

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to City Council

17 September 2024



<b>Title:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE BUSINESS REPORT</b>
<b>Lead Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport Councillor Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and Human Resources
<b>Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>	N/A
<b>Report Author:</b>	Councillor Majid Mahmood, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport Councillor Rob Pocock, Cabinet Member for Transformation, Governance and Human Resources
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Graeme Betts, Acting Chief Executive
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	No
<b>If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?</b>	N/A
<b>Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:</b>	N/A
<b>Is this a Late Report?</b>	Yes
<b>Reason(s) why Late:</b>	Amendments to the report were requested by Commissioners in advance of the meeting. The amendments could not be undertaken until after the agenda publication deadline has passed. The report was circulated to Members at the earliest possible opportunity following the completion of the amendments.
<b>Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'</b>	N/A
<b>If not eligible, please provide reason(s):</b>	N/A

**Wards:**

All

**Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?**

No

## **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 Environment and Transport

1.1.2 Transformation, Governance and Human Resources

## **2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW**

2.1 Commissioners approved the recommendations.

## **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

## **Environment and Transport**

### **7 Introduction**

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport portfolio took on this new portfolio in May 2024. The portfolio spans a large number of service areas and encompasses a wide range of activity.
- 7.2 We know there are issues that need to be tackled across the portfolio. In Transport, a regional road safety emergency was declared in July, confirming the Council's intent to reduce road harm and to work at pace with partners to make our roads safer.
- 7.3 Within the Environment side of the portfolio, there is a lot of work ongoing in the transformation of the Street Scene area in order to improve the service that residents receive.
- 7.4 We continue to work towards our net zero targets. We are leading in environmental action and transparency, as certified by our 'A' grade from the Carbon Disclosure Project, but need to continue to take action to realise our ambitions for our city.
- 7.5 The report will firstly look at transport elements of the portfolio, and then move onto the environment areas, including net zero and street scene.

### **8 Highways and Infrastructure**

- 8.1 The Highways and Infrastructure Division enables Birmingham residents, communities and business to thrive and safely connect to the people, places and businesses that matter to them through safe and well-maintained highway network infrastructure and assets.
- 8.2 This service ensures that as well as meeting statutory obligations, the highway network is safe and accessible and supports keeping the city moving and open for business.

#### **Contribution to Council Priorities**

- 8.3 Investment and maintenance in the Council's 2,500km highway network and Council-owned infrastructure helps to keep the city and region moving and open for business, helping improve the attractiveness of the city for inward investment.
- 8.4 Maintenance and future investment in street lighting contributes to citizens feeling safer and helps reduce the nighttime fear of crime. The Division regularly carries out joint enforcement operations with West Midlands Police which contribute to Road Harm Reduction.
- 8.5 Investment in maintenance of footways and cycleways supports Active Travel choices which contributes to the health and wellbeing of citizens.

- 8.6 Investment and maintenance upgrades to street lighting technologies and future planned investment in LED street lighting enables the city to manage and reduce its highway infrastructure energy use. The use of sustainable material choices, recycled materials and sustainable techniques in highway maintenance help reduce carbon the Council's carbon footprint.

### **Citizen Priorities and Social Responsibility**

- 8.7 Citizens' priorities reflect that road and pavement repairs are the fourth highest priority in the city for citizens.
- 8.8 BHL/Kier and NSL, two major contractors working with the division are signatories to Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility.

### **Budget**

- 8.9 The Division manages significant revenue and income budgets, primarily:
- The Highways PFI Contract
  - Highways Services (including streetlighting energy)
  - Parking Services

### **Improvement and Recovery Plan**

- 8.10 The items below list the Savings and IRP activity underway within the Division.
- 8.11 A full review of all non-statutory service provision was undertaken in September 2023 and non-statutory services put forward for cessation or for continuation through alternate, non-general fund sources of funding.

### **Streetlighting Energy**

- 8.12 As part of its savings proposals, the division implemented further Dimming and Trimming of streetlighting in 23/24 to reduce energy consumption and save circa £900k in equivalent energy costs. Energy consumption is being monitored through 24/25 post implementation of the change in lighting levels and timings to confirm the equivalent reduction in cost.
- 8.13 The savings and transformation proposals were proposed to:
- Drive out systemic, long-term performance in both services with regard to customer and business performance.
  - Bring together like services to allow efficiencies and savings to be gained from undertaking a multi-skilled approach.
- 8.14 Completion of the work and delivery of the savings is scheduled for end of September 2024.

- 8.15 Additionally, £5.5m of net surplus CAZ revenues have been allocated towards the investment in LED street lighting upgrades on active travel corridors that will not only support greater levels of walking and cycling, but improve personal safety, help offset proposed reductions in the highways maintenance budget, reduce general fund utilities costs and drive a reduction in carbon emissions to contribute to our route to net zero agenda.

### **Reduced Spend on Highway Maintenance**

- 8.16 The Council undertook a successful Judicial Review of governments decision to cease funding of the Highways Management and Maintenance PFI Contract. The decision has been quashed and must now be re-made lawfully.
- 8.17 In the event of the Highways Management and Maintenance PFI Contract not receiving government approval, £12m of savings have been proposed in 24/25 with a further £8m in 25/26 from programmed maintenance. Savings of £750k have also be proposed to the Highways PFI Management Budget with the same conditions applied.
- 8.18 Should the Highways PFI Contract receive government approval, the proposed savings will not be delivered by Highways. The savings will become a corporate saving to be redistributed and plans for a corporate approach to cover the shortfall are being developed.

### **Local Engineering**

- 8.19 Local Engineering, whilst providing a valuable interface for elected members and the public, undertake majority non-statutory work. As such the service was put forward to be ceased and the general fund elements removed as a saving. An alternative proposal from staff was reviewed and implemented as part of consultation which proposed a smaller, more focused service operating on a cost recoverable basis using funding from the now new Environment and Transport Neighbourhoods Fund (ETNF).
- 8.20 Restructuring of the team and delivery of the savings is scheduled for end of September 2024.

### **Major Decisions**

- 8.21 Three major decisions were taken forward by the Division in the last twelve months:
- A report to Cabinet on the extension of the Interim Service Contract (ISC) with BHL/Kier to enable the delivery of statutory services whilst a decision was awaited on the future of the Highways PFI Contract.
  - The proposal for and outcome of the Judicial Review of the Highways PFI Contract, which the Council was successful in.
  - The entry into a two-year Parking Contract with Marston/NSL to allow time for the Parking Services Review to be undertaken and a new contact scope

developed for Parking Enforcement fit to meet the future needs of the city. The contract is valued at approximately £4m per annum.

## **Risks and challenges**

8.22 The significant risk and challenges facing the Division in the next nine months are:

8.23 Tame Valley Viaduct (TVV)

8.23.1 This project is for strengthening the viaduct supporting the A38 Expressway. The Baseline budget and project costs to cover Professional Fees (Project management, Design & Supervision etc), Land Expenditure, Land Risk & Inflation, Construction works & risks, STATS / Utilities, Inflation and BCC Fees. was circa £95m with a planned completion Date of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2026. The forecasted budget (as of 31<sup>st</sup> July) is £108.81m (including forecasted risks), with a forecasted contract completion date of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2027.

8.23.2 The keys risks include for

8.23.3 **Works and Services:** Contractor overspend, additional project management services, cancellations for network rail possessions, concrete repairs, weather; in addition to contractor risks - the overall value for the risk pot is **£4.19m**

8.23.4 **Inflation:** As of 31/07/24, the overall cost of inflation is **£12.23m** (£4.42 implemented and £7.75m in forecast) having an impact of **£11.03m** on the overall cost of the project.

8.23.5 **Internal paint system:** incurred an additional cost and time impact of **£5.41m**

8.23.6 **Latent defects:** Unforeseeable defects creating an overall cost and time impact at circa **£8m**

8.23.7 An independent review of the TVV project has been commissioned with Arup to provide the Council with assurance on the overall performance of the projects, including if the project will deliver on time and on budget. The review team consists of specialists in construction risk management, commercial management, risk management and structural engineering. All aspects of the project will be reviewed including risk management, governance, financial management, engineering management.

8.24 Impact of Non PFI/descoping

8.24.1 The uncertainty of the future of the Highways PFI remains a key risk for the Division. This is mitigated to a degree with pre-planning for alternative service delivery models ahead of a decision been made. Should the PFI not be taken forward, alternate delivery arrangements will be put in place to ensure the council discharges its statutory obligations under the Highways act. These will, through financial necessity, be at a significantly descoped level of

service. This will result in a worsening network condition over time and while the asset management strategy in place will look to mitigate this as far as is practicable, the condition will reflect the level of investment.

## 8.25 Flood Risk

8.25.1 2023 recorded some of the highest rainfall levels on record. There are increased numbers of flooding incidents, and the risks associated from surface water and ground water flood risk are rising. Further flood risk modelling is being undertaken to better understand future risk for the city and division.

### **Looking Ahead 24/25:**

## 8.26 Parking Services Review

8.26.1 A full review of all aspects of Parking Services within the city has been commissioned with independent specialists Parking Matters. Parking Matters will review all aspects of Parking Services including fees, charges, enforcement, contract models, BCC operating model, policies, assets, governance, data and information.

8.26.2 The aim of the review is to ensure the Parking Service and its future enforcement contract provide a sustainable, optimised, financially sound and flexible capability for the Council going forward. The review will include significant benchmarking with other comparable authorities to ensure best practice and latest industry innovations are identified and built into the future BCC operating model.

## 8.27 Highways PFI Government Decision/Contingency Planning

8.27.1 The future of the Highways PFI Contract will now need to be remade lawfully by Government. This and the associated contingency planning activity in the event of support being withdrawn will remain a significant piece of activity for the next 12 months.

## 8.28 Integration with City Operations – Operations Hub/Enforcement

8.28.1 The division will continue to capitalise on the opportunities within City Operations to amalgamate and combine service delivery to provide better quality and more efficient services to customers. Services currently under review are Highway Enforcement with the potential for a combined Enforcement Hub being explored, and optimising service delivery such as removal of graffiti.

## 8.29 Closure of first phase transformation

8.29.1 As detailed above the Dropped Kerb service, Specified Licence service, Highway Permit service, and Local Engineering service have all been subject to transformation and savings initiatives. Concluding this work and moving



the service into a new optimised steady state will be a key activity during quarters 3 and 4 of 2024.

### 8.30 Energy and lighting

8.30.1 An asset management strategy for streetlighting powered apparatus is being developed for the division by Arup. This will enable the Council to maximise further energy and carbon reductions from adaptive management of lighting levels, and enable a long term asset management strategy to be developed for the replacement of aging lighting technologies with more efficient LED based luminaires.

### 8.31 Fees charges and income

8.31.1 A full review of all Highways fees and charges is being undertaken, including benchmarking with other authorities, to ensure charging is fair and robust, and income levels are optimised.

## 9 Strategic Transport

9.1 The [Birmingham Transport Plan](#) (BTP), agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2021, sets out the vision, principles and strategic objectives for the city.

9.2 The Birmingham Transport Plan Delivery Plan will be published in Autumn 2024.

### Contribution to Council Priorities

#### A Bold Prosperous Birmingham

9.3 Transforming central Birmingham and reallocating road space are key priorities of the BTP. This is essential to connecting people with jobs, skills and services and to unlocking sites for regeneration.

9.4 The City Centre Movement and Access Strategy will rationalise routings for through trips by private vehicles while enhancing connections for active travel and public transport.

9.5 Delivery of the traffic management cells has been underway since 2020, with public consultation on the most recent plans for Great Charles Street Queensway, Colmore Row, Southside and Digbeth concluded in August 2024.

9.6 There are a variety of projects ongoing aiming to upgrade active travel and public transport:

- The current phase of retail core public realm works is nearing completion, with the river water feature, new granite paving to Victoria Square, Colmore Row and Waterloo Street, and hostile vehicle mitigation measures protecting Victoria Square due to be complete for the 2024 Frankfurt Market.
- Snow Hill traffic management delivery expected to begin in 2025 with future phases revised following feedback from the Commissioners and currently expected to commence in 26/27.

- Public consultation on the Digbeth active travel and streets project took place in June 2024 and the business case is now being developed. Following feedback from the Commissioners, funding options are being explored.
- The One Station project to transform Moor Street Queensway and link Curzon, Moor Street and New Street stations is expected to go to public consultation in quarter three of 2024.
- The permanent scheme for Southside public realm has been designed and funding has been revised following Commissioner feedback. Construction will be scheduled once a contractor has been procured.
- Work continues on Metro extensions, and additional bus improvements in the city centre, led by Transport for West Midlands.
- Significant upgrades have been completed on the Dudley Road corridor.

9.7 Work is underway with WMCA to explore options for the future operation of bus services, including bus franchising. However, the recent change in Government and the forthcoming Better Buses Bill may bring forward further options for consideration.

### **Bold Safe Birmingham**

9.8 Safety on the city's roads is a concern and in August regional road safety emergency was declared with BCC, West Midlands Combined Authority and West Midlands Police holding regular Gold Command meetings to effect urgent changes.

9.9 Key to tackling road harm is delivering a significant reduction in the speed and volume of vehicles on our roads, reinforced with strategic enforcement activities, particularly on higher volume roads.

9.10 By adopting the Healthy Streets approach, the Council plans to reduce the volume of motor vehicles, whilst improving access for all and investing in arterial route corridors. These principles are laid out in the Road Harm Reduction Strategy, which was subject to public consultation in the first quarter of 2024 and is planned to be adopted in November 2024.

9.11 The Full Business case for the standardisation of speed limits from 40mph to 30mph across Birmingham has been approved as a priority action and after consultation will follow the statutory TRO process.

9.12 A new Joint Working Agreement for speed enforcement by camera is in development to enable increased enforcement and a more financially sustainable model. Representation has also been made to the Secretary of State for revenue from Fixed Penalty Notices to be retained and reinvested in the region, which would allow further expansion of camera enforcement.

9.13 Plans to trial use of the Council's powers for camera enforcement of moving traffic offences (such as yellow boxes and banned turns) will be proceeding to full business case in quarter 4 of 2024.

- 9.14 Several traffic signals have been re-timed to prioritise people walking and cycling above motor vehicles. Pending evaluation of these trial sites, it is planned to amend timing on traffic signals city-wide in line with a revised policy.
- 9.15 Work has begun on a review of road classifications in Birmingham to balance the need to ensure equity of access with reducing volumes of vehicular traffic in residential areas. Following this, a new Network Management Plan for the city's roads will be developed.

### **A Bold Healthy Birmingham**

- 9.16 Active travel provides many benefits for physical and mental health and supports community cohesion.
- 9.17 Work to make permanent various temporary active travel schemes, funded through the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund is nearing completion:
  - 9.17.1 An audit of schools to determine suitability for a Car Free School Street (CFSS) has been undertaken and new schemes launched in three new schools in September 2023 with five schools expected in the next phase. Work is ongoing in two existing CFSS locations to pilot further infrastructure enhancements.
  - 9.17.2 Specialist support has been secured to develop a potential further phase of the successful Big Birmingham Bikes giveaway scheme, working through community groups and linked to provision of Bikeability cycle training.
  - 9.17.3 In early 2024, public consultation took place on the connecting Bordesley Green project, aiming to improve the area for people walking, wheeling and cycling and the business case is now being developed.

### **A Bold Green Birmingham**

- 9.18 The BTP Delivery Plan identified the urgent and drastic need to cut carbon emissions from transport and to continue efforts to improve air quality.
- 9.19 The Council has a statutory duty to monitor and report on air quality. The 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report, approved by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, showed that city wide levels of NO<sub>2</sub> are falling and most monitoring locations show an annual average below the legal limit. Plans are being developed to address areas where exceedances occur.
- 9.20 Levels of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> did not exceed air quality objectives at any monitoring location.
- 9.21 The Brum Breathes Clean Air Strategy sets out actions to tackle air pollution, with the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) being a key instrument. Since the introduction of the CAZ, the percentage of non-compliant vehicles entering the zone has dropped from 15.2% to 4.8% (June 2024).

- 9.22 Net surplus revenue from the CAZ must be spent on projects to further improve air quality, as set out by national legislation and in the CAZ charging order. As of June 2024, £82m of revenue has been allocated to such work.
- 9.23 The air quality monitoring for schools project continues to offer sensors for all schools in Birmingham, which will enable educational activities around different sources and types of air pollution and to build an evidence base around levels of particulate matter.

### **Budget**

- 9.24 The 2024/5 to 2029/30 Transport and Highways Delivery Programme (THDP) was approved by Cabinet on 25 June 2024 with a total estimated programme value of £308.372m.
- 9.25 No funding within the THDP comes from the Council's general fund; the largest sources are grants from Central Government, Clean Air Zone (CAZ) revenue (ring-fenced by legislation and the CAZ charging order) and devolved funding provided through West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 9.26 Prior to approval of the THDP, significant engagement with the Commissioners took place, resulting in a streamlined and robust programme.
- 9.27 To enable robust procurement and delivery, new frameworks for works and professional services for transport schemes are being developed.

### **Improvement and Recovery Plan**

- 9.28 Transport funding is external and ring-fenced and cannot directly contribute to the savings target. However, in the context of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, it is vital that projects deliver value for money and consider opportunities for income generation. As future programmes are developing, opportunities will be sought to offset reductions in related budgets, help support current savings proposals, generate future savings and efficiencies, and reduce and/or remove calls for Council borrowing and general fund expenditure.
- 9.29 A 'back to basics' approach is being applied to current delivery, delivering simple changes which benefit citizens in their everyday trips and which create a strong foundation for future, larger scale changes.

### **Risks and challenges**

- 9.30 The environment for implementation of the Birmingham Transport Plan presents several challenges. While strong political support remains a key strength, risks around funding, resources, governance and project delivery remain likely. A risk assessment was conducted for the THDP which provides further details and similar risks were reported by the Active Travel Scrutiny Inquiry including rising costs of materials and labour and shortage of skills.

9.31 The directorate has a robust risk management process whereby risks are regularly reviewed, and appropriate mitigations put in place.

**Look Ahead 24/25**

**Back to Basics**

9.32 The Birmingham Transport Plan is bold in ambition but many of the key aspects can be delivered with relatively simple, lower cost interventions.

9.33 While longer term planning and development of strategic schemes is ongoing, the next 12 months will see a concentration of effort on establishing the Environment and Transport Neighbourhood Fund and on bringing forward these interventions:

	<b>Corridors</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods</b>	<b>Centres and city centre</b>
Tackle illegal, dangerous and antisocial parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Targeted civil enforcement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Targeted civil enforcement</li> <li>✓ Controlled Parking Zones</li> <li>✓ Stopping illegal dropped kerbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Targeted civil enforcement</li> <li>✓ Review pricing of on and off-street parking</li> <li>✓ Off-street car parks review</li> </ul>
Reduce traffic speed/volume and stop 'rat running'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review and amend road classifications</li> <li>✓ 30mph speed limits</li> <li>✓ Average Speed Enforcement cameras</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 20mph speed limits</li> <li>✓ Lower cost traffic calming/management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete movement and access strategy (traffic management, directional signage)</li> </ul>
Attractive, reliable public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Public transport priority at signals</li> <li>✓ Accelerate delivery of bus priority projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 20mph speed limits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Public transport priority</li> </ul>
Safer and healthier streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Pedestrian priority at crossings and signals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ School Streets</li> <li>✓ Pavement /drainage improvements</li> <li>✓ LED street lighting</li> <li>✓ Declutter</li> <li>✓ Bike hangars</li> <li>✓ Trees and planting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reallocate road space to pedestrians</li> <li>✓ Declutter</li> </ul>

**Ongoing Delivery of Birmingham Transport Plan / Transport and Highways Delivery Programme**

9.34 In the next 12 months, delivery of the activities and initiatives as set out in the summary of progress above will continue with key project milestones already described.

9.35 Of particular note are the following:

- Launch of the Birmingham Transport Plan Delivery Plan – Autumn 2024
- Adoption of the Road Harm Reduction Strategy – November 2024
- New Speed Enforcement Joint Working Agreement – April 2025
- Develop and deliver priority road safety actions in line with the emerging action plan from the Road Safety Gold Command, including 40mph to 30mph speed limits.
- Continue to work with WMCA to explore options for regulation of bus services.
- Work across the Council and with partners to deliver the recommendations of the Active Travel Scrutiny Review and forthcoming Road Safety Scrutiny Review.
- In the interests of leading by example, bring forward a new Travel Plan for the Council House.
- Progress new framework for works and professional services for transport schemes.
- Work with Transport for West Midlands to develop Local Transport Plan 5 (statutory transport plan) with a local area strategy for Birmingham setting out investment priorities for transport in line with the Birmingham Transport Plan.

## **10 Route to Net Zero**

### **Contribution to Council Priorities**

#### **A Bold Green Birmingham**

- 10.1 Using nationally derived statistics, the City of Birmingham is realising a level of greenhouse gas emissions reduction in line with UK Core Cities, but which will continue to be highly influenced by UK carbon budget policies e.g. speed of electricity grid decarbonisation. BCC's Climate Emergency ambition – 'seek to be net zero carbon by 2030 – again ensuring that this is just' will require significant system and organisational change beyond areas in the direct control or influence of local government and which will need to balance economic, environmental and social outcomes in speed of implementation. A 2030 net zero ambition is very difficult to achieve in relation to the City of Birmingham's greenhouse gas emissions, although within its areas of influence, the Council is making positive progress as well as exploring local metrics against which performance towards net zero can be measured. Meeting the 2030 target will require significant external support.
- 10.2 The Council's scope 1 and 2 emissions have been calculated and scope 3 emissions have been screened to identify the council's greatest emissions sources. These emissions are the focus of the Council's decarbonisation efforts, and the Route to Net Zero team are working with Council directorates, departments and services to identify emissions reductions opportunities. The

team will also continue to improve the scope, availability and quality of emissions data.

- 10.3 The Council's direct emissions contribute a small overall percentage - 0.9% - to the city's total greenhouse gas emissions, however the council has place-shaping powers to facilitate reductions, particularly in the built environment, transport, and some waste sectors. The council's significant annual supply chain spend also presents opportunities to specify environmentally sustainability products and practice. Key place-shaping activities targeted at driving down the city's emissions include:
- 10.3.1 A new set of planning policies aimed at accelerating the reduction of embodied and operation greenhouse gas emissions from the built environment. These new policies are expected to commence in 2026.
  - 10.3.2 Preparation of a heat network strategy to direct the significant opportunity that heat network zoning powers present to the city of Birmingham. 20% or more of existing heat demand could be supported by heat networks, tackling one of the most complex decarbonisation challenges.
  - 10.3.3 We cannot tackle the climate emergency without fundamental changes to the way people and goods move around our city – and transport can be an enabler of transformational changes. We know that we need to achieve a rapid shift away from single occupancy private car use. The adopted Birmingham Transport Plan sets out the dramatic decrease in vehicle kilometres travelled required to deliver transport decarbonisation in Birmingham and outlines how the city's transport system needs to be transformed to meet the challenges of the next decade.
  - 10.3.4 Our Sustainable Supply Chain programme, engaging with the council's supply chain to increase knowledge on the City's procurement activities to support their decarbonisation activities and develop recommendations for procurement policy and monitoring.
  - 10.3.5 A Waste Strategy Review to align the city's future municipal waste responsibilities with net zero ambitions.
- 10.4 Birmingham City Council scored an 'A' from the Carbon Disclosure Project for environmental action & transparency, which is the highest rating available, recognising Birmingham as a leading city in this area.
- 10.5 The Council has produced the Climate Change Briefing Book making data more open, accessible & engaging and delivered Carbon Literacy Training to Council officers.
- 10.6 Various funding streams secured to support SMEs, improve energy efficiency in all housing and to retrofit council housing
- 10.7 Prepared a climate change evidence base for Birmingham Local Plan.

10.8 Secured funding to develop a roadmap to decarbonise the Birmingham District Energy Company.

### **Budget**

10.9 During the financial year 2023-24 successful applications for £1,863,547 revenue and £1,174,697 capital were achieved.

10.10 The Route to Net Zero team is also working across the Council to explore the delivery of savings and new approaches where they align with and support the Council's net zero commitments, including:

- Corporate Landlord programme and procurement to establish an energy management function, deliver savings and reduce GHG emissions.
- Procurement to improve their undertaking of the Council's supply chain impacts and inform decisions regarding opportunities to make GHG emissions and cost savings.
- Strategic Housing and Housing Asset Management to attract greater investment through the ECO retrofit programme with the potential to create significant savings to the HRA.
- Housing and corporate landlord colleagues to identify suitable projects for devolution funding for building retrofit.

10.11 The Route to Net Zero team is also exploring opportunities where net zero can be harnessed to draw investment into the city and reduce Council and city emissions with partners such as the UK Infrastructure Bank and 3Ci.

### **Improvement and Recovery Plan**

10.12 The IRP includes net zero as a cross-cutting IRP corporate priority, committing the Council to "working in a way which embeds climate action at the heart of the future Council and Council decision-making, ensuring that all directorates make the necessary changes to deliver these outcomes".

10.13 The existing Environmental Sustainability Assessment (ESA) requirement for Cabinet reports is a key tool for supporting the alignment of Council decisions with positive environmental outcomes. 134 Environment and Sustainability Assessments (ESA) have been prepared and a review of the process is underway to embed them into the earliest stages of project conception.

### **Looking ahead 24/25**

10.14 In partnership with the University of Birmingham, (UOB) a [Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment was developed](#) for Birmingham. Also, in partnership with UOB and the UK Met Office, £1.2m was secured to explore the use of new satellite derived heat imaging.



- 10.15 From January 2024, all new developments must deliver measurable increases in biodiversity, on alternative sites if necessary and the Council has been working closely with the WMCA on the implementation of net gain requirements.
- 10.16 Through the Urban Nature Development programme, a Nature Recovery Network has been defined and over 600 open spaces identified with opportunities for investment in habitat creation and enhancement.
- 10.17 The Council has partnered with the National, Woodland and Community Forest Trusts to establish the Urban Forest Accelerator (UFA) Project, supporting community tree planting across the city.
- 10.18 In 2023, the £1.7m Natural Rivers and Green Corridors project to restore watercourses and habitats through the Upper Rea catchment through to Cannon Hill Park was completed. Its success has secured additional funds to further existing flood risk management works to remove further weirs and reprofile water courses to improve ecological connectivity while delivering an element of flood risk alleviation.
- 10.19 The council is using its place shaping powers and leading several initiatives, including the Birmingham Local Plan Review and the Advanced Zoning programme to help tackle and reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions.
- 10.20 A Retrofit Strategy for council housing assets is in development and the procurement of partners to support the scaled-up delivery of ECO4 funded retrofit measures has been launched to help ensure households maximise access to energy efficiency measures. Partners will be appointed in early Autumn. ECO will also provide retrofit funding for council owned homes.
- 10.21 A strategy to realise the significant opportunity for heat network zones in Birmingham is now being prepared in readiness for zoning legislation in 2025. Opportunities for renewable energy generation are also being explored as part of the emerging energy management function.

### **Budget**

- 10.22 The following successful funding applications were made:
- CARMINE – European funding through Innovate UK - £84,549.05 revenue.
  - The National Trust funded the Council's nature work with the Nature Towns and Cities project - £55,000 revenue.

### **Improvement and Recovery Plan**

- 10.23 The existing Environmental Sustainability Assessment (ESA) requirement for Cabinet reports is a key tool for supporting the alignment of Council decisions with positive environmental outcomes. This ESA process has been improved to support assessment earlier in the project or policy development process.

## **Risks and challenges**

- 10.24 The introduction of new mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain and the extended Biodiversity duty through the implementation of the Environment Act 2021 requires an increase in capacity and capability. Funding for resourcing this will need to be explored and developed to ensure compliance.

## **Look Ahead 24/25**

- 10.25 The City Council has made good progress in delivering against their natural environment and climate adaptation goals. The review of the local plan's existing policies and green infrastructure evidence base will bring them in line with new and emerging legislation. This has been supported through collaboration with the University of Birmingham to develop the Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for Birmingham.
- 10.26 The Council will continue working with other city stakeholders and our citizens. The new Climate Change Engagement Framework and Action Plan will guide work with partners to share knowledge, expertise and experience, and explore opportunities to collectively take action to tackle Birmingham city's emissions.

## **11 Pest control**

- 11.1 From 1 April 2024, pest control has been a chargeable service, which is aimed at being a contributory cost for the provision of the service. The charge is £24 (£20 plus VAT) and covers a single treatment for rats in domestic properties either inside the property or within a garden.
- 11.2 As of July 2024, the Council's Housing Department has agreed to pay for these treatments directly for their own tenants.
- 11.3 During 2023/24, we received 12,710 requests for treatment of rats, which is consistent with the preceding year of 12,384 requests.
- 11.4 Pest control continue to offer paid treatments for cockroaches, bedbugs, wasps, fleas, ants and mice. They also operate and promote a Property Clearance Service to internal (particularly Birmingham Property Services) and external partners. The role has grown in terms of capability, size of land and size of contracts. In addition, work enquiries for clearance work have increased. They work extensively with Land and Property Team to carry out this work.
- 11.5 The current reduction in service demand, is projected to put a budget pressure on the service in 2024/25. As a result, Regulation and Enforcement are actively looking at a new operating model that will be cost neutral to the Council. The new service would prioritise delivery of domestic rat treatments, with a contributory charge, and a commercial team to raise the required income to offset all overheads.

## **12 Street Scene**

- 12.1 Street Scene plays a crucial role in shaping our communities and influencing our well-being. The purpose is to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. Well-maintained streets contribute to a sense of pride, safety, and belonging. When people take pride in their surroundings, they are more likely to engage in community activities, support local businesses, and actively participate in neighbourhood improvement initiatives.
- 12.2 Street Scene contributes to our aim to improve street cleanliness.
- 12.3 The division comprises of four functional service areas:
- Waste collection
  - Street cleansing and grounds maintenance
  - Green Infrastructure
  - Fleet

### **Budget**

- 12.4 Given the Council's financial challenges, various cost saving targets have been set and a total of £15.4 million of savings is on track to be delivered in 24/25 financial year.
- 12.5 There are financial savings predicted upon improving the efficiency of the waste operations. As part of the 2024/5 budget process, the Council approved the implementation of some key changes within waste, including the introduction of fortnightly collection of residual waste, with a budgeted saving of £4.5m in 2025/6 and the remodelling of recycling collection rounds, to be implemented in the current financial year, with a budget of £0.85m.

### **Improvement and Recovery plan**

- 12.6 Below is a summary of activities underway that are included in the plan.
- 12.7 A review of the services within Street Scene has been undertaken. Plans are in place that reflect the Council's aims in the Improvement and Recovery plan.

### **Waste Transformation**

- 12.8 At the beginning of 2024, in discussion with the Council Leadership Team, Commissioners and Cabinet, a transitional leadership team was assembled with the aim of tackling issues within Street Scene.
- 12.9 The team is almost complete, and an entirely new leadership team is moving forward with the necessary improvements needed to improve the Street Scene services for the citizens of Birmingham.
- 12.10 On 23 July, Cabinet approved a strategically significant report, which approved the replacement of the Council's oldest and most unreliable refuse collection

vehicles (RCVs). This represents an investment of £30.8m. It will also address one of the underlying performance issues, which is the unreliability of the current fleet. The procurement process is now underway with the delivery of new vehicles expected to commence in 2025.

- 12.11 In April 2024 the street cleansing service and grounds maintenance function amalgamated. This is to create neighbourhood specific teams who will work together and thus reduce any duplication of work and improve performance efficiencies.
- 12.12 A new 10-year contract with Veolia was signed in January 2024. Part of this new contract involves several construction programmes to improve the waste disposal infrastructure across the City that benefits the residents. This includes the Work at the Castle Bromwich household waste recycling centre (HWRC) has already begun. It also includes redevelopment of the Lifford Lane depot and HWRC, due to start in December 2024. An additional re-use facility at Kings Norton is to be created and will work alongside the one at Tyseley.
- 12.13 A new website is being developed so community groups and schools can easily book slots to visit the waste treatment site at Tyseley. The site visit enables visitors to learn more about what happens to our waste and why it is so important to either reduce, reuse or recycle.

## **Parks**

- 12.14 The service is committed to the advancement of a green, sustainable city providing parks, open spaces and services that are accessible to all. With 640 parks and open spaces in the city, our natural environment is undoubtedly one of Birmingham's greatest assets.
- 12.15 Our Future City Plan introduces the vision for Birmingham becoming a city of nature. The current phase of delivery is focused on the most deprived wards and a Green Infrastructure plan has been put in place. Various grants and S106 funding have been secured to deliver the plan. BCC is also working in partnership with Birmingham City of Nature Alliance (a conduit for direct citizen engagement). The National Trust led Urban Forest Accelerator project, funded by DEFRA continues at pace and due to finish by the end of 2024.
- 12.16 Birmingham also retained its Tree City of the World status for another year.
- 12.17 The Cabinet Member recently attended the formal opening of Primrose Park, a brand-new park in Kings Norton.
  - 12.17.1 This was a part of a housing regeneration project in the area. The park has wildflower areas and new trees which will significantly improve the biodiversity of the area, as well as including new facilities for play and sport.
  - 12.17.2 This includes the first teqball (a sport using a football played on a curved table) installed in a Birmingham park.

12.18 The service will continue to make Birmingham one of the greenest cities in the country.

### **Friends of Parks**

12.19 Friends of communities across Birmingham continue to do fantastic work in the city's parks and open spaces. In the year from April 2023-March 2024, Birmingham Open Spaces Forum calculated that Friends Groups spent:

- 42,469 hours spent on conservation, gardening and infrastructure.
- 15,085 hours spent on events.
- 21,523 hours spent on back office support.
- 26,680 hours spent on additional support, including litter picks and security.

12.20 This represents a combined total of 105,757 hours, which, based on the current living wage rate, would equate to almost £1.3m. This is an outstanding contribution to city life, supporting our parks and green spaces.

### **Pocket Parks**

12.21 Pocket Parks is a partnership between the Council's East Birmingham Programme Team and the National Trust. Working together and being led by the local community in each area, 4 new Pocket Parks have been created at Bromford (Bromford Drive), Ward End (St Margaret's Road), Alum Rock (Naseby Youth Centre) and Stechford (Stechford Village Green). This was made possible with £100,000 funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with National Trust contributing a further £20,000 in kind.

12.22 At each of the 4 Pocket Parks, the designs have been created by the community, working in co-production with the local architects (Intervention Architecture at Bromford and Ward End) and our BCC Landscape Practice Group (at Naseby Youth Centre and Stechford). Local communities not only co-design the vision for these spaces but also co-developed each of the pocket parks. An additional £5,000 Maintenance Grant has been awarded to the lead community groups for each Pocket Park to enable the legacy of the project.

12.23 In addition to this, a further £165,000 UKSPF funding has been provided for the regeneration of Glebe Farm Park – allowing the council to install 1,000 metres of new pathway, new litter bins, mature trees and replace damaged play equipment – that the community had been requesting for a number of years.

12.24 Combined, these projects have physically transformed 26,706m<sup>2</sup> of green space in East Birmingham, increased community ownership and upskilled local people to take responsibility for maintaining these spaces. It has also been an important step to transforming Birmingham's underutilised green spaces and allowed the Council to provide much needed investment via external funding; a model we wish to develop further in the months and years ahead.

- 12.25 The success of these projects has led to a second round of Pocket Parks funding – allowing the Council to select a further 4 spaces for completion in East Birmingham before April 2025. The call is now open: [East Birmingham Pocket Parks Project Grant Application](#).

### **Street Cleansing and grounds maintenance**

- 12.26 The Street Cleansing Service is responsible for ensuring the cleanliness of the city to the standards specified by the Environmental Protection Act of 1990.
- 12.27 Approximately 1200 km of highway is cleansed daily by various methods, from mechanical sweeping vehicles to traditional hand cleansing. The services provided are tailored and scheduled to meet anticipated levels of littering at differing locations.

### **Risks and challenges**

- 12.28 The main risks and challenges for the Division in the next nine months are:
- 12.29 Due to the Council's financial challenges, there has been significant cuts in many of the Street Scene services which is having an impact on operational performance. For example, Flytipping has increased significantly in the wards with the highest instances being predominantly the inner-city high-density wards. Changes to routes and schedules have been made to make regular visits to these areas to keep on top of the reported incidence.
- 12.30 Currently, each service is reliant on an aging fleet, which is why Cabinet has approved the purchase of 132 new waste vehicles. Vehicles in street cleansing and grounds maintenance will also need to be upgraded.

### **Looking ahead to the next 12 months**

#### **Waste**

- 12.31 As part of the waste transformation programme, the rationalisation of recycling rounds for 3% (16,000) of residents will be rolled out in October/November 2024. The last review of rounds was undertaken in 2011, so this will help to ensure that these rounds are fit for purpose.
- 12.32 There is a drive to radically improve recycling rates in the city too. Presently, only 22% of waste is recycled in Birmingham compared to the national average of 44.6% (as from 2021).
- 12.33 At the time of writing, the report to September Cabinet has yet to occur, which will propose the roll-out of an additional 180L wheeled bin for paper and card, to replace the current inserts. This will increase the amount of recycling capacity residents have available and reduce the amount of material contamination.

- 12.33.1 A communications campaign will run alongside this introduction to encourage residents to increase their recycling and show them what can and cannot be recycled. It is predicted that this change will see the level of contaminations fall below 15% avoiding the additional processing charges and also increase the Council's recycling rate through increased volumes of kerbside mixed paper recycling. In partnership with Veolia, the Council is working towards achieving a 70% recycling rate by 2040.
- 12.34 There is a statutory requirement for the waste collection service to introduce weekly food collection by March 2026, which Cabinet approved in July.
- 12.34.1 Starting in April 2025 there will be a phased approach to roll out a weekly food waste service across the whole of Birmingham. Concurrently, the recycling and residual waste services will become fortnightly.
- 12.34.2 To aid the smooth transition, a comprehensive communications campaign will be carried out to ensure all residents have a clear understanding of what to expect and why.
- 12.34.3 DEFRA has allocated capital grant funding of £6.825m to the Council to support the introduction of the weekly food waste collection consisting of the following: kitchen caddies (£0.955m), kerbside caddies (£1.763m), communal wheelie bins (£0.526m) and vehicles (£3.580m).
- 12.34.3.1. Following Cabinet approval, the procurement process is underway to purchase 28 food waste collection vehicles and 340,00 7L and 340,000 23L food caddies.
- 12.35 An upgraded mobile IT software system for waste collection will be introduced in the coming months. This will be integral to improving performance standards across the service.
- 12.35.1 Importantly, this new system will also allow us to upload the new collection rounds data to optimise the rounds. The current waste collection and disposal software expires in April 2025.
- 12.35.2 In addition to the in-cab device, new vehicles will be procured with 360-degree CCTV cameras and telematics installed, this allows for data integration with back-office systems.
- 12.35.3 Officers from Digital Technology Services will lead on system architecture and integration and take a collaborative approach to deployment given the interdependencies.
- 12.35.4 The implementation of the new system will be complemented by a training programme for waste collection staff to ensure confidence and consistency in the effective use of this technology to realise the intended benefits.
- 12.36 Commercial waste is being structured to become a stand-alone entity. This will help the team to focus on growing the business and providing a quality service to businesses and institutions in Birmingham.

## **Fleet**

- 12.37 A new fleet strategy is being developed to improve the management of Street Scene fleet and extend the approach to other fleet management activities within the wider City Operations directorate. As part of this review, a project is underway to identify key areas for cross-council efficiencies.

## **Street Cleansing and grounds maintenance**

- 12.38 The Street Cleansing team is looking to build partnerships and collaborate with a variety of different internal services, including City Housing and Waste Enforcement.
- 12.39 City Housing are working on a partnership with Street Scene that allows street cleansing to remove waste on estates property. The agreement will cover the city and help with Flytipping problems.
- 12.40 Grounds maintenance, through an internal contract, will maintain the grass cutting and hedgerow maintenance. Other opportunities within the joined-up approach are also being explored.

## **Keep Britain Tidy**

- 12.41 The team previously had a partnership with KBT, which ended in April 2024 due to savings considerations.
- 12.42 However, there is some credit which will be used to train staff to carry out street assessments, monitor and manage the street and open space cleanliness. This is a great way to invest in staff and audit the cleanliness of the streets and open spaces effectively.

## **13 Conclusion**

- 13.1 The report above demonstrates the vast array of activity ongoing in the portfolio, and the strides being made to make the savings vital to the Council. The importance of the services in the portfolio to citizens cannot be understated.
- 13.2 A lot of major decisions have been taken in the period, for example the extension of interim contract during the pending Highways PFI decision, as well as the undertaking of the Parking Services Review.
- 13.3 Key Cabinet decisions such as the purchase of new waste fleet vehicles will help to improve the services that citizens are receiving, day after day.
- 13.4 This report also lays out the Cabinet Member's and the services' ambitions for the year ahead, where they will continue to work to deliver further savings and increase the quality of services that the Council provides.



## **Transformation, Governance and HR**

### **14 Introduction**

**14.1** The Transformation, Governance and Human Resources portfolio is a new portfolio, created at the start of the municipal year in May. The prime purpose of this role is to lead and drive forward the radical and far-reaching changes needed across the Council, to remedy historic failings and to rebuild a City Council fit for the future. Key to this will be:

a) ensuring delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP);

b) improving performance management, accountability and risk management across the authority amongst both officers and the executive;

c) challenging Directorates in making truly transformational changes to the way services are designed and delivered;

d) rebuilding citizens' trust and confidence in their local services;

e) improving productivity, stripping out duplication, modernising processes, exploiting digitisation and new automation technology;

f) and to support the cross-cutting work required to reverse an over-siloed approach, create a one-Council culture, and support the Council in its improvement journey.

**14.2** It cannot be understated that this has been a year of exceptional challenges for Birmingham City Council. Historic weak governance and a poor accountability culture within the Council can be seen as of equal importance as the financial difficulties, in having led to the current external intervention. A start has been made in recent months in putting things right. But there has been, and continues to be, a lot of hard work involved to deliver the immense scope and scale of whole Council change that will be needed to get the Council back on its feet as a well-run authority fit for the future.

**14.3** Nevertheless, there has been good work done so far in our improvement journey by officers across the Council. This report details some of that early progress. Examples of these are reviews of key corporate services being underway, a refreshed set of more tightly defined and relevant KPIs, progress in resolving the equal pay challenge, and savings programmes are ongoing, with careful and regular monitoring.

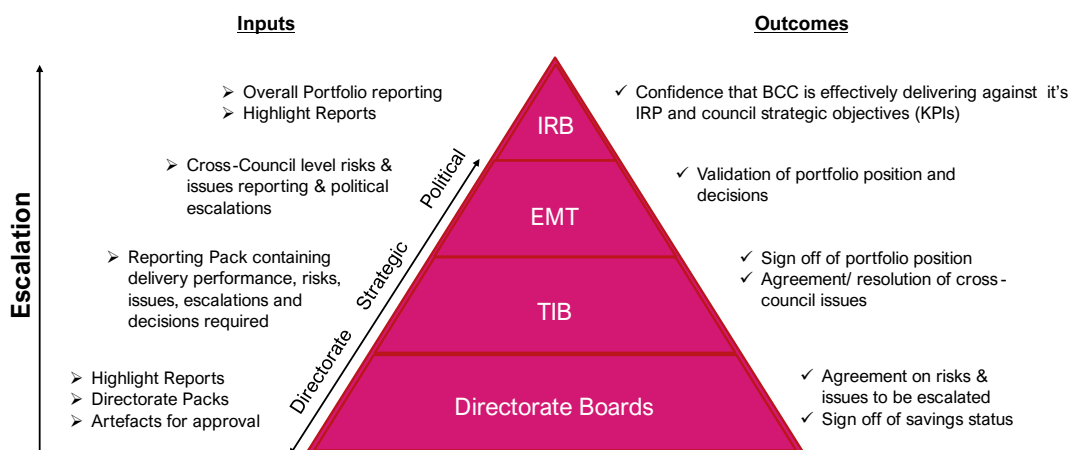
### **15 Improvement and Recovery Plan and Corporate Portfolio Management Office**

**15.1** Recognising the change in focus within the organisation to Improvement and Recovery, a Portfolio management approach has been developed in the

Corporate Portfolio Management Office (CPMO). The CPMO works closely with Senior Accountable Officers, Responsible Delivery Leads and Directorates to enable delivery and provide visibility of progress, risk and benefits to the Transformation and Improvement Board (TIB) and Members, as well as Commissioners via the Improvement and Recovery Board (IRB).

- 15.2 Providing a view of the Corporate Portfolio is vital in maintaining oversight and alignment to aims and objectives. To support the change in approach, BCC has been supported by EY who have been brought in for six months to help kick start the process and also by Kivue who have implemented a proof of value of their Perform reporting system.
- 15.3 Earlier this year it was agreed a phased approach to reporting and assurance across the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) was necessary to meet the urgent requirements for savings reporting. Therefore, delivery reporting and assurance of the 2024/25 savings has been the primary focus of the CPMO since March, establishing the governance framework and reporting process has been critical in enabling grip, oversight and the ability to quickly address issues.
- 15.4 The reporting process has been up and running for 4 cycles now with the governance framework (6 Directorate Boards, TIB and EMT) allowing for issue resolution at each level. The CPMO are working directly with Directorate delivery teams to support and enable delivery and facilitate early identification and resolution of issues, whilst ensuring appropriate challenge and assurance of progress is provided to the organisation.

**Governance boards – Escalation/Issue resolution hierarchy**



- 15.5 During July, reporting and assurance on the full set of IRP priority programmes has begun.
- 15.6 Following approval of the Improvement and Recovery Plan at Full Council on 16th April, work has been mobilised on the IRP priority programmes that weren't

already in flight and progress has continued to be made on those already established.

- 15.7 The reporting and assurance approach relies upon establishing clear reporting accountabilities from the outset. Effective collaboration between Directorates, and the CPMO will be essential to deliver on-time inputs to reporting and to ensure that the reporting of the progress of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan is robust, timely and enables delivery.
- 15.8 The outputs from this approach will provide TIB and elected members with a clear view of what has been achieved to date and progress against key delivery milestones. It should be noted that the first cycles are likely to be a learning curve for all stakeholders and the CPMO will continue to learn from each cycle and iteratively review and improve the process and outputs to enable decision making and provide oversight for key stakeholders.
- 15.9 Working with EY, a new Target Operating Model and strategic playbook are being developed for the CPMO. A plan to improve maturity and support strategic alignment will be outlined. This will support the embedding of the Portfolio approach and ensure the CPMO fully adopts its orchestrator role within the organisation, to architect and enable the delivery of the transformation.

## **16 Corporate Performance**

### **Improvement and Recovery Plan**

- 16.1 Work to improve performance management has progressed over the last quarter and a refreshed corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) set being introduced. The corporate KPI set now focusses more strongly on core service delivery to citizens, alongside a small number of organisational health indicators.
- 16.2 There has also been significant work to improve the content and clarity of the quarterly performance reporting product. All KPIs now have a numerical target, and performance is RAG (red, amber or green) rated accordingly.
- 16.3 We are also presenting benchmarking data wherever available to allow comparison of performance and targets with similar authorities. Performance reports are also being published on the City Observatory, enhancing accessibility for citizens and members.

### **Risks and challenges**

- 16.4 Changes to the performance monitoring arrangements of the organisation have so far focussed on corporate-level reporting. There is a need to ensure alignment across the Council and at all levels with a single set of priorities if we are to become a well-run Council, and for everyone to play their part in achieving this.

## **Looking ahead to the next 12 months**

- 16.5 An internal audit of Corporate Performance is taking place over the next 6 months which should lead to further recommendations to support the improvement of performance management across BCC.
- 16.6 Proposal for the reintroduction of the corporate approach to business planning as part of the overall performance framework improvement is being developed to coincide with the launch of a new corporate plan and in response to the challenge highlighted above.
- 16.7 Continuous improvement of the corporate performance reporting products and mechanisms to increase accountability for, and transparency of, performance data will remain a priority.

## **17 Legal Services**

- 17.1 Legal Services is currently undergoing a transformation. A new structure will be in place from 1 September 2024, reflecting a modern law practice with revised job titles and roles, with a focus on providing opportunities for current employees wishing to develop their careers within the legal team of the Council.
- 17.2 The ongoing transformation over the coming months seeks to establish a culture of continuous improvement and excellence, providing essential legal advice and support to the Council. Successful recruitment into newly created and vacant posts and creating a stable and permanent workforce is now the priority.
- 17.3 Legal Services are on track to deliver the savings proposals put forward for 24/25 and have developed further proposals to achieve efficiencies in 25/26.
- 17.4 Officers within Legal Services have delivered workstreams within the stabilisation plan and are now working on the Governance and Relationship programme within the IRP, as well as providing legal support to all areas of the Council in the delivery of savings, restructures, and service changes.
- 17.5 A challenge 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.

## **18 Early Intervention and Prevention**

- 18.1 The Early Intervention and Prevention Programme business case was agreed at Cabinet on 25 April 2023. The programme has since been moving quickly to achieve its aim of the Council becoming an early intervention and prevention led organisation.
- 18.2 The principles of having a roof over your head, money in your pocket, help to get a job and then a better job and connection to community assets through things to do and places to be, are fundamental to enabling citizens and communities to remain and be independent.

- 18.3 A strong digital front door is key to transforming the way that an EI&P led organisation will operate in the future, building upon the success of the WMCA funded 'Nudge Pilot', which used data and insight to proactively target households that may be at risk of financial hardship and statutory service.
- 18.4 EI&P, in partnership with the Cost-of-Living Programme, are working to scale up our approach using digital triage, a virtual hub and a single view of the citizen platforms. The aim of which is to target potential vulnerability, get to people sooner and ensure that people have good quality information available to them to either self – serve or be supported into the right pathways for support.
- 18.5 Successful workshops have been held with the Executive Management Team over June and July to agree and commence phase 3 of the EI&P transformation programme to accelerate our journey to becoming an Early Intervention and Prevention Led Council. Over the next few months, the EI&P team will engage with individual directorates to work up the detail and delivery plans.

## **19 Human Resources**

### **Equal Pay**

- 19.1 The programme is focused on completing job information and evaluation of benchmark roles by 30 September 2024, which is a key milestone.
- 19.2 Work is ongoing to develop a set of pay and grading principles, which will allow the current job evaluation data and any revisions following the benchmarking activity to inform the design of a sustainable pay and grading structure.
- 19.3 Completing evaluations of our benchmark roles will also help validate the proposed pay and grading structure and give assurance to key stakeholders that it is sustainable and will achieve the objective of implementation by 01 April 2025.
- 19.4 Our aim is to get a collective agreement with the Trade Unions before the end of 2024.

### **2024/25 savings programme**

- 19.5 A programme of work to undertake the consultation with our recognised Trade Union partners around the potential impact to employees of the savings proposals commenced in January 2024.
- 19.6 29 Business Cases have commenced to date, with consultation and subsequent amendments and activities for the avoidance of redundancy whilst achieving savings being considered.
- 19.7 41 employees have been redeployed through the Priority Movers process, enabling the identified saving whilst retaining the knowledge, skills and experience within the council.
- 19.8 241 redundancies have been confirmed, all through voluntary redundancy with no requirement for compulsory redundancy to date.

- 19.9 Further Business Cases and subsequent consultation will follow as any further organisational change is proposed.

### **HRSS service implementation**

- 19.10 Activity to reset the People Services service to the Organisation commenced in 2023/24 and continues in 2024/25. The focus for 2024 has been the completion of a redesigned Employee Relations restructure. This has now concluded (as at 21/08/24) and the business case with the Trade Unions closed. This will allow a more directive, focussed and professional service to our people.
- 19.11 Further areas for service improvement within the People Services operation include areas such as resourcing, workforce planning, compliance and data, analytics and Insight.

### **Industrial Relations**

- 19.12 Despite several incidences of industrial action, and the potential of future dispute as a result of the challenges the council faces, good working relationships have been established with key unions stakeholders which are proving effective in working the various issues through to resolution.
- 19.13 NJC Members Appeals against dismissal have been replaced by appeals to be heard by JNC Officers.
- 19.14 Consultation is being finalised on a new BCC Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.

### **Culture Change & Organisational Design**

- 19.15 The Culture Change & Organisation Design workstream has been identified as a core underpinning of the IRP and the future of the council. Whilst the change in officer leadership since the workstream was planned has impacted upon timeframes and approach both activities have commenced within 2024 and are being managed to slightly revised schedules and deliverables to enable the IRP. The two key items that make up this workstream are both large with long timeframes for deliverables and to see the impact of the changes so the work in this space will continue through 2024 and 2025.
- 19.16 In early 2024, as part of the Stabilisation Plan response to the review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, the Values and Behaviours of the council were reviewed and refreshed to create greater accessibility and understanding. These were then aligned to a refreshed Appraisal to support discussion around individual's adherence to, or championing of, the Values and Behaviours.

### **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDI&B)**

- 19.17 There has been the establishment of a small team within People Services focused upon EDI&B for the staff of the council in 2024. Full resourcing of this team as well as the consolidation of roles undertaking internally focused EDI&B

roles within the wider council to create a coordinated council wide approach and experience and ensure that best practice is shared.

- 19.18 The commissioned timeframe for Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business (EBEB) ceased in March 2024. A proposed EDI&B strategy has been created, the content of which continues and grows upon the principles of EBEB whilst creating measurable actions to bring focus and delivery.
- 19.19 The Equal Group Report on People Services from early 2023 was published, for transparency, on the intranet. This highlighted a number of issues within People Services and more widely within leadership with regard to how people from disadvantaged groups are treated in relation to protection and support. The proposals of actions from the report have been incorporated into the deliverable actions from the EDI&B strategy and action plan.
- 19.20 Staff Networks were feeling disengaged, with limited meetings taking place between Networks and Officers, leading to significant distrust. Re-engagement with Staff Networks has been a particular focus with listening sessions with the Acting CEO and employing an approach to collaborate around both the suitability of the EDI&B strategy and action plan as well as the measurement approach.
- 19.21 Subsequently, People Services ran engagement sessions with our Corporate Leadership Team and Staff Networks, reshaping the relationships and commitment to our networks. The outputs from this session will form the approach to future enhanced support for the Staff Networks and enablement for the EDI&B action plan.

### **Talent Portfolio**

- 19.22 A programme has been planned and commenced in 2024 for the build of a coordinated approach to development of staff across the council. The programme will enable the development of an Early Careers Strategy covering Graduates, Apprenticeships, Work Experience and school, college and university engagement. The programme will also enable the development of a Leadership Development approach covering development of existing leadership, identification and development of future leaders, as well as identifying any potential future equitable leadership training opportunities.
- 19.23 The programmes are intended to future-proof the council and its staff, investing in the existing talent within the council and identifying and investing in the local future potential employees of the council.
- 19.24 These programmes are large and have a long timeframe for delivery so will continue development through 2024 and 2025.
- 19.25 The annual Employee Appraisal process has been reviewed and refreshed as part of the Stabilisation Plan response to the review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. This refresh made the Appraisal more approachable, aligned it to the Values and Behaviours of the council and added in enhanced communication and support materials for those completing it. Completion rate for the 2024

Appraisal was up 100% year-on-year against 2023. The Appraisal will continue to be developed based upon feedback during and following the 2024 process.

- 19.26 Corporate Induction has been redesigned and relaunched in June 2024 as part of the approach to enhance onboarding and early engagement with staff.

### **Employee Engagement**

- 19.27 People Services led on the new Colleague Community; a growing number of colleagues who are available to problem solve, innovate, and share their experiences to help the IRP programmes. So far 186 colleagues have been involved in shaping the communications, the Colleague Community itself and providing cost-saving ideas.
- 19.28 People Services launched a new Managers Insights Webinar, bringing to life every month the communications from People Services, giving clear call-to-actions, and listening to our c.2,000 line managers.
- 19.29 People Services are working with DTS and Oracle to find a solution to communicate and engage direct with offline colleagues, where 35% of the workforce, around 3550 colleagues, have no access to Microsoft licenses, the intranet etc. A Frontline Workers Bulletin has been produced, sending key short information to frontline colleagues to around 1000 frontline managers with talk points, posters of the bulletin, and a shareable digital newsletter of the same content so the information is accessible.
- 19.30 A Colleague Engagement Survey will launch in November 2024, 5 years after the last survey. This will be our most accessible survey (contact centre telephone line, frontline visits, manager webinars, QR codes etc.) where we want equitable access for all colleagues to have their opinions heard on engagement, wellbeing, inclusion and belonging. From the results, action plans will enable co-creation of key areas of opportunities and strengths with directorate staff to drive the changes in their own areas.

### **Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing**

- 19.31 Primary focus continues to be in relation to supporting directorates to reduce ill health, the risk of physical injury, sickness absence and the management of corporate risk.
- 19.32 Progress against priorities has been strong, implementing a new Employee Assistance Programme in June 2024 and engagement with the service is growing month on month.
- 19.33 A Speak Up service has been implemented in August 2024 delivered by a third party provider to support the internal Whistleblowing Policy, improve employee engagement, encourage issues to be raised proactively and anonymously and to afford us the earliest opportunity to address potential risks.



- 19.34 The overarching Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing policy was rewritten and submitted to CLT in June 2024 which places a greater emphasis on local ownership and accountability of associated issues. In relation to this the team have been asked to support compliance in a number of higher risk service areas.

### **Summary**

- 19.35 In summary, the People Services team has commenced and progressed rectification for significant long-term issues for the council in the past year and remains on course to deliver these challenging but necessary changes for the council through 24/25 and beyond.

## **20 Conclusion**

- 20.1 There is still a lot to be done in order to become a financially sustainable and well-run Council delivering consistently best value services for our residents. This report highlights some of the corporate work being done to pave the way towards the major long term transformational journey that still lies ahead, to enable us to reach the standards we have set for ourselves as a trusted, efficient and effective public service that puts partners, communities and citizens first. I look forward to reporting back to City Council on progress made at the next opportunity.