

Birmingham City Council.
**Report to Corporate and Finance Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

27 September 2024



Title:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME Not Applicable
Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	Not Applicable
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Authorised by:	Christian Scade, Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services Legal and Governance
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Applicable
If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?	Not Applicable
Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Is this a Late Report?	No
Reason(s) why Late:	Not Applicable
Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'	Not Applicable
If not eligible, please provide reason(s):	Not Applicable

Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private? Not Applicable

Reasons why not included on the Notification: Not Applicable

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Committee to agree the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme (Appendix A), note the recommendation made to Cabinet following the meeting of Corporate and Finance O&S Committee on 6 September and receive an update on the work programmes of the other 6 Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Appendix B).
- 1.2 A key aspect of the work of all Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will be the continued focus on the delivery of savings agreed in the 24/25 Council budget and the relevant programmes within the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan where the Committee can add value.

2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW

- 2.1 Commissioners support the recommendations

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 3.1 Notes the work programme set out in Appendix A and agrees and amendments required.
- 3.2 Notes the recommendations made to Cabinet following the meeting of Corporate and Finance O&S Committee on 6 September attached as Appendix B
- 3.3 Notes the work programmes of the other 6 Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as Appendix C.

4 KEY INFORMATION

Context

- 4.1 The Statutory Guidance for Overview and Scrutiny Committees [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities) was updated in April 2024 and re-affirms the role of overview and scrutiny in holding an authority's decision-makers to account remains fundamentally important to the functioning of local democracy.
- 4.2 Effective Overview and Scrutiny should:
- provide constructive 'critical friend' challenge
 - amplify the voices and concerns of the public
 - be led by independent <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance-for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities/overview-and-scrutiny-statutory-guidance->

[for-councils-combined-authorities-and-combined-county-authorities](#) people who take responsibility for their role

- drive improvement in public services and strategic decision-making

4.3 The Council's Constitution Part B 11 sets out the procedures and functions of Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

[Constitution Part B roles functions and rules of procedure June 2024 A F \(1\).pdf](#)

Terms of Reference

4.4 The terms of reference for the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

To plan and co-ordinate the work of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees. To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning governance, finance, corporate and legal services, human resources, transformation and efficiency, contract management policy and procurement management, early intervention and prevention, risk, customer services, relationship with stakeholders and WMCA, support to Mayor, member development, use of data, refugees and City of Sanctuary, emergency planning. This includes:

- Council Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan/Budget
- Support to the Lord Mayor and other holders of civic office
- Communications, internal and external stakeholder engagement
- Council's strategic approach to the use of financial resources and budget
- Public policy development at local to international levels
- Representation of the Council on WMCA Board
- Relationships with stakeholders
- Levelling-up, devolution and WMCA
- Cost-of-living
- Oversight of Council's IT strategy, information and governance & GDPR
- Open data
- Data protection, cyber security, digital inclusion
- Customer services
- Overall financial direction within the Financial Strategy developed by the Leader, including Best Value and appropriate financial, accounting and audit controls and procedures.
- Business Charter for Social Responsibility
- Commercial opportunities available to the Council
- Revenues and Benefits service
- Procurement management
- Contract management policy.
- Management of all internal trading operations

- Commissioning approach that supports the Council's wider social objectives
- Oversight of consultants and interims
- Emergency planning
- Refugees, modern slavery and trafficking, City of Sanctuary
- Structure and governance of the Council.
- Efficiency and improvement of Council services
- Human Resources: An effective organisational development function for shaping the future workforce of the Council Development of effective change/transformational programmes deployed corporately Member development programmes Processes and procedures to support good staff performance development and equality objectives Staffing structures at JNC level and personnel procedures that comply with good practice and natural justice.
- Member-Officer protocol
- Business change programmes
- Development and implementation of early intervention and prevention service
- Good governance on outside bodies, Council-owned companies and externalised services
- Risk management, internal audit
- External scrutiny of the Council and Local Government Ombudsman
- Whistleblowing and complaints
- Legal services
- Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) oversight and delivery

These also functions include:

- Giving such guidance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in any cases of uncertainty as to work which they should or should not be undertaking, as may be necessary to achieve such co-ordination, including the allocation of "call-in" to the appropriate Committee
- Determining, in any cases of uncertainty, the allocation of responsibility for specific tasks between the Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Ensuring (by means, for example, of issuing appropriate guidance and/or instructions) that the Overview & Scrutiny Committees pay proper attention in their work to the consideration of key cross cutting issues, in particular equalities, transparency and improvement
- Overseeing the development and delivery of a balanced work programme of Scrutiny Committees using a range of scrutiny methodologies and reporting regularly to City Council
- Considering Overview & Scrutiny development, working practices and constitutional arrangements.

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

- 4.5 The Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan was approved at City Council on 4 April 2024 [BCC Improvement and Recovery Plan \(IRP\) \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) sets out the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider key programmes and projects in the IRP, provide assurance to members and citizens on progress, consider unplanned consequences and negative impacts of the changes the Council is making.
- 4.6 The work programmes attached in Appendices A and B set out how the work of the 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees align to the IRP priorities, the Council's Corporate Plan and the criteria set out in the Governance Stabilisation Plan.
- 4.7 All Overview and Scrutiny Committee's will continue to consider the delivery of savings within the Committee's terms of reference. In addition to this Committee's will also consider the progress in delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan Programmes.

Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2024/25

- 4.8 The Corporate and Finance O&S Committee work programme has been reviewed following the Commissioners comments at the June meeting. The work programme attached as Appendix A includes reports scheduled for 25/26 budget and savings, financial monitoring, 23/24 end of year out turn, Oracle Re-implementation and Equal Pay.
- 4.9 When considering the issues to be included in the work programme members are also asked to agree the Scrutiny method that will be used. This can include:
- **Committee meeting single item**, or items, on a public committee agenda: this fits more closely the "overview" aspect of the Scrutiny function and has limited opportunity for effective scrutiny.
 - **Committee meeting single theme** at a public committee meeting: This has the capacity to enhance the previous option by taking evidence from a number of witnesses.
 - **Task and Finish Group in day**: provided that these are properly focused, they ensure Councillors can swiftly reach conclusions and make recommendations and are effective even for complex topics. The work of a Task and Finish Group will be agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Task and Finish Group meeting is not public. The outcome of the Task and Finish Group will be reported to a public committee meeting.
 - **Multiple Task and Finish Group meetings**: to consider an issue in depth over four or six meetings spread over a limited number of months.
 - **Site Visit**: Members visit services or organisations to inform the work of the Committee.
 - **Inquiry Evidence Gathering**: Evidence for Scrutiny Inquiries may take place at public committee meetings, Task and Finish Groups or Site Visits
 - **Briefings** : for members to be updated on specific issues.

4.10 The Council’s latest Forward Plan: [September 2024 Forward Plan \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com) assist Members in identifying future topics. The following reports are of particular relevance to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

ID Number	Title	Proposed Date of Decision
013338/2024	Alternative Solution for Schools HR, Payroll and Finance Business Case	15/10/24
012776/2024	Grant Funding from Government - Standing Item	15/10/24
013299/2024	Grant Funding from Government - Standing Item	15/10/24
013005/2024	Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Refresh – update to Cabinet at Quarter 2 of the 2024/25 Financial Year	15/10/24
013320/2024	New Birmingham City Council Corporate Plan	15/10/24
012822/2024	Provisional Financial Outturn 2023/24	15/10/24
	Fees and Charges for the 2025/26 Financial Year	12/11/24

4.11 The Quarter 1 2024/25 Corporate Performance Monitoring Report was considered at Cabinet on 10 September [Presentation template \(cmis.uk.com\)](#) The performance against the Key Performance Indicators and benchmarked data will inform members identification of issues for consideration by the Committee. <https://birmingham.cmis.uk.com/Birmingham/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5tUFL1DTL2UE4zNRBcoShgo=8ob37D5tEoEoeiv9jrEDuDKnej7Lx03zt8uhLOj+AkQQFj7+OyYRNw==&rUzwRPf+Z3zd4E7lkn8Lyw===pwRE6AGJFLDNih225F5QM aQWCtPHwdhUfCZ/LUQzqA2uL5jNRG4jdQ==&mCTIbCubSfXsDGW9IXnlg===hFfIUdN3100=&kCx1AnS9/pWZQ40DXFvdEw===hFfIUdN3100=&uJovDxdw jMPoYv+AJvYtyA===ctNJFf55vVA=&FgPIIEJYlotS+YGoBi5oIA===NHdURQburHA=&d9Qjj0ag1Pd993jsyOJqFvmyB7X0CSQK=ctNJFf55vVA=&WGewmoAfeNR9xqBux0r1Q8Za60lavYmz=ctNJFf55vVA=&WGewmoAfeNQ16B2MHuCpMRKZMwaG1PaO=ctNJFf55vVA=>

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The Council’s Governance and Stabilisation Plan identified the need to strengthen the working relationships between the Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee to lead and direct the function. This will include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding that will include the respective roles of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Audit in relation to the Council’s management of risk.

6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS

Finance

6.1 There are no immediate financial implications from this report. Work to support the Committee in developing its work programme is conducted by an inhouse

existing team which has been funded for and there will be no external engagement resulting in incremental costs to the council.

Legal

- 6.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 states that the Council must have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees which have the power to take the actions listed in that section. The Birmingham City Council Constitution sets out how the role and function of scrutiny prescribed by the Act is applied locally.

Equalities

- 6.3 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 6.4 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.
- 6.5 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering: How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.
- 6.6 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

People Services

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

Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero

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

Corporate Parenting

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

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix A: Corporate and Finance OSC Work Programme September 24
- 7.2 Appendix B: Recommendations to September Cabinet_Addendum
- 7.3 Appendix C: Work Programmes: Education and Children and Young People O&S Committee, Economy, Skills and Culture O&S Committee, Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee, Homes O&S Committee, Neighbourhoods O&S Committee, Sustainability and Transport O&S Committee

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None