

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to City Council

2 December 2025



<b>Title:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY BUSINESS REPORT</b>
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Sir Albert Bore
<b>Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Has this report been shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report Author:</b>	Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager Legal and Governance fiona.bottrill@birmingham.gov.uk
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Antony Cox, City Solicitor
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this a Late Report?</b>	No
<b>Reason(s) why Late and confirm who has authorised it to be considered:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'</b>	Not Applicable
<b>If 'call-in' has been dis-applied, please provide reason(s) and confirm who has authorised:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Wards:</b>	Not Applicable

**Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?** No

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

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

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates City Council on the Overview and Scrutiny work undertaken during October – December 2025 and how this contributes to the Council's improvement journey and delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

## **2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW**

- 2.1 Commissioners note the progress being made in ensuring that Scrutiny becomes a valued resource better focussed around corporate priorities. Effective scrutiny, owned by the whole organisation, is a vital element of the transformation journey, securing better governance, on which the Council must progress. To that end, Commissioners strongly support the new protocol referenced in this report. Its application should represent a step change in the improvement of scrutiny practices and processes in the City council. Commissioners will continue to monitor progress.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That City Council note the report.

## **4 KEY INFORMATION**

### **Context**

- 4.1 The Council's 7 Overview and Scrutiny Committees and 2 Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees have continued to fulfil their statutory duties and contribute towards delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan.

### **Developing an Executive Scrutiny Protocol**

- 4.2 The Executive / Scrutiny Protocol was agreed by the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Leader in consultation with Cabinet Members. The protocol aims to reset the Council's political and organisational culture, ensuring a 'parity of esteem' between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny. The protocol will contribute to demonstrating how the Council is delivering the Improvement and Recovery Priority to 'foster a better performing organisation with stronger governance'.
- 4.3 The Leader and Chair of Corporate and Finance OSC have requested that the Monitoring Officer determines, in consultation with the Governance Board, if the protocol should be reported to City Council and included as part of the Council's Constitution.

### **Demonstrating Outcomes: Corporate Plan Priorities 2025**

### **Growth and Prosperity: Birmingham is a vibrant and inclusive City**

4.4 The Economy, Skills and Culture OSC has considered two Requests for Call-In regarding the Cabinet Committee Property decisions on the Disposal of Surplus Assets (September 2025) and the Approval for Disposal of JQ Assets. The Scrutiny Committee decided to refer both decisions to Cabinet for re-consideration for the following reasons:

- Disposal of Surplus Assets: criteria 2 (the decision appears to be inconsistent with any other form of policy approved by the full Council, the Executive or the Regulatory Committee); criteria 3 (the decision appears to be inconsistent with recommendations previous made by an Overview and Scrutiny body (and accepted by the full Council or the Executive)); criteria 4 (the Executive appears to have failed to consult relevant stakeholders or other interested persons before arriving at its decision); and criteria 5 (the Executive appears to have overlooked some relevant consideration in arriving at its decision).
- Approval for Disposal of JQ Assets: criteria 4 (the Executive appears to have failed to consult relevant stakeholders or other interested persons before arriving at its decision) and criteria 7 (there is a substantial lack of clarity, material inaccuracy or insufficient information provided in the report to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to hold the Executive to account and/or add value to the work of the Council).

**Knowledge and Opportunity: Birmingham is a City where every person can learn and develop the skills they need to thrive**

4.5 The Education, Children and Young People OSC will hold a workshop in December examining the City's School Readiness agenda including take up of early years places, the availability of places, barriers to take up and opportunities for improvement and primary exclusions. The committee will also consider the Childcare Sufficiency Annual Report.

4.6 The Economy, Skills and Culture OSC will continue gathering evidence for the Inquiry on Opportunity through Regeneration: Reducing Unemployment, Raising Skills which is due to report to City Council in March 2026.

**Safety and sustainability: Birmingham is a safe, clean and green place to live**

4.7 The Sustainability and Transport OSC continues to gather evidence for the Inquiry on Air Quality, which is due to report to City Council in January 2026

4.8 The Homes OSC considered a report on Regulatory Compliance and also a report on Tenant Engagement and Satisfaction at the committee meeting on 16 October 2025. As part of that report, the Committee also heard from the Resident Chair of the City Housing Involvement Board (CHIB). In November, the committee will receive a briefing on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Rent

Setting for 26/26. During December a workshop will be held to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Druid's Heath Estate Regeneration Scheme Contract Award.

- 4.9 The Education, Children and Young People OSC continues to monitor the progress of implementing the Child Criminal Exploitation Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations and the multi-agency collaboration to deliver the Child Exploitation Strategy and the Birmingham Safeguarding Partnership objectives to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Birmingham.
- 4.10 The Neighbourhoods OSC will undertake policy development scrutiny of the Parks Transformation at the committee meeting in December examining progress, learning from other areas, engagement with local councillors and hearing from community groups. The committee will also examine the Community Safety Partnership's Strategic Assessment and Delivery Plans in line with the statutory duty.

**Health, Equity and Inclusion: Birmingham is a place where everyone can live, work and age well**

- 4.11 The Health and Adult Care OSC considered the procurement programme for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Leisure Services. Members decided to hold a workshop to understand the arrangements for the commissioning of the Neighbourhood Network Schemes. The workshop will be held in 2026. The committee also held a workshop on the Public Health Grant Framework and recommendations from this will be reported to a future Committee meeting.
- 4.12 The Neighbourhoods OSC received a report on the implementation of the committee's recommendations made as a result of the pre-decision scrutiny of the Community Libraries and Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service at the meeting on 22 October and also a verbal update on the Council's approach to Localisation. Pre-decision on Localisation is being planned.
- 4.13 The Birmingham and Solihull Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 November will consider reports from the Integrated Care Board on the Review of Urgent Care Treatment (UTC) Centres, Finance and Performance and a Quality Oversight report. Members of the Birmingham and Sandwell Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been invited to attend for the UTC report.

**Connected Birmingham: Birmingham is a well-connected City**

- 4.14 The Sustainability and Transport OSC carried out pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's proposed revised policy on dropped crossings during October. In November, the Committee had a briefing on the performance of the interim highways contract.

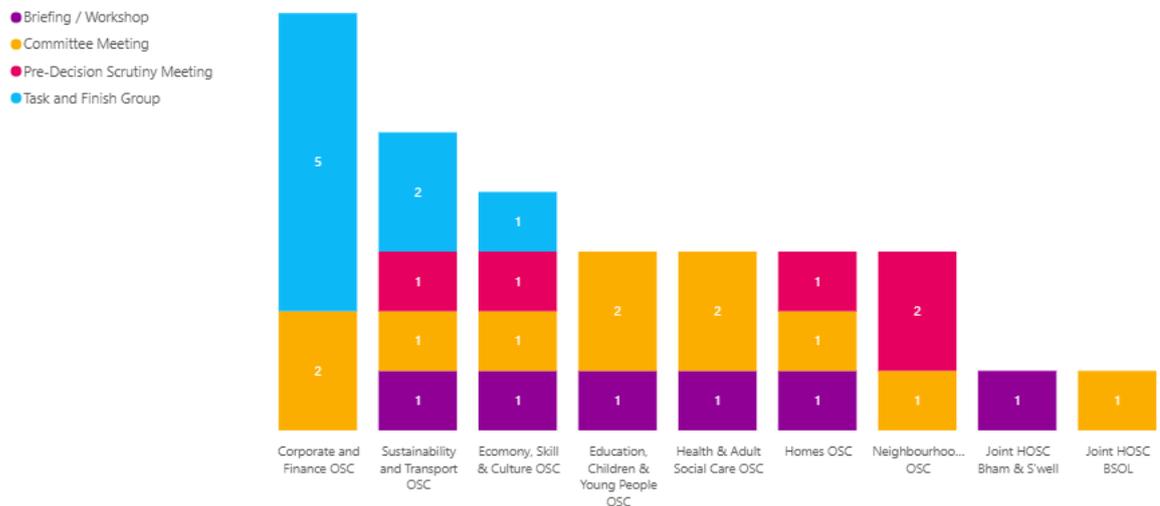
**Improvement and Recovery: Birmingham City Council is financially sustainable and operates effectively as a smaller, leaner and more efficient Council.**

- 4.15 The Corporate and Finance OSC considered the Cabinet reports on the Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and General Fund Refresh and also the Capital Programme Refresh.
- 4.16 The Corporate and Finance OSC has started the work of the MTFP / Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. During October – December the Task and Finish Group will consider the savings delivery plans and relevant equality impact assessments and the budget pressures for each Directorate. Recommendations from the Task and Finish Group will be reported to the January meeting of Corporate and Finance OSC and then to Cabinet and City Council.

**Overview and Scrutiny Meetings**

- 4.17 Between October and December 2025, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees held 30 meetings. The charts below illustrate the range of methods that Overview and Scrutiny Committees have used to undertake their work:

**Chart 1: Scrutiny Method by Overview and Scrutiny Committee October – December 2025**



From: Scrutiny Dashboard developed with City Observatory (Information correct as of 6 November 2025)

Note: Where a committee carried out pre-decision scrutiny at a committee meeting or a task finish group meeting this has been shown as a 'pre-decision scrutiny meeting'.

## **Scrutiny Information Hub**

- 4.18 Overview and Scrutiny Committees have held Information Working Group meetings to consider the performance, delivery and risk information that is shared via the Scrutiny Information Hub. The members were assured that the overview and scrutiny work programme included the majority of issues that were rated Red and the Corporate and Finance OSC Working Group requested further information regarding the Customer Experience IRP Programme, Customer Satisfaction and the delivery of the saving from the consolidation of customer contact. These Working Group meetings are in addition to the meetings shown in Chart 1 above.

## **Monitoring Outcomes of Scrutiny Recommendations**

- 4.19 Overview and Scrutiny Committees continue to monitor the recommendations of Scrutiny Inquiries on Child Criminal Exploitation and Community Libraries and Neighbourhood Advice and Information Services. An update on the implementation of recommendations from previous Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups will be reported to the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December.

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes**

- 4.20 The work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from October 2025 – February 2026 is included as Appendix A.

## **5 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**

### **Ward Councillor(s)**

- 5.1 Not Applicable

### **Overview and Scrutiny**

- 5.2 Not applicable

### **Other**

- 5.3 Not Applicable

## **6 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **Finance and Best Value**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to scrutinise the delivery of savings as a key element of the Council's financial recovery through the Scrutiny Information Hub.

## **Legal**

- 6.2 There are no legal implications resulting from the recommendations in this report. The work of the O&S Committees meets the Council's statutory duties regarding local government and health scrutiny as set out in the Statutory Guidance: [Overview and scrutiny: statutory guidance for councils, combined authorities and combined county authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342211/Overview_and_scrutiny_statutory_guidance_for_councils_combined_authorities_and_combined_county_authorities.pdf) and Health Scrutiny Regulations: [Local authority health scrutiny - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/342211/Local_authority_health_scrutiny.pdf)

## **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 Overview and Scrutiny 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 Overview and Scrutiny 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.

## **Procurement**

- 6.7 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **People Services**

- 6.8 There are no staffing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### **Climate Change, Nature and Net Zero**

- 6.9 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider climate change, nature and Net Zero issues relevant to the work programme items.

### **Corporate Parenting**

- 6.10 Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider corporate parenting responsibilities and opportunities relevant to the work programme.

### **Other**

- 6.11 There are no other implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **7 APPENDICES**

- 7.1 Appendix A - the work programme for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees from October 2025 – February 2026.

## **8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 None