

# **BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

## **HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 14:00 HOURS**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 6, 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 meeting You Tube site ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6\\_5dnVnYlw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw)) 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 that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non pecuniary interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**3 - 12**

4 **ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER**

To agree the action notes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 and note the action tracker.

**13 - 32**

5 **PETITION - BAN USE OF PESTICIDES**

To debate the Petition relating to banning the use of pesticides, presented to City Council on 12 July 2022.

**33 - 36**

6 **DELAYS IN BIRTH AND DEATH REGISTRATIONS**

To receive an update on the City Council Resolution of 14 June 2022 relating to delays in the release of the deceased for burial and in the registration processes for births and deaths.

**37 - 54**

7 **WORK PROGRAMME**

To agree the work programme.

8 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting is scheduled to be held at 1400 on Thursday 13 October 2022

9 **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).

10 **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.

11 **AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

Chair to move:-

'In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee'.

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Committee Room C, Council House Extension, Margaret Street**

**Action Notes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Chair)

Councillors: Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin, Roger Harmer, Lauren Rainbow and Ken Wood

**Also Present:**

Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment

Daren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene

Paul Lankester, Interim Director, Regulation and Enforcement

Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support, City Housing

Stephen Philpott, Head of Service, Housing Solutions and Support

Natalie Smith, Head of Service, Housing Management

Sarah Ager, Head of Capital Investment

Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support, City Operations

Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

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**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

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the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

## **2. APOLOGIES**

An apology was received on behalf of Cllr Saqib Khan.

## **3. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE, CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR**

The Chair nominated Cllr Marje Bridle as Deputy Chair.

This nomination was seconded by Cllr Kerry Brewer

### **RESOLVED: -**

The City Council resolution appointing the Members and Chair of the committee was noted.

Cllr Marje Bridle was appointed Deputy Chair of the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of substitution for the Chair, if absent, for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the City Council in 2023.

## **4. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

## **5. HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **RESOLVED:** -

The Terms of Reference were noted.

## **6. ACTION NOTES**

(See documents No. 1 and No. 2)

It was recognised that due to the changes in the membership of the Committee there were three members who had been present at the previous meetings.

The action notes from the 17 February 2022 and the 10 March 2022 were agreed by members who had been present at the meetings.

## **7. CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

(See document No. 3)

The Chair welcomed Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment, to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member explained the new ways of working that have been adopted within the waste service to continually improve services including the Joint Service Improvement Board, weekly meetings with the Leader and Chief Executive and an action plan that is reported to the Star Chamber. He also described the work with planning and developers to consider new developments and ensure that a waste crew is allocated to new developments which has had positive results in Perry Barr. Crew members have also been trained as drivers which provides additional capacity to cover leave and sickness. The Cabinet Member receives daily reports on dropped bin collections including the top 10 wards and any repeat dropped collections.

It was recognised that more can be done in relation to recycling and that this is not even across the city e.g., recycling in the city centre is 20% and is 50% in Sutton / Harborne. It was reported that mobile trucks have collected 1497 tonnes of household waste and 76 tonnes of recycling. The members' survey has had 46 responses, and this adds additional information about services and how they can be developed and it was reported that residents are contacting the service to report that they are pleased with the response, it is not just complaints.

It was discussed that Members can provide information about areas where there are historical problems and work with residents to identify private alleys where fly-tipping is an issue. The Council does not cover these but can locate a mobile truck in a strategic location that enables residents to dispose of the waste.

The Cabinet Member also reported on the work of the City of Nature which sets out that by 2047 the Council will be a city of 1000 green spaces. Five parks have been identified as pilots and Community Infrastructure Funding has been used to fund improvements and this will be developed across the city as resources allow. Members have been made aware of the Section 106 funding that is available and this is being linked to Friends of Parks Groups. The Commonwealth Games Legacy is also improving parks and green spaces e.g., volleyball and basketball courts. The work of volunteers was recognised, and the Cabinet Member thanked litter pickers for their work.

In response to questions from the Committee the Cabinet Member and officers provided the following information:

The need for accurate information on missed collections e.g. the Council is required to report the number of missed collections per 100,000 collections scheduled. The reported figure of 3% seems too low: The daily reports on missed collections is cross referenced with feedback from residents and elected members. Currently data on missed collections is recorded by ward and then the streets are listed in alphabetical order. Ideally there would be no missed collections but the Cabinet Member explained that the technology is available to track collections so people will know when their bin is collected and this is used in other areas. The size of the city is also an issue and that a small percentage of missed collections is still a large number. It was highlighted that crews want to deliver a good service and there are 133 crews

daily. The Cabinet Member said he wanted to be in a position to share information with members of the public more easily. Overtime for missed collections is offered to crews that have not dropped collections.

The Cabinet Member was asked to provide assurance that where some rounds are missed continually this will be looked into. The example of Newcastle was given where missed collections do not have to be reported as it is recorded on an App. The Committee also requested comparative data to be provided for the previous year and with other authorities. The Cabinet Member said that contingency arrangements were being put in place so collections missed in the morning can be reported and picked up on the same day.

Performance management indicator for missed collections: This is being developed by the corporate performance team and will be reported to the Committee.

More local control for waste services which might mean a less frequent but more reliable service: The Love Your Street programme has been successful and needed to be expanded. Work is also taking place in schools regarding education on recycling and with the Council of Mosques on how they can support recycling.

The Council should consider collecting food waste starting with small scale trials. The technology is available to recycle waste nappies and the Council could work with a partner to provide this service: The Environment Bill includes food recycling, but this has been delayed. The mapping for food waste has been completed. The Cabinet Member agreed to consider a pilot for food waste and nappy recycling where there would be uptake.

Why is the Council mowing grass in the summer when it does not grow: The Mobile Household Recycling Teams are watering trees and flowers – could the staff who cut grass be re-directed to watering duties? Grass mowing has stopped in June. The street cleansing crews have the training and skills to undertake watering and there are more flowers to water due to the Commonwealth Games. The grounds maintenance will be upskilled.

Confusion across council services regarding the Council's duty to clear fly tipping and rubbish from publicly owned land: Where there is an alley way between 2 houses on private land it is not the Council's responsibility, however there is a duty under the Pest Control Act to keep alleys clear of mice and rats and the Council can issue an order notice. Where there is an alley way between 4 or 5 private houses, residents can contact their ward member who can request that a truck is placed in a strategic location for residents to remove waste. The Cabinet Member also highlighted with Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), exempt accommodation and work with Birmingham University to communicate with students.

During the Commonwealth Games visitor numbers to the city will increase and it is important to get street cleansing right: Last month the number of missed collections was the lowest since the start of the pandemic. One of the main issues has been access for vehicles due to double parking.

Use of mobile cameras to prosecute and deter fly tipping and sharing data between the Council and police for enforcement and prosecution: There are GDPR implications when using cameras. These are used for large commercial fly tipping,

more, smaller mobile units are needed. The Community Safety Partnership has signed off locations and another 10 cameras are being procured.

Access and security in parks to reduce illegal use of bikes, quad bikes and illegal encampments: The Transit Sites are out of commission. The response to illegal encampments is reported to the Public Protection Committee and a report can be brought to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was suggested that this could be a topic for a future Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

**RESOLVED: -**

- Cabinet Member to provide response on recommendation to pilot food waste and nappy recycling.
- Cabinet Member to provide assurance that repeat missed collections will be accurately monitored and inform the Committee of the indicators that will be used to measure missed collections.
- Cabinet Member update was noted

## **8. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

(See documents No. 4 and No. 5)

Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support, City Operations, presented the City Operations Performance Report for May 2022. It was highlighted that the red indicators for vital signs were:

- Number of Houses in Multiple Occupation licence applications within adopted standard (time taken)
- Number of completed inspections for licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Reported missed collections per 100k collections scheduled

The red Corporate Plan indicator was:

- Number of properties improved in the Private Rented Sector as a result of Local Authority intervention

During the discussion the following points were made:

Information to be provided on national recycling Key Performance Indicators and data on previous year for comparison.

Is the low number of HMO inspections, 4 of target of 30, due to cancellation by landlords, is the baseline of 220 inspections enough and will inspections be extended to 3 and 4 bedroom HMOs? This is a new indicator as HMOs were not previously being inspected as necessary and as part of the licensing scheme a compliance visit is carried out. It was recognised by management that these had not been carried out satisfactorily, but this arrangement is being changed and the aim is to increase the visits to 1000 but this is the start of the journey. The backlog has been addressed and the proposed selective licensing scheme is being considered by the Government and the proposed additional licensing scheme is subject to a consultation exercise. It is a ring-fenced budget, and the cost of the service is met by the licence fee. It is expected that there will be an additional 90 staff as a result of licensing schemes that

are proposed. Cabinet had put in additional resources last year for enforcement to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met.

Data to compare performance with national comparators and previous years' data to know where we are and where we should be: A five-year scheme should do 20% of licence each year. Other authorities are working at a different scale. The service in Birmingham is striving to be best in class.

With regard to the outcome of the inspections, a quarterly report is provided to the Licensing and Public Protection Committee on regulatory activity and non-executive function and this can be included in the commentary on enforcement activity.

Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support presented the City Housing performance monitoring report for May 2022 and highlighted the 5 vital signs showing one blue indicator, 2 green, 1 amber and 1 red. From month 3 there will be 2 new vital signs for total households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and total families in bed and breakfast accommodation.

In the subsequent discussion the following points were made, and responses provided:

There is no measure for anti-social behaviour which is the largest source of case work and the lack of response to these issues implies the system is overloaded, consideration to be given to KPI to measure timeliness of the progression of ASB complaint: The performance dashboard was being developed which includes customer contacts and working with the customer access strategy and build in the customer feedback. KPIs are being refreshed to understand what indicators are needed and link to the 20 priorities in the Corporate Plan. Information can be reported to the Committee.

The turn-around for voids had reduced but there is a question regarding the standards that incoming tenants are expected to accept: The background to housing applications was that a year ago there was a backlog of 15,000 applications for the housing register and to address this staff were secured from the contact centre and agency staff and this reduced the number of applications that have not been seen to 4,000 with a small percentage outside the 6 weeks. The contact centre staff have returned to their duties and around 30 additional staff have been taken on some of whom are agency staff that have secured permanent roles within Housing Solutions and Support. The new allocations policy went to Cabinet in March 2022 and this will involve a different allocation of staff. The council has started work on the Empty Property Standard with a new standard for contracts for 2024. This will be benchmarked against Registered Social Landlords and the cost implications. The visiting schedule to properties includes households before they move out. This will be a more visible, proactive and risk-based approach. The turnaround time for voids in Birmingham is 51 days which compares favourably with other areas, and the average is 69 days. The discussion moving forward is the financial implications of improving the standard of the property against the time it takes to turn it round.



There is an increase in housing demand but not an increase in housing supply: The Council currently receives on average 536 housing applications per week and information on the website and communication with applicants is clear about waiting times and that there are almost 23,000 households on the register. Applicants are informed of the likelihood that they will be allocated a property. Applicants are sent information about other things they are encouraged to do as the Council cannot meet the need that is coming through. Applicants get feedback on where they are in the banding if they are accepted on the housing register.

Standard of housing repairs, customer satisfaction and national bench marking: Members provided positive feedback on the housing repair service. If a customer has had a housing repair and calls the contact centre within 28 days this is raised separately on the system and there is a 10% audit to identify issues the customer may not have reported. There is no contractual impact, but this is managed through the service improvement meetings. There is the intention to send out customer satisfaction surveys and a customer satisfaction KPI is included in the contract. This is reported via a PDA, but a paper copy can be requested. This has a high response rate and is reported monthly. There is an option to refuse to provide feedback. There is a telephone survey to audit feedback. Audits are carried out on 10-20% of contracted work and 100% of voids.

**RESOLVED: -**

- Information on national Key Performance Indicators on recycling to be shared with the Committee including previous years' performance.
- Outcome of regulatory activity to be included in commentary in future performance reports to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Information on ASB KPIs to be reported to the Committee.
- The City Operations and City Housing Performance Monitoring reports were noted.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No. 6)

The Chair reported that the inquiry on street cleansing had not been selected for 2022/23. The Deputy Chair proposed that the issues could be considered through reports brought to future committee meetings including comparator areas and examples of best practice. This could be achieved through using one-hour sessions at 4 Committee Meetings. This could result in a policy development note or report to Cabinet.

It was noted that there is capacity to undertake 4 inquiries at any one time so a further inquiry proposal could be put forward later in the year.

The issue of the number of households in temporary accommodation was raised as an issue for a future inquiry including comparisons with other authorities and how to minimise the number of households in temporary accommodation.

**RESOLVED:**

- The work on street cleansing will be undertaken though work of Committee Meetings.
- The work programme was noted and to be updated to include work on street cleansing.

**10. DATES OF MEETINGS 2022/23**

**RESOLVED:**

The dates of the meetings for 2022/23 were noted.

The committee approved Thursdays at 1400 hours for any additional meetings required to consider "Requests for Call In".

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

None.

**12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**13. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS**

**RESOLVED:**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

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The meeting ended at 15:53 hours.

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE**  
**ACTION TRACKER 2022/23**

Date	Agenda Item	Action	Notes
14-Jul-22	Cabinet Member for the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet Member to provide response on recommendation to pilot food waste and nappy recycling.</li> <li>• Cabinet Member to provide assurance that repeat missed collections will be accurately monitored and inform the Committee of the indicators that will be used to measure missed collections.</li> </ul>	
	Performance Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on national Key Performance Indicators on recycling to be shared with the Committee including previous years' performance.</li> <li>• Outcome of regulatory activity to be included in commentary in future performance reports to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</li> <li>• Information on ASB KPIs to be reported to the Committee.</li> </ul>	





# Briefing: Responding to Petitions

## 1 The Framework for Dealing with Petitions

- 1.1 A report of the Council Business Management Committee to the City Council on 15 June 2010 sets out the full provisions of the revised Birmingham City Council Petitions Scheme. This revised scheme was developed in response to the Government's statutory guidance on the duty of Councils to respond to Petitions.
- 1.2 The key provisions of the City Council Petitions Scheme are as follows:
  - A petition that is submitted which has collected 20,000 signatures (2% of the population) will automatically trigger a debate at City Council;
  - **If the petition has collected 10,000 signatures** (1% of the population of the City) **it will be referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
  - If a petition over 5,000 signatures is submitted it will be considered by the Council Business Management Committee to determine whether the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee should debate it.
- 1.3 The petition for consideration at your meeting today had signatures from over 10,000 Birmingham City Council residents (the front sheet is included in your agenda papers; the full petition is available for inspection on request) and has therefore been referred to the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee.

## 2 How should O&S Committees handle Petitions?

- 2.1 The proposed approach for handling the item at Committee which draws from the established approach for Call in meetings:
  - The Chair should introduce the item;
  - The Petitioner/presenting Councillor sets out the case and required action (if attending);
  - Cabinet Members/Officers should be asked to respond to the petition with reference to their report;
  - Committee members have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the petition and response;
  - It may be appropriate at this point to seek any further comments from the petitioner although this is not a requirement;



- Once the discussions have reached a close the Chair should formulate a clear formal resolution on the matter for agreement. This may include a letter or recommendations to the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 2.2 After the meeting, the Committee's resolution will be posted on the Council's website as part of the notes of the meeting; and:
- A letter is sent to the lead petitioner / presenting Councillor confirming the resolution;
  - Committee Services are notified so that progress on resolving the petition can be reported to the City Council as part of their regular reports.

### 3 The Petition

- 3.1 The petition before the committee today states:

*"Birmingham City Council routinely sprays verges, pavements and parks with Glyphosate-based pesticides, which include herbicides, despite the negative impact this controversial chemical has on Bees, health and the local environment.*

*Many Birmingham residents are concerned about the use of pesticides being applied in spaces where our children, pets and local wildlife may come into contact with it. Many countries, including France, Belgium and the Netherlands have already restricted or banned their use due to the many issues associated with them, and within the UK over 60 councils are now implementing programs to phase out their use.*

*Glyphosate has both direct and indirect effects:*

*Glyphosate is detrimental to invertebrate well-being, Bees are crucial pollinators that are in serious decline globally. Glyphosate has been shown to affect their navigation, sleep, larval development, and immunity to deadly infections. This could be due to the direct effects of glyphosate on the bee, or by glyphosate detrimentally altering their gut microbiome. Furthermore, bees rely on the presence of pollen and nectar-rich flowers; as 95-97% of British wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1940s, the additional removal of so-called 'weeds' by glyphosate destroys available foraging sites for them. Earthworms and snails have also been shown to be adversely affected by this pesticide.*

*Glyphosate is suspected to have a direct effect on human health. The World Health Organisation says that Glyphosate is "classified as probably carcinogenic to humans" and research continues to confirm this.*

*Birds and other animals are indirectly affected by the widespread use of pesticides due to the wiping out of weeds and wildflowers, destroying habitats and food supplies."*

- 3.2 The petition broadly asks for Birmingham City Council to hear the concerns of its citizens and to work with council contractors to phase out all use of pesticides, including glyphosate, in Birmingham.
- 3.3 Both the Lead Petitioner and the presenting councillor, Cllr Izzy Knowles, have been invited to attend.



- 3.4 The Lead Petitioner will be accompanied by the co-organiser of the petition and a representative from Pesticide Free Towns.
- 3.5 Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment, and Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene, will attend. An Executive Response has been provided and is included in the agenda papers.

*Contact Officers:*

*Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager, 07825 979253*

*Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer, 0121 303 4810*





Presented by Councillor Izzy Knowles Moseley Ward on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Jointly presented by Cllr Majid Mahmood – Cabinet Member for the Environment.

Petition from Bee Friendly Brum to Birmingham City Council – can be found online:

<https://www.change.org/p/birmingham-city-council-save-the-bees-ban-the-use-of-pesticides-in-birmingham-s-public-green-spaces-8ac8d785-098e-4b5e-9d39-f60648ec1b92>

As of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 this petition has 97,347 signatories of which at least 12,166 are Birmingham residents.

A downloaded list of signatures can be forwarded electronically on request by Cllr Mahmood or Knowles

The petition states:

Birmingham City council routinely sprays verges, pavements and parks with Glyphosate-based pesticides, which include herbicides, despite the negative impact this controversial chemical has on Bees, health and the local environment.

Many Birmingham residents are concerned about the use of pesticides being applied in spaces where our children, pets and local wildlife may come into contact with it. Many countries, including France, Belgium and the Netherlands have already restricted or banned their use due to the many issues associated with them, and within the UK over 60 councils are now implementing programs to phase out their use (1).

Glyphosate has both direct and indirect effects:

Glyphosate is detrimental to invertebrate well-being. **Bees are crucial pollinators that are in serious decline globally.** Glyphosate has been shown to affect their navigation, sleep, larval development, and immunity to deadly infections. This could be due to the direct effects of glyphosate on the bee, or by glyphosate detrimentally altering their gut microbiome. **Furthermore, bees rely on the presence of pollen and nectar-rich flowers; as 95-97% of British wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1940s, the additional removal of so-called 'weeds' by glyphosate destroys available foraging sites for them.** Earthworms and snails have also been shown to be adversely affected by this pesticide. (4)

Glyphosate is suspected to have a direct effect on human health. The World Health Organisation says that Glyphosate is "classified as probably carcinogenic to humans" (5), and research continues to confirm this. (6)

Birds and other animals are indirectly affected by the widespread use of pesticides due to the wiping out of weeds and wildflowers, destroying habitats and food supplies (2).

### **What do we want?**

**We are simply asking Birmingham City Council to hear the concerns of its citizens and to work with council contractors to phase out all use of pesticides, including glyphosate, in Birmingham.**

When approached about the use of this pesticide (March 2021), the council responded saying there was no viable alternative. However, there are many safe and environmentally friendly methods of weed control available. These could include Acetic acid dilutions that are completely biodegradable, mulching, foamstream, steel brushing or Electronic control systems (7). Alternatively, where possible, leave the weeds altogether! Bees and other insects rely on weeds such as dandelions as their first source of food in the Spring.

At a time of rapid biodiversity loss, we need to protect and restore our green spaces. Other local authorities have already transformed grass verges into wildflower havens, including our neighbouring Solihull (8). As well as being a necessary boost for biodiversity, wildflower verges also provide beautiful green spaces for our city.

**In 2019 Birmingham City Council declared a climate Emergency** and committed to "embed climate action into its decision-making process" and to "cleaner and greener places" for Birmingham\*. Passing a motion to ban pesticides (including glyphosate) and opting for non-chemical weed management alternatives will show the Council is serious in its commitment to taking a "leading role"(9) in tackling the causes and impacts of the climate emergency.

Further Information:

1. Countries that have banned Glyphosate

(Source: <https://www.baumhedlundlaw.com/toxic-tort-law/monsanto-roundup-lawsuit/where-is-glyphosate-banned-/>)

2. Glyphosate found to have adverse effects on earthworms and beneficial insects.

(source: <https://www.pan-uk.org/glyphosate/>)

3. Roundup is particularly harmful to Bees, studies show.

(Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/sep/24/monsanto-weedkiller-harms-bees-research-finds>)



4. Report on Habitat loss, climate change and pesticides (Source: [https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL\\_17MAY2019.pdf](https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/EofE%20bee%20report%202019%20FINAL_17MAY2019.pdf))
5. Glyphosate 'probably harmful to human's (Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/21/roundup-cancer-who-glyphosate>)
6. Impact of Glyphosate on human Health (Sources: [https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/glyphosate\\_monograph\\_complete?e=28041656/43997864](https://issuu.com/pan-uk/docs/glyphosate_monograph_complete?e=28041656/43997864)  
<https://sustainablepulse.com/2021/03/26/bayer-admit-defeat-in-roundup-cancer-case-as-lawyers-push-back-on-future-payments/>)
7. Alternative Weed control solutions (Source: <https://www.pan-uk.org/pesticide-free/>)

\*Birmingham City Council's Commitment to respond to the climate emergency  
[https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20015/environment/2026/climate\\_emergency/3](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20015/environment/2026/climate_emergency/3)



## **Birmingham Nature Recovery Strategy 2022 – 2030**

### **Current Position**

The City Council is responsible for the care and maintenance of over 3700 hectares of open space and over 8600 roads. The current work programmes include weed control on both the hard and soft landscape and the regular mowing of grass.

The weed control has been historically chemical based. Herbicide usage has been controlled and reduced by moving to the spot treatment of weeds using Glyphosate.

On the highways the maintenance contractor has moved from using Glyphosate to pelargonic acid. This will be monitored for its effectiveness as it acts as a contact herbicide and does not kill the weed roots or seeds. It is also identified as a moderate risk to earthworms so its usage is kept to hard surfaces only in Birmingham.

Grass cutting has been reducing, more areas of grass have been left unmown and some areas actively managed as new meadow to encourage pollinators. Regular amenity mowing has reduced from 14 cuts per year down to 10.

There are many authorities within the UK reviewing their position on the use of Herbicides and moving towards a more pollinator friendly maintenance programme. This draft strategy aims to identify what Birmingham City Council can do within existing resources.

### **Aim of the Strategy**

In line with one of the Cabinet Member for Environment's key priorities, the Nature Recovery Strategy is an operational response to take action to improve our nature offer and increase the pollinator population. We will achieve this by linking into the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust Strategy (BBWT) 'Working for Nature's Recovery' and will seek to protect and enhance the quality of habitat on land the Council owns whilst also increase the hectareage of land dedicated to nature recovery.

The City Council will use this strategy to set out how such habitats will be improved for pollinators and clarify our stance on chemical use in horticulture.

The BBWT strategy has 3 strategic goals that will be mirrored in this strategy. This will provide a strategic link to the wider region and ensure a joined-up approach to tackling nature recovery.

1. Nature is in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife
  - a. Review our current horticultural practices
  - b. Manage our sites to enhance nature conservation and increase habitats
  - c. Influence partners to join in to increase diverse habitats

2. People are taking positive action to protect nature and tackle the impact of climate change
  - a. Provide education and information on nature opportunities
  - b. Inspire others to follow nature recovery principals
  - c. Work with communities to get active involvement in the management of our assets
3. Nature is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems.
  - a. Ensure all new development provides a positive impact on biodiversity
  - b. Ensure the maintenance and planting schemes have a positive impact on the future climate

### The Importance of Pollinators

Pollinators play a vital role in improving our biodiversity. Many of our plants and food crops rely on these insects to pollinate their flowers to produce seed. There are over 4000 species of insect that carry out this function in the UK including bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps and flies.

Pollinators need our help because there is a loss of their natural habitat. They need food/nectar throughout the period of the year when they are active. Native plants, often referred to as 'weeds' can be a good source of food for such insects, including Dandelions and Thistles. Nesting sites are important too as they provide shelter, protection from predators and a place to lay their eggs. These habitats can range from small solitary sites to large swarm underground shelters. Popularity is growing in the use of purpose built insect hotels and log piles. Over wintering in dense vegetation is equally important.

In order to support pollinators, the City Council has reviewed its current weed spraying and grass cutting programmes.

### National Pollinator Strategy

A National Pollinator strategy was published in 2014 with an implementation plan launched in 2018. The Strategy asks local authorities to take a lead in improving habitats and setting an example for all to follow.

The UK Government's 25 year Environment Plan 2018 reinforced the need to improve habitats and the Environment Bill (2021) also has an emphasis on improving biodiversity.

## **1. Nature is in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife**

In order to encourage a diverse wildlife population in Birmingham we need to review our current assets and horticultural practices.

### **Integrated Weed Control Management**

The City Council acknowledges the need to review our use of pesticides.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1970/80s the Council had a maintenance programme that ensured a very sterile environment with close mown grass with no pests, diseases or weeds. At this time invasive weeds such as Japanese Knotweed were not as commonly known as they are today. To achieve this look, a wide range of pesticides were used as a way to maintain standards and they were used extensively. It was in the early 1990s when the implications of the use of chemicals were identified commonly used products such as Simazine and Atrazine, used to keep streets and beds weed free, were found in water supplies. This was the start of the reduction in chemical use but the rise in the use of spot treatment using Glyphosate.

The basis for integrated weed control is focussed on:

#### **Prevention**

Monitoring and Identification of pests, diseases and weeds.

In addition, setting thresholds as to when issues should be dealt with.

Methods of control in priority order:

- a. Cultural
- b. Biological
- c. Chemical

#### **Cultural Control**

##### **Paths**

The paths should be swept as often as possible with a mechanical sweeper. Regular sweeping will remove small weeds and more importantly remove any detritus where weed seeds can germinate. Sweeping should take place along the paths as well as in the channels.

#### **Seasonal Bedding Schemes**

The planting of seasonal bedding has a massive impact on park visitors presenting a kaleidoscope of colour that people are drawn to. However, to improve the design the density of planting is at its highest at 25 plants m<sup>2</sup>. At this density the canopy for the plant will in the initial weeks suppress any weed growth. However ultimately weeds do grow and at this point the beds are hand weeded. Even hoeing is not possible at this density. The choice of plants will also be reviewed to ensure that pollinator friendly plants are used.

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<sup>1</sup> In the terms of this strategy, we have defined pesticides as chemicals that are used in horticulture.



**Planting Densities 25 plants m<sup>2</sup>**



**Planting Density 12 plants m<sup>2</sup>**

### Shrub Planting

Over time many shrub beds have been planted, and today they are seen as being more sustainable than the seasonal bedding schemes.

The critical aim here is to ensure that whatever is planted establishes as quickly as possible to ensure the plant canopy covers the soil as quickly as possible.

With this type of planting, it is possible to follow a similar format as to what happens in nature for example in a beech wood. Here to have an overall canopy, then sub canopy with medium growing shrubs and then at the edge you have what is known as the edge effect using ground covering plants.

Using a range of plants in this way to establish quickly you need good quality plants at a relatively high density.

In order to keep weeds suppressed mulches can also be used.

We did trials with a range of materials including both synthetic and organic materials, but the organic techniques were better because they were more stable in each situation.





## Combination of Plant and Bark mulch

### Bark

There are two grades of bark – Fine which after a dry period blows away, but we found that Bark nuggets which can measure 35mm x 40mm held firmly in the soil and would last 2-3 years unlike the fine grades which generally lasted 12 months or less.

### Synthetic Materials

Trials were done with these materials and although they suppressed weed growth, aesthetically they were not visually acceptable. When this was identified, bark was spread across the surfacing of the material but what happened is that it was just blown away, exposing the synthetic materials again.

Other techniques for controlling weeds:

### Soil Cultivation

Single or Double digging and the incorporation of manure improves not only the soil structure but also the bacterial activity in the soils. The healthier the plants are the quicker they grow and able to provide cover over the soil keeping weed growth to a minimum.

**Planting** – Purchase high quality Plants that quickly establish and cover the ground effectively preventing/reducing weed growth. In addition, plant highly adaptive and competitive plants.

**Timing** - Forking/Hoeing weeds before they flower and therefore set seed reduces the amount of seed in the soil seed bank.

**Mowing** – Controls weeds in grass, particularly annual weeds.

**Hoeing** - Flower beds etc.

**Forking** – The issues here is that initially the area looks aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but regrowth of the weeds occurs within 2 -3 weeks.

### Biological Controls

As an alternative again to the use of herbicides, biological control in parks is relatively new.

### Controlling plants in a Pool

**Case Study** – At Kings Heath Park, in 2012 the pool was infested with *Azolla filliculoides*. As an alternative to Glyphosate a biological control was used and the *Azolla* weevil was used.

Over a period of 4 to 5 weeks after the application there was very little activity seen in terms of the weevil, but on week 6 all the *Azolla* completely disappeared over night and has never returned to the pool again.



**Azolla filiculoides**



**Azolla Weevil**

### Invasive Weeds

Plants such as Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam have provided a challenge in terms of controlling them within parks, and the urban environment generally. The scale of this is increasing every year due to the prohibitive cost of removal and is now having a negative impact on the environment. For example:

### Japanese Knotweed

Trials are taking place around the country focusing on the control of Japanese Knotweed which will suppress the plant rather than kill it. This is using *Aphalara itador* which is a psyllid that feeds on Japanese Knotweed. If they are successful, it is certainly a technique that would greatly reduce the amount of herbicide used to control the spread of Japanese Knotweed.



**Aphalara itador**

### Himalayan Balsam

There are also ongoing trials being undertaken by CABI<sup>21</sup> for the development of a biological control using Rust for the control of Himalayan Balsam.

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<sup>2</sup> CABI is an international, inter-governmental, not-for-profit organization that improves people's lives worldwide by providing information and applying scientific expertise to solve problems in agriculture and the environment.

This plant is so prevalent now that when this control is made available it is certainly something to consider helping reduce this invasive weed.



**Rust Control on Himalayan Balsam**

### Chemical Control

Whilst our focus is still on Cultural and Biological controls, there is still a role for the use of certain pesticides. However, where possible we will use them intelligently and minimally.

They tend to be used on difficult to control weeds such as the Invasive weeds such as Japanese Knotweed or on areas where there is difficulty sweeping due to the erosion of a hard surface in the urban environment and where damage is been caused to the infrastructure such as kerb lines and roads

In addition, to prevent the regrowth of plants such as Ivy, Couch Grass and Japanese Knotweed we have a programme for treating these areas with Glyphosate which is approved for use near water and is applied 3 times per year in May /June, July /August and September /October.

Alternatively, when not near water when controlling Japanese Knotweed, we now use ICADE. This is a very effective herbicide which is only applied once in August, and so far, the results have been very impressive. The benefit of using this is that as a modern herbicide it only requires minimal dilution rates and 1 application per year.

### Benefits of Integrated Weed Control Management

- It allows the plants to compete in favour of the weeds.
- Allows more natural methods of weed control.
- No danger of herbicide residual in the soil or plant.
- Suitable for high planting densities.
- Reduced impact on the natural environment.
- Provides a cost-effective way of weed control.

### Disadvantages of Integrated Weed Control Management

#### **Cultural Controls**

- Some techniques like rotavating, hoeing etc. can damage the soil structure if done continuously and may spread perennial weeds.
- Mulches must be free of weed seed.

### **Biological Controls**

- Expensive.
- Needs to be monitored closely

### **Chemical Controls**

- In terms of pesticide use it requires 2% organic matter in the soil to be effective.
- Direction of spray critical.
- Effects on Natural environment.
- Costs vary.

The City Council will use chemicals as a last resort and intends to adopt more mechanical and cultural methods to maintain the land it owns. This will recognise the importance of some weeds for pollinators

### **Review Grass Cutting Programmes**

The current grass cutting programme is split by area but there are 5 different grass management regimes.

The City Council is responsible for 28 million square metres of grass

- 24 cuts a year (ornamental grass cutting and very limited)
- 10 cuts a year (most common approach)
- 3 cuts a year (tractor cut conservation)
- 1 cut a year (often a cut and collect for conservation reasons)
- No cutting (in some areas of parkland)

The grass cutting season starts in April and concludes in October

### **No Mow May**

Launched in 2019 by the botanical charity Plantlife, No Mow May is a campaign that encourages gardeners to not mow their lawn during the month of May, in order to let wildflowers bloom and provide a nectar feast for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and moths, beetles and flies.

In the last three years, the number of people not mowing their May has trebled.

A Plantlife survey of 2,000 gardeners revealed that the majority mowed their lawns once a fortnight.

The charity's citizen science survey showed that mowing less than this resulted in an increase in the pollen count, with increases in daises, germander, speedwell and creeping buttercup. And by stopping mowing in July as well, there was an increase in white clover, selfheal and bird's foot trefoil.

The campaign doesn't actually mean you have to completely stop mowing in May or avoid mowing all of the grass. The aim of No Mow May campaign is to encourage people to change up their mowing regime therefore mowing less and leaving patches of long grass in places if possible.

Plantlife guidance across the year recommends a layered approach to grass cutting, where shorter grass is complemented by areas of longer grass.

The National Pollinator Strategy asks local authorities to take a lead so we are proposing areas of Parks, central reservations and areas of housing land will take part in no mow May.

All of our grass verges on the side of the road will continue to be cut along with areas of parkland.

## **2. People are taking action for nature and the climate**

### The City Council's Role

In order to make the biggest difference we need more people to know what changes they can make to see the positive impact that will have on the environment as a whole. The City Council will provide a leading role in demonstrating environmental practices and working with as many partners as we can to aid nature recovery across the City.

The BBCWT strategy will ensure our partnering authorities will be following the same approach and we will work with the Parks Alliance to ensure the message is sent across the environmental organisations across Birmingham.

Recognising the importance of front and rear gardens we will actively promote the Royal Horticultural Society Sustainability Strategy. This document provides advice and guidance for individual gardeners and what they can do to make a positive impact on climate change

### The Ranger Service

The Ranger Service will play an important role to ensure the message is spread as wide as possible. The Ranger Service has a good link into schools with them visiting our sites and them attending schools the environmental message will be made at every opportunity.

### Developing an Environmental Youth Group

There is a commitment to develop an environmental youth group to give a voice to young people in the City and allow them to directly get involvement in the management of the City's environment.

#### Developing a Communication Programme

It is vital that a communication plan is developed alongside this to ensure the message is clearly understood. A change in some horticultural operations will affect the look and feel of the City for the benefit of pollinators and we should expand our current media campaign to Bee Bold Bee Birmingham.

### **3. Nature is playing a central and valued role in helping to address local and global problems**

The Parks Service will work closely with the Planning Service to ensure all new development provides a positive impact on biodiversity. This will ensure a joined-up approach and that nature plays a significant role in the future of City.

## **Action Plan**

**Action:** to reduce chemical usage by the City Council

**Action:** to increase areas managed in a pollinator friendly way by [ ]<sup>3</sup>

**Action:** to ensure annual flower display use pollinator friendly plants

**Action:** to increase the perennial plant programme

**Action:** to increase the tree canopy in each Ward

**Action:** to increase the amount of wildflower planting across the City

**Action:** to introduce pollinator pots in urban areas

**Action:** to work with partners to promote pollinator friendly management of open space

**Action:** to carry out baseline and then regular eco-surveys

**Action:** to review the strategy and actions annually

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<sup>3</sup> Commitment to be completed post review.





**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF REGULATION & ENFORCEMENT  
TO THE HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**UPDATE ON COUNCIL NOTICE OF MOTION  
15 September 2022**

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**Summary**

This report is provided to give an update on the approved resolution of Council on 14 June 2022 in respect of bereavement services.

Members are invited to comment and identify any issues they wish further information on.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended the report be noted.

**1. Council Resolution- Bereavement Services**

On 14 June 2022 the City Council approved the following resolution:-

This Council notes with concern continued delays in the release of the deceased for burial and in the registration processes for births and deaths. It notes this can cause extreme distress and in some instances, financial hardship.

This Council further notes that these issues are the result of significant impact of the changes to death registration arrangements resulting from the expiry of the Coronavirus Act on 25 March 2022, together with post-pandemic changes in GP practices impacting on the issuing of Medical Certificates for the Cause of Death, which resulted in the overnight doubling of cases referred to the Coroner. In addition, the temporary ceasing of birth registrations during the pandemic generated a backlog of some 6,000 cases which Register Office staff have worked hard to reduce.

Council recognises the success of the Autopsy Scanner trial with communities throughout Birmingham welcoming its use by the Coroners Office.

Council recognises that the Coroners Service is an independent judicial function separate from the local authority and under the present law, its performance management is the responsibility of the Chief Coroner for England and Wales, not the City Council.

Notwithstanding these legal restrictions on the Council's ability to directly intervene in the management of coronial services, Council endorses the representations made by the Executive to the Coroner, seeking clarity over the steps the service is taking to eliminate delays and also to properly engage with representatives of faith communities, funeral directors and organisations supporting those affected by bereavement.

Council welcomes the action taken by the Executive to allocate additional financial and staffing resources to support the Coroners Service at this challenging time. It also notes, with approval, the programme of work and investment brought forward by the Executive to further improve and strengthen Bereavement Services, including:

- The extension of Kings Norton and Quinton cemeteries, ensuring that the city has sufficient capacity to accommodate burials for many years to come, including specific additional provision for Islamic burials.
- The development of shroud burial grounds.
- The re-hearthing of the Sutton Coldfield crematorium and the scheduled rebuilding of Yardley crematorium, which will provide improved services to communities and citizens for whom cremation is their funeral choice.
- Investment in a new ICT infrastructure to ensure that our services provide the efficient and prompt response citizens expect.
- Joint work with our partners in faith communities to develop a Memorandum of Understanding and with all stakeholders to launch a new Customer Charter, to ensure that our services meet the needs and reflect the requirements of our diverse communities.

Council calls on the executive to:

1. Continue to engage and work with the Coroner, partners and communities on steps to eliminate delays within the service.
2. Continue with the work to develop a new mortuary facility for the city, which will include a permanent digital autopsy scanner.
3. Report back on progress with this work to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September.

The purpose of this report is to fulfil the action in point 3 above.

## **2. Work with the Coroner, Partners and Communities**

The Portfolio Holder and Interim Director have attended various meetings with the Senior Coroner, partners and various communities since June to address any concerns and issues there might be. This has included:-

- Meeting hosted by the Senior Coroner with Muslim Community Leaders and Funeral Directors addressing issues concerning the perceived delay in the release of bodies from the Coronial Service. Since the meeting there has been no further issues raised over the release of the deceased for burial.
- The Portfolio Holder and Interim Director attended the launch of the Muslim Association of Funeral Directors. It is pleasing to note the City Council received awards in recognition of the leadership, dedication and support given to the Funeral Directors. Additional work is being carried out to further links including the potential for reciprocal training.
- The Interim Director and Director Designate are attending a meeting with the West Midlands Guild of Funeral Directors to address concerns that were being raised by this organisation- the Interim Director attended a previous meeting in the Summer and this is a follow up. Further information will be made available at the meeting of the Committee.

- The service hosted an open day at Yardley Cemetery/ Crematorium to consult on the proposals for the refurbishment of that facility. This provided useful information which will be incorporated into the project.
- The Bereavement Service previously had separate telephone lines (and numbers) going into offices at each cemetery/ crematorium. This then required staff to be present at each office to answer calls relating to that site. Calls from the community and funeral directors all used the same number and there was not a way of prioritising any caller. There were often complaints about calls not being answered

As part of the work on the City Council's Customer Services Strategy a new telephony system for burials and cremations has been installed. This provides a single number for all telephone calls and a menu option for the caller to choose the service they want, which reduces missed calls about services. Staff are also able to deal with calls about any site at any location. This improves the service to customers, reducing delays that may have occurred.

- The Portfolio Holder has initiated a Muslim Bereavement Steering Group. This had its inaugural meeting at the end of August 2022. The Group's functions are:-
  - Feedback on the bereavement services provided by Birmingham City Council;
  - Be a forum for views on proposed innovations, streamlining processes and service initiatives being undertaken;
  - Be a forum for views on major projects being undertaken in cemeteries;
  - Consider and be a forum for views on proposals for Friends of Cemeteries Groups proposals;
  - Be a forum for comments on priorities for the services;
  - Be a forum for views on and the impact of the Bereavement Services Charter;
  - Discuss and prepare guidance on any proposed and actual legal changes in bereavement services;
  - Collaboration with the Portfolio Holder's Round table on the bereavement services;
  - Organise training events/ seminars for the community and the City Council on relevant topics.
- The Portfolio Holder has met with the Interim Director to address delays in registration arrangements. It is noted there are no existing delays for registrations required for short notice burials or removal of the deceased out of the country. Other registrations (non-urgent) are being undertaken in date order, but any registration requiring earlier recording is prioritised.

Delays do exist for non-urgent registrations. This is due to the demands on the service at a time when there are several staff with long term sickness and vacancies. Recruitment of additional staff is underway but there is an unavoidable time lag. It is clear there is a limited labour market of trained registrars and there will need to be a programmed recruitment of apprentices so the City Council can 'grow its own' staff.

Delays in non-urgent registrations are exacerbated by failure of people to turn up to the agreed appointment and the practice by some of making multiple contacts with the

Register Office about the same case. (This is a similar issue for the Senior Coroner in managing caseload.) The same staff answer repeat requests as carry out registrations, so multiple calls about the same case reduce the time available to register deaths, births and marriages.

A complete review of the staffing structure is being undertaken, and support to staff to reduce sickness due to stress is being provided through awareness sessions.

### **3. Work to develop a new Mortuary**

Work in relation to this project is in the medium to longer term. Following the lack of willingness (due to the business case not stacking up) from other local authorities this project will cover the Birmingham and Solihull Coronal area.

The following work has been undertaken:-

- a. The identification of the area required for the facility
- b. The likely specification for the facility- number of freezer and refrigerated spaces, the number of post mortem facilities, provision of a scanner etc. (It is intended to create a facility that is future proofed for 25 years.)
- c. An initial survey of land in the City Council's ownership that may be suitable. One site is being looked at but requires significant conversion works. An alternative site might be at a cemetery site. A project group is being set up to prepare a business case.

Update reports will be provided in due course.

### **4. Priorities**

The works being undertaken in respect of this Council resolution are continuing at a pace. They are included in the portfolio holder's priorities for the next year. The Portfolio Holder will attend a future meeting of this Committee to outline these priorities.

**Councillor John Cotton**  
**Portfolio Holder**

**Paul Lankester**  
**Interim Director Regulation**  
**and Enforcement**



## Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee: Work Programme 2022/23

<b>Chair:</b>	Cllr Mohammed Idrees
<b>Deputy Chair:</b>	Cllr Marje Bridle
<b>Committee Members:</b>	Cllrs: Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin, Roger Harmer, Saqib Khan, Lauren Rainbow and Ken Wood
<b>Officer Support:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Manager: Amelia Murray (07825 979253) Scrutiny Officer: Jayne Bowles: (303 4810) Committee Manager: Mandeep Marwaha (303 5950)

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The remit of the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee is 'to fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning housing; waste management; neighbourhood management; parks and allotments; localisation; bereavement services and community safety'.
- 1.2 This Committee shall be the Crime and Disorder Committee (Police and Justice Act 2006).
- 1.3 This report provides details of the proposed scrutiny work programme for 2022/23.

### 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee considers its work programme, attached at Appendix 1, and considers whether any amendments are required.

### 3 Background

- 3.1 *"Scrutiny is based on the principle that someone who makes a decision...should not be the only one to review or challenge it. Overview is founded on the belief that an open, inclusive, member-led approach to policy review...results in better policies in the long run."* (Jessica Crowe, former Executive Director, Centre for Governance and Scrutiny).
- 3.2 Developing an effective work programme is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well, it can help lay the foundations for targeted, inclusive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done poorly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any scrutiny work done is likely to be minimal.



- 3.3 As a result, the careful selection and prioritisation of work is essential if the scrutiny function is to be successful, add value and retain credibility.

## 4 Work Programme

- 4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the future work programme for this Committee. This provides information on the aims and objectives, together with lead officers and witnesses, for each item. The attached work programme also includes items to be programmed where dates are still to be confirmed, and any outstanding items including the tracking of previous recommendations.

## 5 Other Meetings

- 5.1 There are no other meetings scheduled at this time.

### Call in Meetings:

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*None scheduled*

### Petitions

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*None scheduled*

### Councillor Call for Action requests

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*None scheduled*

It is suggested that the Committee approves Thursday at 2.00pm as a suitable day and time each week for any additional meetings required to consider 'requests for call in' which may be lodged in respect of Executive decisions

## 6 Forward Plan for Cabinet Decisions

- 6.1 Since the implementation of the Local Government Act and the introduction of the Forward Plan, scrutiny members have found the Plan to be a useful tool in identifying potential agenda items.
- 6.2 The following decisions, extracted from the CMIS Forward Plan of Decisions, are likely to be relevant to the Housing and Neighbourhoods O&S Committee's remit. The Panel may wish to consider whether any of these issues require further investigation or monitoring via scrutiny. The Forward Plan can be viewed in full via Forward Plans ([cmis.uk.com](http://cmis.uk.com)).

ID Number	Title	Portfolio	Proposed Date of Decision
008859/2021	Building Birmingham – Long Nuke Road Development	Housing and Homelessness	11 Oct 22



010175/2022	Druids Heath Regeneration Update	Housing and Homelessness	11 Oct 22
007349/2020	Waste Vehicle Replacement Programme	OLD – Street Scene and Parks	11 Oct 22
010196/2022	Housing Repairs, Maintenance and Investment 2024	Housing and Homelessness	08 Nov 22
010495/2022	Yardley Brook Development – Increase to Contract Award	Housing and Homelessness	08 Nov 22
008759/2021	Working in Partnership with the Alderson Trust	Housing and Homelessness	13 Dec 22
009213/2021	BMHT Dawberry Fields Road, Passivhaus Development	Housing and Homelessness	13 Dec 22
009647/2022	Supported Housing Strategy	Housing and Homelessness	13 Dec 22
009966/2022	Housing Strategy 2022-2027	Housing and Homelessness	13 Dec 22
010451/2022	Affordable Housing – sites for disposal	Leader	13 Dec 22

## 7 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

## 8 Financial Implications

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

## 9 Public Sector Equality Duty

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

- 9.3 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.

## 10 Use of Appendices

### 10.1 Appendix 1 – Work Programme for 2022/2023



## APPENDIX 1

### HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2022-23 WORK PROGRAMME

Date of Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Item/ Topic	Type of Scrutiny	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information (including joint working / links with other O&S Committees)
Cabinet Member Portfolio Overview	Update Report	Provide a summary of Cabinet Member priorities for 2022-23, and identifying opportunities for O&S to add value	Jon Lawton, Cabinet Support Officer	Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment	None Required	
Performance	Quarterly Report	Outline Month 2 (May) performance for City Operations, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support	Paul Lankester, Interim Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement  Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining Month 2 (May) performance for Housing, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support	Natalie Smith, Head of Service Housing Management  Steve Philpott, Head of Service Housing Solutions and Support	None Required	

Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None Required	<i>A Cleaner Streets inquiry proposal has been submitted to Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This Committee will consider all in-depth inquiry proposals at their July 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. This will ensure an achievable work programme for 2022-23.</i>
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**Final Deadline: Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Petition – Ban Use of Pesticides	Debate	To debate the Petition and formulate a clear formal resolution on the matter for agreement	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	Ms Laura Hackett, Lead Petitioner  Cllr Izzy Knowles, Presenting Councillor  Cllr Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment  Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	The Petition from Bee Friendly Brum was presented to City Council on 12 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
Delays in birth/ death registrations	Update Report	Provide progress on steps being undertaken to reduce delays in births and deaths registrations, and to develop a new mortuary facility, including a digital autopsy scanner	Paul Lankester, Interim Director, Regulation and Enforcement	Paul Lankester, Interim Director, Regulation and Enforcement	None Required	This has been scheduled in response to Full Council motion – 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2022. Further to this, it follows on from previous related updates: 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 and 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2019.

Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	
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**Final Deadline: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 7th September 2022**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Localisation	Update Report	Provide progress on delivery of the Working Together in Neighbourhoods White Paper, including the Neighbourhood Action Co-ordination programme. Respond to the challenge presented by O&S (27 <sup>th</sup> January 2022) for a rapid 4-point stocktake – ‘Councillors and Officers’ Review against the 4 Measures of Success set for ‘Working Together in Birmingham’s Neighbourhoods’	Chris Jordan, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods	Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of the Council	None Required	Working Together in Neighbourhoods White Paper: <a href="#">Working Together in Birmingham's Neighbourhoods (White Paper)   Birmingham City Council</a>
Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness Portfolio Overview	Update Report	Provide a summary of Cabinet Member priorities for 2022-23, and identifying opportunities for O&S to add value	Marcia Wynter, Cabinet Support Officer	Cllr Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness	None Required	
Housing Strategy 2022-2027	Consultation	Outline the development of the new Housing Strategy. Consider the strategic priorities and workstreams identified and inform the	Julie Griffin, Managing Director, City Housing	Naomi Morris, Housing Modernisation and Partnerships Manager	None Required	

		direction of this strategy's development		Guy Chaundy, Housing Modernisation and Partnerships Manager		
Inquiry: Reducing Fly-tipping	Tracking	Provide further clarification on Recommendations R01 and R03. Consider if the Inquiry is concluded.	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	TBC		Further information has been requested in relation to these recommendations. This Inquiry was approved at Full Council on 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2021; the most recent Progress on Recommendations report was presented to Housing & Neighbourhoods O&S Committee on 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2022.
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for Housing, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support	TBC	None Required	
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for City Operations, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support	Sajeela Naseer, Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement  Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	
Mobile Household Recycling Centres – 12 months on	Update Report	Provide an overview of the initial 12 months of the scheme, and highlight impact	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene		
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**



**Date of Meeting: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022**

**Publication: Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for Housing, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Mira Gola, Head of Business Improvement and Support	TBC	None Required	
Performance	Quarterly Report	Report outlining performance for City Operations, and provide more detailed commentary on areas of improvement or for concern	Jonathan Antill, Head of Business Improvement and Support	Sajeela Naseer, Assistant Director, Regulation and Enforcement  Darren Share, Assistant Director, Street Scene	None Required	
Affordable Housing Plan	Update Report	Provide an outline of progress	Kerry Scott, Housing Delivery Programme Lead	Guy Chaundy, Housing Modernisation and Partnership Manager	None Required	
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Publication: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Publication: Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Date of Meeting: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

Item/ Topic	Type	Aims and Objectives	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Visits	Additional Information
Work Programme Development	Decision	Discuss work programme for 2022-23 with a particular focus on refining aims and objectives, and any additional topics to consider	Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager	None	None Required	

**Final Deadline: Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**Publication: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

**TO BE SCHEDULED:**

Date(s) to be agreed for the following items:

1. Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities Portfolio Overview
2. Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership

The following items had been identified as topics for consideration to be included in the work programme and no dates have yet been set. Further items may be identified in the Overview and Scrutiny discussion on 15th September 2022:

1. Cleaner Streets
2. Voids: Improving standards
3. Tenant Management Strategy
4. Selective and Additional Licensing Schemes for Private Rented Sector
5. Flats above shops

