

Birmingham City Council

Report to City Council

16 September 2025



Title:	EXECUTIVE BUSINESS REPORT
Lead Member:	Councillor Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care Councillor Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance & HR
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	N/A
Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?	N/A
Report Author:	Councillor Mariam Khan, Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care Councillor Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance & HR
Authorised by:	Joanne Roney, Managing Director
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Is this a Late Report?	No
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Wards:	All

Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?

No

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?

No

Reasons why not included on the Notification and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:

N/A

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This Executive Business Report will provide an update of the ongoing work in two Cabinet Member portfolios over the past year:

1.1.1 Health and Social Care

1.1.2 Transformation, Governance and Human Resources

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

2.1 Commissioners note the report, and appreciate the progress and priorities reported by the portfolio holders. Regarding the sections on Transformation and Governance, we note the portfolio actions of the Cabinet Member, but emphasise also that the programme of governance and transformation change in response to the government intervention needs to be understood and owned by the whole council, including its leadership but also its wider membership. It is a vital part of the journey of improvement for Birmingham City Council.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the report be noted by the City Council.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

4.1 On 10 September 2019, Full Council accepted the recommendations of the Coordinating O&S Committee review in respect of changes to the Full Council agenda.

4.2 Recommendation 3 of the review requested that the Executive provide an update to Full Council on its work via the provision of an Executive Business Report (EBR). It was agreed that EBRs would be provided to Full Council four times per municipal year and will include details of progress made in relation to Council strategic outcomes and priorities linked to two Cabinet Member portfolios.

5 APPENDICES

5.1 None.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 N/A

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

7 Introduction

- 7.1 The timing of this Executive Business Report could not be more apt as the Adult Social Care and Health service finds itself at a point of new beginnings. The Cabinet Member has returned to post following a period of maternity leave during which there was a great deal of corporate change - Interim Cabinet Members shared responsibility for the service, and at Executive Director level there were interims in place for both ASC and Public Health.
- 7.2 The service now has a new Executive Director for Adult Social Care & Health, a new Director of Public Health, and the amalgamation of Public Health within the Adult Social Care Directorate. A restructure of the service is imminent, further embedding rigour and accountability.
- 7.3 The time is then right, jointly as the most senior members and officers responsible for the health and care of the people of Birmingham, to take stock and re-evaluate to a revised direction for adult social care and public health.
- 7.4 Set out below is the vision for the Directorate. It is aligned to a mission which commits the Council to working collaboratively across health, care and community systems to enable every person in Birmingham to live a healthy, independent and fulfilling life. This mission underlines our commitment to reduce health inequalities, promote prevention and deliver integrated, person-centred support that responds to the diverse needs of our population. We intend to do this through data-driven decision-making, inclusive engagement and strong partnerships, enabling us to build a resilient, equitable city where wellbeing is a shared responsibility and every resident can thrive.
- 7.5 This Executive Business Report sets out how we intend to do that, what challenges and risks we face, and illustrates using real examples of work undertaken how we are meeting our strategic objectives.

Vision

To create a healthier, fairer Birmingham where every child, young person and adult, regardless of background or circumstance, can start well, live well, age well, and access the right care at the right time.

We will achieve this through integrated services that are person-centred, preventative, and rooted in community partnerships.

Our vision is to empower individuals, reduce inequalities, and build resilient systems that support wellbeing, independence, and dignity across all stages of life.

8 Corporate Plan – Health, Equity and Inclusion

- 8.1 Mission 4 within the Council's Corporate Plan concentrates on health, equity and inclusion, with particular focus on giving children a healthy start in life, people living and ageing well and being helped to make healthy choices. Our aim to achieve that looks at ensuring the services we offer are inclusive and focused on citizens, and that they feel safe and listened to. We will co-produce not just

consult – listening to citizens and carers and embedding lived experience into service design and delivery.

- 8.2 The city continues to face stark health inequalities, with a ten-year gap in life expectancy between some of the most deprived and most affluent areas. Tackling these inequalities is central to the Corporate Plan, which also focuses on the wider factors that influence wellbeing - including education, housing, employment and community safety.
- 8.3 The key health inequality areas highlighted in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy include inequalities linked to deprivation, those affecting disabled communities, those affecting inclusion health groups (such as people experiencing homelessness, vulnerable migrants, veterans), those affecting ethnic communities and inequalities of locality. It is therefore imperative that we work together across directorates and Cabinet portfolios to tackle these obstacles and identify where we can see issues arising.
- 8.4 For example, Birmingham is a young city, but it has a growing number of older adults traditionally defined as those above 65 years of age. In 2011 there were 138,213 people aged 65 and over, rising to 150,489 in 2021. The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 to 24 indicated that the cohort of people aged 65 is expected to rise by approximately 30% by 2031 (based on 2021 numbers).
- 8.5 It may seem obvious, but access to healthy food and undertaking physical activity are fundamental to improving a person's health outcomes. However, many families who experience poverty and deprivation face huge challenges accessing affordable, healthy food or staying physically active.
- 8.6 Research also shows having a low income affects a child's outcomes in life, such as in education and health. Through working in partnership to improve access to good jobs, fair wages, reduce inequalities and ensure skills and training are accessible to all, outcomes for families in Birmingham will be improved.
- 8.7 To ensure that the health inequalities across Birmingham are recognised and addressed, we are refreshing and renewing our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Local Area profiles and health inequality profiles. These will provide the starting point for ensuring that the support and investment we provide to our communities is aligned to local needs and priorities.
- 8.8 The Council is committed to ensuring services and support are available in the places where people live and will support the place-based efforts in the Integrated Care Strategy and initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Networks. A neighbourhood approach will also be taken to Warm Welcome spaces to help tackle poverty, reduce social isolation, and improve wellbeing and physical health. A new, integrated Connected Communities service will be introduced. This will provide safe spaces in the city's neighbourhoods ensuring citizens can access early help across a range of services, in their local area.

9 Achievements in the Health & Social Care portfolio over the past 12 months

9.1 Successful consolidation of our day centres down from 9 to 5, enabling us to transform the remaining centres.

9.1.1 The consolidation of our day centres has been the catalyst for transformation of the service into a vibrant and viable offer for citizens.

9.1.2 The Council and Adult Social Care Directorate have adopted a comprehensive and compassionate approach to implementing changes to the day opportunities offer, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding the wellbeing of citizens and their families. A dedicated weekly Project Group, comprising professionals from various departments, has overseen the transition, ensuring that all actions are carried out with sensitivity and robust support. Central to this process has been the commitment to person-centred reviews by social workers, guaranteeing that care packages remain unchanged and that citizens' preferences for relocation were fully respected.

9.1.3 To facilitate a smooth transition, citizens were offered multiple opportunities to visit and experience their preferred centres through open days and tailored induction visits. These visits allowed individuals to explore the facilities, meet other citizens, and participate in activities, with transport and information provided to support informed decision-making. Bespoke equipment and personal items were transferred on behalf of citizens, and efforts were made to maintain friendship groups, all contributing to a positive and reassuring relocation experience. Feedback indicates that the support from social workers was well-received and described as kind and empathetic.

9.1.4 In addition to citizen support, the Directorate extended wraparound services to 90 identified carers, including assessments, advocacy, and wellbeing reviews. While a small number expressed concerns, the majority appreciated the compassionate and informative approach. Carers were also provided with guidance on financial and peer support options. To mark the transition, the Directorate organized farewell and welcome events, reinforcing its commitment to a respectful and inclusive process for all those affected by the Cabinet decision.

9.2 Reshaped model for our 3 Care Centres

9.2.1 A paper setting out the strategy for reshaping the model for our three Care Centres has just been taken to Cabinet setting out how the proposed approach enables us to retain all three Care Centres through a programme of change. ASC leadership has listened to feedback from the phase 1 and phase 2 consultations and has taken the opportunity to work with partners and take forward a different approach that aligns with the national policy on integration.

9.2.2 This option is expected to deliver a minimum revenue savings of £4.9m, with further savings to be realised within the service.

- 9.2.3 Residential and respite services will be delivered at the Kenrick Centre, while integrated intermediate care at Ann Marie Howes and Perry Tree Centres will be provided in partnership with Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHC), under an integrated Health and Social Care Model. With this revised proposal, the Council aims to mitigate the need for redundancies by retaining skilled staff to support future service delivery. A phased approach through 2026/2027 will align both Council and NHS workforces to match the needs of citizens accessing the two centres.
- 9.2.4 The quality of care provided by the Council will remain a focus for Adult Social Care, with the aim that services provided will be rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by the CQC at the next inspection and achieve high satisfaction rates from residents and families.

9.3 Significant progress on Enablement

- 9.3.1 The first thing the new Executive Director did on arrival in May 2025, working with the Cabinet Member, was to revisit the proposals to reshape the internal provider services which include Day Centres, Care Centres and Home Care Enablement service and explore ways to create a joined-up workforce that can respond to demand across the services whilst making us more efficient. This has progressed significantly over the summer with reprovisioning of the internal Homecare service to the external market whilst retaining the skills and experience of the workforce within the remaining provider services.

9.4 CQC (Care Quality Commission) Assessment Outcome

- 9.4.1 BCC is subject to Care Quality Commission Local Authority Assessments of its Adult Social Care Services.
- 9.4.2 The Care Quality Commission assess how local authorities deliver against key aspects of their duties under Part 1 of the Care Act 2014. Birmingham City Council was part of a pilot to test out how CQC would be working in the future and was given an indicative rating of "Good: evidence shows a good standard' in November 2023.
- 9.4.3 Work has continued over 2024/2025 to respond to areas where CQC indicated improvements are required.
- 9.4.4 The Directorate is now starting preparations for the formal re-assessment process.

9.5 Emerging evidence of joined up service delivery – SEND/Transitions

- 9.5.1 There has been a focus on identifying and dealing with the service backlog to enable appropriate allocation of resources in Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood (PFA). There is now a new classification to identify younger people waiting to move from Education facilities and leaving dates, so there will be a more accurate waiting list moving forward.

- 9.5.2 The backlog is now counted as younger people who have waited over 1 day beyond their 18th birthday (as opposed to the previous 3 month timescale) and there is a significant reduction. There are good links between the Children's Trust and Transitions service, which will ensure data is available earlier to enable us to plan workload and forecast expenditure. There are moves to begin Transitions from 14 years' old and 17 years' old as 'business as usual' and commissioning colleagues are supporting in this area.
- 9.5.3 There is a process to manage complaints which are currently at a reduced level and there are agreed business cases to recruit to vacant positions within the team and it is important to note that there has been team stability for 12 months.
- 9.5.4 The Transitions transformation plan feeds into both the PFA (SENAR) audit and the life course board, as well as the Programme board and savings are monitored within these meetings.

9.6 Carers' Partnership Strategy

- 9.6.1 Over the past year, there have been many successes celebrated in relation to support for Carers. The launch of the Carers Partnership Strategy was accompanied by the largest Carers Week celebration in Birmingham to date, with events held across the city and strong representation from Adult Social Care.
- 9.6.2 Carers' Rights Day attracted over 250 carers and featured health checks, flu jabs, and the dementia bus. Forward Carers, the Council's commissioned provider, received national recognition at the Asian Business Chamber of Commerce Awards and at the UK Social Enterprise Awards and for their innovative digital support for carers.
- 9.6.3 The Hub is recognised as one of the UK's Top 100 Social Enterprises (2025) and was a finalist in the Diversity Pioneer category, celebrating its commitment to inclusive, values-led leadership. This recognition highlights Forward Carers' impact in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion while delivering meaningful support to communities across Birmingham.

9.7 Public Health

- 9.7.1 Many of the excellent projects and programmes Public Health lead on or fund are covered within section 14, however it is worth stating that we significantly invest in health visiting, public health school nursing and children's centres and perform well on KPIs. In 2026/27 we will build on the review of those services to enable a strengthened offer for children and young people.
- 9.7.2 We have also reviewed and remodelled the drug and alcohol treatment system for adults and children and young people. We have a high performing treatment and recovery services with increasing resources focusing on prevention of problematic use.

9.8 Sports and wellbeing achievements

9.9 There are also a number of achievements from the sports and wellbeing services, which sit within the City Operations Directorate. These include:

9.9.1 Having completed the final stage of £100m rebuild/refurbishment of Alexander Stadium, on time and to budget.

9.9.2 Delivered a sporting legacy programme, working with National Governing Bodies to improve almost 50 facilities including 17 Basketball courts, 25 Tennis courts and 6 Multi Use Sports facilities.

9.10 Upcoming priorities within the Sports and Wellbeing Service over the next 12 months include:

- Complete new Sports Strategy aligned to Public Health's Creating an Active Birmingham Strategy.
- Continue transformation of Wellbeing Service to deliver savings and meet public health outcomes.
- Construction of phase 1 of the redevelopment and refurbishment of Moseley Road Baths (including Balsall Heath Library) to commence regeneration of Balsall Heath high street.
- Implement a new management and operating model at Alexander Stadium.
- Commence the future planning for sport and leisure contracts post 2030.
- Through the Alexander Stadium plan for major sports events: European Athletics Championship in 2026 (this will be the largest athletics event ever in UK); the Invictus Games in 2027 (with no direct BCC funding); host city for the European Football Championships in 2028.
- Deliver a £1m investment programme under Shared Prosperity Fund, investing in both Wellbeing Facilities and in increased participation.

9.11 Strategic goals for Health & Social Care for the next 12 months:

- Deliver outstanding Adult Social Care across Birmingham that provides better outcomes at a more efficient cost.
- Integrated service delivery between the Council and health partners at a locality and neighbourhood level which reduces demand for services whilst improving outcomes for citizens.
- Seamless service delivery between Council services particularly with SEND, Children's Trust and housing.
- Strengthened Safeguarding Adults partnership which collaborates with Safeguarding Children's arrangements and CSP to support the most vulnerable children, young people and adults in our communities.
- Strengthened Health and Wellbeing Board that drives improvements in population health and health and health inequalities.
- Enhanced strategy that supports people with Mental Health, learning disabilities and Autism to be healthy, safe and well.

- Strengthen delivery of prevention priorities at locality and neighbourhood level – via ICB system clinical boards and community care collaborative – across Adults and Children/Families.
- Support the development of a joint corporate strategic commissioning strategy with partners to deliver outcomes set out in the Corporate Plan, HWBB strategy, 10-year plan. Building on established areas of collaboration eg City Operations.
- Maximise the use of the JSNA, City Observatory, and related tools, support an evidence-led decision culture, sharing examples of what works well and how it can be used to support system level change and service design and delivery to more effectively and efficiently meet the need of the population.
- Health in all policies, embedding equity lens, developing culture and workforce.
- Strengthen corporate approach to community consultation, engagement, and co-production.

10 Marmot

- 10.1 Birmingham City Council is seeking to join 52 other local authorities and places in becoming a Marmot City. This programme is led by Prof Sir Michael Marmot and his team at the Institute of Health Equity. Its aim is to reduce inequalities with a focus on wider social determinants.
- 10.2 It will build on the foundation of work already in place across the authority and further embedding an evidence-informed framework with a focus right across the organization and with wider City Partners. The framework has already delivered measurable impact on other authorities.
- 10.3 The current specification (subject to negotiation) will ask Professor Marmot and his team to assist us in:
- Using data and evidence, agree with partners evidence- based priorities for action on the social determinants of health that will have a transformative and sustainable impact on health equity indicators for Birmingham residents and align to the City vision.
 - Establishing and maintaining the structures and governance to deliver this programme of work.
 - Undertaking an assessment of the City’s current achievements and capability to deliver on the agreed priorities.
 - Developing of a roadmap including clear recommendations for delivery on agreed priorities which demonstrates short, medium and long-term outcomes and a theory of change for reduced demand and return on investment.
 - Fostering system wide collective ownership for a health equity and proportionate universalism approach.
 - Facilitating collective action on the agreed priorities and provide opportunities to share progress and achievements.

- Underpin the agreed priorities with the development and delivery of tangible actions to support the ambition to be an anti-racist city.

10.4 This will contribute significantly to the achievement of our City Vision developed through Shaping Birmingham's Future Together and will underpin our transformation and recovery. The Cabinet Member and Director of Public Health have already met with Professor Marmot this summer to begin these conversations.

11 10 Year Plan

11.1 Following the government's announcement of the 10 year plan, a strong focus has been put on a neighbourhood health model which we are already delivering to some extent in East Birmingham.

11.2 Washwood Heath Health and Wellbeing Hub is a brilliant example of what integrated care can look like in practice. It brings together GPs, community health teams, social care, voluntary and faith sector partners all in one space.

11.3 It is part of the broader Community Care Collaborative model, which aligns with the priorities of the Integrated Care System and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

11.4 The idea is simple but powerful – no more passing between service delivery providers, no silos but instead coordinated care around the person, in their community. This is the direction we must pursue if we are serious about shifting from crisis to prevention.

12 Health and Wellbeing Board

12.1 The Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board has continued to deliver on its ethos of joint strategic thinking and partnership working within the local health and social care system. To better enable this work, the Board has started a series of discussions on neighbourhood working and how this might look in practice. At the July HWB meeting, the Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Health (at BCC) and the Chief Executive of Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust delivered a presentation on their model of locality and neighbourhood health services and the potential issues that the system may have with the transition.

12.2 This will be further developed at a Health and Wellbeing Board workshop on 18th September 2025 where members and wider partners will have an opportunity to consider the issues raised in detail and develop solutions together. This will build on the presentation from July and also be informed by the intention for greater neighbourhood working and planning expressed in the NHS' 10-Year-Plan. The workshop will conclude with members and partners agreeing on the model for neighbourhood health services as well as any actions that need to be accomplished to facilitate this.

13 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024-25

13.1 The Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2024-25 has also been developed extensively over the past year. The focus of the report is on understanding and measuring wellbeing more effectively within Birmingham. The report draws on global, regional and national frameworks for measuring wellbeing that consider wider determinants, such as social relationships, quality of local environment, deprivation, and civic participation. The report explores how these can act as drivers of our individual wellbeing as well as that of the population as a whole. It proposes a local framework that could be used in Birmingham, although it highlights that there continues to be inconsistency at what is measured and at what level (e.g. the whole city or wards). The report also suggests opportunities for action that could help to improve local wellbeing measurement and aligns with wider system-level work, such as the Creating a Mentally Healthy City Strategy.

14 Health & Social Care's 10 Strategic Objectives and Examples in Practice

14.1 1. Promote independence and wellbeing

14.1.1 Birmingham's Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS)

14.1.2 Birmingham's Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS) are a vital part of the city's preventative adult social care strategy, offering free or low-cost community-based support to help citizens live healthier, more independent lives. Delivered in partnership with the Prevention & Communities (P&C) Grants Programme, NNS focuses on building local networks of activities and services that reduce isolation, promote wellbeing, and delay the need for formal care.

14.1.3 These schemes are rooted in community assets and are designed to be accessible through self-referral, ensuring that support is available to all who need it. A key strength of the NNS model is its emphasis on co-production and community development. Citizens are actively involved in shaping services through panels, steering groups, and grant decision-making processes.

14.1.4 The NNS programme is also committed to continuous improvement and strategic alignment. Feedback from citizens, staff, and stakeholders is regularly gathered and used to refine services. Recent improvements include enhanced data collection processes, increased funding flexibility, and the introduction of validated impact measures. These changes have strengthened the programme's ability to demonstrate outcomes and respond to emerging needs, such as digital inclusion and support for underrepresented groups like the Deaf, LGBTQ+, and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

14.1.5 Celebrating success is central to the NNS ethos. Quarterly impact reports and annual events highlight achievements and share learning across the system. Case studies, such as the support provided by Arts in the Yard to a citizen facing homelessness and complex health challenges, illustrate the life-changing impact of the programme. Through strong partnerships, responsive commissioning and

a commitment to equity, NNS continues to play a crucial role in supporting Birmingham's citizens to thrive within their communities.

14.1.6 **Occupational Therapy Front-door diversion Success**

14.1.7 Occupational Therapy (OT) colleagues have seen great success with their drop-in sessions diverting people away from their front door statutory assessments, seeing quicker outcomes from citizens.

14.1.8 From September 2024 people phoning the contact centre about OT-related issues have been offered information about the OT drop-in sessions that run across the city. This is part of the contact centre automation programme that offers information and advice for people with low level needs instead of referring everything routinely through to formal assessment processes.

14.1.9 Since its launch, contact centre over 20,000 callers have asked for this information to be sent to them, and a corresponding 85% increase in hits on the OT's drop-in clinics webpage, as well as an increase of 40% at OT drop-in clinics.

14.1.10 This has benefited citizens, who can resolve lower-level needs quicker and more conveniently and reduced the number of people waiting for statutory OT assessment – ultimately keeping more people independent at home and in the community for longer.

14.2 **2. Reduce health inequalities**

14.2.1 There are a great many examples of how we address the reduction of health inequalities.

14.2.2 On 8th July 2025, the Assistant Director for Healthy Behaviours and Communities in the Public Health Division, together with LSE Consulting were invited to speak at the House of Lords. They discussed the evaluation of the Community Health Profiles, developed by our Public Health Communities Team. The event, hosted by the Midlands Health and Care Inequalities Policy Commission (chaired by Lord Victor Adebawale CBE) and Midlands Innovation Health, was a fantastic opportunity to highlight how local work is informing national conversations. Huge thanks to everyone involved – it was recognition well deserved.

14.2.3 To learn more about the CHP visit [Community health profiles](#)

14.2.4 To watch the CHP evaluation findings webinar visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=escBD9fZxZQ>

14.2.5 In addition, the BLACHIR programme has been shortlisted in two categories for the National BAME Health and Care Awards 2025: **Excellence in Community Partnership** award for our work with the two excellent co-chairs of the previous BLACHIR Implementation Board (Dr Nike Arowobusoye and Sola Afuape MBE) and the evolution into the Communities of Identity Partnership, and **Inclusive Organisation/Trust of the Year** award for our Cultural Humility and Safety training programme.

14.2.6 **Food Systems**

- 14.2.7 The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) is a European partnership for action on creating healthy food environments in cities and towns. The partnership enables connection with a network of 250 cities across the world to share learning on approaches to food in urban environments. During this next term, Birmingham is leading on topics related to food justice, cultural diversity and governance. We applied for MUFPP awards in May 2025 for our work on the local food legends, the full of beans campaign and the surplus food hub. The [leadership plan](#) has been published, and we have supported with achieving one of the aims which was to submit a collaborative proposal to Horizon Europe. Our proposal was successful and led to the Bauhaus Bites initiative.
- 14.2.8 Birmingham, as a Trailblazer city for Bauhaus Bites, is leading the charge to transform urban food environments in East Birmingham by celebrating cultural diversity, inclusivity, and access to healthy, sustainable food. This three-year pilot project, funded by the EU Horizon 2030, will leverage cross-sector collaboration to empower local communities, promote sustainable diets, and strengthen social spaces. Aligned with Birmingham's Food System Strategy, the project aims to unite a diverse community, increase food literacy, support nature-based solutions, and create locally tailored, culturally relevant food initiatives that improve health, wellbeing, and sustainability. Our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has now been approved. Given that this is a three-year project with ongoing development, EIA reviews will be conducted every six months.
- 14.2.9 The Birmingham Food Revolution is the movement that underpins the Birmingham Food System Strategy and is the driving force behind our city-wide citizen-led food system transformation. The revolution has been building for years and is being led by Birmingham citizens making a difference. This approach is key to empowering and energising more than 1.1 million citizens. As part of the Birmingham Food Revolution, we have now run two rounds of the Birmingham Food Legends Fund – once in 2023-24 to celebrate the launch of the Food System Strategy and again in 2025-26 to celebrate the ongoing work of the strategy.
- 14.2.10 We are still supporting the Cost of Living response in a strategic and occasionally operational role. We operationalised a top-up grant to food aid providers such as foodbanks, food pantries, community cafés, and on-street feeding in February 2025. This grant provided up to £4,000 to 140 organisations for the food provision service which directly benefits citizens. The money could be spent on food and consumables (including baby food, hygiene supplies and pet food), infrastructure (including shelving, storage, white goods, furniture and equipment etc.), memberships including Fareshare, Your Local Pantry, Feeding Britain and training (including food safety and hygiene, allergen awareness). As a monitoring requirement of the grant, we also ran a second round of the City-Wide Food Aid Count in March 2025, where we asked all food projects to provide numbers of users during a week in March in order to provide a snapshot of food aid use in the city. The count found that over the two weeks 22,875 visits were made to a

foodbank or other food project, feeding at least 31,158 people (155 people per project on average). These findings seem to show a considerable increase since March 2023, where 13,604 people visited a foodbank or other food project, feeding at least 19,013 people (95 people per project on average). We are currently finalising this and considering how to share this information.

14.2.11 Through the Cost of Living response and Household Support Fund we have also funded The Active Wellbeing Society to run a surplus food hub at the Birmingham Wholesale Market, which redirects edible food away from the bins and onto people's plates. In May 2025 they captured 4.6 tonnes of food which was redistributed to community groups in Birmingham; the provision of a new kitchen at the wholesale market has meant that the produce can be cooked into meals which are provided to community groups.

14.3 3. Strengthen integrated neighbourhood working

14.3.1 A review of the Social Work Teams has begun with a 'One team, one service' approach continuing across the 10 Constituency Teams to address issues around equity, consistency, standardisation, and parity in decision making.

14.3.2 There is a new Principal Social Worker in post who will support the continuous improvement of practice. Work is on-going on the development of a Performance Framework and there is continued close monitoring of budgets.

14.3.3 In addition, the Directorate is continuing to take a leading role in developing Integrated Care System arrangements.

14.3.4 Adult Social Care is a key partner in the Integrated Care System Community Care Collaborative which is responsible for the integration of health and social care services within the community. The directorate is actively engaged with a number of workstreams including Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Locality Partnerships.

14.3.5 A Birmingham Pathway 1 Board has been established reporting to the BSol Intermediate Care Board. The Board co-ordinates a number of workstreams to make improvements to the Early Intervention Community Teams (EICT) who deliver Pathway 1 ("Home-first" discharges from hospital and avoiding admission into acute hospital care). Key objectives for the board are to increase the proportion of citizens who are supported to achieve their reablement goals and are discharged within 42 days.

14.4 4. Enhance prevention and early intervention

14.4.1 As at the end of quarter 1 this year significant progress had been reported across the EI&P workstreams. During the quarter, the progress made across the digital workstream moved from a position of zero records being processed to >6,000,000. This level of data ingestion means that BCC will have a growing ability to use the data that we hold across multiple systems to get a true "single view" of a citizen.

- 14.4.2 Residents will only have to tell us their story once when they interact with us, and we will be in a better position to help people before they fall into crisis and require costly or resource-intensive intervention or assistance. The changes which have begun to go live in the Connected Communities service will further support residents and act as one of the platforms through which this new data offer can provide an enhanced service to citizens over the coming months. We are engaging services across BCC to seek opportunities to move to an early intervention and prevention outcomes focused approach across the Council.
- 14.4.3 The Cost of Living programme continues to deliver immediate and direct support for vulnerable citizens, supporting an estimated 50,000 people per week through our blended approach. This approach also continues to develop the community organisation sector and build resilience across organisations, creating a more impactful ecosystem which is capable of managing demand away from core BCC service areas.
- 14.4.4 The combined approach builds foundational capability across the VCS, BCC and our internal data landscape, whilst still maintaining a laser focus on delivering improved day-to-day services and developing services to support our residents now and into the future.

14.5 5. Improve access and experience

14.5.1 Navigating Adult Social Care Animations

A new series of eight animations have been added to the BCC website providing a visual and engaging way to understand how ASC works. The animations were created through the co-production of a number of local authorities. They highlight the various services offered, such as providing information and advice, commissioning services to tackle issues early, supporting carers, and offering both short-term and long-term support. The animations also explain the importance of safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. By watching these short animations, viewers gain a clearer understanding of how ASC operates and the support available to them.

- 14.5.2 Whether it's through reablement, supported housing, or care homes, ASC aims to ensure that everyone has the choice and control to live good quality lives and enjoy good health and wellbeing. [How to get help from ASC | How Adult Social Care Works covers a vast array of solutions available to citizens.](#)

14.6 6. Build a resilient and skilled workforce

14.6.1 Reset 2025: Reducing Agency Reliance and Building a Sustainable Workforce

- 14.6.2 Adult Social Care is currently operating with 188 agency-filled roles, of which 119 have existed for over five years and a further 69 for more than two years.

- 14.6.3 This level of agency usage presents not only a significant financial risk but also impacts service continuity, team stability, and long-term outcomes for the

individuals and families we support. High turnover, reduced accountability, and limited organisational knowledge are all critical challenges we must address.

- 14.6.4 To tackle this, we are launching 'Reset 2025' - A strategic workforce programme designed to reduce agency reliance, strengthen our permanent workforce, and improve recruitment outcomes. A key part of this involves engaging with our agency staff to explore conversion opportunities and reshaping how we hire moving forward.
- 14.6.5 Mandatory engagement sessions for all Grade 6 and 7 Hiring Managers will take place from July, this will be led by HR, Finance, and Operational Leadership. These workshops will outline our current position, explore the risks, and set out the pathway to a more stable, cost-effective model of delivery.

14.7 7. Safeguarding adults at risk

14.7.1 Safeguarding

- 14.7.2 There have been significant improvements in responding to referrals in the city-wide Safeguarding Team, although referral rates continue to be challenging.
- 14.7.3 Most vacancies have been recruited to or covered by temporary staff and practice and processes have been streamlined. Conversion rates have increased, and response times have reduced.
- 14.7.4 Referral rates have remained challenging, and there had been several staff who have left the triage safeguarding team which has meant that there has been an increased waiting time for some safeguarding concerns to be triaged.
- 14.7.5 There is ongoing recruitment and several agency social workers have just been appointed which should supporting reducing the waiting time whilst there is ongoing permanent recruitment.
- 14.7.6 There is an action plan in place, which is being reviewed and monitored at the Safeguarding and Directors' Performance Board.

14.8 8. Foster Community Engagement and co-production

14.8.1 Autism and ADHD Summit

- 14.8.2 One of the most impactful initiatives has been the Birmingham Autism and ADHD Summit, held in 2024. Co-designed and co-delivered with citizens and community groups, the summit brought together families, professionals, and individuals with lived experience to share insights, challenge stigma, and shape future services. The event fostered meaningful dialogue and led to tangible changes within host communities, including increased awareness, sensory-friendly religious services, and plans for more accessible community spaces. The 2025 summit, themed "Aspirations, Opportunities and Employment," is already in development, with strong community involvement and cross-sector collaboration.

14.8.3 Community Wellbeing: 'Beyond the Fade' Black Barbershop Project

- 14.8.4 'Beyond the Fade' is a new Public Health initiative commissioned by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Team and delivered by Melanin Moods and Capella Chaplaincy. The project taps into the unique role Black barbershops play as trusted community spaces, where supportive and meaningful conversations often take place.
- 14.8.5 The aim is to build a network of Black barbers across Birmingham, exploring the kinds of conversations they have with clients and identifying what training or support could strengthen their role as community leaders.
- 14.8.6 The first session was held on 25 June 2025 at Alpha Barbers in Lozells and saw fantastic attendance, with powerful conversations and community energy.
- 14.8.7 Watch the video from the event [here](#): Beyond the Fade at Alpha Barbers. For more information, please contact: mentalwellbeing@birmingham.gov.uk.
- 14.8.8 **Creating a Mentally Healthy City Strategy**
- 14.8.9 In addition, work has been ongoing this year to develop the Creating a Mentally Healthy City Strategy, with in-depth public consultation and work with the Mental Health Provider Collaborative to demonstrate how the strategy aligns with their Mental Health Services Strategy.
- 14.8.10 Overall feedback of the Strategy was extremely positive. People complimented the approach to promote good mental health outside of clinical spaces and there were positive comments about addressing these through people, family, community factors as well as in key spaces such as schools, universities and workplaces. People really felt that this was a citizen-focused strategy and outlined how it had felt co-created with citizens.
- 14.8.11 **Suicide Prevention Strategy**
- 14.8.12 The Suicide Prevention Strategy was embedded into the Creating a Mentally Healthy City Strategy and therefore consultation information above is pertinent to the Suicide Prevention Strategy. A draft Suicide Action Plan has been developed and has been presented at the Suicide Prevention Advisory Group (SPAG) for comment, including how we can more greatly measure the impact of each priority area.
- 14.8.13 Suicide Prevention work led by the team will be embedded into the Suicide Prevention Action Plan however some areas to note include a focus on Suicide Prevention Awareness Week 7th-13th September, suicide prevention training for primary care practitioners, work to better support children, and work with ICB data teams to examine NHS touchpoints for those we have lost by suicide to help see where we might be able to intervene and ensure people are well supported.
- 14.9 9. Ensure financial sustainability and system efficiency**
- 14.9.1 £23.4m Savings delivery in 2024/25 and £27.8m underspend in 2024/25 including early savings delivery.

14.9.2 While not originally included in the government’s intervention, ASC has continued to improve service delivery while implementing significant savings measures. Some 2024/25 savings have exceeded targets, reducing overall council expenditure.

14.9.3 The directorate is embedding strict financial controls, resulting in a current revenue underspend. Collaborative working with partners continues to drive digital efficiencies, with ASC’s ‘Rapid Review’ showcased across the council as a best practice model.

14.10 10. Harness data and digital innovation and monitor impact to drive improvement

14.10.1 Over 1000 residents now connected by the council’s Digital Inclusion programme

14.10.2 Since starting in October 2024, the Digital Inclusion programme has supported 1,151 residents across the city by offering much-needed advice, connectivity and help in using technology effectively. These numbers have smashed the original target of reaching 1000 people by August 2025. With adequate digital skills and owning technology becoming more crucial than ever, it is important that the council addresses the digital divide within Birmingham. Tasks like applying for jobs and using the NHS app and online services require the public to be digitally literate, which can be limiting for many underprivileged members of the community. Read the full story here: [Over 1000 residents now connected by the council’s Digital Inclusion programme.](#)

15 Risks and Challenges

15.1 Discharge to Assess (D2A Service)

15.1.1 D2A encompasses Acute Hospitals, Pathways 1 and 2 (Early Intervention Community Teams and Bed-Based Settings), and the Integrated Hub. It plays a critical role in addressing system pressures by enabling timely discharge without waiting for in-hospital assessments, prioritising a ‘Home First’ approach.

15.1.2 Commissioning has also felt the impact of ongoing NHS pressures. Officers have developed joint strategies to support NHS operations, including the implementation of the Single Transfer of Care (STOC) model at UHB hospitals since May 2024. BCC staff have aligned with the STOC hub and D2A teams, managing out-of-area admissions for Birmingham citizens. This has improved equity of service and freed up community resources, with additional support provided to Pathways 1 and 2 as needed.

15.1.3 Temporary capacity—both staffing and beds—is activated during peak demand to maintain hospital discharge flow. The system is currently reviewing future models for Pathway 2.

15.1.4 Integrated Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) working has strengthened the system response. However, aligning with national and local agendas such as Urgent Care Response (UCR) and the Integrated Care System (ICS) remains a

challenge. While addressing immediate pressures, the focus also remains on long-term strategic transformation.

- 15.1.5 Commissioning continues to lead innovation within the ICS, using evidence-based approaches to guide funding decisions and improve out-of-hospital flow. Within Pathway 1, benchmarking is underway to develop a new model that supports independence and aligns with the Home First ethos.
- 15.1.6 A one-year review of STOC is in progress, analysing data, identifying successful elements, and highlighting areas for improvement.

15.2 Approved Mental Health Professional Service (AMHP)

- 15.2.1 AMHP is identified as a critical role for BCC and there is a 5-year workforce plan under way with HR to identify numbers and plan for recruitment and training. This has identified an aging workforce and skills gap which we are working to address.
- 15.2.2 We have 7 AMHP trainees and are actively training 7 per year to increase numbers and create stability over the next 5 years.

16 Conclusion

- 16.1 We are still working in an extremely tough context — facing significant financial pressures, increasing demand, an ageing population, and a system still recovering from the impact of COVID-19 – particularly in relation to how some of our services have historically been delivered, but we've needed to rethink our approach. It's not easy, and we don't want to pretend otherwise.
- 16.2 We have never shied away from taking difficult choices when we have needed to and we are taking this opportunity, through the IRP to transform the way we operate, enhancing the quality and accessibility of the services we offer, ensuring we perform better and build a better performing workforce with a culture to match.

TRANSFORMATION, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

17 Introduction

- 17.1 The City Vision and the associated Missions set out within the Corporate Plan articulate a clear and ambitious long-term direction for Birmingham. The Council is committed to actively contributing to this vision while fundamentally transforming its operational approach. By adopting a new model of working—characterised by strong partnerships, a neighbourhood-focused lens, and alignment with citizen priorities—the Council aims to realise its commitment to a fairer, more inclusive, and prosperous city for all.
- 17.2 More fundamentally, the current evolution of the Commissioners' Intervention is setting the City Council onto a fresh direction where the City Council is taking firm ownership of the need for improvement. The consequential radical overhaul of the Council's culture and work practices, and the need to build the internal

discipline and rigour in driving through change, is to be generated within the Council itself.

- 17.3 This shift in internal governance and culture ensures the City Council will embrace the route to recovery and take responsibility for the journey of improvement. In a nutshell, we own the problem, and we own the solution. Increasingly it will not need external inputs to prompt the need for change, it will be driven from within our own organisation.
- 17.4 The Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and HR holds overall responsibility for taking this forward through the recently revised Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP).
- 17.5 So, in order to embed this new approach within the Council's formal management architecture, in parallel to the five citywide missions set out within its Corporate Plan, the Council has established a sixth Mission: **Improvement and Recovery**. This Mission seeks to enhance the Council's internal operations - not only in response to government intervention, but also to embed a culture of continuous improvement within its planning and delivery processes by:
1. Strengthening and stabilising the Council's financial position.
 2. Developing our workforce and building a culture of trust and learning.
 3. Fostering a better performing organisation with stronger governance.
 4. Enhancing the quality and accessibility of our services.
 5. Transforming the way we operate.
- 17.6 The Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) forms the foundation of this Plan, providing the essential reforms and capabilities that will enable the Council to deliver on its wider ambitions, outlining the Council's strategic pathway towards recovery and transformation. Central to this is the development of a new Target Operating Model, which will integrate key change programmes to establish a more streamlined, efficient, and effective organisation. This model is designed to support the Council in delivering its strategic priorities, fulfilling financial and statutory responsibilities, and rebuilding trust with residents and partners.
- 17.7 The Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and Human Resources is responsible for oversight of delivery of this mission and the associated tenets of improvement and transformation programmes and culture change within the workforce. This report sets out some of the activity that has taken place over the intervening period since last reporting twelve months ago and what is planned for the coming year.

18 Role of the Transformation, Governance and Human Resources portfolio

- 18.1 The Transformation, Governance and Human Resources portfolio is still relatively new, having been created in May 2024. The prime purpose of this role is to lead and drive forward the radical and far-reaching changes needed across the

Council, to recognise, own and commit to remedy historic failings in culture and governance, and to rebuild a City Council fit for the future. Key to this will be:

- ensuring delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP);
- improving performance management, accountability and risk management across the authority amongst both officers and the Executive;
- challenging Directorates in making truly transformational changes to the way services are designed and delivered;
- rebuilding citizens' trust and confidence in their local services;
- improving productivity, stripping out duplication, modernising processes, improving digitisation and new automation technology;
- and to support the cross-cutting work required to reverse the Council's historic over-siloed approach, create a one-Council culture, and support the Council in its improvement journey.

18.2 What we have achieved in 24/25 since the last report to Council:

- a) Development of the Corporate Performance Management Framework and strengthened Corporate KPI set and reporting approach to substantially strengthen accountability and transparency, and development of the Annual Business Plan.
- b) Redevelopment of the City Observatory and data and insight support on key initiatives including the BCC Staff Survey
- c) Led upon the development of a new Corporate Plan and refreshed Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP)
- d) Resetting governance structures including an independent Audit Committee, re-energising and refocusing the Group Company Governance Committee, and review of Member-Officer Protocol.
- e) Ensuring stronger financial scrutiny, with a Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group playing a key role in challenging plans

18.3 What is planned for 25/26

- a) Improve the performance and efficiency of Strategy, Insight and Governance (SIG) services via the Council's new Target Operating Model (Strategic Core & Enabling Servicing)
- b) Finalisation of the Corporate Plan, Improvement & Recovery Plan (IRP) and Corporate Performance Management Framework and beginning the development of the process relating to refreshing the IRP for 26/27, working in collaboration with the Commissioners and taking ownership of improvement in line with the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.
- c) Development and delivery of a programme of improved citizen engagement led by the Public Participation team (including a citizen survey)

- d) Further strengthened CPMO oversight, assurance, and reporting of IRP portfolio including single quarterly performance report
- e) Maintain and improve the City Observatory and widen its contribution to service improvement across Directorates to increase impact on policy, strategy, service improvement and wider evidence-based transformation of services.
- f) Delivery of improvements through IRP Programmes:
 - a) **Governance:** Ensure tight discipline within the newly established Council leadership of the Governance Board in partnership with the Commissioners; review the constitution; improve culture and effectiveness of decision-making; improve the impact and centrality of Scrutiny within the Council's Governance framework; and continue to support development of elected members
 - b) **Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CMO):** Continue to optimise the CPMO function and embed continuous improvement across the council (set out in detail below)
 - c) **Performance Management:** Further strengthen performance management framework, and strengthen accountability of service Directorates for performance improvement, and support consistent council application

19 Strategy, Insight and Governance

19.1 Corporate Portfolio Management Office

- 19.1.1 Following recognition of the need to develop a Portfolio management approach across the transformation agenda of BCC, with particular focus on the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP), over the last year the Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO) has worked collaboratively to establish and embed the requisite governance and reporting processes for the IRP.
- 19.1.2 This approach has embedded clear accountability and transparency and demonstrated a grip on progress with visibility established across key governance forums.
- 19.1.3 The CPMO continues to work in partnership with finance colleagues to ensure that there is robust monitoring and assurance across the savings, on a prioritised basis.
- 19.1.4 The CPMO team is now fully resourced with permanent staff. This enables the dedicated portfolio function to monitor progress, enhance performance and ensure effective corporate governance across the BCC portfolio.
- 19.1.5 The CPMO led the development of the refreshed IRP as part of the Corporate Plan and have refined and improved the delivery assurance and reporting processes for 25/26.
- 19.1.6 The following refinements have been made for 25/26:

- **Revised governance:** Clearer, streamlined governance with one version of the truth and stronger cross-Council grip via Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB).
- **Reduced time lag:** Reporting now aligned to a tighter 4.5-week cycle, significantly reducing data delays.
- **Prioritisation:** Targeted, regularly reviewed assurance focuses effort on critical delivery phases and dependencies.
- **A single, integrated performance, portfolio delivery and savings report:** IRP and Corporate Plan reporting merged into one quarterly product for Cabinet and OSC.
- **Transition to BCC-led arrangements for IRP:** Transfer underway from Commissioner-led to Council-led governance as sustainable improvement embeds.

19.1.7 The CPMO has launched a Portfolio Community across BCC to foster a greater understanding of Portfolio, Programme and Project Management and greater alignment across the portfolio. This is intended to advance the sharing of best practice and create the right ecosystem for delivery of change with the CPMO developing its role as a Centre of Excellence across the community.

19.1.8 Over the next 12 months, the CPMO will continue to drive forward the Portfolio optimisation plan, which builds on the strong foundation delivered to date but will focus efforts on developing delivery enablement and organisational alignment functions.

19.1.9 The Portfolio optimisation plan sets out how we will strengthen and optimise the CPMO to ensure that a culture of continuous improvement is embedded council-wide, driven by a dedicated Portfolio function that monitors progress, enhances performance, and ensures effective corporate governance.

19.2 Corporate Performance – last 12 months

19.2.1 2024/25 has been foundational for getting the key parts of an organisational Performance Management Framework in place, as well as introducing strengthened performance reports corporately.

19.2.2 During Quarter 1, a simplified quarterly corporate performance report was introduced. This made expected performance levels clear via numerical targets, alongside clarity of accountability for performance and benchmarking data wherever available. Over the course of the year, this report was refined and strengthened to include directorate commentary to address areas of underperformance.

19.2.3 An Internal Audit of Corporate Performance has taken place and an action plan to address their recommendations is being delivered. The key recommendations are also reflected in the Improvement and Recovery Plan programme for Performance Management.

- 19.2.4 A reorganisation of the Corporate Performance service has been completed, delivering a leaner function focussed on a core purpose of strengthening the performance management arrangements in place across the council.
- 19.2.5 Additionally, during the last 12 months, a [Corporate Plan](#) (2025-28) has been developed, which encompasses our Improvement and Recovery Plan into a single, coherent, plan for the Council. This was approved in June 2025, alongside a suite of important documents that provide the main pillars for our ongoing Performance Management arrangements. The full suite of documents included a [City Vision \(2025-2035\)](#) (and a baseline dataset within the “[State of the City 2025](#)” report), an Annual Corporate Business Plan and a Performance Management Framework.
- 19.2.6 **Corporate Performance - Next 12 months**
- 19.2.7 Further improvements have been made to the quarterly corporate performance report. This will now be presented alongside IRP Programmes and Savings delivery activity to provide a single, integrated, comprehensive view of performance for 2025/26, against our new Corporate Plan (and component IRP). There is also a greater focus on performance trends over time and specific actions to be taken to return performance to acceptable levels for both red and amber indicators.
- 19.2.8 To embed the Performance Management Framework throughout the council, a corporate approach to business planning has been introduced and will be rolled out to support directorates with the process over the next quarter, in readiness for 2026/27 delivery. This will ensure all areas of the council are aligning their activity and performance management to the Corporate Plan.
- 19.2.9 Further, a performance diagnostic tool is being developed and will be piloted during the next year. The purpose of this is to identify areas of strength in performance management across the organisation and identify further areas for improvement.

19.3 Governance & Performance

- 19.4 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) review highlighted longstanding, deep-seated, fundamental shortfalls in governance within the Council, prompting the council to develop the 6-month stabilisation plan in December 2023 which was delivered through to the summer of 2024 when it was further taken forward through the IRP.
- 19.5 Key governance reforms achieved over this period include:
- Strengthening leadership and accountability, with the City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer overseeing Stabilisation Plan delivery.
 - Refreshing corporate KPIs to enhance performance monitoring, aligning with the IRP Programme Management, Performance, and Risk framework.

- Resetting governance structures, including an independent Audit Committee, a revised Member-Officer Protocol, and a modernised scrutiny and committee system with improved training and processes.
- Establishing new risk management systems and implementing a Risk Management IT solution to provide clearer insights for decision-making.
- Ensuring stronger financial scrutiny, with a Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group playing a key role in challenging financial plans.

19.6 The council is also focused on strengthening partnerships and engagement, with initiatives such as The Stakeholder Sentiment Tracker, a new Stakeholder Relationship Management system, and the Succeeding in Partnership project. The Stabilisation Plan's success has laid the foundation for sustained improvement, with clearer accountability, stronger working relationships, and more effective decision-making now embedded in the council's approach.

19.7 Legal Services

19.7.1 The service now forms part of the new SIG directorate. Legal Services is continuing its transformation journey which started in 2024 and has implemented a new structure which will improve productivity and effectiveness of this enabling service. An important part of this process is dealing with the recruitment crisis which is affecting the whole sector. Consequently, it has run a successful recruitment process to employ 6 trainee solicitors and apprentices to help "grow our own" lawyers of the future and provide career opportunities in local government. This will hopefully provide further resilience for the service going forward.

19.7.2 Performance management data is being improved to ensure Legal Services is a responsive service that meets the needs of the council going forward in supporting the council plan. This will help by creating a culture of continuous improvement, excellence and accountability. The information will also assist the service in reviewing the savings it needs to make in forthcoming years. Legal Services are on course to deliver identified savings for 25/26 and are developing proposals for achieving savings in 26/27.

19.7.3 The service introduced service level agreements (SLA) in April 2025 to improve service quality and clarify expectations around service delivery. In modernising our practice we are moving our case management system to a cloud-based platform and are using tools such as Sharepoint and Power Automate and Lists to streamline internal processes. We are also looking at the possibilities of using AI to deliver further efficiencies.

19.7.4 The service is still pivotal in delivering in respect of the IRP in relation to governance and relationships. The four workstreams are:

- the review of the operation of the constitution;
- culture and decision making;
- member development; and
- scrutiny improvement.

19.7.5 A number of actions to support the governance improvement plan are currently in the process of being delivered including new guidance for the members in relation to the Councillor Code of Conduct; a review of the Officer/Member Protocol; creation of a new Member Development Programme; and a new Executive/Scrutiny Protocol which is being developed to improve the effectiveness of relationships between Executive and Scrutiny, reaffirming the 'parity of esteem' between these functions and ensure Scrutiny adds value to the overall good governance of the Council.

19.7.6 The service is continuing to provide legal support to major projects across the council including the industrial dispute in waste and equal pay. In addition, the service will be involved in ensuring that the all-out elections in May 2026 are managed successfully.

19.7.7 A challenge that remains for the service is having sufficient resource to deliver an excellent service, and to meet that challenge we are developing new ways of working and continue to review the demands of the work.

20 Human Resources

20.1 Workforce & Culture

20.1.1 The council is addressing past challenges and ensuring fairness for all staff. A Commissioner-endorsed equal pay settlement with GMB and Unison, reached in December 2024, marks a pivotal step in rebuilding trust and improving industrial relations.

20.1.2 This settlement is within the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) package agreed with the government. The next phase includes a reshaped Pay & Grading structure using the NJC Job Evaluation scheme. A top-tier restructure and permanent senior appointments are creating a smaller, more cost-effective and more agile organisation with strengthened leadership and direct line of accountability for performance at senior level.

20.1.3 Corporate activities such as customer contact and business support functions are being centralised to eliminate duplication and drive efficiency, with further rationalisation planned aligned to the implementation of Oracle.

20.1.4 Cultural change has been a key priority. The "Way We Work" programme reinforces essential behaviours, built around three core principles introduced in October 2024. In addition, the new appraisal framework for 2025/26 focuses on performance, behaviours, and regular feedback, ensuring accountability at all levels. Progress will be measured through Staff Survey engagement scores,

improved participation in appraisals, and stronger collaboration with Staff 'Colleague Community' Networks and the recognised Trade Unions.

20.1.5 The Council's commitment to ensuring equality and inclusion within the workforce has been reinforced by the work of the EDI&B team who have further developed the former 'Everybody's Battle, Everybody's Business' project and have embedded the principles of that approach within the permanent business model within the HR Directorate.

20.1.6 The Council has also begun developing a new workforce strategy, underpinned by a refreshed HR function to ensure the organisation has the skills and capacity needed to deliver high-quality services and the Birmingham vision. Particular note has been taken of the recent Scrutiny Report (reported to Council in July 2025) on recruiting a younger workforce; the recommendations of that report have been accepted, and implementation is being progressed – an illustration of the effectiveness of Scrutiny in helping shape strategic improvements in the way the Council works.

20.2 Equal Pay

20.2.1 The Equal Pay Programme has been significantly affected by industrial action by Unite in waste collection. This has resulted in changes to the programme timeline:

20.3 Pay & grading

20.3.1 BCC Employment Committee approved the reshaped Pay and Grading system in October 2024 which was on track to be implemented by 1 April 2025

20.3.2 Due to the impact of the Waste dispute, the introduction of the reshaped Pay and Grading system was rescheduled from 1 April 2025 to 1 October 2025

20.3.3 All three Trade Unions have now put the reshaped Pay and Grading system to their members via ballot.

20.3.4 The programme is carefully managing any interdependencies with other programmes and expanded the scope of its technical workstream to ensure that any dependencies to Oracle Brindley re-implementation are proactively managed. The two programmes are closely collaborating and there are currently no technical issues that would prevent the introduction of the reshaped Pay & Grading structure.

20.3.5 In parallel to the Grade 1 to 5 Pay and Grading activities, the programme has now commenced the planning of JNC Gr 6 / 7 activities, with a successful proof of concept completed. Further planning is under way for proposed implementation in 2026.

20.4 Job evaluation

20.4.1 The first two stages of the overall Job Evaluation process (Job Information & Job Evaluations) are running ahead of schedule with recruitment and training of Job Evaluators being on track to ensure that the Programme Job Evaluation commitment will be met.

- 20.4.2 The programme has experienced some delays in the last stage of the Job Evaluation process (Moderation). Mitigation plans have been put in place to ensure that the moderation delays do not compromise the 'Outcome release' timeline.
- 20.4.3 Additional engagement from the Job Evaluation Team is in place to support Directorates on re-design Job Evaluations as part of their ongoing transformation projects.

21 Conclusion

- 21.1 In summary, the work overseen by the Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and HR in collaboration with the Director of HR has been pivotal in bringing about a fundamental realignment of the Council's strategic approach to improved governance and performance.
- 21.2 While the input from Commissioners has been welcome and key in our improvement journey in ensuring the Council has responded effectively to the longstanding and deep-seated problems in governance, culture, performance and accountability and their continued support is further valued – the Council is now at a stage where we are effectively implementing plans and are in position whereby the Council is owning responsibility for where things need to be improved and is committed to pursuing an internally driven programme of fundamental and radical change.

The work reported above provides demonstrable compelling evidence of the paradigm shift and justifies confidence that the Council possesses the capability and commitment to move forward with our improvement journey.