemes.
- The Council cannot sustain the current level of funding in the longer term and will be seeking for the court to impose a deadline by when the government must respond.

Further to queries relating to contingency plans and legally prejudicial information the Chair paused the public meeting so that Members could hold a discussion in private.

RESOLVED: -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a briefing note be provided by Officers on the points raised in the private session.
3. That the Committee are provided with a copy of the draft Cabinet report outlining options before it is presented to Cabinet.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair outlined updates made to the work programme following the last meeting. In relation to Appendix 2 it was agreed that the impact of works on the highway would be considered at a future meeting.

Due to Eid Members agreed that April's meeting would be moved to 18th April.

RESOLVED: -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the next meeting is re-arranged for 18th April.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 18th April at 2pm.

10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no requests for Call In received.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The meeting ended at 14:58 hours.

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Update	Completion
21 st December	Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy Update	A breakdown of the 3 schemes listed in Appendix 6 including costings and further details on what the schemes are.	Stephen Arnold, Head of CAZ to provide	Some information circulated on 1 Feb. Further information to follow
21 st December	Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy Update	Further information on the additional projects proposed in all other wards that will be receiving Brum Breathes funding including information for Members on the scope of what the funding can be used for.	Stephen Arnold, Head of CAZ to provide	
21 st December	Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy Update	City Operations to provide further information on the compliance of waste vehicles being utilised within the CAZ and proposals for upgrading/ replacement of the fleet.	Stephen Arnold, Head of CAZ to liaise with colleagues in City Operations for a response	Email circulated to Members – 9 April.
21 st December	Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy Update	Air Quality Monitoring report with details of the outputs from the monitoring undertaken in Tranches 1 & 2 and proposals for Tranche 3 to be shared when this is available.	To be shared once all the data is collated	
21 st December	Highways Maintenance & Management PFI Update	Minutes of the Private Session to be reviewed with officers from Highways and Legal Services to ensure that information that is in the public domain can be referenced in the public minutes of the meeting.	Scrutiny office.	Completed.
21 st December	Work Programme	Chair to write to Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure to ensure that reports requested are ready for the set deadlines to avoid any changes being made to committee meetings to accommodate late changes to the proposed agenda.	Chair has spoken to the Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure.	Completed.

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

21 st December	Work Programme	Receive monthly progress updates on the Highways PFI contract and arrangements for 24-25 until further notice.	Added to the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year	Completed.
21 st December	Work Programme	Arrangements to be made for the January meeting to be held informally with options provided on timings and a hybrid facility.	Members were asked for preferences with the majority agreed for 1pm, 11 th January	Completed.
8 th February	Highways Maintenance PFI arrangement	That the Chair writes to the Chief Executive to request that a copy of the letter received by the Council from the Department for Transport is shared with the Committee once it is legally able to do so.	Chair wrote to the Chief Executive on 23 rd February.	Completed.
8 th February	Work Programme	Further details to be confirmed and diary invitations sent to Members in relation to the meeting agreed for May 16 th .	Scrutiny Office	Completed.
8 th February	Date of Next Meeting	That scrutiny officers check availability of other dates for the March meeting to allow members to hold a full discussion on the budget and financial recovery issues, if possible.	Scrutiny office	Completed.
8 th February	Other Urgent Business	The Chair agreed to write to the Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure to ascertain why the 3 month rolling highways programme spreadsheet on the Council website has not been updated recently, when it will be rectified and if it will continue to be updated publicly in the future.	Chair wrote to the Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure on 23 rd February.	Completed.
7 th March	Action Tracker	The Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure to speak with relevant officers in relation to ensuring that the schedule of highway works published online is updated. In the meantime, a copy of the schedule of works will be circulated to all Members.	Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure	

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE
ACTION TRACKER 2023-24

7 th March	Highways Maintenance and Management PFI	The committee are provided with a copy of the draft cabinet report outlining options before it is presented to cabinet.	Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure to provide.	
7 th March	Highways Maintenance and Management PFI	Summary of points raised in the private session to be shared with Members confidentially.	Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways & Infrastructure to provide.	

Birmingham City Council

Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 April 2024



Subject: Customer Service Programme Co-ordinating OSC Task
& Finish Group – Highways Repairs Update

Commissioner Review

Commissioners note that the report makes reference to verbal progression updates, however BCC must provide an urgent written update on the progress made since July 2023. Commissioners require this to be provided in advance of the next Committee meeting.

Birmingham City Council

Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 April 2024



Subject: Highways Maintenance and Management Services PFI – Update and Contingency Arrangements

Report of: Craig Cooper, Strategic Director City Operations

Report author: Stephen Walton
stephen.walton@birmingham.gov.uk

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a further update to the Committee, following the previous briefing dated 7 March 2024 on the Government's decision on the Outline Business Case (OBC) which set out the Council's proposals for the revised Highways Maintenance PFI arrangement.
- 1.2 Please note, the information provided within this report reflects the position of the project at the time of writing (26 March 2024).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee notes the report.

3 Confidentiality

- 3.1 As the Council is in Judicial Review proceedings (as explained below at paragraph 4), it remains extremely important that both officers and elected representatives of the Council do not express any personal views/opinions regarding the proceedings as this may compromise the Council's position. This includes anything in the public domain which may be in verbal or written format.
- 3.2 Please note that any internal documents created may also be disclosable unless they are covered by legal privilege.

4 Current Position

- 4.1 Please refer to the previous briefing for detail concerning events leading up to the DfT's decision on 30 November 2023 (DfT's decision being communicated in the "Decision Letter") in respect of the OBC.

- 4.2 Following the Decision Letter, and after taking external legal advice, over which privilege is not waived, the Council issued a letter to DfT setting out the basis of its proposed Judicial Review challenge pursuant to the Pre-Action Protocol Letter for Judicial Review (dated 11 December 2023) (the “PAP Letter”).
- 4.3 No substantive response was received from DfT to the PAP Letter. DfT requested an extension of time to respond to 15 January 2024 (the PAP Letter contained a deadline of 18 December 2023).
- 4.4 As no substantive response was received to the PAP Letter within the time permitted, the City Solicitor instructed the Council’s external legal advisers to file and serve a Judicial Review challenge at court on 2 January 2024. On 3 January 2024, the court sealed those documents and the Council’s external legal advisers sent the documents to the Government Legal Department (acting on behalf of DfT), albeit, in accordance with the Civil Procedure Rules, the documents were not deemed served until the second business day after despatch, being Friday 5 January 2024. On 8 January 2024 the court made an order requiring DfT to file its Acknowledgment of Service and Summary Grounds of Defence by 19 January 2024.
- 4.5 On 19 January 2024 DfT filed and served an Acknowledgment of Service and Summary Grounds of Defence, to which BCC responded in brief on 22 January 2024. Evidence was served at intervals thereafter.
- 4.6 A two-day hearing took place from 21 to 22 March 2024 at Birmingham Civil and Family Justice Centre. No judgement was given by the court during this time.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 At the time of writing the Council awaits the court’s decision. Please note by the time of the Committee meeting a judgement may have been handed down and if so, a verbal update will be made by the attending officer.
- 5.2 Under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, Birmingham City Council as the ‘Highway Authority’ for the city, has a legal duty to maintain all adopted highways within Birmingham. Our priority therefore remains the continued delivery of statutory highway functions and services across the city, ensuring the safety of citizens and visitors across the network. We recognise that the performance of Birmingham’s network is critical for not just our city, but the entire West Midlands and we will always endeavour to do our best for the region.
- 5.3 The Council will continue to ensure the delivery of these services via the current Interim Services Contract that is delivered by Kier.
- 5.4 The Interim Service Contract has been extended since the Committee last met and is currently in place until the 31 May 2024. The Council has an option to extend the Interim Service Contract until 31 July 2024 which it expects to exercise before 11 April 2024 (i.e. by the time the Committee meets).

- 5.5 The outcome of the Judicial Review will not be known for a number of weeks, or, if successful, may require further engagement with DfT before the long-term future of the PFI is known. To ensure that the Council can continue to fulfil its statutory duty to provide continuity of services, a paper is being prepared for June's Cabinet with a request, as a contingency measure, to approve the further extension of the Interim Service Contract for up to a period of two years.
- 5.6 There is insufficient time to undertake a full procurement to appoint a long-term service provider prior to the 31 July 2024 and this proposal allows the Council time to develop and implement a robust strategy for the long-term provision of services.
- 5.7 The financial resources to be requested will align with the recently approved Council budget and the requested reduction in spend over the next two years.
- 5.8 Members will be briefed and consulted with on the Council's position and consulted with as appropriate as the position with government develops.

6 Any Finance Implications

- 6.1 Please refer to the briefing dated 21 December 2024 for an overview of the finance implications.

7 Any Legal Implications

- 7.1 Please refer to paragraph 3 above with respect to confidentiality. Failure to adhere to the guidance set out at paragraph 3 may jeopardise the Council's legal position.

8 Any Equalities Implications

- 8.1 There are no equalities implications to be considered in relation to this report at the time of writing. However, officers will continue to keep this under review.

9 Background Documents

- 9.1 Report of the Assistant Director (Highways and Infrastructure) to Sustainability & Transport Overview & Scrutiny Committee, 21 December 2023 ("Highways Maintenance and Management Services PFI")
- 9.2 Report of the Strategic Director, City Operations to Cabinet, 5 September 2023 ("Highway Maintenance and Management PFI Contract")

Birmingham City Council

Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 April 2024



Subject: Customer Service Programme Co-ordinating OSC Task & Finish Group – Highways Repairs Update

Report of: Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director
Highways & Infrastructure
Wendy Griffiths, Assistant Director
Customer Services, Business Support & Digital Mail

Report author: Nikki Spencer
Lead Delivery Manager, Customer Service Programme
Digital & Technology Services

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the background as detailed in the 14 July 2023 report on the actions of the Task and Finish Group, established following the initial Customer Service Programme report to Co-ordinating Overview & Scrutiny Committee in September 2022; and a subsequent report on the 9 December 2022 and a supplementary report on 27 January 2023.
- 1.2 This background report will enable Highways and Infrastructure leads to further update Sustainability & Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any recommendations actioned since the last reporting period.

2 Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 2.1 **Notes the report.**

3 Background

- 3.1 Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the following recommendations on 14 January 2023:
 - 3.1.1 Note the Task and Finish Group had completed its review of the recommendations submitted to service leads for Bereavement Services, Housing Repairs, Waste Management and Highways Repairs.

3.1.2 Agree the Task and 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.

3.1.3 Support further work of the Task and Finish Group to scrutinise how senior managers are responding to feedback from the Customer Standards Workshops to embed the Customer Service Strategy.

3.2 Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee were agreed as the lead for Highways Repairs.

4 Any Finance Implications

4.1 The original Enhanced Business Case sought and approved total funding of £1.7m for Year 1 in December 2021. The Customer Service resource profile forecasted budget spend at the identified £ 1.7m costs allocated to the programme in final Quarter of 2021/22 and 2022/23.

4.2 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.

4.3 There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

5 Any Legal Implications

5.1 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.

5.2 The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

6 Any Equalities Implications

6.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

6.1.1 eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;

6.1.2 advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

6.1.3 foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 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.

- 6.3 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.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A: Supplementary Report Highway Repairs Task & Finish Group Report to Co-ordinating OSC 14July23 V1.0.
- 7.2 Appendix B: OSC Task Finish Group - Highway Repairs Status Overview Jul23 V1.0
- 7.3 Appendix C: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group Report to Co-ordinating OSC 14July23 V1.0

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 There are no background papers.

Birmingham City Council

Coordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Friday 14th July 2023



Subject: Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group
Supplementary Report (Highway Repairs)

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

Report author: Nikki Spencer
Lead Delivery Manager, Digital & Technology Services
Nikki.Spencer@birmingham.gov.uk
07766 924234

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this supplementary report is to provide an update to the 14th July 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. Update on Customer Service Programme Task & Finish Group

- 3.1. Appendix A and Appendix C provide 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.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.

3.4. Highway Repairs

- 3.4.1. The Task & Finish Group met on 7th July 2023 with the Assistant Director for Inclusive Growth also attended by Customer Service Programme Operational Sponsor, Strategic Product Manager and Product Owner. This supplementary update to the report has been issued following the meeting to review the recommendations and provide an update to the 12th December status review previously provided.
- 3.4.2. There has been a change of Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure since the original insights were gathered and previous updates were made. The new AD has affirmed that he is passionate about the customer and will inject pace and effort into putting these recommendations, and additional measures to improve the customer experience, in place. A customer improvement group has been established with senior managers to develop a Highways Customer Improvement Plan which will look to address not only the existing insights but also any additional insight gathered through the course of this work and to drive that plan forward. The customer improvement group has been tasked with developing a draft Highways Customer Improvement plan by the end of September 2023.
 - 3.4.2.1. A detailed piece of work is underway with business support, to analyse the root cause of complaints which is scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2023.
 - 3.4.2.2. Work has also commenced to exploit the technology we now have and to maximise communication between internal systems, ensuring information can be accessed first hand, giving greater visibility and enabling quicker and more robust responses. It is envisaged this will be an ongoing, continuous exploitation and improvement process.

- 3.4.2.3. A series of engagement sessions have been held with the service contractor, Kier's customer and leadership teams - covering improvements to processes, quality of responses and the need for BCC values, attitudes and behaviours to be reflected in these.
- 3.4.3. Approximately 90% of member enquiries to the complaints teams are first time service requests, rather than complaints. The complaints teams are not sufficiently resourced to handle these enquiries. A working group has been established to address this issue. The first meeting of the group took place on 10th July (chaired by AD for Customer Services and Business Support). The group will map current access routes and identify how enquiries can be handled differently. The portfolio lead and informal cabinet have also been briefed on the issue and on the measures being taken to resolve it.
- 3.4.4. Business Support to the highways service is now operating as a single, amalgamated team to manage service enquiries and complaints, reducing duplicated effort.
- 3.4.5. An internal review is being carried out using insight that is now available into all Highway enforcement functions (including parking, permits and licences). The review will establish the current demand for these services, how these requests are reported and presented and how resources can then be prioritised and are deployed most appropriately. A bolder approach to enforcement will be taken. Messaging will also be improved - both in terms of communicating what is being done but also managing expectations where action is not taken. The draft from the internal review of Enforcement is scheduled for the end of October 2023.
- 3.4.6. In summary, a total of 10 service improvement recommendations were presented to Highway Repairs, and to date 2 have been implemented and 8 have an implementation status of 'in progress'.

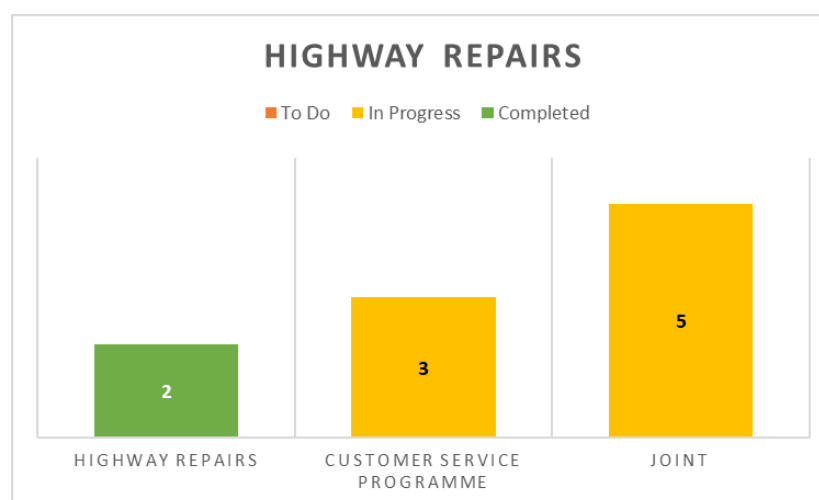


Figure 1 - Highway Repairs Status Overview

4. Any Financial Implications

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. There are no procurement implications or financial implications of the recommendations in this report.

5. Any Legal Implications

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. The City Council will carry out this work under the General Powers of Competence Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

6. Any Equalities Implications

- 6.1. 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.

7. Background Documents

- 7.1. [Customer Service Strategy](#)
- 7.2. [Our Customer Charter](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1. C: Status overview of the Customer Service Programme recommendations (Highway Repairs)

HIGHWAY REPAIRS

RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO SERVICE LEADS

Overview: In Spring 2022 the Customer Service Programme conducted user research with our customers to understand the current customer experience by targeting high demand services accessed digitally and offline, in order to identify a model customer experience, based on best practice, to increase/improve customer satisfaction.

Code	Original Insight	Original Recommendation - detail Update against recommendation following December 2022 Task and Finish Group <i>Update against recommendation following June 2023 Task and Finish Group</i>	Priority Rating	Delivery Accountability R = issues / blockers A = underway and on track G = completed
44	The response to complaints from contractors isn't always to an acceptable quality.	Explore how the service might establish a shared quality standard for responses to complaints, and how we can hold ourselves and our partners to that standard. Consider making adhoc checks of complaint responses to ensure quality standard is acceptable. Refined 04-Nov: Customer Responses in general from the BCC Customer Services are not of sufficient quality in the view of the responsible service area (i.e. Highways). Whilst much of this issue can be resolved through improved wording in responses (particular automated responses), some quality improvements will require process and/or systems changes in conjunction with BHL/Kier as a our highways services provider. Outbound response from CXM shared with service, pair writing to commence. Identify any system changes front office/back office. Iterative content development i.e. released as signed off. Update 12-Dec: At the moment systems don't talk to each other as well as the should do; systems need to be joined up and quality of responses needs improvement - needs to be clear on the request and timescale of outcome and aligned to contractor responses; part cultural piece with Keir - subscribed updates on the progress of repairs raised; new technology that can be embraced and a common approach/consistency between services e.g. Housing repairs. The PFI contract will be lever for alignment with contractors. Status Update 07-July: There has been a change of Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure since the original insights were gathered and previous updates were made. The new AD has affirmed that he is passionate about the customer and will inject pace and effort into putting these recommendations, and additional measures to improve the customer experience, in place. A customer improvement group has been established with senior managers to develop a Highways Customer Improvement Plan which will look to address not only this insight but all those gathered below and any additional insight gathered through the course of this work and to drive that plan forward. A representative from Kier attends the group. The customer service programme also has a seat on the group. The group has been tasked with producing a draft Highways Customer Improvement plan by the end of September 2023 A detailed piece of work is underway with business support, to analyse the root cause of complaints which is scheduled to conclude at the end of August 2023. Work has also commenced to exploit the technology we now have and to maximise communication between internal systems, ensuring information can be accessed first hand, giving greater visibility and enabling quicker and more robust responses. It is envisaged this will be an ongoing, continuous exploitation and improvement process. A series of engagement sessions have been held with Kier's customer and leadership teams - covering improvements to processes, quality of responses and the need for BCC values, attitudes and behaviours to be reflected in these. An understanding is in place on the Customer Service strategy, behaviours and use of information and technology with bidders for the procurement of the remainder of the term of the PFI contract, to ensure that there is no further hiatus when the contract is awarded.	Medium	Programme
45	Councillors are not always using the form that has been created for them to submit their requests, instead using the highways or general complaints inboxes (resulting in delays in responding due to additional processing time and time spent on manually copying content from councillor's emails into iCasework)	Reinforce messaging to councillors that they must use the correct process, and when they don't respond by asking them and making it very easy for them to do so - e.g. include link to the form and instructions on what to do Refined 04-Nov: To deliver the recommendation Highway Service needs see a clearly defined set of outcomes and an agreed delivery plan from D&CS to address this issue. Comms & engagement piece to reinforce the process of Member enquiries. Review of current content, information, advice and guidance required. Update 12-Dec: Members are generally starting to use the systems in place but they won't use the forms as they don't have the time - use of the complaints teams is the corporate approach. 85% come through the complaints team exceptions for urgent/critical items that will go direct to services. Most Highways are enquiries and not complaints which takes time from the complaints team. New system/process - clarify the route to enable better processing of requests that are not complaints - narrative needs to better reflect the expectations of Members (members need to work out which complaints team to send their queries to); some requests need multiple services to be co-ordinated to resolve as a priority. Status Update 07-Jul: Note, this insight applies across services and is not specific to highways. Approximately 90% of member enquiries to the complaints teams are first time service requests, rather than complaints. The complaints teams are not sufficiently resourced to handle these enquiries. A working group has been established to address this issue. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for 10th July (chaired by AD for Customer Services and Business Support). The group will map current access routes and identify how enquiries can be handled differently. The portfolio lead and informal cabinet have also been briefed on the issue and on the measures being taken to resolve it.	High	Programme
46	In Highways there are two business support teams broadly doing similar work. They are working in silos and rely in 'middle people' to work effectively	If our understanding of this situation is right, review the roles, responsibilities and function of these two teams and consolidate into one, redirecting freed up resource elsewhere in the service should it be found that there is duplication of effort. Refined 04-Nov: In Business Support (City Operations dedicated support from Business Support) there are two teams doing similar work to manage service enquiries and complaints. They are working in silos and rely on 'middle people' to work effectively. Review of the current business support structure, policies and working practices in Digital and Customer Services on behalf of the Highway service required. Update 12-Dec: Need one team to own it and close the task down Status Update 07-July: Business Support to the highways service is operating as a single, amalgamated team. Updated as complete.	High	TBC should be DCS not programme COMPLETE

47	The service reported finding it difficult to prioritise activity because sometimes everything is considered 'urgent'.	<p>Consider how the service might establish more effective prioritisation processes. Test these with staff to ensure they will be effective and allow staff to focus on things that are a genuine priority.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Short Discovery piece to inform current process, pain points and opportunities from the end to end dropped Kerb service.</p> <p>Business requirement need to be provided by Highways to identify the needs for the new licencing scheme</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: From a process perspective there is a need to define what is classified as urgent and the ability to prioritise work. Members need to be able to identify cases that are urgent based on their community knowledge - it is a more difficult process to envoke highways enforcement (catching people in the act, capacity to resource), Section 184 Highways Act - letters are currently issued to the address. Preventative action (fencing, bollards, etc) may be an option and there is funding available to support this type of activity but resources are limited. Use of a transportation capital budget for rare instances where Members identify as a priority - requires further exploration</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: An internal review is being carried out using insight that is now available into all Highway enforcement functions (including parking, permits and licences). The review will establish the current demand for these services, how these requests are reported and presented and how resources can then be prioritised and are deployed most appropriately. A bolder approach to enforcement will be taken. Messaging will also be improved - both in terms of communicating what is being done but also managing expectations where action is not taken. The draft from the internal review of Enforcement is scheduled for the end of October 2023.</p>	Medium	Service with Programme support
48	The Clean Air Zone website is confusing, and it is unclear if zones are in the CAZ or not. CAZ charges are not clearly explained on the website. There is no pre-notification or warning of a CAZ fine. Fines come as a surprise to many customers, which can be confusing and distressing.	<p>Review the webpages and quality of communication about the CAZ. Use a content designer to ensure all written communication is clear and accessible. Test the new content with customers to ensure there is no ambiguity. Ensure zones and times are clearly indicated online so charges do not come as a surprise to customers. Should the development of a BRUM account app happen in the future, the service could consider making use of push notifications to alert customers that they have entered a CAZ and give them, for example 10 minutes to exit the zone should they have entered if unintentionally.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: This needs to be worked through with the CAZ team. Highways and Infrastructure are only responsible for penalty charge notices if drivers do not want to pay the 'fine'. The CAZ charge and communications and messaging about payment of the charge is dealt with by the CAZ team. However staffing of customer frontline in Parking needs to be investigated.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Tell Us Once - single view of customer, if a citizen tells 'The Council' something they believe their data will be updated for every dept. Front end visibility and communication of CAZ</p> <p>Enforcement of CAZ has a dependency of the frontend</p> <p>O&S - we acknowledge there are two teams in two different directorates and this needs to be resolved.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: CAZ and its communications (website, signage etc) sits with transportation. Highways are responsible for enforcement when drivers incur a CAZ penalty charge. Feedback has been provided to the CAZ team within transportation and web pages / Brum Breathes website content has been improved. A CAZ colleague was also invited to customer panel and feedback was provided by the Panel on improvements to the FAQs, to be issued with PCNs. Communications have therefore been refined with the customer in mind, albeit there are legal constraints around what must and can be said. Whilst the two teams sit in different directorates, they do not sit in silos and communications between the 2 teams are joined up.</p>	Low	COMPLETE
49	Complaints can come to the service from multiple sources, which can make it difficult to spot duplicates, which can result in duplication of effort from the service.	<p>Status Update 07-July: Insights 49 to 51, as well as the recommendations and updates against these insights, are all interlinked.</p> <p>Contract variations to complete the delivery of new technological solutions are in progress. The service is looking at how it will exploit the new technology to get greater visibility and provide better access to services for customers. There will be a cost involved to exploit the new technology which will need to be agreed. When delivered and fully exploited, it will be possible to identify if a request has already been raised for the same service (e.g. pothole) and to opt in to receive updates against this request. It will also be possible to be more pro active (e.g. raise requests around broken streetlights before the customer has flagged the issue). This will help reduce duplication and avoidable contact. Principles including user centred design, accessibility, automation, harnessing and integrating available technology and pro active communication with customers and members will be embedded across service offerings to ensure that solutions provided meet user and stakeholder needs. Contract Variations are being discussed with Procurement and subject to approval will be followed by a 9-12 month project to deliver the revised customer offer.</p>	High	Highways and Business Support with programme support
50	Customers want to be able to easily report issues on the go. Currently the reporting solution is clunky, customers find the map difficult to use and it doesn't work at all on some devices.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	High	Inflight with service - programme to support customer elements
51	When the service area seeks to engage with service users, they typically use the same group of customers to represent the people of Birmingham.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Programme
52	Customers found there is sometimes a lack of communication on why something has happened or why a decision has been made. This keeps customers in the dark about things they care about and isn't open or transparent.	<p>Status Update 07-July: See update against insight / recommendation 49.</p>	Medium	Solution review inflight by Service, programme to support once finalised

53	Customers report that the quality of repairs is not always to a good standard.	<p>Ensure the SLA between us and partners is clear and known. Consider including information online about the expected quality of repairs, what qualifies for a repair and what repairs we will/will not make, e.g. why we only fill in a large pothole when there are other smaller potholes within the immediate area. This will help to better manage customer's expectations and will be information the contact centre and the service can refer customers to.</p> <p>Refined 04-Nov: Understand the current performance standards are for the service, how these are raised and reported on. Do customers know these standards, how does this feed into the contractual agreements with Contractors and managed. Do we need to make this data visible and transparent. what is the mechanism of reporting defect quality issues? Opportunity to offer a commercial service offering through our suppliers/contractors to offer an enhanced service.</p> <p>Update 12-Dec: Being taken forward as a performance measure discussion with the service provider and ensure repairs are conducted by contractors in a timely way; quality of responses reviewed to ensure they are meaningful and in plain language - how the data is managed and fed back to contractors and customers; providing visibility of the standard of performance. Member example to be provided as to where the system hasn't worked - stewards are not engineers they are customer service/engagement experts - test the process.</p> <p>Status Update 07-July: As referenced under the update against insight / recommendation 44, there is an ongoing piece of work to analyse the root cause of complaints which is due to be completed by the end of August 2023. This root cause analysis will feed into the Highways Customer Improvement Plan also referenced which is due to be drafted by end of September 2023. This more pertinent information is also being fed back to contractors who are receptive to the messages that are being received. End to end satisfaction is not currently being measured but this will be possible with the updated technology solution which means the service will no longer be dependant on the contractor agreeing to provide information back to BCC, Member examples have been provided where the system hasn't worked.</p>	Medium	Inflight by Service, Programme to advise
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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
Report author: Nikki Spencer
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07766 924234

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'.

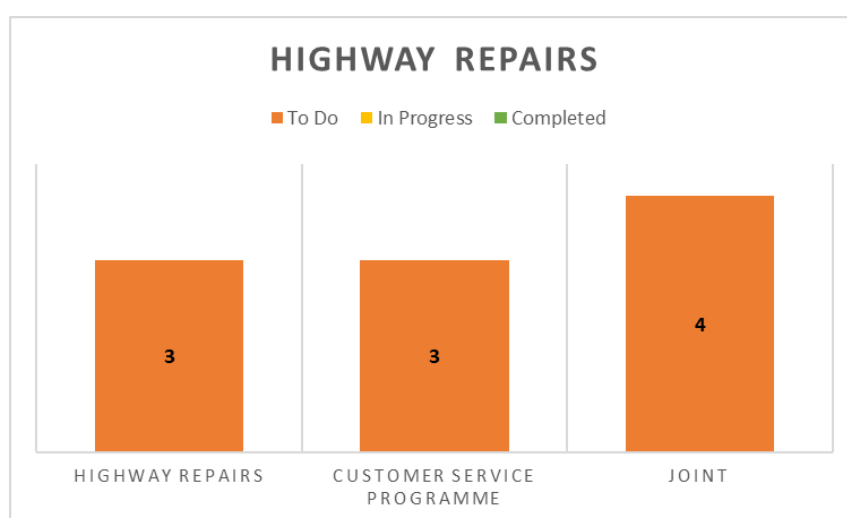


Figure 1 - Highway Repairs Status Overview

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'.

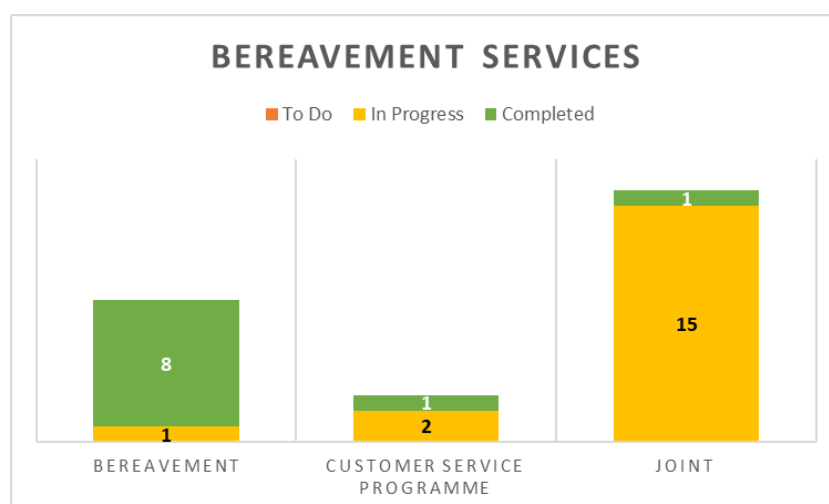


Figure 2 - Bereavement Services Status Overview

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'.

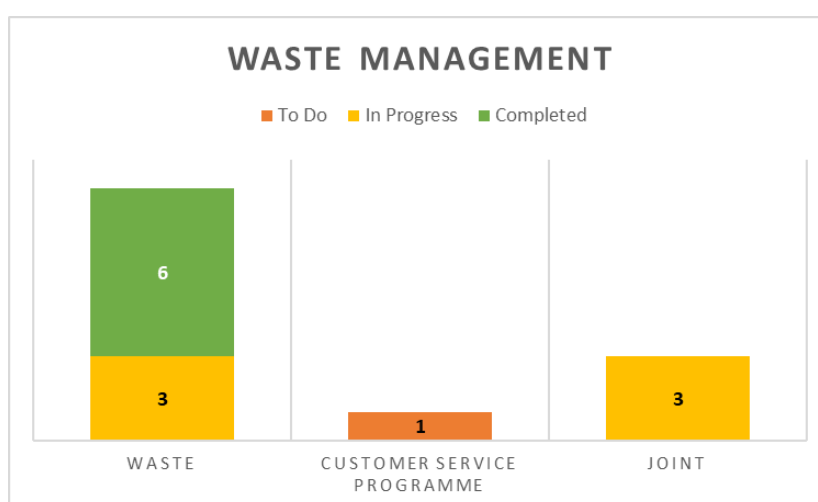


Figure 3 - Waste Management Status Overview

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'.

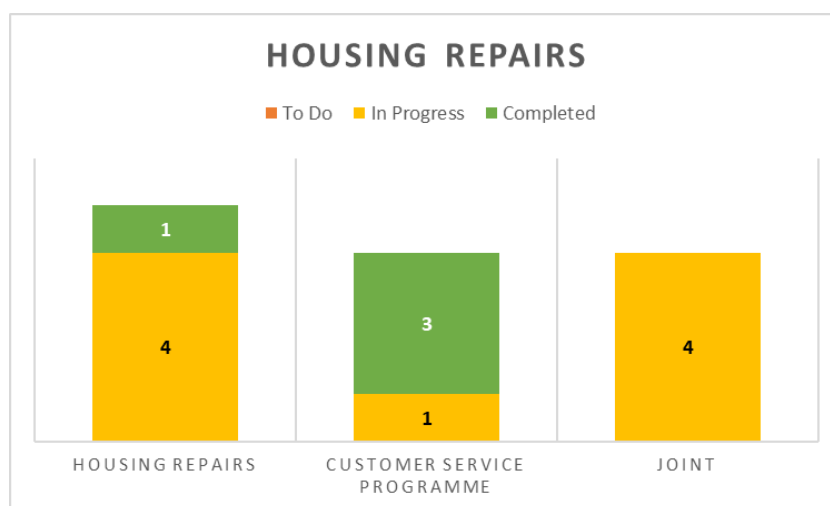


Figure 4 - Housing Repairs Status Overview

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

Birmingham City Council

Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7 March 2023



Subject: Sustainability and Transport 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 Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2023-24. Following the findings and recommendations from the independent Governance Review of the Council, and specifically recommendation 5, the Committee has reframed its work programme to be aligned to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities. Appendix 1 outlines the topics identified, aims and objectives as well as the preferred method of scrutiny to achieve these objectives.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 also provides information on other topics, which had previously been identified by the Committee. In light of the reframing of this work programme, these topics will be deferred by the Committee for future consideration at the right time.
- 1.3 The report also provides a progress update on its two inquiries: Active Travel and Road Safety.

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 which are aligned to the Council's improvement and recovery priorities.
 - Agrees, subject to further input from the Chair and Deputy Chair, the issues that the Committee will consider in May 2024, the proposed aims and objectives and the preferred method of scrutiny.

- 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable work to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the year.

3 Background

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

- Replication: work programme must take account of what else is happening to avoid duplication.

Looking Ahead

- 3.6 Since June 2023, Overview and Scrutiny Committees have identified a 'menu' of issues (including policy development, policy review, issues of accountability and statutory functions). Each Committee has then regularly reviewed their 'menu' and decided which issues needed to be examined further, and how that work would be undertaken.

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 Scrutiny activities should be thorough and undertaken in a timely manner.
- 3.9 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.

Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 3.10 The Committee's Terms of Reference is to fulfil its functions as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning:
- Sustainable transportation policy and programmes, projects and initiatives
 - Strategic highways matters
 - Maintenance of roads and streets, traffic management and car parks and enforcing rights of way
 - Cooperation with the WMCA and Mayor in relation to the key route network
 - An Air Quality strategy for Birmingham

- A financially and environmentally sustainable waste strategy
- A robust re-use and recycle strategy
- A strategy for sustainability, liveability and environmental improvements
- Citywide and national policy development to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change

3.11 The Committee is chaired by Cllr Lee Marsham, and its membership comprises Cllrs Saima Ahmed, David Barker, Martin Brooks, Timothy Huxtable, Colin Green, Richard Parkin and Waseem Zaffar

4 The Governance Review – Reframing the Work Programme 2023-24

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

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

4.2 On 11 January 2024, the Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee met informally to consider the developing Improvement and Recovery Plan and the findings and recommendations of the Governance Review. The Committee reconsidered its work programme for February – April and reframed it to ensure it aligns with the issues set out above.

4.3 The Committee also agreed to meet in May 2024 to replace the cancelled Committee in October 2023. This is critical to ensure it can cover the topics it has identified.

4.4 Appendix 1 outlines the proposed work programme for May 2024. It also provides information on topics which have now been deferred by the Committee as a result of these discussions.

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

- 4.6 The Council's [latest Forward Plan \(April 2024\)](#) may assist Members in identifying future topics.
- 4.7 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.

5 Inquiries

Active Travel

- 5.1 The cross party Task and Finish Group for this inquiry is chaired by Councillor Lee Marsham, and also includes Councillors Martin Brooks; Colin Green and Timothy Huxtable.
- 5.2 Evidence gathering for this inquiry has concluded, and the inquiry group has considered its key findings and recommendations. The Inquiry will be reported to Council in either June or July 2024.
- 5.3 The preparation of its final report had been delayed. This is due to the impact of the extensive budget scrutiny process and activities arising from the Governance Review recommendations on scrutiny resources.

Road Safety

- 5.4 The cross party Task and Finish Group for this inquiry is chaired by Councillor David Barker, and also includes Councillors Richard Parkin and Waseem Zaffar from the Committee itself. Councillor Izzy Knowles has also been co-opted onto the group in the place of Councillor Colin Green.
- 5.5 The terms of reference for this inquiry were agreed by the Committee in February. Evidence gathering for this inquiry will commence in late April once scrutiny resources can be released from the Active Travel inquiry. Further timelines will be reported to the Committee as the inquiry progresses.

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, April

10 Background Papers

10.1 [Birmingham City Council Constitution](#)

10.2 Birmingham City Council Overview and Scrutiny Framework April 2021

Sustainability and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/24

Month	Item/Topic Link with Corporate Priorities	Aims and Objectives	Scrutiny Method	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer	Other Witnesses	Additional Information and Outcome*
May	Annual Flood Risk Management Plan CGFS Independent Governance Review recommendation 5: Equality and equity issues arising from the development of the 24/25 Budget, the Emergency Budget (to be identified by exception), and other priority scrutiny activity relating to the Budget	Review the plan and work undertaken to mitigate against flooding within the city over the past 12 months Consider the Flood Risk management plan for 24-25 and specifically, the impact of the budget challenge and financial recovery programme.	Committee Meeting single item: 2pm Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House	Hannah Hogan, Flood Risk Manager	None	As the October session had to be cancelled due to clash with Extraordinary Council meeting, the Committee will hold a further meeting in May. This is an annual report. Latest report to the Committee is here .
May	Highways and Highways PFI CGFS Independent Governance Review recommendation 5: Critical performance issues emerging “by exception”.	Receive a progress update on the Highways PFI contract and arrangements for 24-25.	Committee Meeting single item: 2pm Venue: Committee Room 6, Council House	Mark Shelswell, Assistant Director, Highways and Infrastructure	Stephen Walton, Head of Highways PFI Procurement	The Committee has requested this report is provided monthly until further notice.

*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
Recycling and Waste Reduction	To be determined.	To be confirmed	No further information at this time
Route to Net Zero	Consider how the Council is supporting community leadership. Other aims and objectives to be determined.	To be confirmed	If this is an in-depth piece of work, to be scheduled following the completion of the Road Safety topic.
Public Transport	To be determined by the Committee	Committee Meeting	The intention is to consider information from multiple bus providers as well as the rail sector and WMCA. It may be followed by visits to public transport facilities
Management of Highways Network	To be confirmed but to include: Review how programme of roadworks is co-ordinated.	To be confirmed	This topic was highlighted by Cllrs Huxtable and Parkin. It had initiated following concerns about Cadent roadworks however, this is a broader request. The Committee are interested in exploring opportunities for efficiencies.

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/document/ashx)

