

# NEIGHBOURHOODS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



April 2026

## PURPOSE/SCOPE OF COMMITTEE

To contribute to the effective democratic oversight of the council by scrutinising decisions, policies, and service performance.

The terms of reference for the Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:

To fulfil the functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as they relate to any policies, services and activities concerning localisation and local neighbourhood plans, library services, community safety, social cohesion and equalities, street scene and waste, recycling, licencing policy and enforcement, parks and allotments.

The Neighbourhood Overview and Scrutiny Committee terms of reference includes the duty to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

## DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not make decisions about Council services or policy.

Overview and scrutiny committees have statutory powers to scrutinise:

- Decisions the Executive is planning to take  
– this may be through briefings or Pre Decision Scrutiny,
- Decisions the Executive has just taken but has not yet implemented  
– this is called 'Call In'.
- Decisions the Executive has already implemented including considering performance information.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee can request reports and information and make recommendations to the Council's Executive, City Council and other organisations that contribute to the services and policy in the terms of reference.

## TIME COMMITMENT

Based on the work undertaken during 2025/26 the time commitment for members of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is between 3 – 10 hours per month. The time commitment for this committee in 2026/27 will be determined by the committee work programme and its activities and can involve public committee meetings, Task and Finish Group meetings, briefings, workshop and site visits. Members are expected to commit the necessary time to study the papers and formulate relevant questions in preparation for the meeting.

The time commitment for Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairs is greater as this will also include meetings with Cabinet members, officers and partner organisations and regular communication with the Scrutiny Team.

## FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The frequency and type of meetings for Overview and Scrutiny Committees depends on the work programme agreed by the committee.

Each committee manages its own work programme so the number of meetings vary but can be between 1 – 3 each month.

During 2025/26 Overview and Scrutiny Committees held between 5 and 9 public committee meetings. Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are usually held on a Wednesday 2.00 - 4.00pm. Other meetings committees may hold include Task and Finish Groups, workshops, briefings and site visits.

Members need to attend committee meetings in person; however other meetings may be held online.

## ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Prepare for committee meetings. This includes reading the agenda and reports and attending any pre-meetings.
- Attend and contribute to Overview and Scrutiny meetings.
- Participate in scrutiny in an independent way that is free from party-political influence and the group whip.
- Abide by the member Code of Conduct including declaration of interests at meetings.
- Abide by meeting procedures set out in the Constitution.
- Agree recommendations which are evidence based and developed by consensus.
- Communicate with the Scrutiny Team. For example, provide availability for meetings being arranged or respond to requests for comments on reports.

## KEY SKILLS REQUIRED

- Analytical thinking – able to review complex information and identify key issues.
- Constructive challenge – confident in probing decision-making respectfully.
- Communication skills – able to question effectively and assess evidence from multiple sources.
- Collaboration – works well with other committee members and officers.
- Objectivity – able to separate political views from scrutiny responsibilities.
- Community insight – awareness of local needs and resident priorities.

- Commitment to good governance and transparency.
- IT skills – using email, the council's committee management information system and Teams.

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Newly elected members and members who are new to this role will need to attend the below training to be an effective member of this committee.

Scrutiny sessions as part of Member Learning and Development Offer:

- **Introduction to Scrutiny:** 9th June 12.30 -14.30, 10th June 14.15 -16.15, 12th June 12.00 – 14.00
- **Scrutiny understanding reports and decisions:** 2nd July 10.00 -12.00, 8th July 12.00- 14.00, 14th July 16.30-18.30
- **Scrutiny Workshop - scrutiny work programming and prioritisation – away day:** 16/7/2025

The Scrutiny Team provide ongoing advice and support to scrutiny committees, chairs and members including briefings before committee meetings, written briefing notes and 1-1 meetings where needed.

The Council is required to have a Statutory Scrutiny Officer. This role promotes the Overview & Scrutiny functions of the Council. At Birmingham City Council this role is held by the Head of Scrutiny and Committee Services.

